

**COVINA
GENERAL PLAN
NATURAL RESOURCES
AND OPEN SPACE
ELEMENT**



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ELEMENT**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Natural Resources and Open Space is the Element of the General Plan that serves 1) to identify, protect, and conserve local natural resources and 2) to establish a framework for preserving, managing, and enhancing the community's open space areas. Because Covina is a flat, mature, and generally built-out community in the urbanized east San Gabriel Valley (an inland subregion), natural resource issues are restricted primarily to ground water and surface water quality and conservation, the preservation of existing limited vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and air quality. Furthermore, open space matters in Covina focus primarily on citywide parks and related recreational facilities and trails. In an urban environment such as Covina, natural and recreational issues/resources are usually closely linked because the most visible concentrations of natural resources are located in public parks and similar uses. Conserving and protecting natural resources and open space lands are important for maintaining a community's overall functionality, vitality, image, and quality of life.

The entire contents of this Element are based on State planning law requirements (Sections 65302(d) and 65302(e) of the California Government Code) and the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan Guidelines, an advisory document on general plan preparation. Under law, as is the case with all chapters of the general plan, the State establishes the overall data and analysis requirements, while allowing local governments to address their natural resource and open space issues and challenges in a manner tailored to local conditions and circumstances. Therefore, the Element has been organized and prepared in a manner that the City feels is most appropriate and logical and best suited for carrying out planning activities.

Covina (population 46,452, 1997 estimate) is a mature, suburban community located in the eastern portion of the San Gabriel Valley, approximately twenty-three miles east of downtown Los Angeles. Because Covina is, as previously indicated, generally flat and is today almost completely built-out or has experienced much urbanization over the years, many of the natural resource concerns relevant in coastal, rural, or less-developed local governments are not applicable to the City. However, there are some noteworthy resources in Covina's hilly southeastern enclave (the Covina Hills neighborhood), which, along with other factors, this Element explores. The community is characterized by predominantly low rise/low intensity residential, commercial, and light manufacturing uses. For a suburban city, Covina has a relatively high percentage of commercial and industrial areas, which illustrates a strong, diversified economic base. Despite the community's generally built-out character, future development is expected to occur on remaining vacant as well as on underutilized properties, thus posing additional direct or indirect impacts on natural resources and open space lands. Concerning the latter, recreational facilities in Covina consist of nine City parks and two leased ball fields, though the community is deficient on a park acreage for every one-thousand resident basis. Covina has a historic downtown that is a key social and economic center of the community. The Covina General Plan covers a ten square mile Planning Area, which includes seven square miles of incorporated territory and a three square mile Sphere of Influence/unincorporated area (designated for eventual Covina annexation). Refer to Section "A" of the Land Use Study of the Land Use Element for more information on location, character, and the Covina Planning Area.

The Covina Natural Resources and Open Space Element is divided into eight chapters. The first chapter introduces and presents general information on the Element process, as mentioned above, as well as on below-described Element contents.

In section number two, the below-listed natural resources are identified and discussed to the extent that important matters apply to Covina:

1. Water Resources
 - a. Ground water
 - b. Unimproved flood control channels
 - c. Surface water
2. Vegetation and Flora
3. Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Sensitive Species, and Fauna

4. Air Quality
5. Soils
6. Minerals

The key issues in this area include: 1) monitoring and regulating water quality and conditions; 2) protecting ground water resources and remedying and handling existing ground water pollution problems; 3) preserving and protecting unimproved segments of two flood control channels and concomitant riparian communities (Walnut Creek in Covina Hills and Charter Oak Wash in Wingate Park) for ecological, aesthetic, and other reasons, and 4) ensuring the adequacy of water supplies to meet existing and future demands and applications. Other salient natural resource issues pertain to: 5) continuing to follow various water conservation measures; 6) complying with the plans and programs of all levels of government pertaining to air pollution mitigation with various land use and transportation control measures outlined in the Land Use and Circulation Elements; 7) preserving and protecting parks and recreational facilities for recreational as well as ecological and aesthetic reasons; and 8) limiting development and minimizing grading in Covina Hills to preserve oak and other significant mature trees as well as natural features in the area. Issues are important because they clarify matters warranting attention and help shape goals and policies and programs/implementation measures, which constitute the chief sections of this Element.

The third chapter discusses and analyzes topics pertaining to open space lands, again to the extent that important matters apply to Covina. These items are:

1. Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources
 - a. Riparian woodland communities
2. Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources
 - a. Flood control spreading grounds
 - b. Improved flood control channels
3. Open Space for Outdoor Recreation
 - a. City parks and related facilities
 - b. Trails
 - 1) Bikeways
 - 2) Equestrian trail

The following presents the key open space issues. Again, issues clarify matters warranting attention and are utilized in formulating the all-important goals and policies and programs/implementation measures. The chief open space issues are: 1) preserving and protecting all parks, ball fields, and schools to maintain recreational opportunities; 2) maintaining joint-use agreements with school districts to provide Covina residents with open space lands that supplement the City's park system; 3) preserving and protecting unimproved segments of two flood control channels and concomitant riparian communities (Walnut Creek in Covina Hills and Charter Oak Wash in Wingate Park) for recreational, ecological, aesthetic, and other reasons; 4) recognizing that the City has an open space deficiency and attempting to resolve the problem by acquiring and developing additional parkland, whenever feasible; 5) considering creative approaches to parkland acquisition; and 6) continuing efforts to enhance existing parks and recreational facilities to improve overall park use, safety, and appearance. The other key issues relating to open space include: 7) placing a higher priority on park enhancement and rehabilitation than park development, in general; 8) considering the Covina Park System Master Plan as a framework for addressing and resolving various park-related deficiencies; 9) paying particular attention to the recreational needs of the City's less mobile segments; 10) offering sufficient, cost-effective programs and services to address local needs and interests; 11) handling and maintaining the City's limited networks of bicycle ways and equestrian/hiking trails; and 12) prioritizing needed park amenities and facility enhancements, focusing on the Covina Park System Master Plan and City Capital Improvement Program as bases for decision-making.

In section number four, the goals and policies of the Natural Resources and Open Space Element are presented. Goals and policies are important because they serve as the chief tools with respect to private development and public project evaluation and decision-making and overall local direction setting as well as the primary basis for the Element's implementation measures, discussed in the subsequent chapter. A goal is defined as a general expression of an ideal future condition or state toward which the community wishes to advance. A policy, on the other hand, is a statement that most directly guides decision-making and actions. In applying the two terms to Covina, one goal and several policies are utilized for each subject of the Element. Under natural resources, to begin with, the goal is:

A setting in which a high environmental quality is achieved through the bona fide conservation and protection of existing natural resources.

The policies are listed within a framework relative to the following three topical areas:

1. Water resources and air quality.
2. Vegetation and wildlife.
3. General matters.

Key policies call for the City to support the efforts at all levels of government to monitor and regulate water quality and conditions; to support the efforts at and various codes and standards of all applicable government entities to protect ground water resources from depletion and sources of pollution; to support Federal, State, and regional efforts to remedy existing ground water pollution problems; to preserve and protect in their natural conditions, through appropriate land use controls and development standards, the unimproved segments of two flood control channels running through Covina (Walnut Creek in the Covina Hills/southeastern area and Charter Oak Wash in Wingate Park), which contain riparian woodland communities, as important functional, ecological, biological, aesthetic, and passive open space resources; to minimize the alteration of drainage patterns in and hillside grading in Covina Hills to best preserve existing resources and conditions in the area; and to handle existing soil erosion along the banks of the unimproved portion of Walnut Creek in the Covina Hills area. Furthermore, the City would ensure the adequacy of water supplies and water pressure to meet all existing and future demands and applications; follow the Covina Water Conservation and Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinances, where appropriate, as viable conservation tools; comply with applicable portions of Federal, State, regional, and County plans and programs pertaining to air pollution mitigation/air quality enhancement by following various vehicular emissions-reducing and traffic congestion-reducing land use and transportation control and energy conservation measures, proposals, and policies outlined in the Land Use and Circulation Elements; encourage and support the use of mass transit and work with transit providers to provide efficient service for local residents and businesses to reduce vehicular travel and air pollution; continue to enforce the Covina Oak Tree Ordinance as a means of protecting oak tree resources and, whenever feasible, preserve existing mature trees in conjunction with private development proposals and public works projects; and require that new and significantly expanded/remodeled properties incorporate adequate landscaping, in accordance with all City standards, for both aesthetic and ecological reasons.

As indicated above, a separate goal and distinct policies are presented for the open space topic as well. Thus, pertaining to open space, the goal is:

A complete, well-balanced, and functional system of parks, open space facilities, and trails and appurtenant thorough, viable programs and services that meet the diverse active and passive recreational needs of current and future Covina residents.

The policies are listed by seven subject areas, which are:

1. Retention, development, and enhancement of park and recreational facilities.

2. Recreational programs.
3. Trail facilities.
4. Design and landscaping of parks, trails, and recreational facilities.
5. Maintenance of parks, trails, and recreational facilities.
6. Safety, accessibility, security, and miscellaneous matters.
7. Funding.

For this topic, the chief policies call for the City to preserve all local parks, ball fields, and schools through appropriate General Plan and Zoning designations to best maintain recreational opportunities as well as community appearance and image and vitality; to maintain joint-use agreements with school districts to provide Covina residents with open space lands that supplement the City's park system; to endeavor to provide for its citizens a total park acreage equal to 2.0 acres for each 1,000 population at General Plan buildout (as opposed to 1.4 at General Plan adoption); to consider creative, practical approaches to acquiring additional open space acreage, including developing mini-parks, small neighborhood parks, and specialty parks; to continue to upgrade, enhance, redesign and/or replace existing parks and recreational areas and appurtenant facilities and amenities; and to generally regard the rehabilitation, renovation, or enhancement of existing parks and facilities as taking precedence over the establishment of new parks and facilities. In accordance with other salient policies, the City would consider the Covina Park System Master Plan as a viable framework for identifying, addressing, and resolving needed park improvements and, therefore, implement the Plan to the greatest extent feasible, continue to offer quality and diverse park/recreational programs, activities, and services to address local needs and interests, pay particular attention to the open space and recreational needs of the City's generally less mobile segments, including young people and senior citizens; continue to support and, where reasonable, expand and improve the City's bicycle ways for recreational as well as functional purposes; and support County efforts to preserve and, where appropriate, expand and improve local- and regional-oriented equestrian/hiking trails and reasonable linkages thereto that run through southeastern Covina (including along or near Walnut Creek). Finally, the City proposes to consider appropriate site design, architecture, functionality, landscaping, land use compatibility, and public safety standards and provisions in developing new or enhancing existing parks and recreational facilities; to continue providing for adequate maintenance of all City parks and recreational facilities as well as support County efforts to keep up County facilities used by Covina residents; to ensure that all playgrounds and trail facilities comply with Federal and State safety standards; and to prioritize and systematically schedule on a long-term basis needed improvements to the Covina park system, using as a basis for decision-making and actions Covina's Park System Master Plan, City Capital Improvement Program, and any other appropriate documents as well as community desires.

The fifth chapter discusses the programs/implementation measures, which, along with the goals and policies, serve as the backbone of the Natural Resources and Open Space Element. Programs ensure that the Element's goals and policies will reach fruition. The programs and measures are divided into three below-listed subject areas that generally follow the categorization of the policies. The subject areas are:

1. Natural Resources.
2. Open Space Lands.
3. Inter-Topic General Matters.

Various specific and general programs are presented, which, again, supplement and further the previously-listed goal and policies.

Section number six discusses the Natural Resources and Open Space Element's relation to and consistency with other General Plan chapters. The Natural Resources and Open Space Element is most closely related to the Land Use Element, the central chapter that focuses on the long-term general distribution/location and development intensity of residential, commercial, industrial, and other uses. There is a close tie to the Land Use Element because, under State law, the proposed land use development scenario must reflect the community's desires with respect to natural resource and open space matters. In addition, State law calls for the Natural Resources and Open Space Element to be consistent with all other chapters, and vice versa, in terms of everything from supporting data and information to policy orientation to implementation. The City of Covina has met this consistency requirement by updating all General Plan Elements simultaneously, including utilizing one common data and information base and cross-checking all goals, policies, and plans/implementation measures among the various chapters. This inter-Element consistency will also ensure that implementation of the Natural Resources and Open Space and all other Elements will realize the same results. Furthermore, if the Natural Resources and Open Space Element is amended in the future, the City will verify that the change is consistent with other chapters and/or modify the accompanying Elements to maintain overall conformity.

The seventh chapter lists the various measures that the City has undertaken to guide citizen participation in the General Plan update process. These items include questionnaires; public forums; cable television segments; and flyers, press releases, and articles. In addition, City staff received numerous citizen and business comments on the phone, at the public counter, and in the course of site-specific project reviews and met with and elicited the views of various City advisory bodies involved with natural resources and open space issues. Public comments elicited from the measures were carefully studied by the City and have been incorporated into the body of data and information that was used in formulating the natural resources and open space issues and, therefore, in developing the goals, policies, and programs/implementation measures. State planning law places a strong emphasis on citizen participation in the General Plan preparation as well as implementation and amendment processes.

The eighth and final chapter discusses monitoring Natural Resources and Open Space Element implementation, which is also a State requirement and is important to ensure that the Element fulfills its primary purpose of maintaining and, where necessary, improving Covina's natural resources and open space facilities. The City will fulfill its obligation to monitor implementation by preparing a State-required annual report on this matter to the Planning Commission and City Council. Any identified underutilized policies or programs will be adequately handled and problems or deficiencies will be carefully studied and appropriately managed to ensure that the desired Natural Resource and Open Space Element goals are met. Because the Natural Resources and Open Space Element is, as previously stated, a prominent chapter and closely tied to the central Land Use Element, monitoring is particularly relevant here.

Much of the background information and facts and analysis of data for this Element appear in the accompanying Biological Study, a consultant-prepared compilation of primarily natural resources in Covina, with some material on open space facilities. Though separate, the Biological Study or Technical Appendix is legally part of the Natural Resources and Open Space Element. The City believes that this two-document organization best addresses applicable planning statutes and policies as well as local conditions and needs. Lastly, it is noted that much of the background information and recommendations for improvement of the Covina Park System Master Plan have been incorporated into the "open space" sections of the Element, though this Plan is not considered to be adopted by reference. The Park System Master Plan, developed by the Covina Parks and Recreation Department, was prepared based on an extensive citizen input process and on a thorough identification of applicable issues, mandates, considerations, and user demands, contains an inventory and assessment of existing recreational facilities, and sets standards and guidelines for the improvement, development, maintenance, and utilization of all open space lands.

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I. INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

Natural Resources and Open Space is the Element of the General Plan that serves 1) to identify, protect, and conserve local natural resources and 2) to establish a framework for preserving, managing, and enhancing the community's open space areas. Under State planning law (discussed below), natural resources include: 1) water and its hydraulic force; 2) forests; 3) soils (particularly those conducive to agriculture); 4) rivers and other waters; 5) harbors; 6) fisheries; 7) wildlife; 8) minerals; and 9) other resources, such as agricultural lands and air quality. Moreover, open space uses must be discussed within the context of: 1) preserving natural resources (such as plant or animal life or wildlife habitat); 2) managing the production of resources (like forest lands, rivers, or ground water recharge basins); 3) maintaining areas for outdoor recreation (e.g., parks and trails); and 4) protecting areas for public health and safety (relating to, for example, earthquake fault zones, flood plains, or unstable soil areas). Concerning the first area, because Covina is a flat, mature, and generally built-out community in the urbanized east San Gabriel Valley (an inland subregion), natural resource issues are restricted primarily to ground water and surface water quality and conservation, the preservation of existing limited vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and air quality. And regarding the second facet of this Element, open space matters in Covina focus primarily on citywide parks and related recreational facilities and trails. In an urban environment such as Covina, natural and recreational issues/resources are usually closely linked because the most visible concentrations of natural resources are located in public parks and similar uses. Conserving and protecting natural resources and open space lands are important for maintaining a community's overall functionality, vitality, image, and quality of life. From the standpoint of the overall General Plan process, the Natural Resources and Open Space Element is closely related to the chapters on Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Safety, and Noise.

The entire contents of this Element are based on State planning law requirements (Sections 65302(d) and 65302(e) of the California Government Code) and the California Office of Planning and Research (OPR) General Plan Guidelines, an advisory document on general plan preparation. The State actually promulgates matters contained in this General Plan chapter as two elements, natural resources or conservation (Section 65302(d)) and open space (Section 65302(e)). Under law, as is the case with all chapters of the general plan, the State establishes the overall data and analysis requirements, while allowing local governments to address their natural resource and open space issues and challenges in a manner tailored to local conditions and circumstances. Therefore, because of the community's above-mentioned generally urbanized, built-out, and inland character and concomitant interrelatedness of natural resource and open space issues, this Element incorporates in one document the required components of both previously stated chapters. And as indicated below, the chapter has been organized in a manner that the City feels is most appropriate and logical and best suited for carrying out planning activities.

The Covina Natural Resources and Open Space Element is divided into eight chapters. Following this Background chapter, the second section presents an identification and discussion of the natural resource issues, which, again, focus on ground water and surface water quality and conservation, the preservation of existing, generally limited vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and air quality. Here, reference is made to an accompanying communitywide biological assessment that functions as the Technical Appendix to this Element. The third area exhibits an identification and discussion on the open space lands, with, as mentioned above, an emphasis on City parks and related recreational facilities and trails. Recreational programs are also mentioned. Section number four presents the natural resources and open space goals and policies, an important component that bridges the gap between where the City is and what type of community it wishes to become. The fifth chapter describes programs/implementation measures, again for both topical areas, which supplement and ensure the fruition of the goals and policies. Sections six, seven, and eight conclude the Element by discussing, respectively, the relation to and consistency with other General Plan chapters, citizen participation in Element formation, and monitoring Natural Resources and Open Space Element implementation.

Covina (population 46,452, 1997 estimate) is a mature, suburban community located in the eastern portion of the San Gabriel Valley, approximately twenty-three miles east of downtown Los Angeles. Because Covina is generally flat and is today almost completely built-out or has experienced much urbanization over the years, many of the natural resource concerns relevant in coastal, rural, or less-developed local governments are not applicable to the City. However, there are some noteworthy resources in Covina's hilly southeastern enclave (the Covina Hills neighborhood). The community is characterized by predominantly low rise/low intensity residential, commercial, and light manufacturing uses. For a suburban city, Covina has a relatively high percentage of commercial and industrial areas, which illustrates a strong, diversified economic base. Despite the community's generally built-out character, future development is expected to occur on remaining vacant as well as on underutilized properties, thus posing additional direct or indirect impacts on natural resources and limited open space lands, as described below. Covina has a historic downtown that is a key social and economic center of the community. The Covina General Plan covers a ten square mile Planning Area, which includes seven square miles of incorporated territory and a three square mile Sphere of Influence/unincorporated area (designated for eventual Covina annexation). Refer to Section "A" of the Land Use Study of the Land Use Element for more information on location, character, and the Covina Planning Area.

II. IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION OF NATURAL RESOURCES

A. General

As stated in the previous chapter, under this topic, State law requires the identification of existing natural resources, including water and its hydraulic force; forests; soils (particularly those conducive to agriculture); rivers and other waters; harbors; fisheries; wildlife; minerals; and other resources, such as agricultural lands and air quality. This identification is intended to serve as a basis for goals, policies, and programs on resource conservation, development, and utilization.

Because Covina is a flat, inland, mature, and generally built-out community, there are limited natural resources. (According to the Land Use Element, approximately 99% of the territory in Covina has been built upon.) The City does not contain any forests; noteworthy, usable agricultural soils (as verified by information received from the State Department of Conservation); rivers, lakes or related water bodies; harbors; fisheries; significant, endangered wildlife; extractable minerals; or important agricultural areas. In other words, because of long-term urbanization, many of the natural resource concerns relevant in coastal, rural, or less-developed cities are not applicable to Covina. Key natural resource issues, which are identified and discussed below, are restricted primarily to ground water and surface water quality and conservation, the preservation of existing, generally limited vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and air quality. Many of the noteworthy resource issues pertain to the community's hilly southeastern enclave (the Covina Hills area). For documentation purposes, two resources that technically exist but from a planning or conservation standpoint are insignificant, soils and minerals, are also mentioned.

It is noted that information and facts pertaining to the community's vegetation, wildlife and wildlife habitat, and soils are clarified in the accompanying Technical Appendix, which is a detailed, consultant-prepared report on existing City natural resource conditions. Though separate, the Technical Appendix is legally part of this Element. Matters relating to other areas, as stated below, are referenced from general documents and correspondence on file in the Covina Planning Division.

B. Identification and Discussion of Covina Natural Resources

As stated above, the below-listed natural resources are discussed to the extent that important matters thereon, if any, are applicable to Covina:

1. Water Resources
 - a. Ground water
 - b. Unimproved flood control channels
 - c. Surface water
2. Vegetation and Flora
3. Wildlife and Wildlife Habitat, Sensitive Species, and Fauna
4. Air Quality
5. Soils
6. Minerals

1. Water Resources

The water resources of Covina consist of the following:

- a. Ground water
- b. Unimproved flood control channels
- c. Surface water

Each water resource is discussed in the respective three sections below. Applicable facts and information are presented within a framework relative to Covina utilization and conservation issues.

In recognition of the importance of water and water bodies in the general plan update process, particularly relating to accommodating future water demands, State law (Government Code Section 65302d) requires that the portion of this Element pertaining to waters be prepared in coordination with any agency, district, or entity that has developed, served, controlled, or conserved water for the city in which the plan is composed. It is hereby stated that the City of Covina has complied with all aspects of this provision. (But as stated above and below, because Covina is generally built-out and because long-term water demands can be met, water supply is not seen as a critical issue.) Information received from various, applicable water agencies and entities is on file in the Covina Planning Division.

a. Ground water

The City of Covina is one of several communities in the area that overlies a major ground water basin. Because of its constant, everyday use by Covina residents, businesses, and facilities (see third section for clarification), ground water is certainly one of Covina's key water resources. The responsibility for monitoring and regulating ground water quality and conditions in the region rests with the Federal Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the State Department of Health Services (DHS), the Los Angeles Regional Water Quality Control Board, and Los Angeles County. In addition, Covina water service, much of which relates to this resource, is provided by the City of Covina, through its Water Department, and three other purveyors (also discussed in third section). Therefore, the City does not have direct control over ground water quality and extraction. Covina's role in protecting ground water resources is limited to 1) preventing hazardous materials from leaching through soils (into ground water supplies) and 2) ensuring that existing flood control system-related (ground water) recharge areas or spreading grounds are protected via land use regulations and, when utilized, guarded against illegal discharge into the surface waters (that feed groundwater basins).

Regarding the second item mentioned above, there are two flood control spreading grounds within Covina's City limits: 1) Walnut Wash at the easterly terminus of Workman Avenue and 2) Ben Lomond at the southwest corner of Arrow Highway and Barranca Avenue. (Refer to Existing Land Use Map for clarification.) During heavy storms, the spreading grounds, which are part of the Los Angeles County-owned and -managed flood control system, fill up with water diverted from flood control channels and washes and thus serve to reduce pressure on the overall network. Collected water subsequently percolates into the ground water. Although generally the Ben Lomond Spreading Grounds has water during and immediately after heavy rains only, the Walnut Wash facility typically maintains at least some water year-round. Other major ground water recharge areas in the City consist of unimproved segments of two flood control channels, which are discussed in the following section. For a more detailed discussion on the flood control system, refer to the Circulation and Safety Elements.

Concerning ground water in general, in recent years, the San Gabriel Valley, particularly areas west of Covina, has been plagued by ground water pollution problems. Trichloroethylene (TCE), perchloroethylene (PCE), and/or nitrates, all suspected cancer-causing agents, have been found in amounts high enough to warrant the shutting down of or restricting the use of many wells in the region. Much of this contamination occurred in prior decades as a result of little or no regulation of certain commercial and industrial businesses. Today, strict controls relating to chemical discharge are in effect, though, in some recent cases, the contamination has been exacerbated by illegal dumping, careless handling, and inadequate environmental enforcement. Since the 1970s, State and Federal officials have been working with communities in the area to remedy the problem to the greatest extent possible.

In Covina, water wells (operated by the City and three other purveyors) have been found to contain varying concentrations of nitrates. Some of the wells have been shut down immediately and others have been treated to meet applicable water quality standards. Therefore, in a general sense, the primary long-term effect of the contamination problem is one of water supply limitation, not of public health. However, this supply limitation will not seriously affect Covina demands because, as explained below, over the last few years the City has been acquiring more and more surface water (from other entities). According to local water officials, all

demands, again, despite the contamination problem, will be met. The only downside for Covina consumers would be slightly high water rates resulting from the additional surface water that must be obtained.

b. Unimproved flood control channels

There are two flood control channel segments in the community that are unimproved or were never reinforced with concrete and steel to appropriate engineering standards. The segments are 1) a stretch of the Charter Oak Wash running through the southern section of Wingate Park (just south of the Metrolink Commuter Rail Line, between Grand and Glendora Avenues) and 2) the northerly portion of Walnut Creek (between Puente Street and an area near the terminus of Chaparro Road). Both segments, which are illustrated on the accompanying Natural Resources and Open Space Map, are typically slightly to moderately inundated or at least damp during and immediately after the rainy seasons, and the areas are usually dry in the summer and in early fall. Thus, as previously mentioned, during certain periods, these flood control channel segments function as ground water recharge areas. (Flood control issues are discussed in the Circulation and Safety Elements.) In addition, the unimproved flood control facilities support riparian vegetation that, in turn, serves as habitat for certain animals and birds. This function of the unimproved channels is elaborated on below. Moreover, a portion of a popular horse trail runs along part of the Walnut Creek facility (discussed in Chapter III), which indicates a recreational purpose for one of the channels as well. In sum, these areas warrant special consideration in terms of land use protection and conservation.

c. Surface water

The overwhelming majority of water supplied to Covina residents and businesses comes from surface sources (i.e., from various major rivers in northern California or the Colorado River, sent to the community through an elaborate water distribution system and then stored in local reservoirs). Because this water is inextricably related to and identified with its suppliers, it is appropriate to discuss surface water according to the community's chief water purveyor, the Covina Water Department. (As mentioned in Section "a" above, four water agencies supply Covina residents and businesses with this resource, the City of Covina as well as Azusa Valley Water, Southern California Water Co., and Suburban Water Systems. But the City of Covina serves about two-thirds of the properties in the community.) In fiscal year 1995-96, 93% of the City's water came from surface sources and only 7% was from underground sources—produced at its only operational well site on Grand Avenue, just south of Cypress Street. All surface water, it is noted, was actually purchased from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD, whose share of all water provided was 11%) and Covina Irrigating Company (CIC, 82% of all water provided) and then, prior to customer transmission via an elaborate distribution system, had been stored in eight reservoirs at six locations. The locations are as follows: 1) 1051 East Cypress Street (1 tank); 2) 2081 Rancho La Merced Drive (1); 3) 502 Rancho Simi Drive (1); 4) 3001 North Roycove Drive (1, in County); 5) 739 East Ruddock Street (1); and 701 North Sunflower Avenue (3). For clarification on location, refer to the accompanying City Street Map. The eight reservoirs range in size from 100,000 to 3 million gallon capacity.

The City of Covina Water Department has approximately 8,000 meters, which are broken down into the following use categories: 1) residential, 75%, 2) commercial, 12%, 3) industrial, 10%, 4) governmental, 3%. The exact number of customers served is not known, though, according to officials with the Water Department, typical daily consumption averages approximately 9 to 10 million gallons per day, and all current water demands are being met. Average water pressures for both general consumer and fire suppression purposes are regarded as good, and water quality meets all applicable standards. (As mentioned previously, the relatively little water that the City extracts from the ground, which has been slightly contaminated with nitrates, is appropriately treated.) Moreover, Water Department officials believe that the City will continue to meet future water demands as moderate growth occurs. (Refer to Land Use Element for clarification on this area.)

Regarding conservation, a key topic of this Element, in 1991, during the height of a drought, the City adopted a Water Conservation Ordinance, which defines water conservation measures and establishes progressive rates and over-usage penalties to be followed throughout a water shortage emergency. During the course of implementing the Ordinance, the City Water Department monitors and evaluates projected supply and demand of water by local customers and issues progress reports to the City Council. The overall intent of the Ordinance is to conserve water during shortages without jeopardizing public health and safety. The City Water Department also offers residents and businesses conservation kits and provides occasional conservation-related inserts in utility bills. All City efforts in this area are consistent with and further the goal and policies of this Element (listed below).

Another key Covina water conservation activity concerns the Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance, which was adopted in 1992 pursuant to State legislation. The Ordinance establishes clear, reasonable water conserving requirements pertaining to landscape and irrigation techniques and applies to all new or significantly enhanced/expanded developments citywide. (For existing landscaped areas, excessive water use is discouraged through progressive water rates.) This tool, which actually was developed as a model ordinance for east San Gabriel Valley communities and is administered by the City Planning Division on a project-by-project basis in the Site Plan Review process, has worked well in conserving water.

As mentioned above, besides the City of Covina, three other water entities (Azusa Valley Water, Southern California Water, and Suburban Water Systems) provide water to approximately one-third of Covina properties. According to information received from these purveyors, the entities obtain their water from both ground water and surface sources, and all water, like that from the City, is monitored and meets the various water quality standards. Moreover, existing and future water pressures are deemed adequate, and all current and long-term demands can be met. Lastly, the three water providers also supply household conservation kits and furnish customers with general information on this topic.

2. Vegetation and flora

(Regarding the following three sections, as previously mentioned, detailed facts and information are described in the accompanying Technical Appendix.) Because of extensive development that has occurred in Covina over the years and considering the fact that about 90% of the community is flat, presently most vegetation consists of common annual grasslands, plants, and ornamental trees, which pervade in various public (e.g., street rights-of-way and parks) and private places. However, in addition to the above resources, there are areas of some biological significance in the generally hilly southeastern district (Covina Hills—refer to accompanying Natural Resources and Open Space Map), including eucalyptus, English walnut, pepper, and coast live oak tree species. One of the most significant ecological resources here—and in the entire City for that matter—is the riparian woodland community, which is situated in and around the previously mentioned unimproved portion of Walnut Creek. The riparian community, as described in the Technical Appendix, supports a wide variety of plant and animal species, though none in the Covina area are believed to be classified by the Federal or State government as “threatened” or “endangered.” There is also a similar, second riparian area in the unimproved flood control facility along the southerly portion of Wingate Park. Both such communities are, again, illustrated on the accompanying Natural Resources and Open Space Map and are further discussed below under “wildlife and wildlife habitat.”

Another important ecological resource in the southeastern portion of Covina is the coast live oak woodland (tree) community, which typically grows in ravines or on north-facing slopes and is supported by mesic soil and moderate weather conditions. Coast live oaks also serve a wildlife habitat function as well as enhance the district’s unique ambience and appearance. It is further noted that other types of oak trees pervade both in Covina Hills and in sporadic locations of the flatlands. All oak trees in Covina are protected under local ordinance, a preservation mechanism that was established years ago in recognition of their statewide ecological and aesthetic value.

3. Wildlife and wildlife habitat, sensitive species, and fauna

Although Covina is a mature, generally built-out suburban municipality, the City flatlands, which constitute most of the area in the community, provide habitat for various wildlife species common to the region. Street trees provide cover, feeding, and nesting habitat for small birds and reptiles. Moreover, the annual grassland community, which pervades on most of Covina's private and public properties, serves as a feeding area for the small birds and reptiles and is used by burrowing mammals, such as pocket gophers, California ground squirrels, and deer mice. While the various accompanying plant species also provide habitat for many small mammals, both grassland and plant communities further support various raptorial birds.

The largest number and greatest diversity of bird, reptile, and animal species occur in the above noted riparian woodland and coast live oak woodland communities of the southeastern Covina Hills area. Riparian zones, another of which, as previously mentioned, runs through Wingate Park, provide wildlife and, to a lesser extent, aquatic life with basic habitat, space, movement corridors, food, and cover for various reptiles, birds, mammals, and amphibians. Also, these zones are utilized by birds of prey as well as by migratory birds and amphibians.

Furthermore, coast live oak woodlands are valuable habitat, as they provide acorn-related food, thermal cover, escape cover, and, because of their extensive canopies and dense foliage, nesting and perching for several species of reptiles, birds, and mammals. The leaves and twigs of oaks are a valuable browse material for foraging mammals. And a variety of insect species that are fed upon by reptiles, birds, and insectivorous mammals are attracted to this type of tree. As mentioned in the preceding section, other types of oak trees pervade throughout the entire community.

Lastly, it is reiterated herein that the City of Covina probably does not have any species considered sensitive or listed as endangered on any Federal or State register. Although the Technical Appendix discusses, based on earlier studies, one sensitive species of bird (the Least Bell's vireo) and one sensitive species of reptile (the San Diego horned lizard) as potentially existing within the City limits, their occurrence probability is considered low because current land use conditions are incompatible with these species' habitats. As illustrated on the accompanying Natural Resources and Open Space Map, in 1949, the San Diego horned lizard was identified in the northwest corner of the Planning Area (presently County territory) and, in 1984, the Least Bell's vireo was spotted approximately one-half mile to the west in what is now Irwindale. For clarification on these species and on their past and current ranges, refer to the Appendix. In general, although the bird and lizard were at one time seen at the indicated locations, they later were not identified by biologists preparing the Technical document. And surrounding the locations of the previously noted species, there had been new uses or developments that would appear to have precluded habitat subsistence. Regarding the Bell's vireo, none are expected to appear within or near the community, though, during migration, it is conceivable that an individual bird could make a short stopover in Covina for foraging purposes. Also, few, if any, areas of the City are expected to support populations of the horned lizard. However, small numbers theoretically could be present within the riparian woodland community in Walnut Creek Regional Park. Should any sensitive species be identified in the future, then appropriate conservation/preservation actions will be considered.

4. Air quality

Covina lies within the South Coast Air Basin (SCAB), the southern California State-designated air pollution control district that is known to have consistently poor air quality. This potentially unhealthy environment, which manifests itself in breathing difficulties, eye irritation, and other discomforts, has developed because of a combination of unique meteorological and naturally-occurring inversion conditions and excessively high pollutant emissions. Pollutant emissions in Covina emanate from both local and regional industries and commercial businesses (stationary sources) and motor vehicles (mobile sources), though the many thousands of cars and trucks operating on roads and freeways constitute approximately 70% of the emissions in the SCAB. The pollution problem most apparent in the Covina area is ozone, which results primarily from vehicle engine hydrocarbons.

Several Federal and State laws have been passed that mandate the control of stationary and mobile sources toward the end of meeting particular air-related standards by preventing further air pollution and, where feasible, improving air quality. The agency in the SCAB empowered to design and implement plans and programs that enforce these laws as well as to monitor pollutant levels is the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD). Two of SCAQMD's chief pollution mitigation/abatement tools consist of the Air Quality Management Plan and what is simply called Regulation 15.

The Air Quality Management Plan, which was actually developed in conjunction with the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG, the main regional planning agency) is comprised of various land use, transportation, and energy conservation control measures that, in terms of local government responsibility, focus on 1) controlling what are known as indirect sources of emissions, such as roads, highways, and parking facilities, which attract vehicles (or mobile sources) and, as previously stated, are the major sources of air pollution and 2) reducing vehicular trips by adopting such methods as employee ridesharing, compressed work schedules, telecommuting, and efficient, sensible land use planning. (For clarification on AQMD components, refer to the Land Use Element Study.) Local governments, which bear the primary responsibility for implementing the Plan, are required to adopt measures that best suit their needs. To date, the City of Covina has adopted an employee compressed work week schedule, offers ridesharing incentives, encourages the use of alternative transportation modes, developed and continues to support the Covina Metrolink Commuter Train Station, and encourages mixed use developments. (The AQMP also contains emissions regulations applicable to industries and commercial businesses, such as requirements for installing new pollution control devices or using clean-burning fuels. The Plan recognizes that local jurisdictions, through land use and circulation system controls, can play a role in reducing emissions from these direct sources.) It is noted that the AQMP is periodically updated to include new strategies and programs that reflect technological improvements, research discoveries, AQMD policy shifts, and/or lifestyle changes. Accordingly, City implementation of the Plan has and will continue to be modified as well.

Regulation 15, the other above-noted SCAQMD chief pollution mitigation/abatement tool, requires trip reduction and ridesharing programs for all employers with 100 or more persons. The intent of the program is to significantly reduce emissions from commuting vehicles, one of the chief purposes of the AQMP. The City of Covina presently operates and will modify, when needed, a viable trip reduction proposal, which, like the AQMP process and below-discussed Congestion Management Program (CMP), is administered through the City Environmental Services Department.

Lastly, the Metropolitan Transportation Authority (MTA)-administered Los Angeles County Congestion Management Program (CMP) in part attempts to mitigate air pollution and is therefore mentioned here as well. The CMP, which is described in detail in the Land Use Element Background Study and in the Circulation Element document, is a countywide measure that aims to relieve traffic congestion, improve air quality, and encourage growth management by linking land use, transportation, and air quality decisions. In general, traffic congestion reduction, air quality enhancement, and growth management are measured by the traffic impacts of new or expanded development proposals on a particular network of major streets. Azusa Avenue in Covina is on the CMP network. The City has been adhering to the intent of this program. Concerning all above-noted regional air quality plans and programs, Covina will utilize the General Plan process to fulfill all obligations to the greatest extent feasible and practical.

5. Soils

As stated in the previous section, because long-term urbanization and development in Covina have replaced and disturbed soil resources, soils in the community today have limited ecological and agricultural value. Notwithstanding this fact, to comply with general plan preparation guidelines, soil resources are discussed below.

As detailed in the accompanying Technical Appendix, there are two general soil types or associations in Covina, Hanford (2-5% slopes) and Ramona-Placentia (2-5% slopes). Both associations typically occur on gently sloping alluvial fans at elevations to approximately 3,500 feet, and vegetation types generally consist of annual grasses, forbs, chamise, sage, buckwheat, and juniper. (As previously discussed, vegetation in Covina is typically comprised of the annual grasses, various common shrubs, and ornamental trees.) Neither of these soils are known to be the substrate for plant species of limited distribution or sensitive classification. And it is noted that in most of the City soil erosion is not a major problem and that the soils generally handle natural drainage, subsoil permeation, and runoff well. However, flood waters along the unimproved segment of Walnut Creek in Covina Hills cause some erosion around the banks of the Creek. (Soil erosion is a natural process by which material is removed from the earth's surface.) But the severity of the problem is unknown and requires further study. (Refer to Safety Element for clarification on this issue.) Moreover, the soil associations are primarily utilized for residential, business, and/or, to a smaller degree, agricultural activities, though present and foreseeable land use patterns, development restrictions, and economic/market factors preclude and will continue to prevent agricultural uses.

The lack of agriculture as a planning/conservation issue in the community is further highlighted through analysis of the Land Capability Classification of the U. S. Soil Conservation Service. The Classification is a ranking tool that groups soils into classes (I - VIII) according to their suitability for agricultural use, based on soil characteristics and climatic conditions. Classes I (prime agricultural) and II (potential prime agricultural) typically constitute the greatest concern when existing in an area used or potentially suitable for agricultural purposes. According to information on file in the Covina Planning Division, there are no Class I soils within the City limits and limited Class II soils generally in the eastern portion of the community. Most of the soils range from categories III to VII (which vary from "limited agricultural use potential" to "unsuited for agriculture"). Despite there being some Class II soils in Covina, again, soil conservation and agriculture preservation are not considered planning issues. As stated above, Covina is generally built-out, and there are virtually no remaining agricultural activities. Future agriculture would be precluded by land use constraints, development regulations, and economic and real estate issues.

6. Minerals

In terms of general plan and conservation activities, minerals refer to aggregate resources, or rock, sand, and gravel, energy-producing fields, including oil, gas, and geothermal substances, and (for both) appurtenant mining operations. Concerning the aggregate resources, there are presently no mining activities in the City and none are expected in the future because of Covina's built-out character, land use restrictions, and the potentially negative environmental and "quality of life" impacts (e.g., noise, dust, and heavy truck traffic) typically associated with such operations. In fact, the Covina Zoning Ordinance prohibits the extraction or production of aggregates. And although, according to mineral-related State information on file in the City Planning Division, two subsurface areas in northern Covina probably contain certain mineral deposits, State officials presently have declared the areas insignificant because urbanization and potentially negative incursions preclude any extraction. (From a geological standpoint, Covina lies in the San Gabriel alluvial fan, of which the underlying sedimentary material was derived from rocks exposed in the San Gabriel Mountains to the north. The potential value of the San Gabriel alluvial fan as a source of quality sand and gravel for use as construction material has been recognized for years. There are presently eight aggregate production operations in the area, including a major facility in Irwindale, just west of Covina.)

Also, the State Division of Oil and Gas has indicated that there are no significant energy-producing minerals—or oil, gas, or geothermal fields—in the City. Therefore, there is currently no drilling or production of any of these elements. As was the case with aggregates, such drilling/production is and will continue to be expressly prohibited because of potentially negative land use, operational, and other incursions. In sum, issues associated with the management, drilling, extraction, and/or production of mineral resources are not of concern in the Covina General Plan process.

C. Listing Of Key Existing Natural Resource Issues

This area of discussion lists the key Covina natural resource issues, which are based on the facts and information presented in the previous section, related, salient material, and community input (see Chapter VII for clarification). Issues are important because they clarify key natural resource matters warranting attention and because, along with a detailed identification and discussion of natural resources themselves (the preceding section and Technical Appendix), issues form the basis for below-listed goals and policies and programs/implementation measures. Refer to the previous section and to the accompanying Technical Appendix for clarification on these issues and for underlying data and information. (In addition, see the Land Use Element and Land Use Study for an expanded discussion on matters relating to land use.)

The natural resource issues are listed below in no particular order. It should be noted that the issues are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

1. Monitoring and regulating water quality and conditions.
2. Protecting ground water resources and remedying and handling existing ground water pollution problems.
3. Preserving and protecting flood control system-related ground water recharge areas or spreading grounds (except where the entire facility or a portion thereof is determined by appropriate analysis to be no longer needed).
4. Preserving and protecting unimproved segments of two flood control channels and concomitant riparian woodland communities for ecological, aesthetic, and other reasons.
5. Ensuring the adequacy of water supplies to meet existing and future demands and applications.
6. Continuing to follow various water conservation measures, such as the Water Conservation Ordinance, when necessary, the provision of water conservation kits, and, in reviewing development proposals, the Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance.
7. Complying with the plans and programs of all levels of government pertaining to air pollution mitigation with various land use and transportation control measures outlined in the Land Use and Circulation Elements.
8. Discouraging land uses that contribute significantly to air pollution.
9. Enforcing the Covina Oak Tree Ordinance to best protect all oak tree resources.
10. Preserving existing mature trees in private developments and in public works projects.
11. Preserving and protecting parks and recreational facilities for recreational as well as ecological and aesthetic reasons.
12. Continuing to require landscaping in private development proposals and in public projects in accordance with City standards for aesthetic and ecological reasons.
13. Providing for needed landscape improvements to the City's parks and recreational facilities for recreational, ecological, and aesthetic reasons.
14. Encouraging the maintenance of landscaping in public areas and in private places.
15. Limiting development and minimizing grading in Covina Hills to preserve oak and other significant mature trees as well as natural features in the area.

16. Dealing with soil erosion occurring along the banks of the unimproved segment of Walnut Creek in Covina Hills.
17. Balancing all natural resource concerns with essential, ongoing economic development, commercial revitalization, housing preservation and accommodation, and community appearance and image enhancement efforts.
18. Committing to implement the natural resources component of the Element through following various documents, plans, and items and maintaining a viable inter-departmental approach.



PICTURE 1. VIEW OF GRAND AVENUE, LOOKING SOUTH FROM NEAR SAN BERNARDINO ROAD. BECAUSE COVINA IS PREDOMINANTLY FLAT AND BUILT-OUT, TREES ON STREETS AND PRIVATE PROPERTIES MAKE UP MUCH OF THE COMMUNITY'S PRINCIPAL VEGETATION.



PICTURE 2. UNDEVELOPED PORTION OF COVINA HILLS AREA, LOOKING WEST FROM THE CURVE THAT SERVES AS THE TRANSITION FROM SOUTH REEDER AVENUE TO EAST PUENTE STREET. THE COVINA HILLS DISTRICT IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY IS A SPECIAL, LOWER INTENSITY ENCLAVE THAT WARRANTS PROTECTION.

III. IDENTIFICATION AND DISCUSSION OF OPEN SPACE LANDS

A. General

As discussed in the Background chapter, according to State planning law, an area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to or designated as a State-defined open space use must be identified and discussed. Open space uses, under law, consist of four categories of activities: 1) preserving natural resources (such as plant or animal life or wildlife habitat); 2) managing the production of resources (like forest lands, rivers, or ground water recharge basins); 3) maintaining areas for outdoor recreation (e.g., parks and trails); and 4) protecting areas for public health and safety (relating to, for example, earthquake fault zones, flood plains, or unstable soil areas). The identification and discussion is intended to serve as a basis for goals, policies, and programs on open space preservation, utilization, and enhancement.

As previously stated, Covina is a mature and predominantly flat and built-out inland community with limited natural resources. Presently, open space issues focus primarily on citywide parks and related recreational facilities and trails, the third category noted above. The extent to which this area relates to natural resources is generally restricted to preserving the two riparian woodland communities (which falls under the first classification) and maintaining the two flood control spreading grounds or ground water recharge areas (included in the second category). All of the above open space lands are presented in the following section. It is noted that open space for protecting areas for public health and safety (the fourth State-defined classification) is a topic that is inapplicable to Covina.

B. Identification and Discussion of Covina Open Space Lands

As stated in the previous section, the below-listed open space use categories and appurtenant area types are discussed to the extent that important matters apply to Covina:

1. Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources
 - a. Riparian woodland communities
2. Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources
 - a. Flood control spreading grounds
 - b. Improved flood control channels
3. Open Space for Outdoor Recreation
 - a. City parks and related facilities
 - b. Trails
 - 1) Bikeways
 - 2) Equestrian trail

1. Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources

a. Riparian woodland communities

As discussed in Chapter II and in the accompanying Technical Appendix, unimproved segments of two flood control channels support riparian woodland communities, which are an important ecological and aesthetic resource and therefore are worthy of preservation as an open space asset as well. These segments are 1) a stretch of the Charter Oak Wash running through the southern area of Wingate Park (just south of the Rail Line, between Grand and Glendora Avenues) and 2) the northerly portion of Walnut Creek (between Puente Street and an area near the terminus of Chaparro Road). Both segments are illustrated on the Natural Resources and Open Space Map. The latter riparian community as well as the channelized portion of Walnut Creek also run conterminous with or side on the Walnut Creek (horse and hiking) Trail, which is part of a countywide trail network (or, managed by Los Angeles County) and is addressed under the recreation section discussion below. (It is noted that although a generally unimproved creek runs through the below-described Jalapa Park,

the creek is partially concreted and, according to the Appendix, is not a significant biological resource.)

Designating both riparian woodlands as “park,” “open space,” or another suitable category or as a flood control channel on the General Plan Land Use Map would be an appropriate preservation measure. The community around Walnut Creek supports both ecological and recreational functions, and, although the riparian area in Wingate Park serves primarily natural or biological purposes, the area lies in an established recreational facility and therefore is logically suited for this type of protection. Other safeguards for both communities could include establishing appropriate, compatible land uses on adjacent properties, general preservation policies, and sufficient building setback standards to maintain the integrity and full functionality of the stream channels. Although the City of Covina presently has no other lands or parcels under this area of discussion that warrant preservation through open space measures, City staff will endeavor to monitor future conditions, discoveries, and local policy changes and, when necessary, make appropriate General Plan amendments.

2. Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources

a. Flood control spreading grounds

As also discussed in the previous chapter, Covina has two County-managed flood control spreading grounds or ground water recharge areas that, because of their environmental and functional significance, constitute properties that legitimately qualify for open space preservation. The two facilities are 1) the Walnut Wash Spreading Grounds (at easterly terminus of Workman Avenue) and 2) the Ben Lomond Spreading Grounds (at southwest corner of Arrow Highway and Barranca Avenue). These two Spreading Grounds, which are components of the extensive Los Angeles County Flood Control system, could eventually accommodate passive or active recreational activities, a matter that warrants further study.

b. Improved flood control channels

Improved or fully-concreted flood control channels pervade the community (in areas illustrated on Natural Resources and Open Space Map), are linked to the previously mentioned two local spreading grounds, and are described in detail in the Circulation and Safety Elements. Because the channels indirectly pertain to or “manage” water, a vital resource, and, with respect to certain facilities, directly connect to unimproved washes with riparian communities, these improved flood control passages should be designated “open space” or the equivalent in the long term, comprehensive planning process. Such classification would also protect local residents against potentially inappropriate or incompatible uses or activities in these facilities from being established. In addition, the elevated flood control channel access areas or portions thereof could possibly be available in the future for bicycles or as walking trails or exercise courses.

3. Open Space for Outdoor Recreation

a. City parks and related facilities

1) Description of facilities

As previously stated, most of Covina’s open space lands pertaining to recreation are comprised of public parks and related facilities. Parks are important public places that serve the passive and active recreational needs of and provide essential services for the citizenry. For example, children are provided easily accessible, low- or no-fee activities through structured programming provided by the City’s Parks and Recreation Department or through the unstructured use of park amenities, such as playground equipment. Also, various open space lands have facilities to house wholesome, constructive youth and other activities like nonprofit sports leagues or scouting. Such facilities include baseball fields, soccer fields, roller hockey rinks, tennis courts, basketball courts, and buildings suitable for meeting purposes. Parks also provide youths with important after-school programs and activities. In addition, City parks benefit senior citizens a great deal too. Presently, the below-described Joslyn (seniors’) Center at Kelby Park houses senior-oriented programming, including

classes, entertainment, nutrition, and various unstructured activities. The Center also offers informational referral for legal, tax, and other services. Public parks benefit whole families as well in terms of facilitating passive activities, picnicking, playing sports, and more. And then there are organized groups, such as arts and crafts associations, that rely on open space lands for places to conduct their occasional activities. The significant role of parks in maintaining community image and vitality is particularly relevant in light of current and foreseeable demographic and development trends, which were discussed in the Land Use and Housing Elements and are elaborated on in the following section. It is noted that most matters and programs pertaining to Covina parks are administered by the City Parks and Recreation Department.

The Covina park system consists of nine parks and two ball fields. The City owns seven of the parks, two parks are leased from the Covina-Valley Unified School District, and recreational activities in the ball fields are conducted under leases with the Charter Oak Unified School District. Parks are located throughout the community and vary in size and facilities from Three Oak Park, a 0.2-acre passive area oriented for employees of an adjacent office park in the southeastern part of the community, to Wingate Park, which is over 16 acres in area and contains ball fields, tennis courts, a roller rink, and picnic areas in the eastern portion of the community. Covina Park, a 10-acre multi-amenity facility located just west of the downtown, is the community's oldest (established in the 1920s) and most heavily used park. Most of the community's public green spaces were developed during the building boom period of the '50s and '60s. The accompanying Natural Resources and Open Space Map shows the distribution of Covina parks and ball fields. In addition, Table 2 below describes the facilities by location, acreage, classification, and ownership. Concerning the categorizing of open space lands, the City classifies parks as follows:



PICTURE 3. HOLLENBECK PARK, ON HOLLENBECK AVENUE NEAR ARROW HIGHWAY. HOLLENBECK PARK IS A MAJOR, MULTI-AMENITY RECREATIONAL FACILITY.

TABLE 1. CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM FOR COVINA PARKS.

<u>SCALE</u>	<u>SIZE</u>	<u>SERVICE AREA</u>	<u>CHARACTERISTICS</u>
1. Mini Park	<1 acre	<.5 mile radius	In close proximity to and targeting multi-family housing
2. Neighborhood Park	<10 acres	<2 mile radius	Field and/or court games offered, playground, picnicking, etc.
3. Community Park	≥ 10 acres	Citywide	Neighborhood Park types of activities but also may include larger-scale athletic facilities, more diverse types of recreation (running from passive to highly active), and may act as a focal point for community activities
4. Regional Park	≥ 15 acres	Beyond City limits	Affords unique recreational opportunities that may entail specialized athletic facilities and may provide a “natural quality”
5. Specialty Use	Varies	Varies	An area that fulfills passive and/or recreational needs, though because of unique features is not a park

The City thus categorizes parks according to size, service area, and characteristics or amenities, which, for all facilities, are presented in Table 3. For additional information on the open space lands, refer to the Covina Park System Master Plan, which contains, among other things, a comprehensive inventory and assessment on City parks and is discussed below.

TABLE 2. COVINA PARKS AND BALL FIELDS.

	<u>NAME</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>ACREAGE*</u>	<u>CLASSIFICATION</u>	<u>OWNERSHIP</u>
1.	Barranca Park	669 South Barranca Avenue	6	Neighborhood Park	Covina-Valley Unified S. D.
2.	Covina Park	303 North Fourth Avenue	10	Community Park	City of Covina
3.	Cypress Park	320 West Covina Boulevard	4	Neighborhood Park	Covina-Valley Unified S. D.
4.	Edna Park	220 West Edna Place	2	Neighborhood Park	City of Covina
5.	Heyler Field	303 South Glendora Avenue	2	N/A ^o	Charter Oak Unified S. D.
6.	Hollenbeck Park	1250 North Hollenbeck Ave.	10	Community Park	City of Covina
7.	Jalapa Park	1321 East Garvey Ave. North	2	Neighborhood Park	City of Covina
8.	Kelby Park	815 North Barranca Avenue	6	Neighborhood Park	City of Covina
9.	Savoy Field	1359 East Cypress Street	2	N/A ^o	Charter Oak Unified S. D.
10.	Three Oak Park	829 Oak Park Road	<1	Mini-Park	City of Covina
11.	Wingate Park	735 North Glendora Avenue	<u>17</u>	Regional Park	City of Covina
	Total		62		

*Rounded to nearest whole number.

^oFacility is not assigned park classification because it contains only one ball field and is used exclusively for baseball/softball purposes.

Hence, the City presently has 1 mini-park (1% of acreage total), 5 neighborhood parks (32% of total), 2 community parks (32% of total), 1 regional park (27% of total), and 2 (non-classified) ball fields (7% of total. There are currently no specialty use facilities in the community.) Table 2 illustrates that over the years property leases between the City and local school districts have been a viable method for augmenting the City's network of parks. By establishing its own park classification system, the community is able to describe the scale and scope of its current and future parks in suitable terms.

TABLE 3. COVINA CITY PARK AMENITIES.

PARK

<u>AMENITY</u>	<u>BARRANCA</u>	<u>COVINA</u>	<u>CYPRESS</u>	<u>EDNA</u>	<u>HOLLENBECK</u>	<u>JALAPA</u>	<u>KELBY</u>	<u>THREE OAK</u>	<u>WINGATE</u>
Bandshell		yes							
Baseball Field(s)	yes	yes	yes		yes				yes
Basketball Courts		yes			yes				yes
Community Room		yes					yes		
Drinking Fountains	yes	yes	yes		yes		yes		yes
Football Field					yes				yes
Historic Structure ⁽¹⁾		yes							
Horseshoe Pit		yes							
Irrigation - Automatic		yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Irrigation - Manual	yes								
Jogging Track		yes							
Joslyn Center							yes		
Lighting		yes					yes		
Parking Lot(s)	yes	yes	yes		yes		yes		yes
Picnic Tables	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes	yes
Picnic Shelter		yes							yes
Playground	yes	yes		yes	yes	yes	yes		yes
Recreation Hall		yes							
Restrooms	yes	yes			yes		yes		yes
Scout Houses					yes		yes		
Snack Bar	yes	yes	yes		yes		yes		
Soccer Field					yes		yes		yes
Softball Field(s)	yes	yes	yes		yes				yes
Swimming Pools		yes							
Tennis Courts		yes							
Wash						yes ⁽²⁾			yes

(1) A locally-determined historic structure (former residence).

(2) Wash is partially improved; ecological value is limited.

Table 2 and the Natural Resources and Open Space Map show that although the parks and ball fields are located throughout the community, over 60% of the total green space is situated between Hollenbeck and Barranca Avenues, the central portion of Covina. This fact and other challenges are discussed in the following section. Also, of the approximately 62 acres of open space lands identified in Table 2, the City owns about 77% of the area. However, as previously stated, joint-use agreements with owners of the other 23% of the lands, the Covina-Valley Unified and Charter Oak Unified School Districts, ensure sufficient access for local citizens. All of Covina's recreational facilities can therefore be described as diverse, primarily urban, and aging.

In addition to Covina's eleven parks and ball fields in which principal or City-administered leisure opportunities are provided, the Covina-Valley and Charter Oak School Districts and large private schools manage several campuses in and around Covina that provide supplemental green space and recreational facilities, such as gymnasiums, to City residents. Technically, schools in other districts would be accessible, too. But utilization of campuses (except where above-noted joint-use agreements exist) is often limited to non-school hours and, when groups such as youth sports are involved, is subject to school district-imposed fees and/or restrictions. And schools cannot be heavily relied upon in light of the fact that, as discussed below, many campuses have been closed and redeveloped to other (usually residential) uses because of changes in demographics and school district administrative policies. The previously mentioned matter of restrictions is also an issue when discussing parks and facilities in surrounding cities and Los Angeles County, of which Covina residents arguably use but the City of course has no administrative control over. Nevertheless, because of their generally broader service areas, larger sizes, and greater amenities, County facilities near Covina are worthy of discussion. Charter Oak Park, at 20261 Covina Boulevard, an unincorporated neighborhood (between Glendora and Bonnie Cove Avenues) and Walnut Creek Regional Park, which is located within the City limits of Covina near the "Reeder-Puente" curve in the Covina Hills area, are the closest County-operated facilities. Charter Oak Park is a 19-acre open space land providing generally similar amenities to those found in City parks, such as ball fields, basketball courts, and playgrounds. Over the past few years, because of Los Angeles County budget problems and below-described City open space shortfalls, several discussions regarding potential City lease or acquisition of the Park have occurred. The second County facility close to Covina is the Walnut Creek Regional Park, which, as previously mentioned, actually lies in the City. Walnut Creek Park is an approximately 11-acre facility that is generally unimproved or rural in character and provides a passive or naturalistic setting and staging area for the traversing Walnut Creek (horse and hiking) Trail.

Other County facilities within reasonable access to Covina residents are: Bonelli Regional County Park (120 Via Verde Park Road, San Dimas); Dalton Park (18867 East Armstead Street, Azusa); the Los Angeles County Fairgrounds (Pomona); the Los Angeles State and County Arboretum (301 North Baldwin Avenue, Arcadia); Marshall Canyon Golf Course (6100 Stephens Ranch Road, San Dimas); San Dimas Canyon Park (1512 North Sycamore Canyon Road, San Dimas); and the Santa Fe Dam Recreation Area (1550 East Arrow Highway, Irwindale).

Concerning the State of California and the Federal government, there are no State parklands immediately available to Covina residents, though the northerly Angeles National Forest, which is managed by the United States Forest Service, is within ten miles of the City. The Angeles National Forest is comprised of foothills and mountains and provides a rustic experience that cannot be replicated in Covina's parks. All above-mentioned County, State, and Federal facilities are shown in Figure 12 of the Covina Park System Master Plan (see below for clarification on this Plan).

2) Assessment of present and future demands

From the standpoint of the general plan, evaluating how well a community's parks and ball fields meet local demands is primarily a function of the sufficiency of total open space acreage, though the adequacy of park amenities and features is a topic that also warrants discussion. Concerning the total open space acreage for Covina recreational facilities, as indicated on Table 2 above, Covina presently has about 62 acres of parkland. Combining the acreage figure with the City's most recent population count (46,452, as of January 1, 1997)

reveals that Covina has 1.3 acres of open space for each 1,000 residents. This ratio is significantly below the generally accepted, national guideline (established by the National Park and Recreation Association, or NPRA) of 2.5 to 4.0 acres of parkland for every 1,000 population, meaning, as far as this barometer is concerned, that park demands are not being met. This deficiency has hampered the City for many years and, unless corrective policies and measures are adopted and followed, the shortfall would be exacerbated in the future because of various demographic, socio-economic, and housing development trends.

In the first place, between 1980 and 1997, because of general growth and annexations, Covina's total population increased by over 37% (from 33,751 to 46,452). The 1980s in particular was known as somewhat of a "mini-boom" period. But during this 17-year interval, relatively little parkland was added/developed. Moreover, the character of the population has been changing to one that tends to be more dependent on recreational facilities. In the '80s, Covina's youth (defined as age 17 and below) and senior citizen (age 65 and above) populations increased by, respectively, 22% (to 25% of the total) and 42% (to about 11% of the total). These two segments, which presently comprise about 36% of the local population, have been the City's focus of attention in addressing open space and recreation needs because of the mobility limitations commonly associated with youths and seniors. Other demographic indicators point to rising incidences of single-parent households, lower income families, and outright poverty. Refer to the Housing Study of the Housing Element for clarification.

In addition to the above factors, changes in the composition of Covina's housing stock have had a major impact on increasing park demands. Specifically, since the '70s, because of decreasing amounts of vacant land, rising land values, and often favorable zoning provisions, more and more multi-unit housing complexes have been built. In fact today, over 40% of the City's housing is comprised of apartments, condominiums, and townhomes, which is considered a high percentage for a community in the east San Gabriel Valley. (Again, refer to Housing Study for further details.) Such types of dwelling units have less open space for each dwelling unit than traditional single-family detached residences, and older complexes built under previous standards or structures erected under County review are particularly lacking in recreational areas. This condition is most problematic for minors. Lastly, at least to a certain extent, the previously mentioned closure and redevelopment of school district campuses, which have supplemented local parks for recreational purposes, has decreased available green space. Several schools in Covina have been closed (and typically rebuilt to residential uses) because of smaller increases in the number of school-age children, of which school district officials believed warranted less classroom space, and changing school district administrative policies that called for operating less underutilized campuses. Also, many school administrators and lay persons believe that school facilities were overbuilt in the '50s and '60s. It is again noted that as far as the City of Covina is concerned, the absolute number of children continues to rise, an important indicator for assessing future park needs.

The above trends, particularly population, demographic, and housing, are expected to continue in the future, thus exacerbating Covina's open space deficiency. Concerning population growth, for example, the Land Use and Housing Elements project that at the time of General Plan build-out, shortly after 2010, Covina theoretically could have almost 25,000 more residents (71,254 total) over existing conditions (if all currently unincorporated areas were to be annexed to the City and every presently vacant or underutilized parcel were to be built to full potential). This means that should no additional parkland be developed or added (other than Charter Oak and Walnut Creek Parks, which, as previously mentioned, are now managed by the County but may be acquired by the City), Covina's ratio of park acreage to each 1,000 population would remain at 1.3. To meet the "low end" of the above-mentioned NPRA recommended park standard (a 2.5 ratio), the City would have to add/develop 86 acres of green space. This is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to accomplish in a community like Covina, which is well established, predominantly built-out, appears lacking in major underutilized lands suitable for conversion to full-scale parks, and faced with major park funding limitations. Covina's overall situation with respect to parkland needs is illustrated in Table 4.

TABLE 4. COVINA PARKLAND NEEDS

	<u>POPULATION</u>	<u>PARK ACREAGE</u>	<u>STANDARD - ACRES/1000 PEOPLE</u>	<u>ADDITIONAL ACREAGE NEEDED(1)</u>
PRESENT	46,452 (2)	62	1.3	54
AT GENERAL PLAN				
BUILD-OUT	71,254 (3)	92 (4)	1.3	86

- (1) Refers to additional acreage needed to achieve 2.5 acres to each 1,000 population, the recommended minimum parkland standard of the National Park and Recreation Association.
- (2) Includes currently designated City territory only.
- (3) Assumes future City territory encompasses entire Planning Area.
- (4) Number assumes no new parks are developed/added but does include 2 facilities in area presently managed by the County.

A problem related to the overall green space deficiency is that existing facilities are not evenly distributed throughout the community. Over 60% of the park and ball field acreage is located between Hollenbeck and Barranca Avenues. And many blocks and neighborhoods that are outside of this central section (or, the western and eastern districts of Covina) consist of apartments, condominiums, townhouses, and mobile home parks, the residents of which, as previously stated, tend to be more park-dependent.

As indicated in the beginning of this section, the General Plan process also addresses the adequacy of park amenities and features in existing facilities. Table 3 above illustrated the various amenities found in Covina’s parks and ball fields. As previously noted, the City’s recreational facilities are diverse, though aging. Therefore, according to the City’s Parks and Recreation Department, many improvements in park amenities are needed in order for Covina to adequately serve a growing, changing population. In fact, because of the City’s built-out character and funding limitations, the rehabilitation and enhancement of existing facilities likely will be more viable than acquisition and development of new open space lands.

Over the years, the chief documents in which necessary park improvements have been presented, discussed, and prioritized have been the annually updated, five-year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) and corresponding City Budget. For example, under both “funded” and “unfunded” sections, the current CIP lists, for various facilities, a range of proposals relating to the addition or enhancement of the following key features: ball fields, benches, curb ramps, drinking fountains, landscaping and irrigation systems, lighting (security and athletic), parking lots, picnic facilities, playgrounds, recreation and maintenance buildings, restrooms, signage, and walkways. It is important to point out that in recent years the City has undertaken many of the above and other enhancement projects pertaining to certain parks, thus following long-standing policies to stabilize and preserve existing facilities in a reasonable fashion to the greatest extent possible. And major proposals that will confer significant, long-term benefits on the community have recently been completed or are nearing fruition, including the reconstruction of the pool complex at Covina Park, the complete redevelopment of Edna Park, the expansion of the Joslyn Senior Center at Kelby Park, and the first phase of the Wingate Park improvement project (addition of paved parking, picnic facilities, roller hockey rinks, basketball courts, restrooms, and more).

Despite all the enhancements that have been done up to this point, many more park improvements or additions are in fact needed to ensure the suitability and functionality of Covina’s recreational facilities for current and future, increasing users. For example, according to the Parks and Recreation Department, the City shows strong demand for a youth center and a gymnasium. In addition, continued, appropriate maintenance of parks

and ball fields is essential as well. As is the case with roads, water mains, and other components of the City's infrastructure, the features in Covina's parks are aging (and, in some instances subject to abuse) and therefore require more attention and upkeep. Unfortunately, budget reductions have and likely will continue to hinder maintenance efforts. The importance of park improvement and maintenance is underscored by the fact that, as previously mentioned, the City's built-out character and other constraints will likely hinder acquiring and developing additional parkland (or, resolving the identified shortfall in total open space acreage). Nevertheless, both park development and facility enhancement and maintenance are important matters that warrant appropriate, below presented policies and programs as well as further analyses. Also, these matters will have to be carried out in a manner that is cost effective, prioritized, systematic, and reflective of community sentiment/ desires and City Council policy orientations. Lastly, it is noted that many of the challenges on this topic facing Covina have been addressed in the community's Park System Master Plan, which is discussed separately in the following section.

3) **Covina Park System Master Plan**

To best define and address the community's open space-related challenges and deficiencies noted in the previous section, the City Parks and Recreation Department recently prepared—and in September 1995 the City Council adopted—the Covina Park System Master Plan. This Plan, which was developed based on an extensive citizen input process and on a thorough identification of applicable issues, mandates, considerations, and user demands, contains a comprehensive inventory and assessment of existing recreational facilities and sets uniform, consistent standards, guidelines, and policies for the improvement, development, maintenance, and utilization of all open space lands. The proposal includes detailed sections on park enhancement funding and prioritization and implementation. In short, the Master Plan is a tool that will guide decisions and actions on park-related matters over the next 20 years.

In preparing the Natural Resources and Open Space Element, the Planning staff has incorporated the following provisions of the Park System Master Plan (not listed in any particular order) that directly relate to the General Plan update process:

1. An appropriate goal for future park acreage would be 2.0 acres for each 1,000 population (to be achieved by the final or 20th year of Master Plan implementation).
2. The lease of property held by school districts or other entities augments the quantity and variety of City parkland, and, therefore, future leases of land would be a viable approach toward meeting park acreage goals.
3. Future capital facilities or amenities that are particularly needed in the City are a youth center, development of a ball park with approximately 4 fields, and a gymnasium.
4. In light of the City's built-out nature and funding limitations, Covina should consider practical, creative approaches to acquiring additional open space acreage, including, but not limited to, the development of mini-parks, small neighborhood parks, and specialty parks, which do not require a high level of consolidated land. The City should also consider converting previously developed properties for use as park space through leasing additional school district campuses, leasing church or institutional properties, purchasing or leasing vacant residential lots or parcels where housing is no longer viable, and converting existing public rights-of-way to recreational uses.
5. Because of recent and potentially additional budget freezes and reductions, the City must consider that future park development be comprised of low-maintenance facilities, and, considering the upkeep of open space resources in general, that the City prioritize maintenance such that the safety of park users is a top priority, when necessary.
6. Rehabilitation or renovation of existing parks and facilities should generally take precedence over the establishment of new parks and facilities.

7. To best describe the scale and scope of its current and future parks, the City should continue to utilize its own park classification system.
8. Park design must take into account the personal comfort of parks users, including, where desired, reasonable access to restrooms.
9. Although aesthetic characteristics and the prioritization of aesthetic improvements will vary from park to park, to the extent feasible, there should be complementary color schemes in each park.
10. The City must endeavor to comply with Federal and State laws and guidelines concerning access for individuals with disabilities, safety components (e.g., pertaining to playgrounds), and pesticides.
11. The community must comply with all State and local laws relating to water conservation, such as Covina's Water-Efficient Landscaping Ordinance.
12. The City should visibly follow the recycling efforts expected of its residents and should comply with all California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) regulations relating to the environmental impacts of park projects.
13. Covina will continue to pay particular attention to the open space/recreational needs of young people and seniors, who presently and will likely continue to comprise the majority of park users in the community.
14. Where organized, consistent activities, such as arts and crafts exhibits, or occasional events, like fairs, occur in parks, the City will attempt to balance, on the one hand, the needs of activity participants with, on the other hand, the legitimate open space/recreational demands of citizens and the concerns of park neighbors pertaining to actual or perceived incursions.
15. Because of limited financial resources, future improvements to the Covina park system must be prioritized.
16. In expanding and enhancing its network of open space lands, the City will have to strike a reasonable balance between costs versus benefits, whereby the community would be able to develop and sustain a park system that embodies community recreation, ensures public safety, and encourages optimum usage of available green space, while avoiding an undue financial burden.
17. In funding future park enhancements, the most viable methods appear to be monies from available grants or various foundations, though the City should consider other alternatives, including (in general order of estimated reliability and practicality of source) establishing a citywide landscape district, a special tax, user fees, community donations/corporate sponsorships, bonds, establishing a nonprofit organization, general fund monies, funding from the Covina Redevelopment Agency (CRA), and/or certificates of participation.

The above provisions of the Park System Master Plan have been incorporated into the below-presented goal, policies, and programs/implementation measures. For clarification on any of the above statements, refer to the Park System Plan. It is noted, however, that, in relation to the General Plan revision process, the Plan is not considered to be adopted by reference. Therefore, minor or inapplicable changes or updates of the document do not necessarily trigger a General Plan amendment.

b) Trails

1) Description of facilities

Covina has limited trail-related networks that supplement the park system in addressing the recreational needs of the City's residents. A few streets are designated as bicycle ways, and there are two equestrian/hiking trails that run through the community, as depicted on Map 2. These networks are discussed below.

The City has a small, 3 1/2-mile network of bicycle routes on portions of various primary and secondary arterial and collector streets, as defined in the Circulation Element, namely Lark Ellen, Hollenbeck, and Grand Avenues and Badillo Street as well as a single, approximately mile-long bike lane on a stretch of Glendora Avenue, from Badillo to Cienega Streets. In general, routes provide for sign-designated bike travel on streets on a basis that is non-restricted or shared with vehicles. Bicycle lanes, on the other hand, provide for restricted (during school hours only), one-way bike travel on a striped lane of a street.

The bicycle today finds and will continue to attract both functional and recreational usage. From a functional standpoint, nonmotorized transportation is important for persons such as students, employed individuals who cannot afford a car, and persons running an errand. On the recreational side, bicycles provide an opportunity for individuals, families, and groups to get exercise, socialize, and experience the outdoors. Many private retail stores and commercial and public centers in Covina have bike racks, which facilitate bicycle usage. The bikeways of Covina were established in the 1970s as part of a regional network of bike lanes and routes and today facilitate a viable alternative means of transportation. Much of Covina's bike usage of course occurs on non-bikeway streets as well. For additional details on bikeways, refer to the Circulation Element.

The other facet of Covina's trail network pertains to two trails suitable for both equestrian and hiking purposes. These facilities, as illustrated on the Natural Resources and Open Space Map, are located in the hilly, less intensively developed southeastern area and are, first of all, the Peter F. Schabarum or Walnut Creek Trail, which runs along or close to Walnut Creek (part of which is along the previously mentioned, environmentally sensitive riparian habitat) and in and near the Village Oaks Office Park and is one segment of a major regional path that stretches from the base of the San Gabriel Mountains (in Claremont) to the Pacific Ocean (in Seal Beach). A portion of this trail passes through Jalapa Park. The second facility is a "general County trail" that branches off from the Walnut Creek Trail at Holt Avenue and Park View Drive and then runs on Holt and Covina Hills Road, where it connects to an extensive system of paths in the City of San Dimas. All such routes in Covina (incorporated and unincorporated territories) total approximately 4.5 miles.

Unlike the bikeways, the trails serve primarily a recreational function (as opposed to both recreational and functional purposes) and serve fewer residents (generally in the southeastern district), particularly relating to horses. But the trails also reinforce the more rural atmosphere of the Covina Hills area. Therefore, they provide another dimension to the City's open space lands and, along with bikeways, are worthy of utilization and preservation.

2) Assessment of present and future demands

Unlike relating park acreage for every 1,000 residents in a community, there is no common, generally acceptable standard for evaluating the adequacy of trails. Trail suitability is a subjective matter that typically varies from community to community according to the extent of existing facilities and local location, character, demographic and economic factors, needs, and sentiments. In Covina, based on observations and analyses of several applicable factors, including current trail networks, demographic characteristics, and citizen views ascertained from various citizen participation measures (see Chapter VIII below), staff believes that bikeways currently and will continue to receive much more usage than the equestrian/hiking trails. Therefore, while it appears reasonable to continue maintaining both trail/route networks, future enhancement/expansion efforts should focus on the bikeway system. The extent to which bikeway improvements are warranted is an issue that

requires further study. In other words, as indicated in the program section, on an ongoing basis, Covina officials will consider resident demands in developing any proposals in this area. It is important to point out, however, that the City views dealing with the previously discussed deficiencies in total open space acreage and in the inadequate or incomplete features of many parks as the highest recreational priority.

3) Linkages to State trails network

When discussing trails in the General Plan, under law, the City is also required to “consider the feasibility of integrating its trail routes with appropriate segments of the State system.” In preparing this Element, the City spoke to officials from the State Department of Parks and Recreation and reviewed the most current California Recreational Trails Plan. There are no portions of the statewide network (which covers hiking, equestrian, bicycling, boating, and off-highway trails/routes) that run in or within many miles of Covina. Therefore, this matter is moot. (As discussed earlier, however, the northerly, Federal-managed Angeles National Forest has many trails and is indirectly linked to Covina via bikeways and equestrian/hiking routes. But the exact recreational benefit conferred to local residents by this obtuse connection is difficult to quantify.) The City will monitor for any changes in the State Trails Plan relating to Covina.

C. Listing of Key Existing Open Space Issues

This area of discussion lists the key Covina open space issues, which are based on the facts and information presented in the previous section, related, salient material, and community input (see Chapter VII for clarification). As stated in the section on natural resources, issues are important because they clarify key open space matters warranting attention and because, along with a detailed identification and discussion of open space resources themselves (the preceding section and Technical Appendix), issues form the basis for below-listed goals and policies and programs/implementation measures. Refer to the previous section, to the accompanying Technical Appendix, and to the Covina Park System Master Plan for clarification on these issues and for underlying data and information. (In addition, see the Land Use Element and Land Use Study for an expanded discussion on matters relating to land use.)

The open space issues are listed below in no particular order. It should be noted that the issues are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

1. Preserving and protecting all parks, ball fields, and schools to maintain recreational opportunities.
2. Maintaining joint-use agreements with school districts to provide Covina residents with open space lands that supplement the City’s park system.
3. Preserving and protecting unimproved segments of two flood control channels and concomitant riparian communities for recreational, ecological, aesthetic, and other reasons.
4. Preserving and protecting various improved flood control channels for functional, potential recreational, and other reasons.
5. Recognizing that the City has an open space deficiency and attempting to resolve the problem by acquiring and developing additional parkland, whenever feasible.
6. Attempting to locate new parks where most needed, such as in the western and eastern portions of the community or in neighborhoods with multiple-family housing.
7. Considering creative approaches to parkland acquisition, such as through developing mini-parks and small neighborhood parks, converting previously utilized properties, and obtaining additional joint-use agreements with school districts.

8. Continuing efforts to enhance existing parks and recreational facilities to improve overall park use, safety, and appearance.
9. Placing a higher priority on park enhancement and rehabilitation than on park development, in general.
10. Considering the Covina Park System Master Plan as a framework for addressing and resolving various park-related deficiencies.
11. Paying particular attention to the recreational needs of the City's less mobile segments, such as young people and senior citizens.
12. Monitoring demographic, socio-economic, and other trends in Covina to detect any needed changes to City recreational strategies or programs.
13. Offering sufficient, cost-effective programs and services to address local needs and interests.
14. Providing for the adequate, efficient use of park and recreational facilities and resources.
15. Handling and maintaining the City's limited networks of bicycle ways and equestrian/hiking trails.
16. Using the City's park classification system as the appropriate tool for categorizing and enhancing the City's park system.
17. Considering various factors in the design of new or remodeling/enhancement of existing recreational facilities, including attractiveness, functionality, accessibility, durability of materials, appropriateness and water efficiency of landscaping, potential negative impacts on adjacent properties, and, in particular, public safety.
18. Prioritizing needed park amenities and facility enhancements, focusing on the Covina Park System Master Plan and City Capital Improvement Program as bases for decision-making.
19. Considering to establish building setback standards along the unchanneled portions of the two unimproved flood control channels for environmental protection purposes.
20. Ensuring that changes to bicycle ways and equestrian/hiking trails meet the appropriate design and access requirements.
21. Providing adequate, cost-effective maintenance of park and recreational facilities and trails, utilizing as many resources as available, and regarding safety for park and trail users as a top priority.
22. Providing adequate handicap accessibility in new and enhanced parks and recreational facilities and regarding the retrofitting of existing facilities as a high priority.
23. Balancing the needs of various park users, including general recreation-seeking citizens and organized groups.
24. Following appropriate security measures, such as sufficient supervision, in the operation of parks and recreational facilities to discourage and combat, among other problems, graffiti and vandalism and regarding public safety in parks and recreational facilities as a high priority.
25. Continuing to require residential developments to contain minimum on-site open space in accordance with City standards to supplement public facilities.

26. Maintaining a land use plan and concomitant standards that best support and further City park and recreational efforts.
27. Balancing all park and recreational concerns with essential, ongoing economic development, commercial revitalization, housing preservation and accommodation, and community appearance and image enhancement efforts.
28. Committing to implement the parks and recreation component of the Element through following various documents, plans, and items and maintaining a viable inter-departmental approach.
29. Ensuring that funding mechanisms and sources for park and recreational facility development, enhancement, and maintenance are viable, cost-effective, and administratively and financially feasible as well as reflective of guidelines established in the Park System Master Plan.



PICTURE 4. JALAPA PARK, NEAR HOLT AVENUE AND THE SAN BERNARDINO FREEWAY. THIS SMALLER PARK SERVES RESIDENTS AND BUSINESSES IN THE SOUTHEASTERN PORTION OF THE COMMUNITY.



PICTURE 5. DIOS JAGUAR STATUE IN JALAPA PARK, NEAR HOLT AVENUE AND THE SAN BERNARDINO FREEWAY. THE STATUE, WHICH WAS A GIFT TO COVINA BY ITS SISTER CITY, XALAPA, MEXICO, IS ONE OF A FEW CULTURAL RESOURCES LOCATED IN THE COMMUNITY'S PARKS.

IV. GOALS AND POLICIES

A. General

As stated in the Introduction above, the goals and policies of this General Plan chapter are important because, along with the below-presented implementation measures, they serve as the chief tools with respect to local decisions and actions in evaluating natural resource matters, open space land issues and proposals, private developments, and public projects. The goals and policies, again as previously indicated, are based on the community's key natural resource- and open space-related conditions and issues (described in, respectively, Chapters II and III above), which were both identified by City staff and ascertained through public comment. In theory, then, the goals and policies presented here (and accompanying implementation measures) bridge the gap between where the community is and what type of city it wishes to become. As was the case with the discussion of conditions and issues, the natural resource and open space goals and policies are presented below in separate sections, a format that the City believes is most appropriate. However, in recognition of the interrelatedness of the two areas, several policies overlap.

A goal is defined as a general expression of an ideal future condition or state toward which the community wishes to advance. A policy, on the other hand, is a statement that most directly guides decision-making and actions. In order for policies to be meaningful and useful, they must be clear and unambiguous, a guideline that this Element has followed. Policies should also indicate clear local government commitment. Therefore, all below policies are listed within the context of "The City shall . . ." and are worded in plain English.

B. Goal and Policies - Natural Resources

In applying the two terms to natural resources, one goal and several policies are utilized. All policies are listed within a framework relative to three topical areas. The City believes that this organization is most logical and best suited for preserving identified natural resources. The goal is:

A setting in which a high environmental quality is achieved through the bona fide conservation and protection of existing natural resources.

The remainder of this section is devoted to the policies. For each topical area, policies are listed in no particular order. The three topical areas are:

1. Water resources and air quality
2. Vegetation and wildlife
3. General matters

The topical areas are not entirely mutually exclusive, and, therefore, some policies from different groupings are similar. Also, the goal and policies are applied on a citywide basis, unless expressly stated otherwise.

1. Policy Area 1

Water Resources and Air Quality

The City shall:

- a. Support the efforts at all levels of government to monitor and regulate water quality and conditions, ensuring that all applicable standards are met.

- b. Support the efforts at and various codes and standards of all levels of government to protect ground water resources from depletion and sources of pollution, such as soil-leaching hazardous materials.
- c. Support Federal, State, and regional efforts to remedy existing ground water pollution problems.
- d. Continue local efforts to handle ground water contamination problems, including, but not limited to, shutting down or reconstructing water wells and appropriately treating water from operating wells to meet all applicable water quality standards.
- e. Ensure that existing flood control system-related ground water recharge areas or spreading grounds (Ben Lomond at the southwest corner of Arrow Highway and Barranca Avenue and Walnut Wash at the easterly terminus of Workman Avenue) are preserved and protected via land use regulations (except where the entire facility or a portion thereof is determined by appropriate analysis to be no longer needed) and, when utilized, guarded against illegal discharge into surface waters (that feed ground water basins).
- f. Preserve and protect in their natural conditions, through appropriate land use controls, development standards, and any other reasonable measures, the unimproved segments of two flood control channels running through Covina (Charter Oak Wash in Wingate Park and Walnut Creek in the Covina Hills/southeastern area) and concomitant elements, such as soil conditions, as important functional, ecological, biological, aesthetic, and passive open space resources.
- g. Minimize the alteration of drainage patterns in Covina Hills to preserve the stream flow in and immediately abutting the unimproved section of Walnut Creek.
- h. Handle the problem of soil erosion occurring along the banks of the unimproved portion of Walnut Creek and elsewhere.
- i. Ensure the adequacy of water supplies to meet all existing and future demands and applications, particularly public safety.
- j. Where necessary, work with other water providers serving Covina residents and businesses to ensure sufficient service and to communicate important issues and needs.
- k. Ensure adequate water pressure for all uses and purposes.
- l. Follow the Covina Water Conservation Ordinance, when necessary, and provide conservation kits and general information to best promote water conservation.
- m. Follow the City's Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance for the sites of new and significantly expanded/remodeled developments as a viable conservation tool.
- n. Encourage the incorporation of water conservation features in the design of all new and significantly expanded/remodeled developments and in the installation of conservation devices in existing developments, including, but not limited to, low-flow toilets and shower registers.
- o. Comply with applicable portions of Federal, State, regional, and County plans and programs pertaining to air pollution mitigation/air quality enhancement by following, in a manner that recognizes local needs, issues, views, and policy and financial constraints, various vehicular emissions-reducing and traffic congestion-reducing land use and transportation control and energy conservation measures, proposals, and policies outlined in the Land Use and Circulation Elements, to the greatest extent feasible and practical.
- p. Encourage and support the use of mass transit, whenever possible, and work with transit operators to provide the best, most efficient service for local residents and businesses to reduce vehicular travel and air pollution.



PICTURE 6. COVINA HILLS AREA, LOOKING WEST FROM REEDER AVENUE, SOUTH OF BADILLO STREET. NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT POLICY GENERALLY CALLS FOR LIMITING DEVELOPMENT TO VERY LOW INTENSITY RESIDENTIAL USES AND MINIMIZING GRADING TO PRESERVE TOPOGRAPHIC, AESTHETIC, AND BIOLOGICAL CONDITIONS.



PICTURE 7. TYPICAL STRETCH OF WALNUT CREEK MEANDERING THROUGH COVINA HILLS. THE GENERAL PLAN STRONGLY ENCOURAGES THE PRESERVATION AND PROTECTION OF THE UNIMPROVED SEGMENT OF WALNUT CREEK AS AN IMPORTANT FUNCTIONAL, ECOLOGICAL, BIOLOGICAL, AESTHETIC, AND PASSIVE OPEN SPACE RESOURCE.



PICTURE 8. OAK TREE IN FRONT YARD OF RESIDENCE. IN RECOGNITION OF THE STATEWIDE ECOLOGICAL AND AESTHETIC VALUE OF THIS NATURAL FEATURE, THE GENERAL PLAN SUPPORTS THE CONTINUED PROTECTION OF OAK TREES, PRIMARILY THROUGH ADHERENCE TO AN APPLICABLE ORDINANCE.



PICTURE 9. COVINA WELL SITE, ON GRAND AVENUE NEAR CYPRESS STREET. WATER EMANATING FROM UNDERGROUND SOURCES, WHICH IS USED FOR ALL PURPOSES IN THE COMMUNITY, WILL CONTINUE TO BE TREATED AND MONITORED TO ENSURE THAT WATER QUALITY STANDARDS ARE MET.

- q. Encourage the continuation of and improvement of local transportation programs.
- r. Encourage bikeways, where feasible, to provide an alternative mode of transportation.
- s. Separate sensitive areas and uses (e.g., parks, schools, child care centers, and nursing homes) from significant sources of air pollution, to the greatest extent possible.
- t. Preclude the development of land uses and land use practices that would contribute significantly to air quality degradation.
- u. Encourage and, where necessary, require the incorporation of energy conservation features in the design of all new and significantly expanded/remodeled private and public developments and encourage the installation of conservation devices in existing developments to increase energy efficiency and decrease pollution emissions from off-site electrical power plants and on-site natural gas use.
- v. Maintain all recycling programs to encourage the reuse of recyclable materials.

2. Policy Area 2

Vegetation and Wildlife

The City shall:

- a. Continue to enforce the Covina Oak Tree Ordinance as a means of protecting oak tree resources, particularly the coast live oak woodland community in the Covina Hills area, except where infeasible.
- b. Retain existing trees, such as oak woodlands, in their natural setting or incorporate into planned landscaping, to the greatest extent feasible.
- c. In new construction or redevelopment proposals, preserve existing mature trees, whenever feasible, particularly those located within forty feet of any public right-of-way or within any existing or proposed parking lot.
- d. Preserve and protect, through appropriate land use controls, development standards, and any other reasonable measures, the ecologically, biologically, and aesthetically important riparian woodland communities in and abutting the unimproved segments of the Charter Oak Wash and Walnut Creek.
- e. Designate all Covina parks and recreational facilities and unimproved flood control channels and concomitant riparian woodland communities as open space because of their ecological and biological importance and, to the greatest extent possible, restrict adjacent land uses to ensure compatibility thereon.
- f. Follow appropriate measures to handle and/or protect any officially recognized sensitive plant, animal, or other species that may be identified in the City.
- g. Require that new and significantly expanded/remodeled private, quasi-public, and public developments, including parking lots, incorporate adequate landscaping, in accordance with City Zoning, Design Guidelines, and general landscape installation provisions, for both aesthetic and ecological reasons.
- h. Provide for landscape improvements to the City's sidewalks, streets, civic properties, and related public spaces and facilities, in accordance with all applicable standards and provisions, for aesthetic and ecological reasons, to the greatest extent possible.
- i. Provide for needed landscape improvements to the City's parks and recreational facilities, as described in the Covina Park System Master Plan and other sources, in accordance with all applicable standards and provisions, for aesthetic and ecological reasons, to the greatest extent possible.

- j. Encourage the preservation of existing mature street and other public trees in conjunction with all public works projects, except where infeasible and/or unsafe.
- k. Require the reasonable upkeep and maintenance of landscaping in all private and quasi-public properties, in accordance with all applicable City standards and guidelines.
- l. Require that the owners of residential, commercial, industrial, institutional, and other properties maintain all landscaping in City right-of-way areas.
- m. Preserve and maintain the quality and health of existing landscaping in public areas, to the greatest extent possible, and, when necessary, replace landscaping that is unhealthy or dead, ensuring that such actions are in accordance with applicable City plans, standards, and policies.
- n. Encourage the administrators of schools and other large public, landscaping-rich sites to preserve and maintain and, where greatly needed, improve their landscaping resources.

3. Policy Area 3

General Matters

The City shall:

- a. Limit development in the Covina Hills area to large-lot, low density residential uses (except for suitable commercial activities in appropriate sections, such as the Village Oaks Office Park) to prevent the obstruction of natural runoff courses and the scarring of hillsides as well as to maintain the natural appearance of the district.
- b. Minimize hillside grading in Covina Hills to preserve existing topography and to permit major grading only where the physical appearance of a site is enhanced.
- c. Endeavor to monitor future ecological conditions, discoveries, and local policy changes and, when necessary, make appropriate General Plan amendments.
- d. Balance the City's obligation to preserve, protect, and maintain natural resources with Covina's need to accommodate moderate growth and to continue with ongoing communitywide economic development, commercial revitalization, public improvement enhancement, residential construction, neighborhood preservation, code enforcement, and housing activities/programs.
- e. Best implement the natural resources component of this Element through the Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines, Capital Improvement Program, Subdivision Ordinance, Park System Master Plan, Building and Safety provisions, and any related Covina Municipal Code sections, City policies, plans, or proposals or through other matters.
- f. Observe the requirements imposed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when reviewing any public or private proposals, including, but not limited to, infrastructure alteration or the development, redevelopment, modification, or expansion/remodeling of properties, particularly those in or abutting natural resource areas, to address all applicable potential impacts, including, but not limited to, land use, circulation, noise, and aesthetics.
- g. Appropriately monitor and, under State law, annually report to the Planning Commission and City Council on progress in General Plan implementation to ensure the viability, effectiveness, and coordination of all adopted goals, objectives (if applicable), policies, and natural resource, parks and recreation, circulation, land use, and other plan components.

- h. Attempt to work with other City departments/divisions to best approach and handle various natural resource-related proposals, issues, and problems.
- i. Endeavor to promote the importance of the General Plan and its implementation to the public, businesses, developers, Covina employees, and other interested parties through appropriate channels.
- j. Implement the natural resources component of this Element in a manner consistent with the desired implementation/administration of all other General Plan Elements, as presented in those chapters, as well as applicable City and Redevelopment Agency plans and community goals.
- k. Maintain departments/divisions to carry out the Natural Resources and Open Space Element's various natural resource-related responsibilities and obligations.

C. Goal and Policies - Open Space Lands

As was the case with the above section on natural resources, one goal and several policies are utilized for this area, and the policies are listed within a framework relative to seven topical areas. The City believes that an organization of this type is most logical and appropriate for addressing open space and park conditions and issues. The goal is:

A complete, well-balanced, and functional system of parks, open space facilities, and trails and appurtenant thorough, viable programs and services that meet the diverse active and passive recreational needs of current and future Covina residents.

The remainder of this section is devoted to the policies. For each topical area, policies are listed in no particular order. The seven topical areas are:

- 1. Retention, development, and enhancement of park and recreational facilities
- 2. Recreational programs
- 3. Trail facilities
- 4. Design and landscaping of parks, trails, and recreational facilities
- 5. Maintenance of parks, trails, and recreational facilities
- 6. Safety, accessibility, security, and miscellaneous matters
- 7. Funding

The topical areas are not entirely mutually exclusive, and, therefore, certain policies from different groupings are similar. Also, the goal and policies are applied on a citywide basis, unless expressly stated otherwise.

1. Policy Area 1

Retention, Development, and Enhancement of Park and Recreational Facilities

The City shall:

- a. Preserve all existing local parks, ball fields, and schools through appropriate General Plan and Zoning designations and any other reasonable measures to best maintain recreational opportunities as well as community appearance and image.
- b. To the greatest degree possible, encourage land uses adjacent to parks and recreational facilities to consist of residential, school, institutional, and/or other appropriate, compatible categories to prevent unreasonable encroachments thereon.
- c. Maintain joint-use agreements with school districts to provide Covina residents with open space lands that supplement the City's park system and attempt to ensure, to the greatest degree possible, that such agreements afford local residents with maximum accessibility to school campus facilities.
- d. Preserve and protect in their natural conditions the unimproved segments of the Charter Oak Wash (running through Wingate Park) and Walnut Creek (which passes through the Covina Hills area) by way of appropriate General Plan and Zoning designations and standards and any other reasonable measures as important functional, ecological, aesthetic, and passive open space resources.
- e. To the greatest degree possible, encourage land uses adjacent to the unchanneled portions of Walnut Creek and Charter Oak Washes to consist of low density residential, park/open space, or other appropriate, compatible categories to prevent unreasonable encroachments thereon.
- f. Preserve and protect the various improved flood control channels through appropriate General Plan and Zoning designations and standards and any other reasonable measures (excluding minor, excess portions thereof that are being sold off to owners of abutting residential and other properties).
- g. Encourage optimum usage of available green space and recreational facilities.
- h. Endeavor to provide for its citizens a total park acreage equal to 2.0 acres for every 1,000 population at the time of General Plan buildout.
- i. Whenever possible and feasible, attempt to acquire and improve land for park and recreational uses.
- j. Consider to emphasize locating new parklands in the western and eastern portions of the community, in neighborhoods in and around apartments and condominiums/townhomes, and in other areas that are markedly deficient in open space.
- k. Consider creative, practical approaches to acquiring additional open space acreage, including, but not limited to, developing mini-parks, small neighborhood parks, and specialty parks and, through additional lease agreements or outright purchases, consider opportunities to convert previously developed properties, such as closed school campuses, vacant churches or other institutional facilities, utility company lands, vacant residential lots (where housing is no longer viable), public rights-of-way, and, if feasible and/or not in conflict with other City proposals, areas in and/or around the flood control spreading grounds, to recreational functions.
- l. When deliberating upon opportunities to enter into lease agreements for additional properties to augment the City park system, address salient factors including, but not limited to, quantity of land, variety of available recreational facilities, terms of leases, operation, and maintenance.
- m. Study future school campus closures from the standpoint of the degree of loss of open space lands on the community as well as the potential for City park system expansion.



PICTURE 10. COVINA PARK, BETWEEN BADILLO STREET AND SAN BERNARDINO ROAD IN WESTERN PORTION OF DOWNTOWN. AS THE CITY'S OLDEST AND MOST HEAVILY USED PARK, CONTINUED MAINTENANCE OF AND ATTENTION TO THIS FACILITY, AS STATED IN THE GENERAL PLAN, IS ESSENTIAL.



PICTURE 11. WINGATE PARK, ON GLENDORA AVENUE NEAR CYPRESS STREET. THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT PROMOTES PARK AMENITY IMPROVEMENT, AS RECENTLY OCCURRED IN THIS FACILITY (E.G., NEW ROLLER HOCKEY RINK).



PICTURE 12. HEYLER FIELD AT ROYAL OAK INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL CAMPUS, ON BADILLO STREET NEAR GLENDORA AVENUE. THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT ENCOURAGES KEEPING AGREEMENTS WITH PUBLIC SCHOOL DISTRICTS THAT PROVIDE THE CITY WITH DIRECT ACCESS TO BALL FIELDS THAT SUPPLEMENT COVINA'S PARK SYSTEM.



PICTURE 13. THREE OAK PARK IN VILLAGE OAKS OFFICE PARK, NEAR HOLT AVENUE AND THE SAN BERNARDINO FREEWAY. SMALL OR MINI-PARKS SUCH AS THIS FACILITY ARE VIEWED UNDER THE GENERAL PLAN AS WELCOME STRATEGIES FOR INCREASING THE OVERALL AMOUNT OF OPEN SPACE LAND IN THE COMMUNITY.

- n. Explore alternative facilities that may be able to serve recreational functions, such as utility rights-of-way or easements.
- o. Continue to upgrade, enhance, redesign, and/or replace existing parks and recreational areas and appurtenant facilities and amenities to improve overall park use, safety, and/or appearance as well as to maintain community image and vitality, whenever possible.
- p. When necessary and feasible, completely or partially re-site or reconfigure park facilities, where elements can be readily moved, to promote a more efficient use of parklands.
- q. Generally regard the rehabilitation, renovation, or enhancement of existing parks and facilities as taking precedence over the establishment of new parks and facilities.
- r. Regard improving and expanding the City's park system as a higher priority than enhancing the (policy area 3 discussed) bicycle ways and equestrian/hiking trails.
- s. Consider the Covina Park System Master Plan as a viable framework for identifying, addressing, and resolving needed improvements to specific parks, pertaining to matters including, but not limited to, parking and walkways, picnic facilities, benches, playgrounds, and ball fields as well as major systemwide deficiencies in capital facilities, such as the lack of a major youth center and a gymnasium.
- t. Implement the City's Park System Master Plan to the greatest extent feasible to best and most systematically improve Covina parks and recreational facilities.
- u. Approach park or recreational facility acquisition/development or enhancement proposals from the standpoint of addressing both neighborhood and citywide needs, to the greatest extent feasible.
- v. Provide active and passive park and recreational facilities and programs to serve the needs of as many population segments as possible.
- w. Pay particular attention to the open space and recreational needs of the generally less mobile segments of the City's population, including, but not limited to, young people, senior citizens, disabled persons, single-parent households, and lower income families.
- x. Monitor Covina population, demographic, socio-economic, and housing trends as well as citizen views to ascertain any changes in open space and recreational needs and, as necessary, modify policies, strategies, and programs.
- y. Coordinate Covina open space development and improvement and programs with regional open space facilities, whenever possible, to maximize local recreational opportunities.
- z. Support inter-jurisdictional agreements and cooperation with neighboring governmental agencies pertaining to park or recreational facility development or improvement within and around the City, when feasible and beneficial to Covina.

2. Policy Area 2

Recreational Programs

The City shall:

- a. Continue to offer quality and diverse park/recreational programs, activities, and services to address local needs and interests and to best maintain community image and vitality.
- b. Provide for the adequate, efficient, and cost effective use of facilities, resources, and staff in delivering park/recreational programs and services.
- c. Where feasible, encourage the development of recreational programs by non-City public or private sports organizations to involve more children and adults, using, whenever possible, volunteers to operate and maintain programs.
- d. Continue ongoing needs assessment and evaluation of demands for recreational programs and activities and modify programs, provided that adequate funding is available.
- e. Endeavor to notify Covina residents of the types of available recreational facilities and programs and to encourage resident participation therein.

3. Policy Area 3

Trail Facilities

The City shall:

- a. Continue to support, encourage the utilization of, and, where deemed reasonable by appropriate analyses or studies, expand and improve the City's limited network of bicycle ways for recreational as well as functional purposes to link local and regional recreational areas and other major points of interest.
- b. Support County efforts to preserve, provide for, and, where appropriate, expand and improve local- and regional-oriented equestrian/hiking trails and reasonable linkages thereto that run through southeastern Covina, notably the Peter F. Scharabum or Walnut Creek Trail that generally abuts Walnut Creek, for both recreational and leisure activities.
- c. Because of their greater usage and simpler development, regard improving and expanding the network of bicycle ways as a higher priority than enhancing the equestrian/hiking trails.
- d. Consider using the improved flood control channels for active recreational purposes, such as trails or exercise courses, if feasible.
- e. Monitor the trail plans of the State and County for any changes relating to linkages to Covina trails or recreational facilities.
- f. Consider to coordinate bikeway improvements and enhancements with adjoining jurisdictions.
- g. Provide commercial and major employment areas that are conducive to bicycle and pedestrian circulation, to the greatest extent feasible.



PICTURE 14. JOSLYN SENIOR CENTER AT KELBY PARK, ON BARRANCA AVENUE NEAR CYPRESS STREET. THE JOSLYN CENTER—AND OTHER COMMUNITY GATHERING FACILITIES IN PARKS—PROVIDE ESSENTIAL SERVICES TO RESIDENTS OF COVINA.



PICTURE 15. WALNUT CREEK TRAIL, VIEWED FROM NEAR COVINA HILLS ROAD. GENERAL PLAN POLICY CALLS FOR CURRENT AND FUTURE SUPPORT OF THIS LOS ANGELES COUNTY MANAGED FACILITY, WHICH RUNS ALONG BOTH IMPROVED AND UNIMPROVED SECTIONS OF THE CREEK AND SERVES EQUESTRIAN AND GENERAL HIKING PURPOSES.



PICTURE 16. COVINA BIKEWAY. THE GENERAL PLAN PROPOSES TO MAINTAIN AND, WHERE FEASIBLE, IMPROVE THE COMMUNITY'S LIMITED NETWORK OF BIKE ROUTES AND BIKE LANES FOR TRANSPORTATION, RECREATION, AND OTHER PURPOSES.



PICTURE 17. PARK MAINTENANCE ACTIVITY IN COVINA PARK. THE NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT SUPPORTS ADEQUATE MAINTENANCE OF ALL RECREATIONAL FACILITIES SO THAT PARKS CAN BEST AND MOST SAFELY SERVE COVINA RESIDENTS.

4. Policy Area 4

Design and Landscaping of Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities

The City shall:

- a. Follow the park classification system listed in Table 1 of this Element in categorizing, preserving, expanding, and enhancing the City's park system.
- b. In developing new or enhancing existing parks and recreational facilities, to the greatest extent possible, ensure that all buildings, amenities, open air facilities, and landscaping are unified, functionally related to improve efficiency, architecturally coordinated, and consistent with all applicable City and other standards as well as provide a high level of public safety to maintain and bolster the park system's overall purposes.
- c. Design parks and recreational facilities such that appurtenant buildings, outdoor amenities, people-gathering areas, lighting, parking lots, and other elements do not adversely affect adjacent uses, to the greatest degree possible.
- d. Follow appropriate security measures in future park development and enhancement, including, but not limited to, adequate lighting, sufficient walkways, and safety-based site design principles, to discourage and combat graffiti, vandalism, and illicit activities.
- e. Follow the restroom facility standards listed in the Covina Park System Master Plan and ensure that new or remodeled restrooms are reasonably accessible to park patrons, located in safe, highly visible areas, and constructed of the most durable and vandal-resistant materials.
- f. Encourage variety in the design of park facilities to enhance the lifestyle of residents to be served.
- g. Prioritize the aesthetic aspects of facility development or enhancement on a park-by-park basis and, to the greatest extent feasible, attempt to achieve complementary color schemes in each facility.
- h. Ensure that new landscape and irrigation systems in City recreational facilities comply with the Covina Water-Efficient Landscaping Ordinance and any related measures, as applicable.
- i. Install new or replace existing landscaping, where severely deteriorating, inappropriately located for park activities, and/or incompatible with other facility landscape materials.
- j. Follow the park signage guidelines of the Covina Park System Master Plan.
- k. Observe the requirements imposed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when undertaking the development or acquisition of new and the improvement or redevelopment of existing parks and open space lands to address all applicable potential impacts, such as land use, circulation, noise, and aesthetics.
- l. Consider to require minimum building setback standards along the unchanneled portions of Walnut Creek and Charter Oak Wash to maintain the riparian habitat, natural contours, and full functionalism of the stream channels.
- m. Attempt to preserve the stream flow in the riparian woodland communities of the unchanneled portions of Walnut Creek and Charter Oak Wash by minimizing alteration of their drainage patterns.
- n. Ensure that all new and modified bicycle ways, equestrian/hiking trails, and related facilities plus appurtenant amenities and entry points conform to all applicable design and access requirements and standards.

- o. Seek the maximum community input feasible in locating, conceptualizing, and designing new and enhanced park and recreational facilities.

5. Policy Area 5

Maintenance of Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities

The City shall:

- a. Continue providing for adequate maintenance of the physical condition, operation, cleanliness, and appearance of all parks and recreational facilities and appurtenant amenities, following reasonable, applicable procedures and standards.
- b. Provide for the maintenance of parks and recreational facilities by tapping all available revenue sources and, to the greatest degree possible, through utilizing a combination of City staff, contract maintenance, user groups, and volunteers.
- c. Consider the inclusion of low-maintenance facilities in the development or acquisition of new and improvement or redevelopment of existing parks or recreational facilities.
- d. Prioritize maintenance such that safety of park/recreational facility users is a top priority, when necessary.
- e. Support Los Angeles County efforts to maintain County parks and recreational facilities used by Covina residents.
- f. Continue to maintain the City's network of bicycle ways and, if appropriate, provide upkeep of such ways in a fashion similar to the maintenance of general parks and recreational facilities.
- g. Support County efforts to maintain equestrian/hiking trails and linkages thereto that run through southeastern Covina.

6. Policy Area 6

Safety, Accessibility, Security, and Miscellaneous Matters

The City shall:

- a. Ensure that new playgrounds in City parks comply with applicable Federal and State safety standards.
- b. Regard the retrofitting of existing playgrounds for safety reasons as a high priority.
- c. Maintain the highest degree of safety to the users of parks and recreational facilities within operating budget constraints.
- d. Ensure that the City complies with applicable Federal and State pesticide application requirements.
- e. Ensure that new and modified trail facilities conform to all applicable safety standards.
- f. Ensure that new construction in City parks, ball fields, and recreational facilities complies with applicable Federal and State handicap accessibility standards.

- g. Regard the retrofitting of existing outdoor parks and recreational facilities for handicap accessibility as a high priority.
- h. Consider the needs of persons dependent upon public transportation in matters and in potential changes relating to park accessibility.
- i. Balance the needs of groups and appurtenant clientele that use parks on an organized, consistent basis for various purposes with the open space demands of typical recreation-seeking citizens and reconcile the actual or potential incursion-related concerns of park neighbors.
- j. Maintain and annually update the City's policy guides pertaining to the rental of indoor and outdoor facilities by private entities.
- k. Follow the guidelines of and address the matters listed in the Covina Park System Master Plan relating to park use agreements between the City and various organizations, such as little leagues.
- l. Follow appropriate security measures, including, but not limited to, sufficient park supervision, regular police patrols, and the formation of park/neighborhood watch programs, to the greatest extent practical, to discourage and combat graffiti, vandalism, and illicit activities.
- m. Regard public safety in Covina parks and recreational facilities as a high priority.
- n. Support Los Angeles County efforts to follow appropriate security measures at County parks and recreational facilities used by Covina residents.
- o. Encourage, to the greatest extent feasible, cost-effective recycling programs pertaining to both the disposal of green waste and refuse generated by park users.
- p. Continue to require new and significantly enlarged or remodeled single-family detached residences plus apartment, condominium/townhouse, and, if appropriate, mixed use projects to provide sufficient, on-site open space and, if appropriate, recreational amenities, in accordance with City Zoning and Design Guidelines provisions, to accommodate residents and to supplement public facilities.
- q. Continue to require sufficient building setbacks and/or, if appropriate, open space facilities in new and significantly enlarged or remodeled commercial, industrial, institutional, and other nonresidential proposals, in accordance with City Zoning and Design Guidelines provisions, for visual relief and, if applicable, to supplement public facilities.
- r. Encourage small parks or plazas to be included within or adjacent to the development of major commercial or other centers, if appropriate.
- s. Balance the City's obligation to provide local residents and workers with adequate park and recreational opportunities with Covina's need to accommodate moderate growth and to continue with ongoing communitywide economic development, commercial revitalization, public improvement enhancement, residential construction, neighborhood preservation, code enforcement, and housing activities/programs.
- t. Consider to preserve any areas, facilities, or buildings determined to be of outstanding scenic, historic, or cultural value.
- u. If necessary, as determined by appropriate study or analysis, designate potential hazard areas as open space.
- v. If necessary, as determined by appropriate study or analysis, designate areas with scenic views as open space.

- w. Endeavor to monitor future ecological conditions, discoveries, and local policy changes and, when necessary, make appropriate General Plan amendments.
- x. Encourage City participation with neighboring government agencies in maximizing local and regional open space and recreational opportunities.
- y. Best implement the parks and recreation component of this Element through the Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines, Park System Master Plan, Capital Improvement Program, Subdivision Ordinance, Parks and Recreation Department and Building and Safety Division provisions, and any related Covina Municipal Code sections, City policies, plans, or proposals or through other matters.
- z. Observe the requirements imposed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) when reviewing any public or private proposals, including, but not limited to, infrastructure alterations or the development, redevelopment, modification, or expansion/remodeling of properties, to address all applicable potential impacts on open space lands, including, but not limited to, land use, circulation, noise, and aesthetics.
- aa. Appropriately monitor and, under State law, annually report to the Planning Commission and City Council on progress in General Plan implementation to ensure the viability, effectiveness, and coordination of all adopted goals, objectives (if applicable), policies, and parks and recreation, natural resource, circulation, land use, and other plan components.
- bb. Attempt to work with other City departments/divisions to best approach and handle various parks and recreation-related proposals, issues, and problems.
- cc. Endeavor to promote the importance of the General Plan and its implementation to the public, businesses, developers, Covina employees, and other interested parties through appropriate channels.
- dd. Implement the parks and recreation component of this Element in a manner consistent with the desired implementation/administration of all other General Plan Elements, as presented in those chapters, and applicable City and Redevelopment Agency plans and community goals.
- ee. Maintain departments/divisions to carry out the Natural Resources and Open Space Element's various parks- and recreation-related responsibilities and obligations.

7. Policy Area 7

Funding

The City shall:

- a. Prioritize and systematically schedule on a long-term basis needed improvements to the Covina park system, using as a basis for decision-making and actions Covina's Park System Master Plan, the City Capital Improvement Program, and any other appropriate documents as well as community sentiment/desires and City Council policy orientations.
- b. Fund future park acquisition/development and enhancements through viable and cost-effective sources, mechanisms, and methods, using as a guide the City Park System Master Plan.
- c. In expanding and enhancing its network of open space lands, strike a reasonable balance between costs versus benefits.

- d. Fund ongoing park maintenance with sources, mechanisms, and methods that are viable, administratively and financially feasible, recurring, and stable.
- e. Consider all available sources of financing for parkland acquisition, development, enhancement, and maintenance.
- f. Continue to require applicable property owners to join the City Landscaping Assessment District for financing certain public landscaping and appurtenant maintenance costs.
- g. Consider to establish an official parkland acquisition program, possibly funded through developer-sponsored impact fees or resident-imposed special property assessments, as a vehicle for meeting current and future park and recreational needs, if appropriate.
- h. Consider to establish a formal mechanism by which the City may accept gifts and dedications of parks and open space, if appropriate.
- i. Consider the use of eminent domain to acquire additional parkland, where the need for parks/recreational facilities is particularly great, if appropriate.
- j. Support inter-jurisdictional agreements and cooperation with neighboring government agencies pertaining to park or recreational facility maintenance, repair, and/or enhancement within and around the City, when feasible and beneficial to Covina.

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V. PROGRAMS/IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

Under State law, this Natural Resources and Open Space Element must contain programs/implementation measures. Programs supplement goals and policies and serve as a key implementation mechanism. In other words, as stated in the Introduction, programs ensure that the Element's goals and policies will reach fruition. For clarification on the goals and policies and how they have shaped the development of this section, refer to Chapter IV.

The Covina Natural Resources and Open Space Element programs/implementation measures are listed below. Some of the programs/measures are currently active, though many would commence upon Element adoption. Programs that are proposed are believed best suited and viable for the City.

For reasons of simplicity and clarity, the programs/measures are divided into three below-listed subject areas. The categorization generally follows that of the policies. Within each topical area, the programs are listed in no particular order. The three subject areas are:

- A. Natural Resources
- B. Open Space Lands
- C. Inter-Topic General Matters

A. NATURAL RESOURCES

1. Monitoring and Regulating Water Quality and Conditions

Water is one of Covina's key resources, and, therefore, its well-being is vital to the community. The City will support efforts at all government levels to ensure that each and every standard and code pertaining to drinking water and ground water resources are met.

2. Ground Water Pollution/Contamination Remediation and Abatement

As previously described in this Element, ground water pollution/contamination has been a problem in the area. The City will support efforts at all government levels to remedy and abate or handle ground water pollution, including local actions to shut down wells and properly treat extracted water as well as ensure that future problems are minimized to the greatest extent possible, such that water removed therefrom meets each and every applicable standard and code.

3. Water Service Provision

Covina will ensure sufficient water service and supplies for local residents and businesses as well as adequate water pressure, particularly for emergency purposes, and, where necessary, work with other water providers serving the City thereupon.

4. Water Conservation Measures

Water conservation is an important component of any natural resources process. The City will continue to follow its various conservation measures, including the Water Conservation Ordinance, when necessary, the Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance, in both private developments and public areas, the provision of water conservation kits and related, general information, and encouraging the incorporation of water as well as energy conservation features and devices in new buildings and existing structures.

5. Air Pollution Mitigation/Air Quality Enhancement Measures

The community will continue to follow in a reasonable manner various measures, proposals, and strategies outlined in the Land Use and Circulation Elements that comply with applicable portions of Federal, State, regional, and County plans and programs and aim to reduce vehicle emissions and traffic congestion as well as to provide alternative modes of transportation.

6. General Plan and Zoning Use Controls

The City will preserve and protect via General Plan and Zoning land use regulations (e.g., open space zoning designations) 1) flood control system-related ground water recharge areas or spreading grounds (except where the entire facility or a portion thereof is determined by appropriate analysis to be no longer needed); 2) the unimproved segments of two flood control channels (Charter Oak Wash and Walnut Creek) and concomitant ecologically and aesthetically important riparian woodland communities; 3) applicable portions of improved flood control channels; and 4) parks, ball fields, and related facilities.

7. General Plan, Zoning, and Design Guidelines Development Standards

Covina will preserve and protect the ecologically and aesthetically important riparian woodland communities in and abutting the unimproved segments of the Charter Oak Wash and Walnut Creek flood control channels through reasonable standards and provisions (e.g., minimum building setbacks, if appropriate) as well as follow appropriate measures thereof to limit development and hillside grading in the Covina Hills area for aesthetic, ecological, and drainage reasons.

8. Tree Conservation Measures

The City will continue to follow its Oak Tree Ordinance to protect oak tree resources, particularly the coast live oak woodland community in the Covina Hills area, will follow applicable portions of the Design Guidelines to preserve existing mature trees, whenever feasible, in private construction or redevelopment proposals, and will encourage the retention of existing full-grown trees in conjunction with public works projects.

9. Private and Quasi-Public Landscaping

For aesthetic and ecological reasons, Covina will continue to require that new and expanded or remodeled developments incorporate adequate landscaping, in accordance with Zoning, Design Guidelines, and general landscape installation provisions, and the City will continue to require the reasonable upkeep and maintenance of landscaping thereupon as well as in public rights-of-way, in accordance with all applicable standards.

10. Public Landscaping

For aesthetic and ecological reasons, the community will continue to provide for landscape improvements as well as upkeep and maintenance, to the greatest extent feasible, in City sidewalks, streets, parks and recreational facilities, and other public places, in accordance with all applicable provisions and standards.

11. Monitoring of Natural Resources Environment

The Planning Division will periodically monitor the natural resources environment to note any discoveries or changes in conditions arising from future private developments or public projects. Where necessary, appropriate action will be taken, such as following new General Plan policies and/or considering to incorporate additional implementation measures.

B. Open Space Lands

1. General Plan and Zoning Use Controls

As previously indicated in this Element, the City has a relatively limited amount of open space lands and therefore must preserve and protect through General Plan and Zoning regulations (e.g., open space zoning designations) existing parks, ball fields, and schools to maintain recreational opportunities and confer other benefits for the community.

2. School Campus Joint-Use Agreements

Covina presently leases certain recreational facilities from school districts, which provide local residents with important open space resources that supplement the City's park system. The community will maintain these joint-use agreements and, where feasible and beneficial to the community, will consider opportunities to enter into additional leases with public school entities and other organizations.

3. Park Acquisition and Development Efforts

The City will attempt to acquire and improve land for park and recreational uses, whenever possible and feasible, particularly in and around areas that are markedly deficient in open space, considering creative, practical approaches, such as mini-parks, small neighborhood parks, and specialty use facilities.

4. Park Improvement and Enhancement Efforts

Covina is in need of many park improvements. The City will continue to upgrade, enhance, and/or redesign parks and recreational facilities and appurtenant amenities to improve overall park use, safety, and/or appearance.

5. Park Classification System

The City of Covina classifies parks and recreational facilities according to size, service area, and amenities and will continue to use this hierarchy as a guide in categorizing, preserving, expanding, and enhancing the City's park system.

6. Covina Park System Master Plan

The community's Park System Master Plan contains an inventory and appraisal of existing recreational facilities and establishes standards and guidelines for the utilization, development, and improvement as well as maintenance of all open space lands. Covina will consider the Plan as a viable resource for acquiring and enhancing parks and developing major, needed resources on a prioritized, cost-effective basis. The Park Plan should be implemented to the greatest extent feasible.

7. Park and Recreational Facility Design

In developing new and improving existing parks and recreational facilities and appurtenant amenities, the City will follow all site design, building architecture, aesthetic, general and handicap accessibility, signage, public safety, and security standards, provisions, and guidelines of the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, Park Master Plan, and other applicable documents to maintain and bolster the park system's overall function.

8. Park and Recreational Facility Landscaping

The City will follow all landscape standards, provisions, and guidelines of the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, Park Master Plan, Water-Efficient Landscape Ordinance, and other applicable documents in installing new or replacing existing park or recreational facility landscaping.

9. Park System Needs Accommodation

In handling recreational matters, Covina will continue to pay close attention to the open space and recreational needs of the less mobile segments of the City's population, particularly young people, senior citizens, and lower income households, and will monitor various communitywide demographic, social, and economic trends and views to identify where changes in needs occur.

10. Recreational Programs

The City Parks and Recreation Department presently offers a variety of recreational programs and activities for persons of different ages, backgrounds, and needs. Covina will continue to offer quality, cost-effective recreational programs, activities, and services and, where necessary, enhance and change recreational activities to better satisfy the community.

11. General Security

Covina will continue to follow appropriate general security measures, such as sufficient park supervision and regular police patrols, as part of ongoing park operations, to discourage and combat graffiti, vandalism, and illicit activities.

12. Park Usage Agreements

The City Parks and Recreation Department presently oversees and will continue to administer various park usage agreements and policy guides thereof for different entities and organizations to ensure the coordinated and reasonable utilization of Covina's parks and recreational facilities.

13. Park and Recreational Facility Maintenance

The upkeep of parks is understandably important. Therefore, Covina will continue maintaining the physical condition, operation, cleanliness, and appearance of parks and recreational facilities and appurtenant amenities in an adequate, efficient, and cost-effective manner, reflective of all applicable procedures and standards and emphasizing the safety of park users.

14. Playground Retrofitting

The City will attempt to retrofit all existing playgrounds for safety reasons, to the greatest degree feasible, on an organized, systematic basis.

15. Accessibility for the Disabled

Covina will endeavor to retrofit existing parks and recreational facilities and appurtenant amenities for the disabled on an organized, systematic basis, and the community will pay attention to the needs of disabled persons pertaining to park facilities, amenities, and programs.

16. Supplemental Open Space Provision

The community maintains standards and provisions under the Zoning Ordinance and Design Guidelines that require all residential uses, notably apartment and condominium/townhouse complexes as well as certain

nonresidential developments to provide a minimum amount of open space, which fulfills general City health, safety, and vitality goals but also supplements public facilities. Covina will continue following and, where necessary, strengthening these provisions.

17. Park Development and Enhancement Funding

Using as a basis for decision-making and actions Covina's Park System Master Plan, the City Capital Improvement Program, and related, appropriate documents, the City will prioritize and systematically schedule on a long-term basis needed improvements to the Covina park system and ensure that park acquisition/development and enhancement funding sources are viable.

18. Park Maintenance Funding

The City will fund ongoing park maintenance with sources, mechanisms, and methods that are administratively and financially feasible, stable, and recurring.

19. Bicycle Ways

Covina will continue to support, encourage the utilization of, maintain, and, where reasonable, expand and improve its relatively limited network of bicycle ways, in accordance with all applicable design and accessibility requirements and standards. However, viable, sufficient funding must be secured.

20. Equestrian/Hiking Trails

The City has limited equestrian/hiking trails that are part of a regional system, and the community will support Los Angeles County efforts to preserve, maintain, and, where appropriate, expand and improve the facilities and linkages thereto, in accordance with citizen desires and all applicable design and accessibility requirements.

21. Monitoring of Open Space Resources

The Planning Division and, where appropriate, the Parks and Recreation Department, will periodically monitor parks and recreational matters to note any discoveries or changes warranting City response. Where necessary, proper action will be taken, such as following new General Plan policies and/or considering to incorporate additional implementation measures. Moreover, if appropriate, the City will designate as open space areas with scenic views or prone to potential hazards or buildings and/or sections of the community of high historic or cultural value.

C. Inter-Topic General Matters

1. Zoning Ordinance Revision to Achieve General Plan Consistency

As required by State planning law, the Zoning text and Map will be revised to conform to the new General Plan land use distribution, policy orientation, program framework, building intensity provisions and limits, and development standards to streamline and clarify key portions of the document and to incorporate applicable new State requirements, such as open space zoning.

2. Consistency Between General Plan and Other Plans/Documents

City departments and the Redevelopment Agency administer various plans and measures that directly or indirectly relate to Natural Resources and Open Space. Where necessary, the Planning Division will ensure consistency between the revised Natural Resources and Open Space Element and these other germane plans/documents, which include, but are not limited to, the Redevelopment Project Area Plans, the Park System Master Plan, the Subdivision Ordinance, and the Capital Improvement Program, to the greatest extent possible.

3. Site Plan Review Process

This part of the Zoning Ordinance constitutes the process by which private development applications and certain public proposals are reviewed and Zoning, Design Guidelines, and other City provisions are applied. Site Plan Review also serves as a mechanism for, among other things, determining General Plan/Zoning consistency, for routing projects to other City departments/divisions for study and comment, and for addressing overall City service and infrastructure accommodation issues and related matters. When reviewing applications, the City Planning Division may impose reasonable conditions to ensure General Plan, Zoning, Design Guidelines, and Park Master Plan conformance. This process shall continue.

4. Environmental Impact Review Process

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) requires, among other things, examination of environmental, biological, physical, and land use impacts as well as service provision when reviewing generally major use or development applications, general plan amendments, zone changes, and/or related matters. The analysis occurs during the Site Plan Review process. For applicable projects, typical areas of concern pertain to site geology and grading, proximity to any active earthquake faults, potential erosion, storm water runoff and/or flooding, species degradation, vehicular traffic, noise, and/or land use compatibility. The City will continue to follow all applicable CEQA provisions in its planning activities to ensure fruition of natural resource and open space goals and the furthering of applicable policies. Thus, in some cases, projects will have to be changed or mitigated.

5. Code Enforcement

In situations where Zoning-, Site Plan Review-, and/or Building and Safety-related Code requirements are not met, particularly when there is a major threat to public health, safety, and welfare, the City attempts to abate or at least mitigate the violation(s). Code violations range from greatly unkempt property to structural inadequacy to illegal discharges, which, if left unchecked, in the aggregate, not only could jeopardize individual health and safety but could diminish overall community image, appearance, character, social stability, and economic vitality, all of which directly or indirectly relate to subjects discussed in this Element. To ensure that all General Plan natural resource and open space goals and policies are furthered, the City will continue with its existing, and, where possible, expand, Code Enforcement and related matters. In general, Covina will attempt to abate first the most serious violations or those nuisances that constitute the greatest threat to public health, safety, and welfare.

6. Reconciling Natural Resource and Open Space Conservation

This Element is one chapter of a comprehensive General Plan that addresses various other topics, including land use, circulation, and housing. Under State law, all Elements must be consistent with one another in preparation and revision (see Chapter VI), a requirement that the City has met and will continue to achieve. However, in the course of implementing a general plan, proposals that strongly fulfill plan goals and policies in one area may be inconsistent with another chapter. For example, the Covina Housing Element, among other things, identifies various sites for potential apartment-oriented affordable housing development, though some of the properties lie adjacent to open space resources. Although the identification of affordable housing locations in such an area does not constitute an inconsistency or problem per se, the City's land use compatibility policies would be triggered, thus possibly influencing the design and cost of this type of housing in the effected locations. Moreover, in some cases, the natural resources or open space environment could possibly interfere with important community goals, such as economic development, commercial revitalization, neighborhood preservation, and public improvement enhancement. Therefore, in implementing the Element, the City will endeavor to reconcile, to the greatest degree possible, natural resource/open space preservation and protection efforts with all other General Plan obligations, including, but not limited to, those mentioned above.

7. Inter-governmental Coordination

To most fairly and best deal with natural resource and open space issues at or near Covina's border areas, the City will continue routing various topical plans and documents to and reviewing development and public proposals from neighboring communities and Los Angeles County as well as, if applicable, the State and Federal governments. When necessary, Covina will also be in contact with other governmental entities and/or relevant groups. This activity will, among other things, acknowledge City intentions, desires, and/or concerns over particular developments, proposals, and related actions in an atmosphere of respect and cooperation.

8. Intra-governmental Coordination

In carrying out its various natural resource- and open space-related and planning activities and programs/measures, where appropriate and feasible, the Planning Division will work with other City departments/divisions, particularly the Building and Safety Division, the Parks and Recreation Department, and the City Maintenance Department, to best approach and handle or abate various issues and problems. In light of changing Covina demographic, social, economic, and housing conditions as well as other trends, it is believed that this holistic orientation is essential and thus will best implement General Plan goals, objectives (where applicable), and policies.

9. Public Involvement

In compliance with State planning law, the City will endeavor to promote the importance of the General Plan as well as implementing programs/measures, such as the Park System Master Plan, to the public, businesses, developers, Covina employees, and other interested parties and groups at the public counter, on the phone, at meetings, at City-sponsored events, and at other available opportunities through information handouts, brochures, press releases, and any other mediums deemed appropriate. When General Plan updates are done, persons, groups, and organizations shall be notified through State-defined public hearings and, if appropriate, by way of other means. Frequent public education is an important ingredient in successful general plan implementation.

10. General Plan Review and Revisions

State planning law requires the City to annually report to the Planning Commission and City Council on progress in General Plan implementation. The report must then be filed with the State Office of Planning and Research (OPR). The intent of this process is to ensure the viability, effectiveness, and coordination of adopted General Plan goals, objectives (where applicable), policies, and programs/implementation measures, which impact not only the community but, technically, the State as well. The City of Covina will continue with this activity and, when an amendment to the revised General Plan is made, will review the change in relation to the entire Plan to ensure inter-Element consistency. Also, appropriate, occasional monitoring of the General Plan components shall occur. Lastly, no later than five years following adoption of the last phase of the General Plan update, a detailed analysis of the entire Plan will be conducted.

11. Natural Resources and Open Space Element Implementation

In accordance with the State planning law/Government Code criteria, the City will implement the Covina Natural Resources and Open Space Element in a manner compatible to the implementation/administration of all other General Plan Elements, the Park Master Plan and additional applicable City and Redevelopment Agency documents and proposals, and community goals and, in a fashion consistent with the intent of this chapter, monitor all facets of Element implementation, conduct necessary tasks so as to best prepare for future versions, annually report its findings to the Planning Commission and City Council, and, when legally required, necessary, and/or in the public interest, update the Element.

12. Maintenance of City Departments/Divisions Responsible for Natural Resource and Open Space Matters

In order to carry out its various natural resource and open space responsibilities and obligations, the City will maintain departments/divisions to, among other things, appropriately administer the General Plan, Zoning Ordinance, Design Guidelines, various non-Planning Codes, Park System Master Plan, and other documents. In addition, Covina will maintain resources to administer and monitor various accompanying processes, programs, and activities, such as Site Plan Review, Environmental Impact Review, Code Enforcement, and general recreational programs and activities, and to disseminate applicable information and provide assistance to the public.



PICTURE 18. COVINA METROLINK COMMUTER RAIL STATION ON CITRUS AVENUE IN NORTHERN PORTION OF DOWNTOWN. GENERAL PLAN POLICY PROMOTES THE LINKING OF THE METROLINK STATION TO THE DOWNTOWN AND OTHER AREAS TO ELIMINATE MANY LONG DISTANCE VEHICULAR TRIPS, THUS REDUCING AIR POLLUTION.

VI. RELATION TO AND CONSISTENCY WITH OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

This Natural Resources and Open Space chapter of the General Plan is most closely related to the Land Use Element, the central chapter that focuses on the long-term general distribution/location and development intensity of residential, commercial, industrial, open space, and other uses, as well as the Circulation and Housing Elements. There is a close tie to the Land Use chapter because, under State law, as implied above, the proposed land use development scenario or Land Use Map must reflect the community's desires with respect to natural resource and open space matters. In other words, when integrated with this Element, the Land Use Map should show acceptable land uses in relation to existing and future natural resources and parks and recreational facilities. Concerning the Element's connection to the Circulation chapter, which focuses on circulation and transportation systems and the movement of people and goods, the circulation network must be correlated with the Land Use Element, which, as previously stated, includes natural resource/open space categories. Thus, the street system provides access to and among the topical resources and (relating to the overall land use planning process) must be considered in the location and design of new and improved open space lands as well as retention of existing facilities.

The Housing Element, which this chapter also bears a strong relationship to, among other things, serves as a tool for addressing housing needs and providing adequate sites for new housing and standards for the housing stock. Because, as stated above, Covina's residents, particularly seniors, children, and occupants of apartments and condominiums/townhomes, have various open space and recreational needs, it is essential for the Natural Resources and Open Space Element to reflect the community's housing situation and concomitant occupancy characteristics. The Element is also most directly related to the Safety and Noise chapters.

It is also important for the Natural Resources and Open Space Element to be consistent with other chapters, and vice versa, in terms of everything from supporting data and information to policy orientation to implementation. This necessity for overall congruence is underscored by State law as well. Section 65300.5 of the California Government Code states that "the Legislature intends that the general plan and elements and parts thereof comprise an integrated, internally consistent and compatible statement of policies for the adopting agency."

The City of Covina has met this consistency requirement. Because the City has updated all General Plan Elements simultaneously, one common data and information base, with the same community input, has been used for the entire project. This means that the goals, objectives (if applicable), and policies for all Elements will have been (when all Elements are completed) prepared based on the same foundation and according to the same or similar methodology, thus ensuring consistency. Also, and perhaps most importantly, revising all General Plan Elements together guarantees inter-Element program conformity because, according to planning law, implementation measures or circulation/infrastructure, land use, and other plans must be developed upon the existing conditions/data and issues plus the stated goals, objectives (if applicable), and policies in question. In sum, the nature of the Covina General Plan update process has greatly facilitated consistency among all Elements. During Natural Resources and Open Space Element preparation, topical goals, policies, and programs/implementation measures have been cross-checked with those in other Elements, particularly Land Use, Circulation, and Housing, the other key General Plan chapters, to maintain and verify this necessary congruence.

The above-noted inter-Element consistency will also ensure that implementation of the Natural Resources and Open Space and each and every Element will realize the same results. Furthermore, if the Natural Resources and Open Space Element is amended in the future, the City will confirm that the change is consistent with other chapters and/or modify the accompanying Elements to maintain overall conformity. Moreover, as stated in Program "C10," the City will monitor all major aspects of Natural Resources and Open Space Element implementation through decision-making activities and other processes to verify this consistency. In other

words, the City regards all Elements as having equal legal status and is therefore committed to appropriate Natural Resources and Open Space chapter implementation, particularly with respect to inter-Element unity and coherence.

VII. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT FORMATION

State planning law (Government Code Section 65351) requires local governments, during the amendment of a general plan, to “provide opportunities for the involvement of citizens, public agencies, public utility companies, and civic, education, and other community groups, through public hearings and any other means the city or county deems appropriate.” In fulfilling its citizen participation obligations and in identifying issues for the Natural Resources and Open Space as well as for all other Elements, the City has:

1. Prepared and distributed a “short” questionnaire to all Covina households.
2. Prepared and distributed a “long” questionnaire on a random basis to approximately 10% of all Covina area households.
3. Conducted “town hall meetings” and public forums.
4. Prepared a cable television commercial on the General Plan update and public forums and had a staff member appear on the local cable television station to discuss the General Plan update process and answer public questions.
5. Prepared and distributed several General Plan update flyers at City Hall and at various public functions. Also prepared press releases and articles in various newspapers and City publications on the update process and on the public forums.
6. Received numerous comments from the public (in this case regarding natural resources and open space) on the phone, at the counter, and in the course of site-specific project reviews.
7. Organized, met with, and elicited the views of a subcommittee of Covina’s General Plan Update Committee that addressed natural resource, open space, and related issues.
8. Met with and elicited the views of City of Covina employees who deal with natural resource and open space matters.
9. Received numerous comments from representatives of other public or quasi-public agencies, such as school districts, transit agencies, utility companies, regional organizations, and adjacent municipalities as well as local civic organizations.
10. Reviewed and considered the Covina Park System Master Plan, an important, applicable document that had been prepared based on extensive community outreach.

The public comments elicited from measures 1 through 10 have been carefully studied by the City and have been incorporated into the body of data and information that was used in formulating this Element’s identification and discussion of natural resources and open space lands and, therefore, in developing the related goals, policies, and programs/implementation measures as well. All material and information and specific input received pertaining to these items are on file in the City Planning Division. Thus, Covina has made a reasonable effort to reach out to the important segments, views, and organizations in drafting the Natural Resources and Open Space Element.

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VIII. MONITORING NATURAL RESOURCES AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT IMPLEMENTATION

In order for the General Plan Natural Resources and Open Space Element's goals, policies, and programs/ implementation measures to be realized, or to ensure that the Element serves to maintain and, where necessary, improve Covina's natural environment, open space facilities, recreational opportunities, and quality of life, the Element must be implemented as proposed through effective decision-making and actions. Also, to ensure that implementation is achieved to the maximum degree possible, consistent Natural Resources and Open Space Element monitoring must also occur. This subject is addressed by Section 65400(b) of the Government Code, which states that following general plan adoption or revision, a city shall "provide an annual report to the legislative body on the status of the plan and progress in its implementation . . ." Because the Natural Resources and Open Space Element is an important chapter and is, as previously stated, closely tied to the central Land Use Element, monitoring is particularly relevant here.

The City of Covina will fulfill its obligation to monitor implementation by preparing the State-required report for the Planning Commission and for the City Council. This procedure, in fact, has been incorporated into the Natural Resources and Open Space Element implementation framework as Program "C10," which calls for the monitoring of all aspects of the implementation effort, including, as stated in Section VI, assurances that inter-Element consistency is achieved. One such facet of the monitoring process is ensuring that any underutilized policies or programs are adequately handled. Also, any identified problems or deficiencies will be carefully studied and appropriately managed to ensure that desired Natural Resources and Open Space Element results are met. The City believes that many potential problems should be avoided by maintaining a commitment to appropriate Element implementation through the decision-making process. Besides, then, furthering the established natural resource- and open space-related goals, this approach will facilitate preparing General Plan amendments.

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