



DATE: FOR THE PLANNING COMMISSION MEETING OF DECEMBER 6, 2017

TO: THE PLANNING COMMISSION

FROM: STEPHANIE DAVIS, AICP, SENIOR PLANNER

SUBJECT: ATHERTON GENERAL PLAN UPDATE – PROCESS AND SCHEDULE AND AMENDMENTS TO THE OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Planning Commission receive a report from Staff on the proposed process and schedule for a comprehensive update to the General Plan (less the Housing Element) and discuss the current Open Space and Conservation Element with potential amendments, and provide direction to staff.

BACKGROUND:

The Atherton General Plan was updated and adopted by the City Council on November 20, 2002. It contains seven “elements”, or subject categories in the matters of Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Open and Conservation, Noise, and Community Safety. Per guidelines established by the State of California, each city and county in the state must prepare a comprehensive, long term general plan to guide its future and is mandated to contain these seven elements. An update to the Housing Element, prepared in accordance with State law, was adopted by the City Council on March 18, 2015 with the next State mandated update to occur in 2022. All other elements of the General Plan have not been updated since 2002. Atherton is essentially built out in accordance with the policies stated in the General Plan. The Sphere of Influence as adopted by the San Mateo Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) is coterminous with the current Town Limits. The vast majority of all of the existing parcels of land have been developed with land uses consistent with the General Plan. All of the streets and highways described in the General Plan are developed to their planned capacity. The entire infrastructure needed to serve the planned land uses and population is in place with sufficient capacity to accommodate the planned land uses and population. However, there are some policies, data references, and maps within the General Plan that should be updated to reflect current conditions and Town policies.

The State Office of Planning and Research (OPR) adopted General Plan Guidelines in 2017 for use by local jurisdictions in the preparation of their general plans. The Guidelines are permissive, not mandatory and are quite extensive. An analysis of the Atherton General Plan compared to the general criteria included in the Guidelines along with an evaluation of the degree to which the Atherton

General Plan complies with the OPR Guidelines shows that the Atherton General Plan is in substantial compliance with the adopted OPR Guidelines with a few exceptions

ANALYSIS:

Process and Schedule

Staff would prepare updates to the General Plan and present the updates to the Planning Commission one to two Elements at a time in a study session format. Following comment and direction received by the Planning Commission at each study session(s) for each of the six Elements to be updated, Staff would then facilitate a public workshop to obtain feedback and comment from the community. Staff has prepared a proposed schedule that includes targeted future study sessions, a community meeting, and public hearings. This schedule identifies the start of the process to update the General Plan beginning in December 2017 with an anticipated completion date of early 2019. The proposed timing and order for presentation of each Element attempts to take into consideration other Town-wide efforts currently underway to maximize efficiency and costs (such as the Town wide traffic flow/long range planning solutions study and potential revisions to the Heritage Tree Ordinance), as well as timing required for any 3rd party professional consultant (such as a traffic engineering consultant and acoustical engineer). Please see Attachment 2.

Following the community feedback, staff would further refine (any) additional updates to any of the Elements, prepare the required environmental analysis and come back to the Planning Commission at a public hearing to present for consideration and a recommendation to the City Council the certification of the prepared environmental document and amendments to the General Plan. Following a recommendation by the Planning Commission, the item would then be presented to the City Council for formal adoption.

Administrative Draft - Open Space and Conservation Element

An Open Space Element identifies areas that provide value in an essentially undeveloped condition and creates a plan to preserve such areas. It includes private and public lands or water that may provide value related to such things as recreation, habitat, and health. State guidelines specify six required categories of open space:

- Open Space for Natural Resources
- Open Space for Managed Production of Resources
- Open Space for Outdoor Recreation
- Open Space for Public Health and Safety
- Open Space for Military Support
- Open Space for Tribal Resources

A Conservation Element is intended to describe natural resources: land, water, ecosystem services and living resources and establishes goals, and policies for their conservation, development, and utilization. As with the Open Space Element, State guidelines specify a series of required components all Conservation Elements must include. These include:

- Water and its Hydraulic Force
- Forests
- Soils
- Rivers and Other Waters
- Harbors and Fisheries
- Wildlife
- Minerals and other Natural Resources

Both the Open Space and Conservation Element, should work in coordination with the Land Use Element to guide conservation and development, balance community needs with environmental preservation and the effects of climate change. State guidelines allow a jurisdiction to combine an Open Space Element and Conservation Element, into one consolidated element; this combined approach is proposed and presented in Attachment 1.

The Open Space and Conservation Element is proposed to be re-structured into three sections.

- I. Purpose and Relation to Other General Plan Elements.
- II. Background Information. Provides information on the existing conditions of open space and natural resources.
- III. Goals, Policies and Actions. Provides policy guidance for protecting and preserving important open space and natural resources.

Staff has reviewed the existing Open Space and Conservation Element and provided substantive updates within the “Background Information” to assure all State required components are addressed. The amendments proposed within the Open Space and Conservation Element not only assure compliance with the State guidelines, but to attempt to support the overarching Town goal to maintain its low density, residential character by describing existing and proposed open spaces and natural resources, and providing subsequent goals, objectives, policies and actions that support their long-term preservation. No new open spaces have been identified beyond those already zoned as such (i.e. Holbrook-Palmer Park, Reading Park, Menlo Circus Club, Bear Gulch reservoir, and the public schools). A new Town-wide map was created to plot the locations of the identified open space resources within Atherton.

The existing Open Space and Conservation Element was evaluated and any goal and/or objective that was found to support current Town direction (based off other adopted Town policies and/or regulatory documents) was proposed to be carried over to the existing draft. Evaluation of other adopted Town documents and/or studies, including the Climate Action Plan, Green Infrastructure Work Plan, Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan, Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan, Civic Center Master Plan, Historic Artifact Inventory, Tree Preservation Guidelines, Standards and Specifications, Town Wide Drainage Study and Municipal Code were assessed and their relevant policies and directives were integrated into the draft. These were all integrated within the “Goals, Policies and Actions” section and are noted to be “existing” or “proposed”.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT:

Per the provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) an environmental analysis will be prepared to analyze any potential environmental impacts that may occur as a result of the project (i.e. updates to the General Plan) and to mitigate any identified impacts to a level of insignificance as feasible. This environmental review would be prepared following all study sessions identified above and would be formally noticed and circulated for public review in accordance with State Law and presented for consideration by the Planning Commission at a future public hearing (estimated to be late spring/early summer 2018).

/s/ Stephanie Davis
Stephanie Davis, AICP, Senior Planner

Attachments:

1. Proposed Amendments to the Open Space and Circulation Element
2. Proposed General Plan Update Schedule
3. Existing Open Space and Conservation Element

Town of Atherton

Administrative Draft

**OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION
ELEMENT**

of the General Plan

December 2017

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OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

I. Purpose and Relation to Other Elements

The purpose of the Open Space portion of this element is to inventory and describe existing and proposed open space lands and uses and to identify goals and policies that support open spaces in Atherton. The purpose of the Conservation portion of this element is to describe the Town's natural and man-made resources; including land, water, ecosystems, cultural and living resources. The Open Space and Conservation Element seeks to maintain the low density, residential character of the Town. (Proposed New Section)

In order to eliminate duplication, the Open Space and Conservation Elements of the Atherton General Plan have been consolidated into a single document, a procedure authorized by Government Code Sections 65301. Programs and policies outlined in the combined Element are to be coordinated with State and Regional open space and conservation policies. *(Existing Section)*

In addition to being closely related to one another, open space and conservation relate closely to the Land Use and Circulation Elements. Decisions implemented under policies contained in those Elements could significantly impact upon open space and sensitive environmental features. *(Existing Section)*

II. Background Information

Open Space Land Uses

The State-mandated Open Space Element is concerned with the management of open space resources, including cultural resources. Open space is defined as, "any parcel or area of public or private land, large or small, or water that is essentially unimproved and undeveloped." California Government Code requires local general plans to address six categories of open spaces:

- Open Space for Natural Resources
- Open Space for Managed Production of Resources
- Open Space for Outdoor Recreation
- Open Space for Public Health and Safety
- Open Space for Military Support
- Open Space for Tribal Resources

The Government Code also requires an Inventory of Open Space Lands. These topics are all addressed in the sections below.

Inventory of Open Space Lands *(Proposed New Section)*

Table OSC-1 and Figure OSC-1 present an inventory of the open space lands existing in Atherton in 2017. The Town owned Holbrook-Palmer Park and the Reading Park are included in the category of Open Space for Outdoor Recreation. The privately-owned Menlo Circus Club Country Club equestrian center is also included in the category of Open Space for Outdoor Recreation. The California Water Service owned Bear Gulch Reservoir is included in the category of Open Space for Natural Resources and Open Space for Public Health and Safety.

Table OSC-1: Inventory of Atherton Open Space Lands

Facility	Category	Area
Holbrook-Palmer Park	Outdoor Recreation	22 acres
Reading Park	Outdoor Recreation	0.38 acres
Menlo Circus Club	Outdoor Recreation	29.25 acres
Bear Gulch Reservoir	Natural Resources / Public Health and Safety	99.22 acres

Open Space for Natural Resources *(Proposed New Section)*

Bear Gulch Reservoir is a water storage facility located on the western border of Atherton. The reservoir is the main storage facility for the Bear Gulch District of the California Water Service. The facility holds 166 million gallons of water and serves over 55,000 people. The lands surrounding the reservoir function as a watershed for the facility. As both a potable water storage facility and a water shed area, the reservoir and surrounding lands owned by Cal Water are designated Open Space for Natural Resources.

Should the Bear Gulch Dam fail, portions of Atherton and west Menlo Park would be subject to inundation. The Safety Element of this General Plan addresses dam safety and the potential for inundation of properties below the dam.

Open Space for Managed Production of Resources *(Proposed New Section)*

Groundwater is a sub-regional resource that produces irrigation water for many properties in Atherton. The quantity and quality of groundwater has been of concern, and the subject of past studies. Atherton, along with other concerned agencies cooperate in its study and management.

The Town of Atherton is part of the **San Francisquito Creek area** (creek itself located in the City of Palo Alto) of the Mid-peninsula that overlies the **Santa Clara and San Mateo Plain Groundwater Sub-basins**. Concerns about increased reliance on local groundwater resources for landscape irrigation were raised in the Town of Atherton by 1992. By then, five years of drought and the installation of more than 100 new wells raised concerns that such reliance might lead to land subsidence, declining water levels, and

saltwater intrusion. A 1993-95 study¹ was commissioned by the U. S. Geological Survey, in cooperation with the Town of Atherton, which describes the general geohydrology of the San Francisquito Creek alluvial cone; historical groundwater development; present-day well distribution and groundwater use; the aerial and seasonal variation of groundwater levels and direction of flow-aerial variation in groundwater chemistry; and the establishment and initial measurements of a land elevation surveying network for monitoring potential land subsidence. The study findings included:

- The number of active, probably active, and unknown wells in Atherton ranged from 175 to 403 in 1994. Approximately 95% were used for private residential irrigation with the remainder used for public and private institutions.
- Groundwater levels were expressed in two ways: depth-to-water level below land surface or hydraulic head (i.e. water level expressed as an altitude above sea level). The depth-to-water level ranged from less than 20 feet below land surface nearest the San Francisco Bay to about 70 feet below land surface near Alameda de las Pulgas. The hydraulic head level ranged from less than 10 feet above sea level nearest the San Francisco Bay to about 60 feet above sea level near Alameda de las Pulgas.
- Groundwater flow was generally north or northeasterly towards San Francisco Bay.
- All measured hydraulic heads within the study area from April 1993 to September 1995 were above sea level, which indicated that saltwater intrusion was unlikely during that period.
- Water quality samples provided no evidence of saltwater intrusion from San Francisco Bay.
- The lack of land-elevation surveying network and historical data prompted the establishment of 21 surveying sites as part of the study. These sites plus one existing bench mark were surveyed in March 1994 to establish a baseline for monitoring subsidence. A determination as to whether subsidence is occurring presently or in the future will require repetitive measurements of land-surface elevation.

The Town², along with the cities of Palo Alto, East Palo Alto, Menlo Park, Stanford University, San Mateo County, Santa Clara Valley Water District and several other agencies and non-governmental organizations have committed to:

- Collaborating with other agencies and organizations to better understand the hydrology and geology of the San Francisquito Creek area, and
- The sustainable management of local groundwater to protect its quality and ensure its availability during droughts and emergency situations.

While no lands are specifically designated Open Space for Managed Production of Resources, the Town's low intensity development, its support of Green Infrastructure, and policies directed toward sustainable management of local groundwater to protect its quality and future availability, act to help protect this natural resource.

Open Space for Outdoor Recreation (*Proposed New Section*)

¹ USGS Water Resources Investigations Report 97-4033

² Resolution 14-21, September 17, 2014

The facilities described below provide open space for outdoor recreation in Atherton.

Atherton's premier public park, **Holbrook-Palmer Park**, is a 22-acre open space facility located on Watkins Avenue near Middlefield Road. The Park offers many amenities to the community, including shady, tree-lined walking paths, tennis courts, a playground, a large sports field, open space and gardens. Several historic buildings provide a glimpse of Atherton's past, and provide space for meetings and classes. The Main House and the Jennings Pavilion are also used for meetings, weddings and larger events. The park supports a variety of activities, including sports, a place to play for children, classes, public and private events, a preschool and more.

Development of the Park is governed by the adopted³ **Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan 2014**. In the Master Plan it is noted that the need for new parkland is not anticipated as the Town's population is stable. There are however, opportunities for refinement and improvements. The adopted Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan includes a link through Holbrook-Palmer Park to enhance cyclist connectivity and safety. Other recommendations include modifications to the Park Entrance, pedestrian access improvements and new path links, signage and lighting improvements. The Master Plan builds on the concept of the park as an Arboretum. It calls for an off-leash dog area, recognizes the Little League Field improvements and relocation of the Playschool. The Master Plan calls for interior restoration and upgrades for expanding public use of the historic Carriage House and relocation and redesign of the Park Maintenance Building & Corporation Yard. Finally, parking management options are offered.

A recent proposal (2017), the Holbrook-Palmer Park Water Capture Project, is currently under study by the City Council. The project includes the construction of a storm drain diversion structure to re-direct all dry weather urban runoff and the first flush of wet-weather runoff from the Atherton Channel, through a pre-treatment device, into a buried multi-chambered storage/infiltration facility with a capacity of eight to ten acre-feet. Further discussion of the project is included in the section entitled "Rivers, Other Waters and Floodwater Management" below.

Atherton's second public park, the small **Reading Park** is located adjacent to the Atherton Library at the corner of Dinkelspiel (Station) Lane and Maple Street. This landscaped open space provides a quiet area for reading and other passive activities. The recently adopted Atherton Civic Center Master Plan envisions retention of the park, with connection to a new "Town Green" located between the new City Administration Building and the new Library. The expanded **Town Green and Reading Park** (aka Library Garden) would be slightly larger than the existing Reading Park. The Town Green and Library Garden would be the landscape focus of the new Civic Center. It would also provide for stormwater detention and function as a component of the **Green Infrastructure** (see section below).

The **Menlo Circus Club** is a private equestrian center located on Elena Avenue at Park Lane. The Club provides almost 30 acres of open space for outdoor recreation for its members including polo, swimming, tennis and horse shows.

Open spaces for outdoor recreation are also provided at the **public and private schools** in Atherton. Access to these facilities are generally restricted to students and faculty during school hours. The schools are listed in Table OSC-2.

³ Adopted May 20, 2015

Table OSC-2: Inventory of Schools in Atherton

School	Grades	Public/Private
Encinal School	Elementary	Public
Las Lomas School	Elementary	Public
Laurel School	Elementary	Public
Selby Lane School	Elementary	Public
Menlo-Atherton High School	High School	Public
Menlo School	Middle & High School	Private
Sacred Heart Schools	Elementary, Middle & High School	Private
Menlo College	College	Private

Open Space for Public Health and Safety (*Proposed New Section*)

The only area in Atherton designated as Open Space for Public Health and Safety is the **Bear Gulch Reservoir** which is required for the protection of water quality and a water reservoir. Bear Gulch Reservoir is also categorized as an Open Space for Natural Resources and further described in that section.

Open Space for Military Support and Tribal Resources (*Proposed New Section*)

Atherton has no areas designated as Open Space for Military Support, as there are no military facilities in or near Town. Neither does Atherton have areas designated as Open Space for Native American Tribal Resources, as there are no known Native American Tribal Resources in or near Town.

Conservation, Development and Utilization of Natural Resources

The State-mandated Conservation Element is concerned with the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, including plants and animal wildlife, water bodies and watersheds, forests, soils, minerals and energy conservation. California Government Code requires local general plans to address seven categories of natural resources:

- Water and its Hydraulic Force
- Forests
- Soils
- Rivers and Other Waters
- Harbors and Fisheries
- Wildlife

- Minerals and other Natural Resources

Water and Its Hydraulic Force (*Proposed New Section*)

Groundwater management and recharge of the **Santa Clara and San Mateo Plain Groundwater Sub-basins** is discussed under the section entitled Open Space for Managed Production of Resources, above.

Green Infrastructure is an approach to managing wet weather impacts that uses vegetation, soils, and other elements and practices to restore some of the natural processes to the management of stormwater. At the local level, Green Infrastructure is a series of natural areas that provide habitat, flood protection, cleaner air, and cleaner water. At the neighborhood or site level, Green Infrastructure stormwater management systems mimic nature to soak up and store water. Examples include downspout rerouting to storage or permeable areas; rainwater harvesting, storage, and later use; rain gardens and planter boxes for infiltration, evaporation, and transpiration; bioswales that facilitate filter and infiltration; permeable pavements that promote infiltration and storage; green streets and alleys designed for storage, infiltration and evapotranspiration; green roofs; and tree canopies.

Forests (*Proposed New Section*)

The entire Town of Atherton can be considered a **Coastal Oak Woodland**. Coastal Oak Woodland is defined primarily by the composition of its overstory. The Town's overstory consists of deciduous and evergreen hardwoods (mostly oaks) sometimes mixed with scattered conifers. The dominant oak species in Town are the Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*) and the Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*), along with many White Oaks (*Quercus alba*), Blue Oaks (*quercus douglasii*), and Black Oaks (*Quercus kelloggii*). Species associated with Coast Live Oak on moister sites are Pacific Madrone, California Bay, Tanoak, and Canyon Live Oak, while Coast Live Oak occurs with Valley Oak, Blue Oak, and Foothill Pine on drier sites. Numerous other tree species including Coast Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), Incense Cedar (*Calocedrus decurrens*), Ash (*Fraxinus Spp.*), Southern Magnolia (*Magnolia grandiflora*), Deodar Cedar (*Cedrus deodara* and Elm (*Ulmus Spp.*) are found throughout the Town.

Over the years, Town policies have supported the preservation and protection of trees in general and heritage trees (trees 48 inches or greater in diameter measured 4 feet above grade) in particular. Tree protection was included as a policy in the 2002 General Plan, Open Space and Conservation Element. The Atherton Municipal Code describes why trees are essential to the health, welfare and quality of life to the citizens of Atherton:

1. To preserve the scenic beauty of the town and to ensure the privacy of its citizens;
2. To maintain ecological balance;
3. To prevent erosion of topsoil;
4. To protect against the hazards of floods and the risk of landslides;
5. To counteract air pollutants and oxygenate the air;
6. To absorb noise;
7. To maintain the climatic and microclimatic balance; and
8. To decrease high wind velocities.

Specific *Tree Preservation Guidelines, Standards and Specifications* were adopted in 2004 to regulate development and protection measures during construction. Those *Tree Preservation Guidelines* are currently (2017-2018) under review to assure their effectiveness and applicability to current practices.

Soils (*Proposed New Section*)

Atherton is essentially built-out with low-density residential and supporting facilities (i.e. schools, public and quasi-public and similar uses). As such, soils supporting agricultural uses, the traditional subject of this topic, are less important. However, prevention of soil erosion and potential loss of top soil is a Town objective. Further, prevention of soil compaction near the roots of trees and heritage trees in order to support their viability, is also a Town objective, as specified in the Tree Preservation Guidelines.

Rivers, Other Waters and Floodwater Management (*Proposed New Section*)

The primary waterway in Atherton is the **Atherton Channel**. The headwaters of the Atherton Channel originate west of Interstate 280 in the hillside area of the Town of Woodside. Historically, the Atherton Channel, like many of the smaller creeks in the area, did not have a permanent channel extending all the way downstream to the Bay. Most years, the small flows soaked into the porous soils in the flatlands; only during floods did the flow remain on the surface all the way to the Bay. Urbanization and development created impervious surfaces, which lead to the need for controlled drainage facilities to dispose of stormwaters. Prior to 1958, drainage facilities were constructed along the historic floodways as development proceeded. Developers that originally subdivided the land from large estates installed many of the facilities. The Town formed the Atherton Channel Drainage District in 1958 to construct and maintain storm water collection facilities in areas determined to be in the local stream flood plain. The District boundaries include most of the Town south of Atherton Avenue, a portion of unincorporated University Heights, and small areas of the City of Menlo Park and Town of Woodside.

In 2001 a *Town Wide Drainage Study* was prepared with the objectives of developing an inventory of the existing drainage system for incorporation into the Town Geographic Information System (GIS) database, assessing the weaknesses of the drainage system with input from the community, and developing estimated costs and a prioritized plan for improvements to the drainage system. By 2014 the Town had implemented 26 of the 55 improvement projects identified in the 2001 Drainage Study.

In 2014, an update to the 2001 Drainage Study was requested for several reasons. Recent residential development may have impacted previously identified drainage issues. Drainage improvements are now required to comply with the Municipal Regional Stormwater Permit (R2-2009-0074) adopted in 2009. In addition, the Town adopted drainage design criteria in January 2013 aimed to reduce peak stormwater flows and improve water quality. The goals of the desired drainage study update were to: update the inventory of the existing drainage system, assess current system weaknesses with input from the community, develop a prioritized plan for improvements to the drainage system, with itemized cost estimates, review stormwater management policies for compliance with the 2009 Municipal Stormwater Permit, and describe opportunities for regional stormwater detention. The *Town Wide Drainage Study Update* was completed in April 2015. The *Update* included recommended storm drainage improvement projects prioritized according to the tiers listed below.

Tier 1 Improvements mitigate flooding problems that can create significant life and safety issues.

Tier 2 Improvements are intended to avoid damage to private property caused by storm runoff from public areas.

Tier 3 Projects are located on public property and not influenced by downstream drainage system.

Tier 4 Projects are located on public property and influenced by under capacity downstream drainage system.

Tier 5 Projects were recommended in the 2001 Drainage Study but drainage issues in these areas have not been observed recently.

Currently (2017) the Town of Atherton is considering a partnership with the jurisdictions of the City of Redwood City, City of Menlo Park, and County of San Mateo to complete the planning, design and environmental permitting for the proposed Bayfront Canal/Atherton Channel Flood Protection and Restoration Project. The Atherton Channel and Bayfront Canal watersheds are multi-jurisdictional watersheds crossing all of the member jurisdictions. The two channels intersect in the City of Redwood City west of U.S. 101 near the Marsh Road interchange. Both watersheds have experienced decades of repetitive flooding. All of the member jurisdictions have been impacted by flooded streets, residences and businesses.

The proposed Holbrook-Palmer Park Water Capture Project, a runoff diversion, storage and filtration system, is part of a larger Bayfront Canal/Atherton Channel flood protection and restoration planning, design and environmental permitting partnership. This project has a number of objectives, including those listed below.

1. Capturing dry weather runoff in order to eliminate the transport of pollutants to San Francisco Bay,
2. Capturing at least the first flush of wet-weather runoff to reduce the load of pollutants transported to the Bay,
3. Diverting potential flood flows from the Atherton Channel,
4. Minimizing the on-going operations and maintenance costs, and
5. Reusing storm water for park irrigation.

Harbors and Fisheries *(Proposed New Section)*

Atherton has no harbors or fisheries in or near Town.

Wildlife and Habitats *(Proposed New Section)*

The California Department of Fish and Game maintains the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB), that inventories the status and location of rare plants, animals and natural habitats in California. A search of the database was completed for Atherton and the surrounding area, to identify rare and sensitive species and habitats with the potential to occur within the Town. Table OSC-3 lists the rare and sensitive species and communities that may occur within the Town. The Town monitors new development to ensure that it does not negatively impact sensitive species, especially those listed in the table.

Table OSC-3: Biological Resources with the Potential to Occur in Atherton

Common Name	Scientific Name	Type	Status
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San Mateo thornmint	<i>Acanthomintha duttonii</i>	Plant	FE, 1B ⁴
Franciscan onion	<i>Allium peninsulare</i> var. <i>franciscanum</i>	Plant	1B
Bent-flowered fiddleneck	<i>Amsinckia lunaris</i>	Plant	1B
Kings Mountain manzanita	<i>Arctostaphylos</i>	Plant	1B
Congdon's tarplant	<i>Centromadia parryi</i> ssp. <i>Congdonii</i>	Plant	1B
Franciscan thistle	<i>Cirsium andrewsii</i>	Plant	1B
Fountain thistle	<i>Cirsium fontinale</i> var. <i>fontinale</i>	Plant	FE, 1B
Lost thistle	<i>Cirsium praeterens</i>	Plant	1A
San Francisco collinsia	<i>Collinsia multicolor</i>	Plant	1B
Santa Cruz Cyprus	<i>Cupressus abramsiana</i>	Plant	FE, 1B
Western leatherwood	<i>Dirca occidentalis</i>	Plant	1B
Tiburon buckwheat	<i>Eriogonum luteolum</i> var. <i>caninum</i>	Plant	1B
San Mateo woolly sunflower	<i>Eriophyllum latilobum</i>	Plant	FE, 1B
Hoover's button-celery	<i>Eryngium aristulatum</i> var. <i>hooveri</i>	Plant	1B
Hillsborough chocolate lily	<i>Fritillaria biflora</i> var. <i>ineziana</i>	Plant	1B
Fragrant fritillary	<i>Fritillaria liliacea</i>	Plant	1B
Marin dwarf-flax	<i>Hesperolinon congestum</i>	Plant	FT, ST, 1B

⁴ Status:

FE = Federally listed as endangered

FT = Federally listed as threatened

FD = Federally delisted

SE = State-listed as endangered

ST = State-listed as threatened

CSC = California Species of Special Concern

CFP = California Fully Protected Species

1A = California Rare Plant Rank List 1A (plants presumed extirpated in California and either rare or extinct elsewhere)

1B = California Rare Plant Rank List 1B (plant species that are rare or endangered in California and elsewhere)

Kellogg's horkelia	<i>Horkelia cuneate</i> ssp. <i>Sericea</i>	Plant	1B
San Francisco lessingia	<i>Lessingia germanorum</i>	Plant	FE, 1B
Coast lily	<i>Lilium maritimum</i>	Plant	1B
Davidson's bush-mallow	<i>Malacothamnus davidsonii</i>	Plant	1B
Hall's bush mallow	<i>Malacothamnus hallii</i>	Plant	1B
White-rayed pentachaeta	<i>Pentachaeta bellidiflora</i>	Plant	FE, SE, 1B
San Francisco owl's-clover	<i>Triphysaria floribunda</i>	Plant	1B
Caper-fruited tropidocarpum	<i>Tropidocarpum capparideum</i>	Plant	1A
Bay checkerspot butterfly	<i>Euphydryas editha bayensis</i>	Invertebrate	FT
California tiger salamander	<i>Ambystoma californiense</i>	Amphibian	FT, CSC
California red-legged frog	<i>Rana draytonii</i>	Amphibian	FT, CSC
Western pond turtle	<i>Actinemys marmorata</i>	Reptile	CSC
San Francisco garter snake	<i>Thamnophis sirtalis tetrataenia</i>	Reptile	FE, SE
White-tailed kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	Bird	CFP
American peregrine falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus anatum</i>	Bird	FD, SE, CFP
Northern harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	Bird	CSC
Burrowing owl	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>	Bird	CSC
Vaux's swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	Bird	CSC
Olive-sided flycatcher	<i>Contopus cooperi</i>	Bird	CSC
Loggerhead shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Bird	CSC
Pallid bat	<i>Antrozous pallidus</i>	Mammal	CSC
Townsend's big-eared bat	<i>Corynorhinus townsendii</i>	Mammal	CSC
Western mastiff bat	<i>Eumops perotis californicus</i>	Mammal	CSC

San Francisco dusky-footed woodrat	Neotoma fuscipes anneciens	Mammal	CSC
American badger	Taxidea taxus	Mammal	CSC

Riparian habitats along the Atherton Channel and other drainages are important to providing plant and wildlife habitats and controlling erosion.

The oak woodland habitat that exists throughout Atherton is an important natural resource and is described in greater detail under the Section entitled “Forests”.

Minerals and Other Natural Resources *(Proposed New Section)*

Atherton is within an urban area with no known mineral or other similar natural resources. The San Mateo County General Plan Resources Map does not identify any known mineral resources or mineral recovery sites within or adjacent to the Town.

Cultural Resources *(Proposed New Section)*

Cultural resources in Atherton take the form of historically significant buildings, structures and artifacts. Several of the historically significant buildings are privately owned; only one of which has been listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

Table OSC-4: Atherton’s Historically Significant Buildings and Structures

Building or Structure	Year Constructed	Status
Watkins/Cartan House	1866	Privately owned, listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP)
Water Tower, Holbrook-Palmer Park	Circa 1870	Publicly owned, listed in the NRHP
Gen Merrill Carriage House, Holbrook-Palmer Park	1896	Publicly owned, listed in the NRHP
Sacred Heart Schools Main Building	1898 and 1915	Privately owned, appears eligible for listing as a historic structure
Menlo School, Stent Family Hall (Douglass Hall aka Payne-Douglass House)	1913	Privately owned, listed in California Point of Historical Interest Log ⁵ and Historic American Buildings Survey ⁶ ,

⁵ California Department of Parks and Recreation

⁶ San Mateo County’s Inventory of Historic Resources

		potentially eligible for listing in the NRHP
Perry Stable (Associated with Australian Racehorse Phar Lap)	Circa 1920	Privately owned, eligible for listing in the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR)
Caltrain Station, Civic Center	Mid-1920's	Publicly owned, appears eligible for listing in NRHP
Town Hall (Council Chambers building) Civic Center	1928	Publicly owned, appears eligible for inclusion in CRHR

The Town also has a policy of protecting and preserving historical artifacts. The term historical artifact is defined as a structure or object that meets the criteria for listing on the national, state or local level. A 2006 survey of potential historical artifacts resulted in compilation of the official catalog known as the Atherton Historical Artifact Inventory. The policy specifically excludes buildings designed for human occupation and objects housed in the interiors of buildings.

Climate Action Plan (*Proposed New Section*)

Atherton’s proposals and policies related to climate change are contained in its adopted⁷ **Climate Action Plan**. The Climate Action Plan (CAP) is summarized in the Land Use Element of this General Plan. Transportation aspects of the Action Plan are addressed in the Circulation Element. Energy, water and solid waste programs and policies are addressed in this Open Space and Conservation Element.

Energy and water-saving measures can help reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and impacts from drought conditions. Building energy is the sector with the most immediately achievable and affordable reduction opportunities. A primary focus of the CAP is on residential energy efficiency strategies to significantly reduce existing emissions and on the voluntary implementation of new building standards which incentivize new home builders towards designing net zero energy homes.

Reducing the amount of waste deposited into the landfill through material reuse, reduction, and recycling is an important strategy to reduce GHG emissions. Waste reduction and recycling help reduce emissions and the amount of single-use materials.

III. Goals, Objectives, Policies and Actions

Goal OSC-1: Protect both publicly and privately held *open space* lands from deterioration of their rural charm, scenic value and environmental equilibrium. (*Existing Goal*)

Objective OSC 1.1: Preserve presently existing open space, wildlife and vegetation. (*Existing Objective*)

⁷ Adopted October 19, 2016

Objective OSC 1.2: Prevent developmental encroachment on open space and sensitive environmental resources. *(Existing Objective)*

Objective OSC 1.3: Endeavor to prevent soil erosion and the potential loss of top soil through the development review process. *(Proposed New Objective)*

Policy OSC-1.1: The Town shall endeavor to protect scenic resources, significant stands of natural vegetation, wildlife habitat, public safety and significant archaeological resources, both publicly and privately held. *(Existing Policy)*

Policy OSC-1.2: The Town seeks to preserve the open space characteristics of existing public and private schools, churches, the Menlo Circus Club, the *Bear Gulch Reservoir* property and the public parks. *(Existing Policy)*

Policy OSC-1.3: Holbrook-Palmer Park shall serve as the Town’s primary outdoor recreational facility subject to the following conditions:

- A. The property shall not be used, occupied or operated for commercial or housing purposes except those which are strictly incidental and appropriate to its use as a public recreational park.
- B. The Park is to be used for the benefit of the citizens of Atherton.
- C. The Park may not be used for political purposes except those which involve the public affairs of the Town of Atherton as a whole.
- D. The Park may be rented for use by others in accordance with the standards established by the Parks and Recreation Commission. *(Existing Policy)*

Policy OSC-1.4: Implement the recommendations and projects adopted in the *Holbrook-Palmer Park Master Plan 2014*. *(Proposed New Policy)*

Policy OSC-1.5: In addition to Holbrook-Palmer Park and the Reading Park, public elementary and high school properties should also be considered for recreational purposes. *(Existing Policy)*

Action OSC-1.1: Minimum lot sizes, setback restrictions, height limitations, tree protection and preservation, and sign regulations shall be employed to accomplish open space and conservation objectives. *(Existing Action)*

Action OSC-1.2: The Town shall evaluate the potential for cooperative recreational use of existing school sites. *(Existing Action)*

Goal OSC-2:	Protect and enhance the existing Oak Woodland character of the Town. <i>(Proposed New Goal)</i>
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Policy OSC-2.1: Trees shall be preserved wherever possible. This policy shall be explicitly considered during the *development and* subdivision process. *(Existing Action)*

Policy OSC-2.2: Wherever possible, native species trees shall be used for new and replacement planting. *(Proposed New Policy)*

Policy OSC-2.3: Enforce the Heritage Tree Ordinance and Tree Preservation Guidelines and Standards, or equal document. *(Proposed New Policy)*

Goal OSC-3:	Minimize the impacts of flooding on health, safety and property damage. <i>(Proposed New Goal)</i>
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Policy OSC-3.1: Implement the recommendations and projects adopted in the 2015 *Town Wide Drainage Study Update*. *(Proposed New Policy)*

Policy OSC-3.2: New development shall provide detention volume to attenuate any increase in stormwater runoff caused by increased imperviousness created by the proposed development. *(Existing Policy from 2001)*

Policy OSC-3.3: Promote the use of Green Infrastructure techniques and practices in order to reduce flooding, treat stormwater at its source, and to reduce stormwater pollution. *(Proposed New Policy)*

Action OSC-3.1: As co-permittee, the Town will continue to participate in the San Mateo Stormwater Pollution Prevention Program (STOPPP) or equal program. New development and Town activities will be reviewed for compliance with STOPPP as part of project approval. The Town will also monitor construction to ensure compliance with any required mitigation.

Action OSC-3.2: The Town will encourage property owners to incorporate water conservation techniques into their landscaping to reduce water usage.

Goal OSC-4:	Protect both publicly and privately held cultural resources from deterioration and/or destruction. <i>(Proposed New Goal)</i>
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Policy OSC-4.1: Encourage the preservation of both private and public historical resources and artifacts for the benefit of future generations. *(Proposed New Policy)*

Policy OSC-4.2: The Town will require construction projects to stop if archaeological or paleontological resources are uncovered during grading or other on-site excavation activities. Once the resources are assessed for importance, appropriate mitigation compliant with State law will be determined.

Goal OSC-5:	Increase residential and commercial energy efficiency and reduce water consumption to meet AB 32 emission reduction target. <i>(Existing Goal from CAP)</i>
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Policy OSC-5.1: Implement the Greenhouse Gas programs in the Atherton Climate Action Plan related to energy efficiency and reduced water consumption. *(From Programs Existing in CAP)*

Goal OSC-6:	Reduce the total amount of community waste generated and sent to landfills to meet AB 32 emission reduction target. <i>(Existing Goal from CAP)</i>
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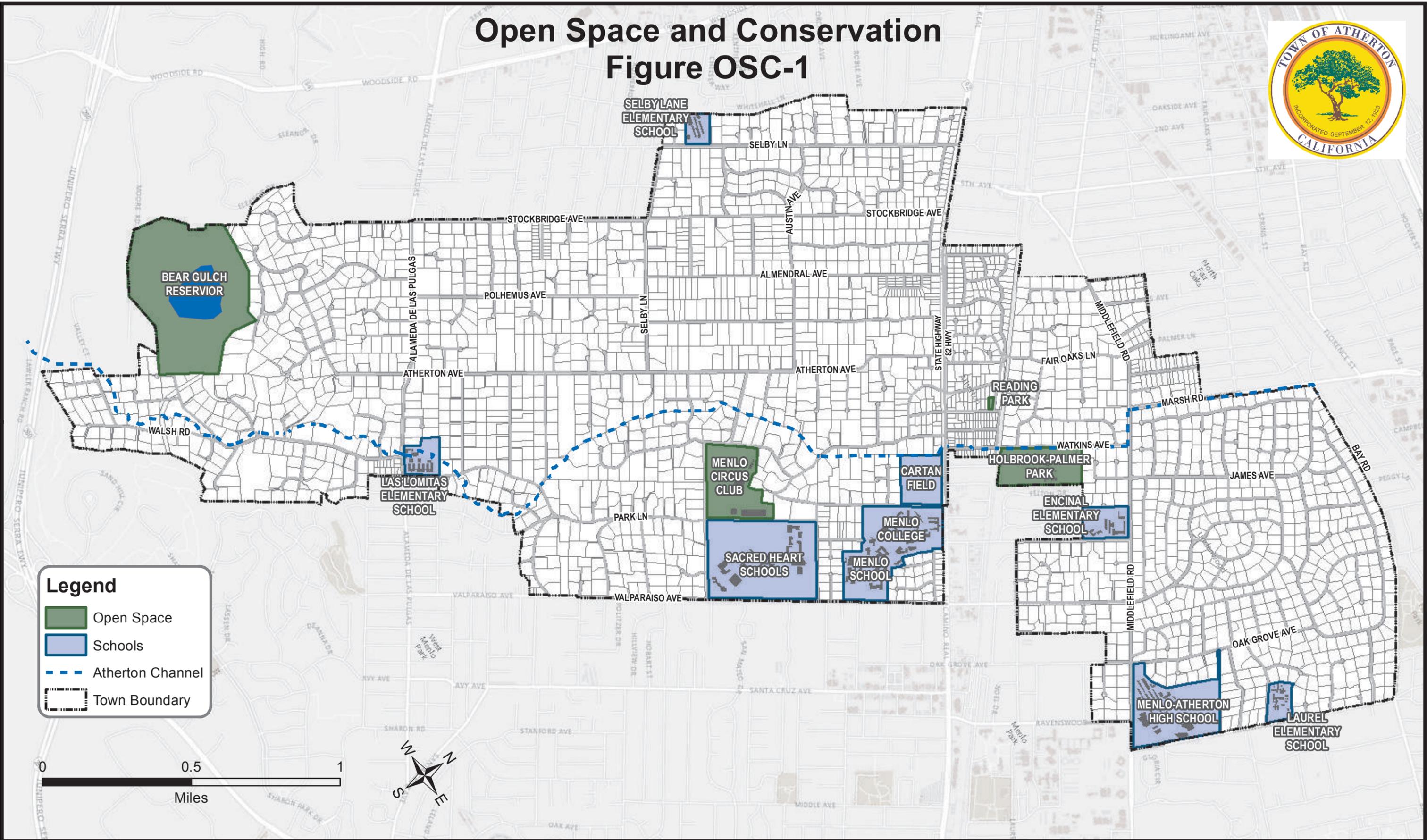
Policy OSC-6.1: Implement the Greenhouse Gas programs in the Atherton Climate Action Plan related to community waste generation. *(From Programs Existing in CAP)*

Insert Open Space and Conservation Diagram

Figure OSC-1

here

Open Space and Conservation Figure OSC-1



General Plan Update - Schedule

Draft 11/9/2017

Oct-17 Nov-17 Dec-17 Jan-18 Feb-18 Mar-18 Apr-18 May-18 Jun-18 Jul-18 Aug-18 Sep-18 Oct-18 Nov-18 Dec-18 Jan-19 Feb-19 Mar-19 Apr-19

Open Space & Conservation																			
Prepare Draft																			
PC Study Session			12/6																
Revise Draft																			
Land Use Element																			
Prepare Draft																			
PC Study Session							4/25												
Revise Draft																			
Circulation																			
Prepare Draft																			
Transportation Consultant																			
PC Study Session								5/23											
Revise Draft																			
Noise																			
Prepare Draft																			
Noise Consultant																			
PC Study Session									6/27										
Revise Draft																			
Community Safety																			
Prepare Draft																			
PC Study Session											8/22								
Revise Draft																			
Community Workshop																			
IS/MND																			
Prepare Draft																			
Planning Commission Hearing																			
City Council Hearing/Adoption																			

- = Prepare Administrative Draft Report
- = Revise Admin. Draft per direction from PC Study Session
- = Consultant Input/Report
- 2/28 = Planning Commission Study Session Date

4.000 OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION ELEMENT

4.100 INTRODUCTION

4.110 Purpose and Content

In order to eliminate duplication, the Open Space and Conservation Elements of the Atherton General Plan have been consolidated into a single document, a procedure authorized by Government Code Sections 65301 and 65302. Programs and policies outlined in the combined Element are to be coordinated with State and Regional open space and conservation policies.

4.120 Relation to other Elements

In addition to being closely related to one another, open space and conservation relate closely to the Land Use and Circulation Elements. Decisions implemented under policies contained in those Elements could significantly impact upon open space and sensitive environmental features.

4.130 Open Space Land Uses

The State Government Code refers to four different categories of open space:

- A. Open space for the preservation of natural resources;
- B. Open space used for the managed production of resources;
- C. Open space for outdoor recreation;
- D. Open space for public health and safety.

4.200 OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

For the most part, open space lands in Atherton fall into categories (A) and (C). Much of the open space utilized for resource preservation is privately held, while Holbrook-Palmer Park is the most substantial publicly held open space used for recreational purposes. Lands which are characterized by cross slopes in excess of 30 percent can be classified into category (D) above.

4.210 Goal

To protect both publicly and privately held lands from deterioration of their rural charm, scenic value and environmental equilibrium.

4.220 Objectives

- 4.221 Preserve presently existing open space, wildlife and vegetation.
- 4.222 Prevent developmental encroachment on open space and sensitive environmental resources.

4.230 Open Space and Conservation Policies

- 4.231 The following policies, in addition to those set forth under open space land use policies in the Land Use Elements, are intended to help guide decision making in regard to open space and conservation impacts in Atherton.
- 4.232 The Town shall endeavor to protect scenic resources, significant stands of natural vegetation, wildlife habitat, public safety and significant archaeological resources, both publicly and privately held.
- 4.233 The Town seeks to preserve the open space characteristics of existing public and private schools, churches, the Circus Club, the California Water Service property and the public parks.
- 4.234 Holbrook-Palmer Park shall serve as the Town’s primary outdoor recreational facility subject to the following conditions:
 - A. The property shall not be used, occupied or operated for commercial or housing purposes except those which are strictly incidental and appropriate to its use as a public recreational park.
 - B. The Park is to be used for the benefit of the citizens of Atherton.
 - C. The Park may not be used for political purposes except those which involve the public affairs of the town of Atherton as a whole.
 - D. The Park may be rented for use by others in accordance with the standards established by the Parks and Recreation Commission.
- 4.235 In addition to Holbrook Palmer Park and the Reading Park, public elementary and high school properties are also available for recreational use.

4.300 ACTION PROGRAM

- 4.310 Trees shall be preserved wherever possible. This policy shall be explicitly considered during the subdivision process.
- 4.320 Minimum lot sizes, setback restrictions, height limitations and sign regulations shall be employed to accomplish open space and conservation objectives.

4.330 The Town shall investigate the potential for cooperative recreational use of existing school site