



City of Dublin
General Plan

Chapter 7

**ENVIRONMENTAL
RESOURCES MANAGEMENT:
CONSERVATION ELEMENT**

7.1 INTRODUCTION

Government Code sec. 65302 (d) requires that conservation elements plan for the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources. The statute lists the following resources that must be included in the Element: water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources. The statute also suggests other resources that may be included such as, reclamation of land and waters, prevention and control of pollution of streams and other waters, regulation of the use of land in stream channels, erosion of soils, beaches and shores, protection of watersheds, and the location, quantity and quality of rock, sand and gravel resources. Finally, the statute specifically requires those portions of the Element that include waters be developed in coordination with the countywide water agency and all district and city agencies that have developed, served, controlled, managed, or conserved water of any type for any purpose within Dublin. Coordination shall include a discussion and evaluation of water supply and demand.

Dublin's Conservation Element addresses the following statutorily required elements: water resources, agriculture and other soils, rivers and streams, and wildlife habitats. Other important resources discussed in this Element are air quality and archaeological and historical resources. Many conservation related resources are also addressed in the context of other Elements. For example, agricultural and other open space uses are discussed in the Parks and Open Space Element (Chapter 3); wastewater disposal and water supply is discussed in the Schools, Public Lands and Utilities Element (Chapter 4); and, soil conditions related to earthquakes and flood hazard from local streams are discussed in the Seismic Safety and Safety Element (Chapter 8). The Technical Supplement may also be consulted for information and background on resource related planning policies for each of these Elements.

Those statutorily required resources that do not occur in the Primary or Extended Planning Areas of Dublin are not discussed. Specifically, Dublin is an inland city which contains no forests, harbors, fisheries or mineral extraction areas.

Air quality and wastewater disposal have been the Tri-Valley's most difficult conservation issues affecting urban growth, even with construction of the Livermore Amador Valley Wastewater Management Association (LAVWMA) pipeline, and significantly improved air quality. The extent of development in eastern Dublin has drawn greater attention to other conservation issues -- conversion of agricultural land to urban uses; loss of open space; hazards posed by development in steep and landslide prone areas; increased runoff; and, erosion and stream siltation. Additionally, the prospect of renewed or intensified air quality and sewage disposal problems accompanies plans approved or under consideration that would result in up to 200,000 jobs in the Tri-Valley.

The planning area includes three zones that are distinct in terms of topography, vegetation, and soils (valley floor, eastern hills and western hills). The urban area within the City's Primary Planning Area that extends eastward along Dublin Boulevard to Tassajara Road forms part of the flat, valley floor. The land east of the Parks Reserve Forces Training Area and Santa Rita Rehabilitation Center and just south of the county line consists of grassy rolling hills with occasional steep slopes. Lastly, the westernmost part of the Planning Area is composed of ridgelines covered primarily by grasslands with oak woodlands on steep slopes and in winding canyons.

7.1.1 WESTERN HILLS

The western hills that form part of the ridgelines extending from Contra Costa County to Santa Clara County, were established as an area of regional significance by a 1980 National Parks Service study. The ridgelines have been the subject of preservation efforts over the years, and also have been protected by the difficulty of development on the steep slopes and ridges. The ridgelines of the western hills are characterized by grazing land and good quality woodland and forest habitats with high natural resource values. Perhaps most important, the western hills form part of a greenbelt that rings the Bay Plain, preventing continuous urban spread.

An open space corridor, centered on the main ridgeline in the Western Extended Planning Area, is included in the General Plan. This open space corridor will incorporate visually-prominent ridgelines, as well as woodland and coastal scrub habitat. A north-south regional trail will provide access to this area for hiking and nature study.

7.1.2 EASTERN HILLS

The eastern hills are not as valuable as the western hills for habitat resources. Productive agricultural soils are likewise limited; the Eastern Extended Planning Area does not include prime agricultural land or farmlands of Statewide importance. At best, the forage produced in the Planning Area is of some local importance. Throughout the northern, central, and eastern portions of the Eastern Extended Planning Area, much of the land had been under Williamson Act contracts that prohibit development for a minimum of ten years while providing tax advantages to landowners. In recent years, a number of landowners have not renewed their contracts, and the lands are no longer in Williamson Act contracts.

7.2 STREAM CORRIDORS AND RIPARIAN VEGETATION

Dublin's Primary and Eastern Extended Planning Areas are located within Livermore Drainage Unit which is one of two major drainage basins in the Alameda Creek Watershed. Of the many streams in the Livermore Drainage Unit, two flow through Dublin's Primary and Eastern Extended Planning Areas – Alamo Creek and Tassajara Creek, respectively. Alamo Creek runs in a north-south direction just west of Dougherty Road; Tassajara Creek also runs in a north-south direction and is located just west of Tassajara Road. Portions of these creeks have been channelized and remaining sections are being improved as a result of subdivision developments.

The Western Extended Planning Area lies within the San Lorenzo Creek Watershed and includes the Palomares Creek and Dublin Creek sub-watersheds. Several significant streams traverse the Western Extended Planning Area including Hollis Canyon and Martin Canyon Creeks in the western hills. For additional information on water courses in Dublin the following documents are available from the City Planning Division:

- Western Dublin Environmental Setting – November 27, 1989
- Western Dublin Final Environmental Impact Report – May 1992
- Eastern Dublin Environmental Setting – November 1988

Eastern Dublin Specific Plan, General Plan Amendment, and Environmental Impact Report – 1994
Extensive areas of riparian vegetation are located along stream courses in the Western Extended Planning Area. This riparian woodland has importance to wildlife in the area. Considerable damage to riparian areas has resulted from intensive grazing.

7.2.1 ALL PLANNING AREAS

A. Guiding Policies

1. Protect riparian vegetation as a protective buffer for stream quality and for its value as a habitat and aesthetic resource.
2. Promote access to stream corridors for passive recreational use and to allow stream maintenance and improvements as necessary, while respecting the privacy of owners of property abutting stream corridors.

B. Implementing Policies

1. Enforce Watercourse Ordinance 52-87 for developed areas of the city.
2. Require open stream corridors of adequate width to protect all riparian vegetation, improve access, and prevent flooding caused by blockage of streams.
3. Require revegetation of creek banks with species characteristic of local riparian vegetation, where construction requires creekbank alteration.

7.2.2 WESTERN EXTENDED PLANNING AREA

A. Guiding Policy

1. While alteration of riparian vegetation will be necessary in some situations, special consideration shall be given to the protection or enhancement of riparian woodland in the Western Extended Planning Area.

7.3 EROSION AND SILTATION CONTROL

7.3.1 ALL PLANNING AREAS

A. Guiding Policies

1. Maintain natural hydrologic systems.
2. Regulate grading and development on steep slopes.

B. Implementing Policies

1. Enforce the requirements of the Municipal Regional Permit for stormwater issued by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board or any subsequent permit as well as Chapter 7 (Public Works) and Chapter 9 (Subdivisions) of the Dublin Municipal Code for maintenance of water quality and protection of stream courses.

2. Review development proposals to insure site design that minimizes soil erosion and volume and velocity of surface runoff.
3. Restrict development on slopes over 30 percent.

7.3.2 WESTERN EXTENDED PLANNING AREA

A. Guiding Policies

1. Maintain natural hydrologic systems. Contain any net increase of runoff on-site or with approved off-site measures.
2. Regulate grading and development on steep slopes, with special concern for potential problems of erosion and siltation.

B. Implementing Policies

1. Require erosion control plans for proposed development. Erosion control plans shall include recommendations for preventing erosion and scour of drainageways, consistent with biological and visual values.
2. In general, restrict areas of steep slopes (more than 30%) to permanent open space, as part of an overall cluster development concept on approved plans. Any development in otherwise restricted areas shall require substantial mitigation which has considerable benefit to the community, in keeping with the standards of General Plan Policy 3.2.2.A.1.
3. Development projects shall comply with the requirements of the Municipal Regional Permit for stormwater issued by the San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board or any subsequent permit as well as Dublin Municipal Code Chapter 7 (Public Works) and Chapter 9 (Subdivisions).

7.4 OAK WOODLANDS

Most of the oak woodland within the Dublin Planning Area is concentrated in the Western Extended Planning Area. In addition to California Live Oaks, other species such as laurel are a vital part of this plant community. This woodland has important visual and biological qualities.

7.4.1 PRIMARY AND EASTERN EXTENDED PLANNING AREAS

A. Guiding Policy

1. Protect oak woodlands.

B. Implementing Policies

1. Require preservation of oak woodlands. Where woodlands occupy slopes that otherwise could be graded and developed, permit allowable density to be transferred to another part of the site. Removal of an individual oak tree may be considered through the project review process.
2. Enact and enforce the Heritage Tree Ordinance.

7.4.2 WESTERN EXTENDED PLANNING AREA

A. Guiding Policies

1. There shall be an emphasis on preservation of oak woodland in the Western Extended Planning Area. Development shall be clustered in grassland areas wherever possible, in order to protect existing trees. However, as part of comprehensive planning for development in this area, some oak woodland may need to be removed. Removal of oaks shall be allowed only after all feasible site planning efforts have been made to preserve trees.
2. Any removed trees shall be replaced, and existing trees to remain shall be protected.

B. Implementing Policies

1. Require effective replacement of existing trees which are scheduled for removal.
2. Require detailed protection measures for trees to remain.

7.5 AIR QUALITY

7.5.1 ALL PLANNING AREAS

A. Implementing Policies

1. Request that the Bay Area Air Quality Management District establish an air quality monitoring station in Dublin.
2. Require an air quality analysis for new development projects that could generate significant air emissions on a project and cumulative level. Air quality analyses shall include specific feasible measures to reduce anticipated air quality emissions to a less-than-significant California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) level.

7.6 AGRICULTURAL LANDS

7.6.1 ALL PLANNING AREAS

A. Guiding Policy

1. Prevent premature urbanization of agricultural lands. (See Open Space policies, Section 7.8)

B. Implementing Policy

1. Approval of urban development shall require findings that the land is suitable for the proposed use and will have adequate urban services and that conversion to an urban use will not have significant adverse effects on adjoining lands remaining under Williamson Act contract.

7.7 ARCHAEOLOGIC AND HISTORIC RESOURCES

7.7.1 ALL PLANNING AREAS

A. Guiding Policies

1. Preserve Dublin's historic structures.

Seven sites in the Primary Planning Area are listed in the California Archaeological Inventory, Northwest Information Center, at Sonoma State University including the church and school on the grounds of the Dublin Heritage Park and Museums. As many as a dozen potentially significant historic and prehistoric sites have been identified in the Eastern Extended Planning Area.

2. Follow State regulations as set forth in Public Resources Code Section 21083.2 regarding discovery of archaeological sites, and Historical Resources, as defined in Section 5020.1 of the Public Resources Code.
3. Preserve the Green Store.

The Green Store is a recognized historical resource and has been used as a church since 1989. This use can remain as long as the landowner(s) wish to continue its operation. The Parks/ Public Recreation designation on the General Plan Land Use Map illustrates the long-term potential for expansion of the Dublin Heritage Park and Museums to include this historic structure and the property it is on and is not intended to affect or change the current church use or its continued operation as a religious land use under a valid conditional use permit.

7.8 OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE / MANAGEMENT

Acquisition of existing open space areas has been accomplished through Planned Developments and subdivision approvals. Since the Primary Planning Area is mostly built out, there will be no additional major areas set aside for open space.

In the Western and Eastern Extended Planning Areas, substantial areas are designated for open space. The Eastern Dublin Specific Plan includes additional information on designated areas of open space and mechanisms for maintenance and management.

In addition, the City's Park and Recreation Master Plan contains information on open space acquisition and maintenance.

7.8.1 ALL PLANNING AREAS

A. Guiding Policy

1. Require open space management and maintenance programs for open space areas established through subdivisions and Planned Development districts. Programs shall include standards to ensure control of potential hazards; appropriate setbacks; and management of the open space so that it produces a positive and pleasing visual image.

B. Implementing Policies

1. Require that land designated and offered as open space in conjunction with development approval be permanently restricted to open space use by recorded map or deed.
2. Require revegetation of cut and fill slopes.
3. Require use of native trees, shrubs and grasses with low maintenance costs in revegetation of cut and fill slopes.
4. Access roads (including emergency access roads), arterial streets and collector streets that must pass through open space areas shall be designed to minimize grading to the maximum extent possible, so as not to damage the ecological and/or aesthetic value and characteristics of the open space area. (See also Implementing Policy 7.8.2.A.1 below.)
5. Prohibit development within designated open space areas except that which is designed to enhance public safety and the environmental setting.
6. Promote inclusion of hiking, bicycling, and/or equestrian trails within designated open space areas.

7.8.2 EASTERN EXTENDED PLANNING AREA

A. Implementing Policy

1. Due to difficult terrain, some damage to ecological and aesthetic values may result from construction of streets and emergency access roads in the Extended Planning Area. These roads shall be designed to incorporate feasible measures which minimize adverse effects on visual and biological resources.

