



# 6 Environment and Sustainability Element



# Environment and Sustainability Element

The Environment and Sustainability Element evaluates environmental, biological, and agricultural resources, air quality, open space, and climate change and sustainability in Ukiah. It establishes policies and actions to protect and manage these resources including an emphasis on climate adaptation and sustainability, to protect the community.

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## 6.1 Open Space

Open space, or any parcel or area of land or water that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open-space use, is abundant in the greater Ukiah Valley region, and the city of Ukiah has additional opportunities for local acquisition and management of open spaces as shown in Figure 6-1. Ukiah has a number of local parks and recreation facilities totaling 260 acres, as well as an 80-acre open-space park called Low Gap Park, managed by Mendocino County. Low Gap Park has an existing network of trails, which extend from Low Gap Park through the hills west of the city. The greater Planning Area for Ukiah includes a number of County and Federal parks including Mill Creek Park (400-acres), and two Federal open space recreation areas: Lake Mendocino Recreation Area (5,110-acres) and Cow Mountain Recreation Area (60,000-acres). Adjacent to Ukiah City Limits, the Russian River provides recreational opportunities for Ukiah residents including swimming, fishing, inner-tubing, and picnicking. There are four access points to the river from the city: the City's Softball Complex, Vichy Spring-Perkins Road crossing, Riverside Park, and Talmage Road crossing.

### Goals and Policies

**ENV-1** *Preserve open space land for the commercial agricultural and productive uses, the protection and use of natural resources, the enjoyment of scenic beauty and recreation, protection of tribal resources, and the protection from natural hazards.*

**ENV-1.1** **Landscaping Compatibility**

The City shall require landscaping in new development to be compatible with preservation and restoration goals of open space management and native vegetation.

**ENV-1.2** **Open Space Management**

The City shall manage and maintain City-owned open spaces to preserve the integrity of these public spaces.

**ENV-1.3** **Open Space and Renewable Energy Production**

The City shall seek, where feasible, to develop renewable energy production within City-owned open space.

**ENV-2** *To maintain and enhance the urban forest to create a sense of urban space and cohesiveness with the surrounding natural environment.*

**ENV-2.1** **Tree Preservation**

The City shall update and maintain City tree inventories to support landmark trees preservation and urban biodiversity, including trees designated for streets and parking lots, and city facilities. The City shall also prepare an Urban Forest Master Plan, review its Tree Management Guidelines and study the feasibility of preparing a Tree Protection Ordinance.



**ENV-2.2 Protect Healthy Trees**

The City shall review new construction and landscaping site plans to ensure that healthy trees are not removed unnecessarily.

**ENV-2.3 Accommodation of Trees along Roadways**

The City shall ensure future roadway plans accommodate existing and new trees without compromising sidewalk accessibility.

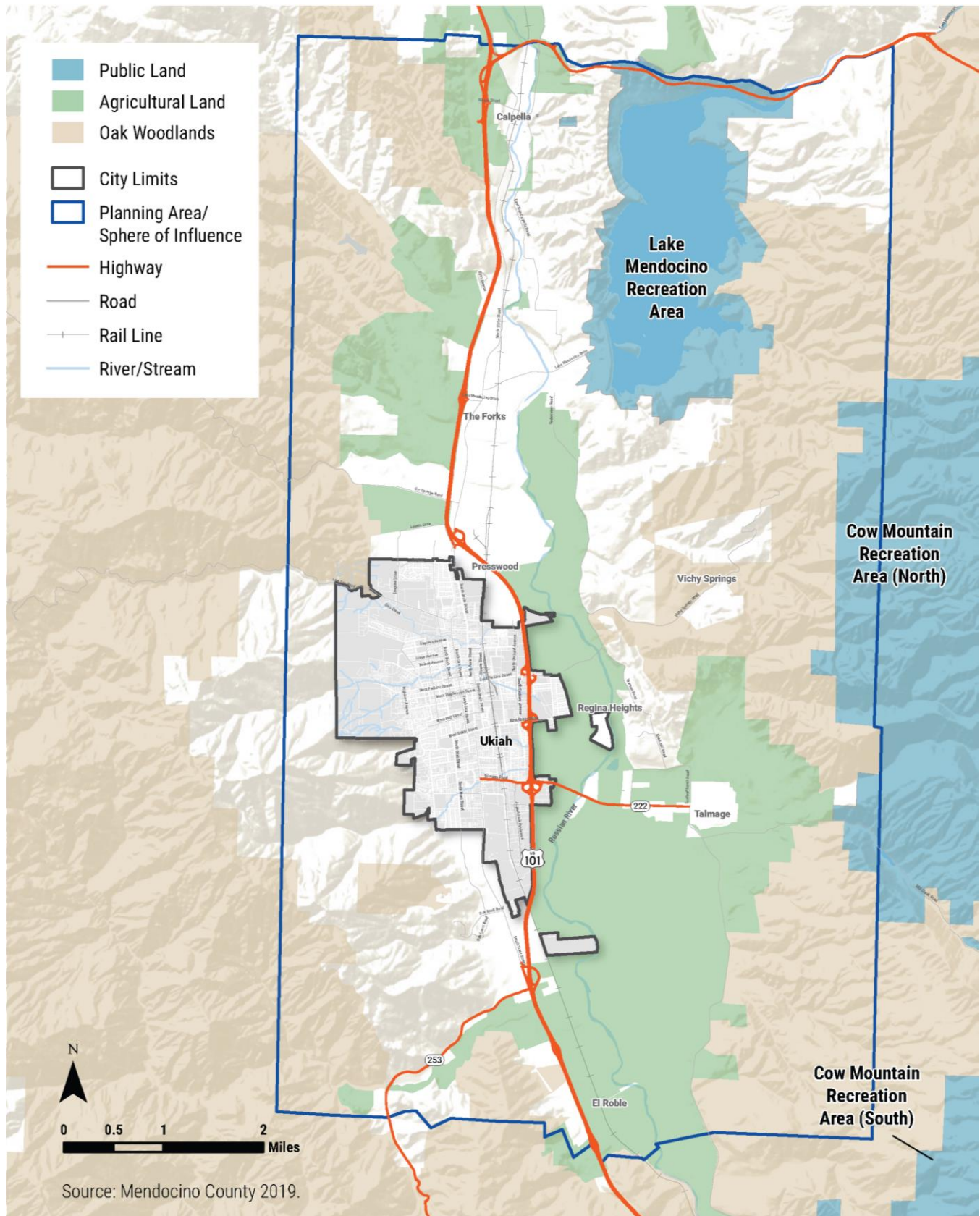
**ENV-2.4 Tree Trimming for Fire Prevention**

The City shall encourage private tree trimming as a fire hazard mitigation.



*For goals and policies relating to parks and recreation uses and designated facilities, please refer to Section 5.7 (Parks and Recreation Facilities) in the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element.*

Figure 6-1 Open Space



## 6.2 Historic-Archeological

The City of Ukiah values preserving its historic and archaeological character. The area has a rich history, from the first seasonal Native American inhabitants to the landmark ranches and buildings of the modern era. The Planning Area includes the City of 10,000 Buddhas two miles east of Ukiah; the Vichy Springs Resort, a California Historical Landmark; and the former Finnish colony in Calpella. The city of Ukiah itself has the Palace Hotel, built in 1891, and completed Historical and Architectural Surveys in 1985 and 1999, identifying a number of local historic and architectural resources.

### Goals and Policies

**ENV-3** *To preserve and protect historic and archaeological resources in Ukiah.*

#### ENV-3.1 Historic Designations

The City shall support the listing of eligible properties, sites, and structures as potential historic designations and their inclusion in the California Register of Historical Resources and National Register of Historic Places.

#### ENV-3.2 Archaeological Resource Impact Mitigation

The City shall ensure appropriate and feasible mitigation for new development that has the potential to impact sites likely to contain archaeological, paleontological, cultural, or tribal resources.

#### ENV-3.3 Protect Archaeological Resources

The City shall require any construction, grading, or other site altering activities cease if cultural, archaeological, paleontological, or cultural resources are discovered during until a qualified professional has completed an evaluation of the site.

#### ENV-3.4 Tribal Consultation

The City shall proactively engage local Native American tribes in the planning process, particularly when matters related to Native American culture, heritage, resources, or artifacts may be affected.

#### ENV-3.5 Educational Outreach

The City shall coordinate with the museum to provide education to the public on how to protect sites and structures.

#### ENV-3.6 City-owned Historic Sites and Structures

The City shall maintain, preserve, and improve City-owned historic structures and sites in an architecturally and environmentally sensitive manner.

#### ENV-3.7 Adaptive Reuse

The City shall encourage appropriate adaptive reuse of historic resources.

## 6.3 Conservation

Ukiah is home to multiple species of native oak trees and other sensitive plant species and habitats. The community strives to conserve the iconic natural resources that are part of the area's identity. The City maintains protections of select species in its Protected Trees code: black oak, blue oak, coast live oak, , interior live oak, oracle oak, Oregon

oak, valley oak, white oak, native California oak, California buckeye, California bay, and California/coast redwood. Riparian habitats are located along the Russian River and provide habitat for a variety of species including, blackberry, wild rose, wild grape, and coyote bush.

The City has programs in place to aid in protecting and enhancing its natural resources, including a Public Spaces Commission that has been created to foster a culture of informed community participation in the planning and implementation of the wise use of public spaces.

The City of Ukiah sources its water primarily from the Russian River and three active groundwater wells. Groundwater recharge is important for ensuring a sustainable water supply for the city and protecting these resources from pollutants. The City has a recycled water system that serves agricultural and landscape irrigation, industrial processes.

## Goals and Policies

**ENV-4** *To conserve and protect the city's natural woodlands and water resources for future generations.*

### ENV-4.1 **Habitat Preservation**

The City shall require new development to preserve and enhance natural areas that serve, or may potentially serve, as habitat for special-status species. Where preservation is not feasible, the City shall require appropriate mitigation.

### ENV-4.2 **Trail Connectivity**

The City shall identify appropriate areas for trails along the ridge line that can be connected to trails in the valley.

### ENV-4.3 **Interconnected Greenways**

The City shall encourage new development to incorporate and facilitate interconnected greenways that support wildlife conservation and recreational purposes.

### ENV-4.4 **River and Creek Preservation**

The City shall work cooperatively with the County and private landowners to develop pedestrian access along creeks flowing through the City where safe and feasible to do so and where it will not cause adverse impacts.

### ENV-4.5 **Recycled Water**

The City shall support efforts to increase recycle water use.

### ENV-4.6 **Groundwater Protection**

The City shall require, for new development that could result in a significant reduction in groundwater recharge area or water quantity, an analysis, prepared by a licensed hydrologist, of the project impacts on groundwater recharge and quality.

### ENV-4.7 **Water Capturing Permits**

The City shall encourage and support residents to have an on-site water capturing system for landscaping and household use.

**ENV-4.8 Mitigate Water Resource Pollutants**

The City shall protect water quality from adverse impacts of urban and agricultural runoff.

**ENV-4.9 Biological Resource Assessment**

The City shall require that new development proposed in or adjacent to ecologically sensitive areas, to complete a site-specific biological resource assessment prepared by a qualified biologist that establishes the existing resources present.

## 6.4 Biological Resources

There are several threatened and endangered species within the greater Ukiah Planning Area including the northern spotted owl, foothill yellow-legged frog, red-bellied newt, chinook salmon, and steelhead trout. The local wildlife and biological resources are critical to the proper functioning of the local ecosystems and the City is committed to protecting and restoring sensitive biological processes and ensuring the overall health of the wildlife community.

### Goals and Policies

**ENV-5** *To ensure the health and viability of the Russian River fisheries and tributaries.*

**ENV-5.1 Local Collaboratives**

The City shall participate in local collaborative efforts to restore and preserve the health of the Russian River as a habitat for riparian species.

**ENV-5.2 Community Education**

The City shall work with schools' education providers, and non-profit community groups, to organize educational trips, cleanup days, and similar activities that promote involvement with and knowledge of the Russian River habitat.

**ENV-5.3 Russian River Riparian Area**

The City shall support the County in maintaining the Russian River as a natural riparian corridor.

**ENV-6** *To preserve and restore creeks, streams, riparian areas, and wetlands.*

**ENV-6.1 Restoration Master Plans**

The City shall establish a Creek and Stream Restoration Master Plan for each creek flowing through the City limits.

**ENV-6.2 Contamination and Sedimentation Prevention**

The City shall require new development to use site preparation, grading, and construction techniques that prevent contamination and sedimentation of creeks and streams.

**ENV-6.3 Waterway Restoration**

The City shall encourage and provide resources to landowners in the city to remove invasive species, plant native plant species, and prevent pollution from entering local creeks and waterways.



**ENV-6.4 Waterway Channelization**

The City shall actively support the use of natural waterways within the city by avoiding any new waterway channelization within the city and collaborating with local and regional agencies to restore channelized waterways where feasible.

**ENV-6.5 Creek Protection**

The City shall require new development located adjacent to stream corridors to include appropriate measures for creek bank stabilization, erosion and sedimentation prevention, and natural creek channel and riparian vegetation preservation.

**ENV-6.6 Erosion Control Plans**

The City shall require new development that requires significant grading near creeks, streams, wetlands, and riparian areas to prepare erosion control plans that address grading practices that prevent soil erosion, loss of topsoil, and drainageway scour, consistent with biological and aesthetic values.

**ENV-6.7 Public Open Space**

The City shall work with Mendocino County and the Public Spaces Commission to identify and select appropriate locations along creek channels, hillsides, and ridgelines that would be appropriate for future acquisition and development as trails, pocket parks, wildlife preserves, or other public open space.

**ENV-6.8 Research and Educational Access**

The City shall work with public and private landowners adjacent to creeks to allow public access to creeks, streams, waterways, and riparian areas for educational and research programs.

## 6.5 Air Quality

The city of Ukiah has generally good air quality when compared with the rest of the state. Air quality monitoring of ozone and particulate matter from 2015 and 2017 reports indicated that Ukiah did not exceed California air quality standards for more than eight days in a year. The only major source of air pollution is from transportation emissions, most notably from diesel particulate matter, with Highway 101 as the primary source. Air pollution from wildfires has also grown in intensity and frequency across the State over the last decade. Such impacts from the wildfires smoke continue to impact and threaten our vulnerable populations resulting in school closings and business shutdowns. It is expected that Ukiah as well as other vulnerable communities to wildfires will experience these worsening events for the foreseeable future.

### Goals and Policies

**ENV-7** *To improve air quality to the benefit of public health, welfare, and reduce air quality impacts with adverse effects on residents' health and wellbeing.*

**ENV-7.1 Transit Oriented Development**

The City shall encourage concentration of new development near areas served by transit access and reduce single-occupancy vehicle dependency.

**ENV-7.2 Active Transportation**

The City shall prioritize pedestrian and bicycle access, infrastructure, and education to encourage increased use of alternative modes of transportation as a means to reduce direct and indirect air contaminant emissions.

**ENV-7.3 Implement Clean Air Plan**

The City shall cooperate with Mendocino County Air Quality Management District (MCAQMD) to implement the Clean Air Plan required by the Clean Air Act, reduce non-attainment pollutants, including PM<sub>10</sub>, PM<sub>2.5</sub>, and ozone, and enforce air quality standards as required by State and Federal statutes.

**ENV-7.4 Public Outreach**

The City shall cooperate with the MCAQMD and Mendocino County Public Health to create public awareness and education programs about air quality issues and safety measures during hazardous air events.

**ENV-7.5 Construction and Operations**

The City shall require that development projects incorporate feasible measures that reduce construction and operational emissions for reactive organic gases, nitrogen oxides, and particulate matter (PM<sub>10</sub> and PM<sub>2.5</sub>).

**ENV-7.6 Wood Burning Fireplace Replacement**

The City shall promote the replacement of non-EPA certified fireplaces and woodstoves and encourage city residents to participate in MCAQMD and NSCAPCD programs, such as the Wood Stove Rebate Program.

**ENV-7.7 City Vehicle and Equipment Fleet**

The City shall continue to purchase low-emission vehicles and use clean alternative fuels as part of their fleet. When possible, the City will replace gas and hybrid vehicles with electric vehicles.

**ENV-7.8 Residential EV Charging Stations**

The City shall encourage new development to install EV charging stations in homes to increase the potential for the public to use zero-emission vehicles, lessening the impacts to air quality through pollution.

**ENV-7.9 Public EV Charging Stations**

The City shall install public charging stations in its commercial areas to provide additional charging options for city visitors.

## 6.6 Climate Change and Sustainability

There are several State laws that work to address the climate crisis in California. In 2016, the State achieved its goal from the target set under Assembly Bill 32 (AB 32), which required California to reduce emissions to 1990 levels by 2020. Senate Bill 32 (SB 32) is the next legislative milestone, requiring a reduction in emissions of 40 percent below 1990 levels by 2030. Through Senate Bill 100 (SB 100) the State has also set an ambitious target of eliminating 100 percent of emissions from energy production by 2045. Lastly, Executive Order B-55-18 aims to reduce the entire state's emissions to net zero by 2045.

To work toward achieving these goals, the City of Ukiah prepared a Draft Climate Action Plan in 2014 which was not formally adopted. The Draft Climate Action Plan outlines the pathway to reducing emissions and meeting the targets

set by the State and City. Ukiah aims to build on this strategy to significantly reduce emissions in compliance with state standards and develop ambitious strategies to achieving carbon neutrality. It is important to note that the City's Electric Utility Department has its own goals for carbon reduction, based on State's requirements, specifically tied to city-owned/operated facilities and the city fleet.

## Goals and Policies

**ENV-8** *To achieve carbon neutrality by or before the year 2045.*

### **ENV-8.1 Carbon Neutrality Resolution**

The City shall adopt a Carbon Neutrality Resolution that provides a foundation for all subsequent climate actions.

### **ENV-8.2 Micro-grid and Small Battery Storage**

The City shall encourage the development of small-scale battery storage and micro grid capacity for storing renewable power for nighttime energy use.

### **ENV-8.3 Municipal Building Electrification Plan**

The City shall adopt an electrification plan for all municipal buildings to convert them to all electric using energy from carbon-free and renewable sources by 2035.

### **ENV-8.4 Municipal Preference of Emissions-Reduced Equipment**

The City shall contract only with providers who use electric-powered equipment where available and feasible for City construction projects or contract services.

### **ENV-8.5 Energy Conservation and Renewable Energy**

The City shall promote energy conservation in municipal facilities by seeking opportunities to install energy efficient fixtures and appliances, solar panels, solar battery storage, and other retrofits to new and existing structures.

**ENV-9** *To become a zero-waste community through responsible procurement, waste diversion, and innovative strategies.*

### **ENV-9.1 Zero Waste**

The City shall promote innovative activities that reduce waste and increase waste diversion, including sourcing products with reusable, recyclable, or compostable packaging; establishing food diversion programs; gasification, and promoting and educating on waste diversion and its importance.

### **ENV-9.2 Household Waste Programs**

The City shall provide convenient, easy-to-use bulky item and household hazardous waste programs that facilitate the reuse and recycling of materials.



## 6.7 Implementation Programs

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p><b>A Hillside Ordinance</b>                      The City shall update its Hillside Ordinance periodically to provides regulations and provisions that balance hillside development and preservation. At a minimum the Hillside Ordinance shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Protect of natural terrain and hillside areas on the west side of Ukiah;</li> <li>• Promote habitat connectivity and scenic viewsheds;</li> <li>• Include development standards for grading, road and trail improvements, density, structure design and placement, clustering, erosion and sediment control, habitat preservation; and</li> <li>• Promote wildfire safety standards and site development regulations.</li> </ul>	ENV – 1.1 ENV – 1.2 ENV – 6.7	Community Development	■				■
<p><b>B Landscaping Standards</b>                      The City shall update the Zoning Code to include landscaping standards to require drought-resistant and native plants.</p>	ENV – 1.1	Community Development	■				
<p><b>C Open Space Management</b>                      Revise the Zoning Code to include standards for maintaining open space and green areas within new developments.</p>	ENV – 1.2	Community Development	■				
<p><b>D Updated Undeveloped Land Inventory</b>                      The City shall annually update the undeveloped lands inventory.</p>	ENV – 1.2	Community Development				■	

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<b>E Prepare an Urban Forest Master Plan</b> The City shall prepare an Urban Forest Master Plan that includes the types of trees appropriate for Ukiah and locations where the city would receive the greatest benefits of new trees. This plan should include trees within commercial and residential areas, as well as those at city parks and facilities. This plan shall be updated every five years.	ENV – 2.1	Community Development  Public Works  Community Services			■		
<b>F Tree Protection Ordinance</b> The City shall review it's Tree Management Guidelines and study the feasibility of preparing a Tree Protection Ordinance.	ENV – 2.1 ENV – 2.2	Community Development			■		
<b>G Historic Structure Preservation Policy and Architectural Inventory</b> The City shall update the Historic Structure Preservation policy and architectural resource inventory in collaboration with the Mendocino County Historical Society to focus on preservation of identified historic and architectural resources, while also streamlining development/demolition of older, non-resource structures.	ENV – 3.1	Community Development		■			
<b>H Cultural and Historic Registry</b> The City shall update the list of cultural and historic resources worthy of nomination to state or national preservation lists.	ENV – 3.1	Community Development	■				



Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p><b>I Historic Preservation Ordinance</b> The City shall adopt a Historic Archaeological Preservation Ordinance to review permanent changes to the exterior or setting of designated historic or impacts to Archaeological resources. Among other topics, the Ordinance should address the following: archaeological resource impact avoidance, new development in historically-sensitive neighborhood, compatibility of energy conservation retrofitting, design review standards for new structures replacing demolished historic structures, and requirements for preservation of records and artifacts from demolished historic structures.</p>	<p>ENV – 3.1 ENV – 3.5 ENV – 3.6 ENV – 3.7</p>	<p>Community Development</p>		■			
<p><b>J Water Conservation Guidelines</b> The City shall prepare guidelines for drought period water conservation strategies for residential zones.</p>	<p>ENV – 4.5 ENV – 4.6 ENV – 4.7</p>	<p>Community Development  Public Works</p>	■				

Programs	Implements Which Policy(ies)	Responsible Supporting Department(s)	2022 – 2025	2026 – 2030	2031 – 2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p><b>K Creek and Stream Protection Zone Establishment for New Development</b> The City shall establish creek and stream protection zones for waterways that extend a minimum of 30 feet (measured from the top of a bank and a strip of land extending laterally outward from the top of each bank), with wider buffers where significant habitat areas or high potential wetlands exist. The City shall prohibit development within a creek and stream protection zones, except as part of greenway enhancement, including habitat conservation, bike and walking paths, wildlife habitat, and native plant landscaping). City approval is required for the following activities within the creek and stream protection zones.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Construction, alteration, or removal of any structure;</li> <li>2. Excavation, filling, or grading;</li> <li>3. Removal or planting of vegetation (except for removal of invasive plant species); or</li> <li>4. Alteration of any embankment.</li> </ol>	<p>ENV – 6.1 ENV – 6.3 ENV – 6.6</p>	<p>Community Development  Public Works</p>		■			
<p><b>L Erosion Prevention Program</b> The City shall revise the Zoning Code to include design standards for new development that require riparian habitat integration into project design as a means of avoiding potential impacts of river sedimentation and lessening the effects of erosion.</p>	<p>ENV – 6.1 ENV – 6.2 ENV – 6.4 ENV – 6.5 ENV – 6.6</p>	<p>Community Development</p>		■			
<p><b>M Adopt a Municipal Climate Action Plan (CAP)</b> The City shall adopt a municipal Climate Action Plan to achieve carbon neutrality for all municipal operations and meet State and City GHG emission reduction goals.</p>	<p>ENV – 8 ENV – 8.1 ENV – 8.3 ENV – 9.1 PFS – 3 (and supporting policies)</p>	<p>Community Development</p>	■				



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