

AGRICULTURE, CONSERVATION and OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Principals:

- That resources such as prime capability soils are highly productive whether for agricultural purposes, watershed or natural habitat.
- Resources that are irretrievable and/or irreplaceable need to be protected and preserved.
- Individuals and the community have a responsibility to future generations as well as to wildlife to preserve and protect finite natural resources.
- Resources lands contribute to overall public health, safety and welfare beyond provision of basic necessities such as food, fiber and livelihood.
- Land Use and urban development shall be managed and limited to that which can be sustained by the available resources and serviced by the circulation and other infrastructure systems.

AGRICULTURE OBJECTIVES and POLICIES:

Ag1 Avoid and or mitigate loss of prime farmland soils and conserve non-prime Agriculture use and natural resource lands.

Ag1-1 Designate prime farmland soils that are not predominately committed to non-Agricultural development as Agriculture (Ag) and/or Agriculture Preserve (AgP), whether or not in current agricultural productive use.

Ag1-1.1 Prime Farmland Soils shall include all land, whether a single parcel or contiguous parcels, that if irrigated, qualifies for rating as Class I or Class II in the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service land use capability classification whether or not the land is actually irrigated, provided that irrigation is feasible. (This definition is derived from the Local Government Reorganization Act of 2000 as reorganized and amended in 2000. Section 56064(a)). Prime farmland soils shall also include farmland of Statewide importance as identified in the USDA, Natural Resources Conservation Services, outlined in the Land Inventory and Monitoring (LIM) Project Soil Survey for San Luis Obispo County, California, Coastal Part, September 1984.

Ag1-1.2 Public facilities are permitted on agricultural and natural resource land when required by health, safety, or welfare of the public.

Ag1-1.3 Either Agriculture or Agriculture Preserve zoning are consistent with the Agriculture classification of the plan.

Ag1-2 Designate as Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) or County Rural Lands all non-prime Ag lands with important natural resource or open space values that the community intends to conserve.

- Ag1-2.1 Areas with a C/OS designation shall be subject to special measures and/or programs designed to conserve natural resources and protect the community from their loss, including measures or programs that may be developed subsequent to adoption of this General Plan Update.
- Ag1-3 Support existing programs and develop strategies to retain areas of farmland soils for agricultural use, and other Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) areas in a natural, undeveloped state.
 - Ag1-3.1 Encourage Williamson Act participation and acquisition of Agricultural Conservation Easements by agricultural landowners. An inventory of parcels under Williamson Act contract and those with easements within the City shall be maintained by the Community Development Department and the status of those contracts/easements reported to the Planning Commission and City Council. The City's objective shall be 100% of either Williamson Act enrollment of qualified parcels or agricultural conservation easement acquisition. The City's aim shall be to maintain contiguity of Ag and C/OS parcels and avoid fragmentation of areas having prime farmland soils or non-prime Conservation/Open Space designation.
 - Ag1-3.2 Encourage dedication of conservation easements over parcels having Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) designation. An inventory of conservation easements and similar restrictions within the City shall be maintained by the Community Development Department and reported annually to the Planning Commission and City Council. The City's objective shall be to maintain 100% of the Conservation/Open Space designation under interim or permanent open space or conservation easements.
- Ag1-4 Establish and apply a significance criterion (threshold of significance) for CEQA analysis, as provided by CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.7, that considers loss of prime farmland soils as a significant adverse environmental impact.
 - Ag1-4.1 Loss of prime farmland soils shall refer to their unavailability for agricultural use. Loss may occur through natural causes or development such as coverage (e.g., paving, construction of buildings, etc.), or conversion to urban/suburban use (including residential yards/gardens and recreational areas). Cessation of agricultural use shall not constitute loss so long as the parcel remains fallow or is allowed to revert to a natural undeveloped state. Site improvements that are intended to support agricultural operations - such as grading, irrigation or drainage facilities, unpaved roads, or farm buildings and structures -- shall not constitute loss so long as the improvements do not substantially diminish the capability of agricultural operations on the parcel or within the area and the improvements are directly related to agricultural production on the site.
 - Ag1-4.2 Possible mitigation for loss of areas having prime farmland soils may include permanent protection of prime farmland soils at a ratio of at least 1:1 and up to 2:1 with regard to the acreage of land removed from the capability for agricultural use. Permanent protection may involve,

but is not limited to, dedication of a perpetual agriculture or conservation easement or other effective mechanism to ensure that the area chosen as mitigation shall not be subject to loss of its prime farmland soils. Suitability of location shall be determined by the City Council. The aim shall be to protect and preserve prime farmland soils primarily within and contiguous to City boundaries, secondly within the Urban Land Use Element area, and thirdly within the larger Arroyo Grande Valley and La Cienega Valley within the Area of Environmental Concern. Other potential mitigation measures for loss of areas having prime farmland soils include payment of in-lieu fees or such other mitigation acceptable to the City Council.

Ag1-4.3 Since prime farmland soils occur naturally and are geographically specific, the only means for mitigation to less than significant is preservation. The City's aim shall be to maintain contiguity of Ag and C/OS parcels and avoid fragmentation of areas having prime farmland soils. The City shall avoid development of prime farmland soil areas by directing growth potential to more suitable urban locations. Only after the imposition of available mitigation and consideration of alternatives to avoid the proposed action, may the City Council approve development on prime farmland soils subject to overriding considerations as permitted by California Government Code Section 15093.

Ag1-5 Conserve topsoil by encouraging cooperation between property owners, agriculture operators and growers, agencies and organizations that will result in effective soil conservation practices.

Ag1-5.1 Assure that city streets, drainage systems and other infrastructure do not adversely impact agricultural lands and that the roads, drainage and utility systems are properly maintained.

Ag1-5.2 Actively encourage conservation of soil resources.

Ag1-5.2.1 Make available to area farmers, in conjunction with Natural Resource Conservation Service, voluntary guidelines for farming operations on erodible soils.

Ag1-5.3 Minimize flood damage potential to farmland.

Ag1-5.3.1 Assure that urban developments incorporate adequate runoff and drainage detention and flood control.

Ag2 Allocate and conserve ground and surface water resources for agricultural use and minimize potential Fringe Area and urban development that would divert such resources from agriculture.

Ag2-1 Maintain water resources for production agriculture, both in quality and in quantity, so as to prevent the loss of agriculture due to competition for water with urban development.

- Ag2-1.1 Minimize County Fringe Area and urban development that would adversely affect: (1) water supplies and quality or (2) groundwater recharge capability needed for agricultural use.
- Ag2-1.2 Support efforts to provide needed surface and/or ground water resources for agricultural irrigation to those properties zoned Agriculture, Very Low Density and Low Density.
- Ag2-2 Identify groundwater recharge areas that are pertinent to agricultural water usage.
 - Ag2-2.1 For purposes of this policy, 'groundwater recharge area' refers to all areas with sufficient soil permeability or appropriate geologic structure such that surface water penetrates to one or more subterranean aquifers that are currently used or could reasonably be used in the future for agricultural irrigation.
 - Ag2-2.2 The location and suitability of groundwater recharge areas shall be identified in CEQA analyses and considered with regard to impacts on agricultural land uses.
- Ag2-3 Ensure that urban land use and Residential Rural or Suburban development projects result in no net decrease in groundwater recharge and no adverse effect on agricultural water supplies.
 - Ag2-3.1 Require mitigation measures that result in no net decrease in groundwater recharge.
- Ag2-4 Detention, retention and recharge basins shall be designed as open space and habitat resources in addition to flood control and other functions associated with a development. Their extent and engineering shall permit establishment of vegetative growth and utilization for passive recreation or compatible agricultural uses. The design of such Facilities shall include specific operation and maintenance programs that ensure that the capacity is not reduced.
- Ag2-5 Encourage water conservation by both agricultural and urban water users.
 - Ag2-5.1 Require water-conserving design in urban development proposals.
 - Ag2-5.2 Distribute irrigation standards for urban area agricultural uses.

Ag3 Current acreage of agricultural uses within Arroyo Grande's Area of Environmental Concern shall be maintained.

- Ag3-1 Designate all lands currently in agricultural use, and vacant lands having been in agricultural use for at least six (6) months within the past ten (10) years, as Agriculture (Ag) unless otherwise classified and partially developed for non-Agricultural uses.
 - Ag3-1.1 Agricultural use shall include grazing by domesticated animals (e.g. horses, cattle, sheep, goats, etc) or other animals (e.g. buffalo, ostrich, deer, etc.) managed for commercial or conservation purposes; tending

of animals (e.g. chickens, rabbits, etc.) for commercial products (e.g., eggs, meat, fur) or for conservation purposes (e.g., wildlife refuge); cultivation of food crops intended for human or animal consumption, including products requiring substantial processing after harvest; cultivation of flowers, trees or ornamental flora, including landscaping materials; active management of orchards or vineyards; or any other activity where the soil and climate provide an essential component of commercial productivity.

- Ag3-1.2 Commercial value and significance with regard to agricultural use shall refer to the purpose of the activity rather than to any particular economic threshold. The criterion is whether the activity is pursued with the intent to sell agricultural products, directly or indirectly and whether profitable or not. Activity pursued for personal consumption or pleasure (e.g., keeping a horse for family riding, a goat for household milk, or a small vineyard for home vinting) does not qualify as an agricultural use.
 - Ag3-1.3 Agricultural land shall encompass parcels with agricultural uses and one or more residential structures and/or outbuildings designed to shelter or contain animals or store agricultural products or equipment and supplies.
 - Ag3-1.4 Parcels with no agricultural uses, of a primarily residential nature, shall be considered residential. Parcels with no agricultural uses, which contain uses related to and supportive of agricultural operations, shall be considered agricultural.
 - Ag3-1.5 Vacant or undeveloped agricultural land shall refer to fallow cropland, grazing land or land supporting other agricultural uses as identified in AG3-1.1, that is not in productive use at the time of any designation action or re-designation request.
- Ag3-2 Outside the City limits and within Arroyo Grande's Area of Environmental Concern, designate those lands identified in San Luis Obispo County's General Plan as Agriculture, which are currently in agricultural use or have been in agricultural use for at least six (6) months within the past ten (10) years, as Agriculture (Ag).
- Ag3-2.1 County designation shall be as determined as of December 15, 1998, the date of adoption by the Board of Supervisors, of the County's *Agriculture & Open Space Element*.
 - Ag3-2.2 Should landowners of parcels in this area request consideration for inclusion within the City's Sphere of Influence and/or annexation to the City of Arroyo Grande, the request shall be evaluated based on the City's criteria for Agriculture designation and zoning, and be subject to all policies and regulations pertaining to that use.
- Ag3-3 Agricultural land shall be considered as two sub-types: Prime and non-prime. Because of soil and slope conditions, and non-expandable nature of these areas, prime Agriculture areas shall have the highest priority for protection from conversion to urban uses.

- Ag3-3.1 Prime Agriculture shall comprise what are commonly referred to as "bottom lands" within the Arroyo Grande Valley, Huasna Valley, Cienega Valley and Los Berros Valley. These are typically flat, irrigated, and in intensive crop production.
- Ag3-3.2 Non-prime areas shall comprise what are commonly referred to as "grass lands" on hillsides and sloped areas generally southeast, east and north of the urban area. These are typically non-irrigated and support grazing or dry-land crops.
- Ag3-4 Encourage the expansion of agricultural land uses.
 - Ag3-4.1 Encourage requests for re-classification of lands in Residential Rural and Residential Suburban and/or Urban land use districts to the Agriculture district.
- Ag3-5 All Ag-designated lands shall be considered 'Agricultural Preserve' for Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) purposes and eligible to enter into Williamson Act contracts to the extent that statutory qualifications are satisfied. The City shall encourage agricultural conservation easements for lands that are not eligible for Williamson Act contracts.
 - Ag3-5.1 Promote Williamson Act contracts, or agricultural conservation easements, on Ag-designated properties within the City limits and in the City's Area of Environmental Concern. The City's aim shall be 100% participation of qualified Ag-designated properties that are otherwise not protected in perpetuity.
 - Ag3-5.2 Encourage the County to support participation in the Williamson Act program by Ag-designated properties within the Area of Environmental Concern under jurisdiction of the County. The City's aim shall be 100% participation of qualified Ag-designated properties that are otherwise not protected in perpetuity.
- Ag3-6 Encourage lot mergers and consolidations, within the Ag district, and among properties seeking inclusion into the Ag district, or meet minimum parcel size requirements for Williamson Act participation and City standards for Agriculture uses, and encourage joint participation in linked agricultural conservation easements.
 - Ag3-6.1 Establish incentives for lot mergers and consolidations. The City's aim shall be 100% of Ag-designated properties to be qualified for Williamson Act participation and compliant with City standards, or subject to agricultural conservation easements.
- Ag3-7 Where lot mergers and consolidations are impractical, encourage the establishment and maintenance of small-scale agricultural uses, specialty crops, and specialized animal facilities.
 - Ag3-7.1 Discourage rural residences as the primary use on existing small Ag designated parcels.

- Ag3-7.2 Advise owners of legally non-conforming Ag parcels that City policy promotes continued agricultural use including specialty crops and right-to-farm adjoining Ag properties.
- Ag3-8 Encourage the establishment and succession of agricultural usage.
 - Ag3-8.1 Cooperate with the County Agricultural Commissioner and Farm Advisors to distribute information encouraging establishment of agricultural uses and conversion to higher value crops to preserve Agriculture and conserve Conservation/Open Space lands.
- Ag3-9 Discourage subdivision of Ag designated property.
 - Ag3-9.1 The minimum parcel size for new land division of Ag designated parcels that are irrigated shall be 20 acres.
 - Ag3-9.2 The minimum parcel size for new land division of Ag designated parcels that are non-irrigated shall be 40 acres.
- Ag3-10 Where land division of an Ag designated property is proposed, the resulting parcels shall be designed to ensure the long-term protection of agricultural resources.
 - Ag3-10.1 Refer proposed divisions of Agriculture lands to the County Agricultural Commissioner for review and advisory comment as to whether the proposed parcels would be sustainable as agricultural parcels.
 - Ag3-10.2 Require that Ag parcels meet Williamson Act eligibility standards and enter into Williamson Act contracts if not otherwise protected in perpetuity.
 - Ag3-10.3 Require that divisions of Ag designated parcels include covenants, conditions and restrictions (CC&Rs) notifying subsequent owners that land is an Agricultural reserve and that the City supports its 'Right-to-Farm' Ordinance.
 - Ag3-10.4 Restrict the building sites of a subdivided Ag parcel to no more than 1 acre.
 - Ag3-10.5 Accessory buildings or structures shall be sited to minimize disruption of agricultural operations, avoid conversions of productive farmland, and take maximum advantage of existing infrastructure.
 - Ag3-10.6 Maintain existing irrigation infrastructure.
- Ag3-11 Allow residential density of no more than two primary dwelling units on each legal parcel of 20 acres or larger within the Ag category. Accessory units for farmworker housing at a higher density may be allowed on parcels greater than 20 acres subject to obtaining a conditional use permit. Allow no more than one primary dwelling unit on each parcel of less than 20 acres; exceptions may be allowed for farmworker housing located on non-prime Agriculture designated lands subject to obtaining a conditional use permit.

Ag3-12 Except as provided below, permit only Ag-related uses in areas designated Agriculture (Ag).

Ag3-12.1 Ag-related shall mean activities and structures associated with the growing and/or production of agricultural products for income.

Ag3-12.2 Incidental activities (such as roadside stands or bed-and-breakfast/farm stay accommodations) may be permitted, so long as those activities are related to the primary use, are clearly secondary to agricultural use, and that all building sites in the aggregate compose less than 1 acre of conforming (or less than 10% of the non-conforming) parcel size and are situated such that they do not impinge upon the agricultural activities of the parcel and/or the Ag district.

Ag3-13 Discourage conversion of land within Ag designated areas to non-Agriculture uses.

Ag3-13.1 Cooperate with the County, special districts, and agricultural organizations/agencies to establish urban service and urban reserve lines that will protect agricultural land and stabilize agricultural uses within the Area of Environmental Concern.

Ag3-14 Consider re-classification of an Ag parcel (or contiguous set of parcels), only if and when the parcel or set of such parcels is less than minimum size (e.g. legally non-conforming as to area) and is isolated from other agricultural uses.

Ag3-14.1 "Isolated" shall refer to a parcel or set of parcels being predominately separated from other nearby Agriculture areas, or predominately surrounded by existing non-agricultural uses, such that it lacks contiguity with or connection to other areas of existing or potential agricultural use.

Ag3-14.2 In cases considered for conversion, the parcel(s) shall be adequately served by appropriate infrastructure and any development application shall be subject to environmental analysis as referenced in AOSCE Policy Ag1-4.

Ag3-15 Re-designation requests shall avoid leapfrogging of parcels in agricultural use that would result in other Ag parcels being widowed, including uses within County jurisdiction as well as uses within City.

Ag4 Support continued economic viability of agriculture as a specialized site-specific industry.

Ag4-1 Support increased productivity and enhancement of markets and/or Ag uses, such as vineyards, in appropriate areas, especially in locations that would retain Ag. Lands and/or improve or reestablish agricultural productivity.

Ag4-1.1 Continue support of the Farmers Market in Arroyo Grande on a regular basis in one or more appropriate locations.

Ag4-2 Support the development of new techniques and new practices in agricultural production.

- Ag4-2.1 Favorably consider proposals for agricultural uses and practices that are compatible with surrounding uses.
 - Ag4-2.2 Minimize the burden to agricultural operators of any review and permitting requirements by the City.
 - Ag4-2.3 Affirm the City's Right to Farm Ordinance and its extension to new techniques and practices.
- Ag4-3 Provide incentives for landowners to maintain land in productive agricultural uses.
- Ag4-3.1 Encourage the establishment of small-scale agricultural uses, specialty crops, and specialized livestock facilities other than processing on existing small land parcels in the Ag category.
- Ag4-4 Allow incidental visitor-serving and incidental retail use and facilities in Ag designated areas that are beneficial to the agricultural industry and are compatible with long-term agricultural use of the land. Such uses shall be clearly incidental and secondary to the primary agricultural uses of the site, and meet the criteria of Ag3-12.2.
- Ag4-4.1 Visitor-serving uses may include tourism facilities such as bed-and-breakfast/farm stay lodging or food-serving establishments. Such uses shall be of a small-scale nature with discrete signage.
 - Ag4-4.2 Incidental retail uses may involve on-site, area-specific or product-specific promotion and marketing of agricultural products, such as wine tasting at a vineyard. Such uses shall be of a small-scale nature with discrete signage.
 - Ag4-4.3 Locate visitor-serving and incidental retail uses on the least productive agricultural lands unless there are no other feasible locations
- Ag4-5 Promote the establishment of service commercial type uses related to the support of local agricultural production outside Ag areas.
- Ag4-5.1 Locate Ag related service commercial uses in commercial or industrial districts with convenient access to areas of agricultural production. Service commercial type uses may include, but are not limited to, farm equipment rental and repair services, veterinary services, and bulk supplies.
- Ag4-6 Promote the establishment of compatible industrial facilities that support local agricultural production, processing, packing, and related industries.
- Ag4-6.1 Compatible industrial facilities include facilities that are fully enclosed and do not generate dust, odors or other emissions that may adversely affect residents or workers. Such facilities may include small-scale wineries, breweries, ice manufacturing, and other facilities as evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Ag4-6.2 Incompatible agricultural facilities of an industrial nature may include poultry operations, hog farms, feed lots, feed and grain mills, meat-packing plants, food processing plants, produce packing sheds, and certain types of transportation facilities for agricultural products and supplies, as evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

Ag4-6.3 Locate agriculturally related industrial facility uses in commercial or industrial districts with convenient access to areas of agricultural production.

Ag5 Promote coexistence of agricultural and urban land uses.

Ag5-1 Affirm the Right-to-Farm Ordinance.

Ag5-1.1 Extend Right-to-Farm provisions to new areas that are adjoining lands approved for addition to the Agriculture district.

Ag5-2 Establish criteria for buffers between Agriculture land use designations and non-Agriculture land use designations.

Ag5-2.1 Buffers shall be established on all parcels proposed for non-agricultural development adjacent to agricultural uses, when the property is exposed to agricultural operations.

Ag5-2.2 No portion of any new residential structure within a non-Agricultural land use designation shall be located closer than 100 feet from the site of agricultural operations within an Agricultural land designation. Greater distances may be required based upon site-specific circumstances, to include consideration of established or existing farming operations or practices.

Ag5-2.3 The buffer area shall be noticed and/or fenced and landscaped in such manner to discourage human and domestic animal movement between the urban and agricultural areas and to screen urban uses from dust and wind-borne materials.

Ag5-2.4 The buffer area shall contain a minimum 20 feet depth of landscaping. Plantings shall be sufficiently dense and mature to provide aerosol protection within the first year of establishment. Greater landscaping depth may be required based upon site-specific circumstances, to include consideration of established or existing farming operations or practices.

Ag5-2.5 Buffer standards associated with non-residential structures and roadways shall account for the type of use, building orientation and building and roadways design.

Ag5-3 Land use conversions shall not adversely affect existing or potential agriculture production on adjacent lands designated Ag.

Ag5-4 Design special assessments that are equitable with regard to benefits, such that agricultural landowners are not disproportionately assessed for services that accrue

to urban residents more than farmers or ranchers. Examples of such urban services include fire protection, park and recreation services and neighborhood street lighting.

Ag5-5 Minimize trespassing into agricultural areas, through signage, access restrictions, fines and other available means

Ag5-6 Establish a grievance or arbitration committee to mediate land use disputes between farmers and adjoining non-farm residents.

Ag 6 Agriculture classification shall include minimum development standards:

Ag6-1 Ag zoning classifications shall prescribe minimum parcel sizes of 20-acres for cultivated, irrigated and/or prime agricultural land, and 40 acres for non-cultivated, non-irrigated and/or non-prime agricultural lands.

Ag6-2 Ag Zoning classifications shall allow 1 dwelling unit per 10 acres and accessory structures provided all buildings comply with Ag 3-10.4, Ag 3-10.5 and Ag 3-11.

CONSERVATION and OPEN SPACE OBJECTIVES and POLICIES

C/OS1 Protect visually accessible scenic resources.

C/OS1-1 Identify and protect scenic resources and view sheds associated with them

C/OS1-1.1 For purposes of this policy, a 'scenic resource' may refer to agricultural land, open spaces, hillsides, ridgelines, canyons, valleys, landmark trees, woodlands, wetlands, streambeds and banks, as well as aspects of the built environment that are of a historic nature, or unique to the City, or contribute to the rural, small town character of the City.

C/OS1-1.2 For purposes of this policy, a 'view shed' refers to locations from which a scenic resource is visible. Such locations may be privately owned but generally accessible to the public. Public vantage points, such as travel paths (roadways, trails) or public facilities (schools, parks, etc) are especially important view sheds to maintain.

C/OS1-1.3 Establish designated scenic corridors along public roads and highways that have unique or outstanding scenic attributes, such as views of prominent hills, mountains or canyons; views of stands of trees or wildflowers; views of the Pacific Ocean or streams.

C/OS1-1.4 Locate structures, roads and grading on portions of a site so as to minimize visual impact. Locate developments below prominent ridgelines and hilltops such that they are not silhouetted against the sky.

C/OS1-1.5 Use natural landforms and vegetation to screen development.

C/OS1-1.6 Minimize signs, especially freestanding signs. Secure removal of non-conforming signs within scenic corridors as part of discretionary development projects.

C/OS 1-1.7 Prohibit off-premise advertising signs in all Agriculture, Conservation/Open Space, and Residential designated areas of the City and planning area.

C/OS1-2 Identify unique landforms and designate them as Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) to require or encourage their protection, conservation and/or preservation.

C/OS2 Safeguard important environmental and sensitive biological resources contributing to healthy, functioning ecosystem.

C/OS2-1 Designate all streams and riparian corridors as Conservation/Open Space (C/OS).

C/OS2-1.1 'Creeks' and 'riparian corridors' shall include buffer area corresponding at least to edge of riparian habitat and/or creek bank.

C/OS2-1.2 Preserve stream and riparian corridors in their natural state, except where necessary for flood control, periodic maintenance, creekbank protection, and creek restoration consistent with State and Federal permits. Concrete channels and underground piping of creeks and drainages shall be minimized and allowed if it is determined by the City Council to be necessary for public health, safety and welfare. Bridges are preferred over arched or piped culverts.

C/OS2-1.3 Where feasible, maintain a development setback of 25 – 50 feet from the top of stream bank or edge of riparian habitat depending on slope, habitat and floodplain characteristics. Locate development outside the setback.

C/OS2-1.4 Creekside trails may be designed to integrate with stream and riparian corridor protection, and implement mitigation measures including those for erosion control, drainage and vegetation management and allowed within building setback if it is not feasible to place the trail outside of the setback area.

C/OS2-1.5 Creeks and riparian vegetation and the natural hydrological system and the existing or potential ecological function of creeks shall be evaluated in accordance with CEQA within 100 feet of the Top of Bank or upland edge of riparian vegetation, whichever is greater, within which various setbacks and other measures may be designed and implemented in accordance with City codes with the objective of protecting the environmentally sensitive creek habitats.

C/OS2-1.6 Plan, design, and develop sites to: Protect scenic resources, water quality and natural creekside habitat, including opportunities for wildlife habitation, rest, and movement. Further the restoration of damaged or degraded habitat, especially where a continuous riparian habitat corridor can be established.

- Allow for natural changes that may occur within the creek corridor;

- Maintain predevelopment site hydrology by using site design techniques that store, infiltrate, evaporate, or detain runoff according to the City Drainage Master Plan or any applicable Site Design Guidelines for Storm Water Quality and Water Conservation as amended;
- Protect areas that provide important water quality benefits or are particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss;
- Limit impervious area by design and the use of best management practices;
- Limit land disturbance activities, such as clearing and grading and cut and fill, to reduce erosion, sediment loss, and soil compaction; and
- Preserve natural drainage features and vegetation to the extent possible.

- C/OS2-1.7 Incentive programs and creek management resources shall be developed to assist property owners in protecting creek corridors.
- C/OS2-1.8 Property in the vicinity of creeks is considered Archaeologically Sensitive due to the likelihood of previous settlement patterns and known cultural sensitivity of creek areas. Require Cultural Resources Surveys for all discretionary projects in the vicinity of creeks.
- C/OS2-1.9 Culverting or channelization for existing open creeks should not occur unless there is strong evidence that there is no other means to prevent erosion of foundations of other existing structures.
- C/OS2-1.10 Coordinate through a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) agreement with other watershed jurisdictions, groups, and stakeholders and other interested parties to develop and implement public education programs and water quality enhancement activities and provide technical assistance to minimize storm water pollution. Use watershed planning approaches to resolve water quality problems.
- C/OS2-1.11 Design, construct, and maintain City facilities, roads, bridges, drainage and other facilities to minimize sediment and other pollutants in storm water flows. Develop and implement "best management practices" for ongoing maintenance and operation.
- C/OS2-1.12 Continue requiring grading plans that include measures for avoiding soil erosion and consider upgrading requirements as needed to minimize sedimentation in storm water.
- C/OS2-1.13 Require that discretionary projects, to the maximum extent practicable, maintain or increase the site's pre-development absorption of runoff to recharge groundwater. Implementation would include standards to regulate impervious surfaces, vary by project type, land use, soils and area characteristics, and provide for water impoundments, protecting and planting vegetation, cisterns and other measures to increase runoff retention and groundwater recharge.

C/OS2-2 Identify unique or sensitive habitat areas and designate them Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) overlay.

C/OS2-2.1 Designate wetlands as Conservation/Open Space.

C/OS2-3 Identify and designate Conservation/Open Space (C/OS) other public or private properties containing scenic resources or public vistas of scenic importance.

C/OS2-4 Identify and protect wildlife corridors that link habitat areas as Conservation/Open Space (C/OS).

C/OS2-4.1 Encourage agricultural landowners and managers of Conservation/Open Space to adopt range and farmland management practices that will not interfere with the movement of wildlife through their properties.

C/OS2-4.2 Public or private developments that require discretionary permit or propose a land division, shall avoid disturbance of significant wildlife corridors, and/or wetlands identified by City or County environmental studies.

C/OS2-4.3 When evaluating discretionary proposals as part of the CEQA process, require mitigation measures that would re-establish damaged or disturbed corridors and provide for long-term viability.

C/OS3 Plan for a well-maintained system of footpaths and non-vehicular trails that provide access to areas of non-urban environment.

C/OS3-1 In Residential Rural and Suburban County areas and developments in the unincorporated portions of the planning area, and in all urban land use developments adjoining possible trail alignments within the City, provide for equestrian, hiking and biking trails, particularly those providing access to schools, parks and community facility activity areas.

C/OS3-2 Access trails shall not conflict with Agriculture use or significantly disturb environmentally sensitive resources.

C/OS4 Preserve historic and cultural resources of public interest that reflect the legacy of earlier human settlement.

C/OS4-1 Identify historic and cultural resources that should be protected as C/OS combining designations.

C/OS4-2 Avoid disturbance of archaeological and culturally sensitive sites.

C/OS4-3 Encourage acquisition of significant designated C/OS sites by public agencies, historical or conservation organizations for preservation and restoration where feasible, or require private conservation by adaptive reuse if not.

C/OS4-4 Protect the character of significant historical features and settings by C/OS designation. Maintain a listing of historic and cultural resources.

C/OS5 Conservation/Open Space classification shall include minimum development standards:

- C/OS5-1 C/OS zoning classifications shall prescribe minimum parcel sizes of 5 acres, 10 acres or 20 acres (e.g. C/OS5) as determined appropriate by the City based on existing parcel size or sensitivity to development.
- C/OS5-2 C/OS zoning classifications shall allow 1 dwelling unit per parcel provided all buildings and related grading and infrastructure complies with Ag3-10.4 and Ag3-10.5 related to conservation of natural resources.

C/OS6 The City of Arroyo Grande shall manage land use and limit its urban development potential to that which can be sustained by the available water resources and serviced by circulation and other infrastructure.

- C/OS6-1 Water resources currently available include 1200 acre-feet annually of groundwater extraction from Arroyo Grande Basin, 2290-acre feet annual entitlement from Lopez Lake and 100 acre feet per year from the Pismo formation. The 3590 ac. ft/year minimum supply during drought conditions is estimated as capable of supporting a City of 20,000 residents (at 160 gpd per capita average consumption).
- C/OS6-1.1 The City shall consider more efficient water utilization and conservation measures in subsequent Water Management Master Plan amendments to reduce average annual per capita consumption including the Best Management Practices already identified. The City will monitor water use by type and density of land use including agriculture, residential, office and commercial. The City will reflect any changes to regional water resources available to the City by periodic amendment to the City's Water Master Plan.
- C/OS6-2 Residential Rural and Residential Suburban uses in the unincorporated Arroyo Grande Fringe Area utilize individual wells and septic systems located in the Arroyo Grande Creek watershed which cumulatively impact water quantity and quality available for agriculture and urban uses.

Implementation Measures

- Ag/C/OS.1 Designate all deed-restricted open space, identified as part of a Planned Development entitlement or Specific Plan, as Permanent Open Space (P/OS).
- Ag/C/OS.2 Re-designate all open space, which becomes deed-restricted through voluntary dedication or in conjunction with development activities, as Permanent Open Space.
- Ag/C/OS.3 Maintain an inventory of P/OS and C/OS designated open space, along with specific restrictions.
- Ag/C/OS.4 Encourage private landowners to voluntarily protect and maintain open space resources on their properties.

- Ag/C/OS.5 Encourage and support efforts to protect lands containing open space resources by state and federal agencies, the County, special districts, and non-profit and conservation organizations.
- Ag/C/OS.6 Encourage application of Williamson Act programs and Conservation/Open Space easements to all eligible private properties.
- Ag/C/OS.7 Coordinate efforts to acquire significant conservation and Permanent Open Space lands with other public agencies and conservation organizations.
- Ag/C/OS.8 Actively seek available grants and aid programs from state and federal agencies and private foundations to fund acquisition and maintenance of Open Space and Agriculture lands.
- Ag/C/OS.9 Actively seek contributions of land, development rights, easements, and money from individuals and corporations, both for preservation of open space and recreation land in general and for acquisition of specific priority properties. Consider using San Luis Obispo Parks, Open Space and Trails Foundation as a vehicle for donations and gifts.
- Ag/C/OS.10 Encourage the use of cluster land divisions and cluster development that will locate development on the least environmentally sensitive portions of properties where the balance of land is preserved in Permanent Open Space.
- Ag/C/OS.11 Where a landowner proposes a land division, the proposed parcels shall maintain or enhance the long-term protection of Open Space.
- Ag/C/OS.12 Park sites and recreation areas shall protect scenic and environmentally sensitive resources, and shall not conflict with Agriculture uses.
- Ag/C/OS.13 Develop a Strategic Action Plan for Agriculture and Open Space preservation (prioritize locations, identify actions, responsible entities, funding, timing, and performance monitoring).
- Ag/C/OS.14 Consider an impact mitigation fee program as adjunct to, or in lieu of, direct dedication of off-site Agriculture or conservation easement.
- Ag/C/OS.15 Establish a fund for the purchase of Permanent or Conservation/Open Space easements and investigate all available revenue sources for funding, including:
- a. grants/loans from State or Federal agencies;
 - b. grants/loans from private foundations/organizations;
 - c. citywide tax or participation in countywide tax; and,
 - e. mitigation fees
- Ag/C/OS.16 Assist in developing a public education and outreach program relative to conservation easements (personal advantages) and permitted uses and activities on easement areas.

- Ag/C/OS.17 Collaborate with the County, SLOCOG and/or adjacent jurisdictions (e.g., Cities of Pismo Beach, Grover Beach and Oceano CSD) to develop a "model agricultural conservation easement" document to be used as the basis for negotiation with individual property owners.
- Ag/C/OS.18 Establish a program that provides the City with a low cost option or contractual arrangements with agricultural landowners to acquire "right of first refusal" with regard to acquisition when the owner becomes interested in selling a property.
- Ag/C/OS.19 Establish or contract with an existing Land Trust to administer ownership of Ag parcels and manage agricultural activities.
- Ag/C/OS.20 The City should initiate a program for riparian corridor acquisition, wetland, restoration and storm Water Pollution Prevention programs.
- Ag/C/OS.21 Support the establishment of a local funding mechanism, as identified by City Council, which allocates funds toward the voluntary purchase of agricultural, conservation, and open space easements.
- Ag/C/OS.22 Coordinate with volunteer organizations that provide services or programs that implement City Conservation Element policies including creek clean-up events, creek restoration activities, and creekside trail maintenance.
- Ag/C/OS.23 In order to reduce impacts to natural habitats from night lighting, require all sustained/constant exterior lighting to be low intensity and shielded to reduce its visibility from surrounding areas and to minimize impacts to wildlife.
- Ag/C/OS.24 Disseminate information regarding the potential harmful effects of invasive plant species on native plant communities and harmful effects of toxic chemical substances and safe alternatives to toxics for home and garden use. City employees and contractors shall use Best Management Practices in construction and maintenance of City-used or owned properties, facilities, trails, and rights of way.

Map C/OS – 1
Creeks Within the City of Arroyo Grande

AMENDED JUNE 12, 2007

AgC/OS - 18