

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA GENERAL PLAN



2020

A photograph of an older man with white hair, wearing a light blue striped button-down shirt and dark trousers, standing on a sidewalk. He is smiling and has his right hand on a metal pole that holds a green street sign. The sign reads "RICHARD REESE WAY" in white capital letters. The background shows lush green trees and a portion of a house with a tiled roof. A large, dark purple diagonal graphic element is on the left side of the image.

RICHARD REESE WAY

“ It is possible to create an urban village, in an open space setting, that provides the opportunity for its people to choose to live lifestyle expressions, that reach beyond the mere satisfaction of basic human needs for air, water, food, shelter, safety and economic opportunity, while embracing wellness, well-being, full self-expression and participative governance, as normal everyday activities. ”

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INTRODUCTION



The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is a small urban community located in a unique and beautiful natural setting. Incorporated on January 1, 2000, Rancho Santa Margarita became the 33rd city in Orange County. Now, Rancho Santa Margarita has approximately 48,516 residents and is the 23rd largest city in Orange County.

Located in the eastern part of the County and along the Santa Ana Mountains, the City provides an oasis from sprawling urbanized development that characterizes much of southern California. The City was planned to offer the best amenities of a small city, while maintaining the natural landscape of the area. These complementary features have resulted in a high quality-of-life and enjoyment for members of the community.





NEED FOR GENERAL PLAN

The Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan provides the foundation for continued enhancement while also addressing the challenges presented by potential growth in unincorporated County areas and neighboring cities. The qualities that made Rancho Santa Margarita's master-planned communities desirable prior to incorporation, form the basis for the Plan's long-range vision and provide guiding policies for the City today and in the future.

Planning for the future means addressing key issues in the City and responding to the dynamics of population growth, economic development, natural resource preservation, and land use. Successful planning also recognizes the contributions of housing, circulation, public safety, open space and urban design in creating livable communities. To this end, the General Plan serves as a policy guide, balancing these important and inter-related factors to ensure Rancho Santa Margarita's community vision continues to be realized.

Preparation of the City's General Plan Update affords an occasion to reinforce solid policies and programs directed at managing growth, enhancing quality-of-life and livability, and achieving sustainability in Rancho Santa Margarita. The active role that the community has taken in providing their valuable input is an integral part of this Plan. The Plan promotes the values of the residents and businesses in the community through policies and programs to meet the challenges and opportunities that face the City today and in the decades to come.

RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA PLANNING AREA

Rancho Santa Margarita contains approximately 13 square miles of land (or about 8,280 acres), located in eastern Orange County about ten miles northeast of the Pacific Ocean, in the foothills of the Santa Ana mountains. Figure I-1 shows the location of Rancho Santa Margarita within the region. The community is divided by the Foothill Transportation Corridor (SR-241) which extends to the north connecting with North County cities such as Yorba Linda and Anaheim, terminates at the edge of Rancho Santa Margarita's southern boundary. The City is bordered on the west by Mission Viejo, on the east by the Cleveland National Forest, and on the north and south by unincorporated areas.

Figure I-2 depicts the planning area for Rancho Santa Margarita and the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI). Maintaining compatibility between future urban development in the SOI and Rancho Santa Margarita as described in the General Plan is an important aspect of long-range planning.

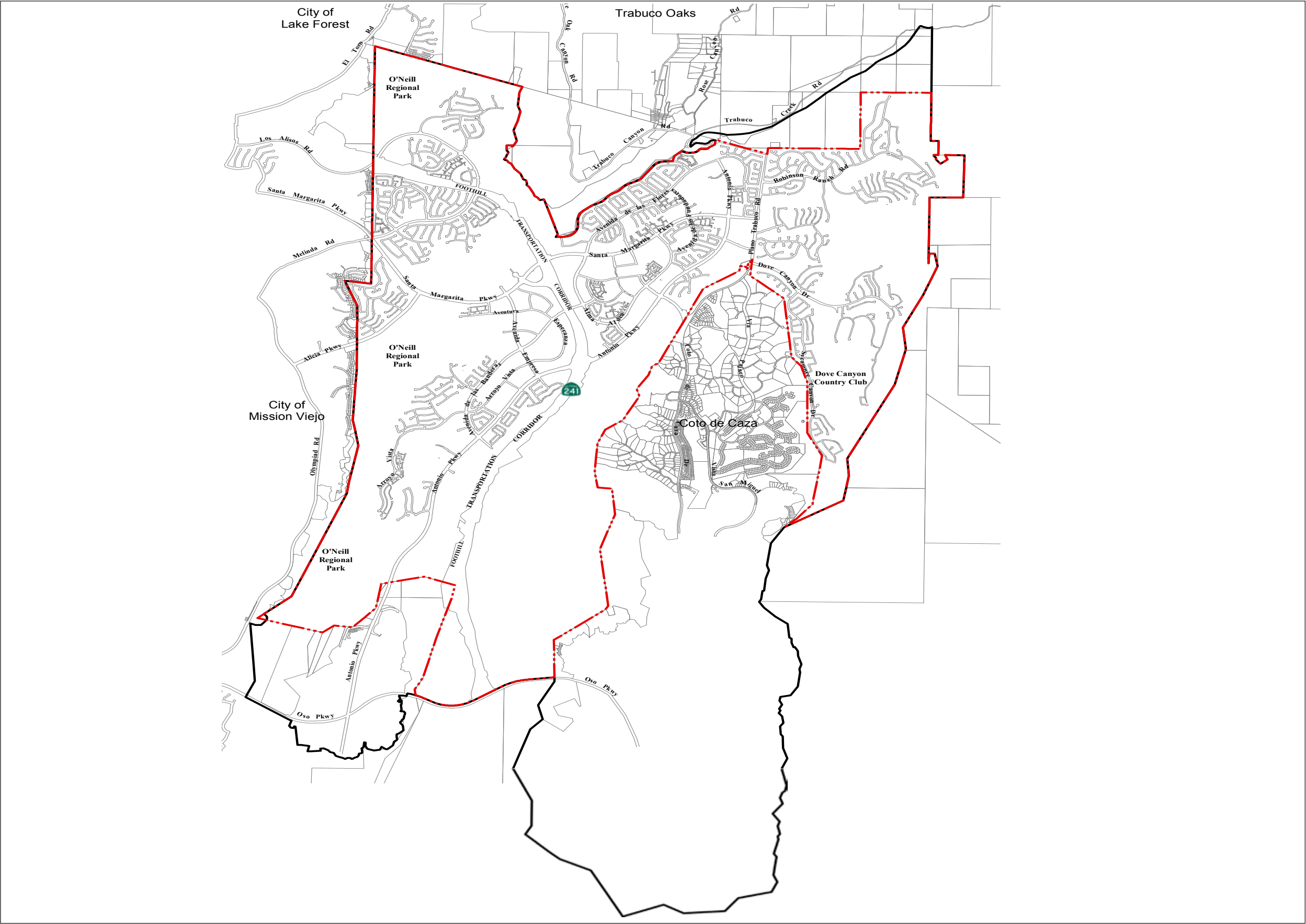






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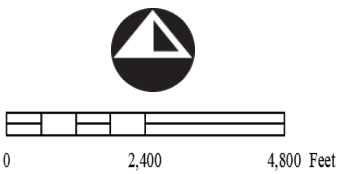




LEGEND

--- City Boundary

— Sphere of Influence



Source: Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2013.



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HISTORY OF THE COMMUNITY

Where schools, shopping centers and residential neighborhoods now stand, Native Americans once lived. On July 23, 1769, Native Americans were visited by a Spanish expedition under Captain Gaspar de Portola, who camped near the site of Tijeras Creek Golf Course in Rancho Santa Margarita.

On July 24, 1769 the expedition headed inland to avoid the many streams and swamps in the area. They found a large plateau and camped that night on its western edge by a canyon, which the Franciscans named San Francisco Solano. This was on the eastern side of Trabuco Creek about three miles downstream from the present site of Trabuco Oaks. While camped here on July 24th and 25th, one of the soldiers lost his *trabuco*, or musket, a most valuable possession to any soldier. To mark this loss, the stream was named Trabuco. The name has been associated with the mesa, the canyon, and the entire area ever since.

The Spaniards founded Mission San Juan Capistrano in 1776, and ruled the region until 1821, when California became part of Mexico. The Mexican governors carved the area around the mission into three large ranchos: Rancho Trabuco, Rancho Mission Viejo, and Rancho Santa Margarita.

James L. Flood and his partner Jerome O'Neill purchased the combined ranchos in 1882. The huge estate operated as a ranch into the 1920s. In 1940, the ranch was divided, with the Flood family taking the lower portion (now San Diego County), and the upper portion retained by the O'Neill family. In 1942, the Navy annexed the Flood family's land for use as Camp Joseph H. Pendleton.

In 1948, the O'Neill family donated 278 acres of canyon bottom land to the County of Orange for park purposes. The O'Neill family donated an additional 120 acres of parkland in 1963, the same year they founded the Mission Viejo Company and drew up plans for a master-planned community of the same name.

By the 1960s, a rural cluster of homes had been present in Trabuco Canyon for decades. The area's first tract developed homes did not arrive until late in the decade in what would become Coto De Caza. The area remained remote until 1986, when the first homes in the new master-planned community of Rancho Santa Margarita were sold. The economic boom of the 1980s fueled home construction in nearby Dove Canyon, Robinson Ranch, Wagon Wheel and a handful of smaller developments. The area became better linked to the rest of the County in 1992, when extensions of Oso, Antonio and Alicia Parkways were completed.

In 1989, the community of Rancho Santa Margarita established a Community Civic Association (CCA) to provide a political voice for residents. The CCA, later known as the Rancho Margarita Civic Association (and eventually as the Civic Council), briefly explored self-governance. In 1995, the RSM Cityhood Committee, a separate community organization, began the official drive for cityhood. Rancho Santa Margarita was planned to be an "Urban Village," offering the best of two worlds: the advantages of a small city plus the quality-of-life of a small village.





In November 1999, area voters opted to incorporate the Rancho Santa Margarita Planned Community and the neighboring Robinson Ranch, Dove Canyon, Rancho Cielo, Trabuco Highlands and Walden Communities. The newly formed City of Rancho Santa Margarita incorporated on January 1, 2000, and became the 33rd city in Orange County.



VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA

Building upon the City's history, and upon the vision statement for the original Rancho Santa Margarita Planned Community, the Vision for the Future provides the foundation for the General Plan, the sustaining basis for its goals, policies, and programs, and is an expression of what the community wants to maintain or become:

Rancho Santa Margarita is a small city with the soul of a village. The City is instilled with traditions that honor the heritage of our land. A mix of land uses and a balance of jobs and housing provide a planned community oasis in which people live, work, shop, and play. Community events and public gathering places promote a family-oriented community and encourage community spirit and participation. The City maintains a safe environment through a variety of community programs, law enforcement, and fire protection services. Quality educational programs and facilities are promoted through cooperation between the City and the school districts.



As the community looks toward the future, Rancho Santa Margarita will strive to ensure its small town village character is protected and enhanced by well-designed and well-maintained neighborhoods that complement the natural environment. The quality of environmental, open space, scenic resources and our watershed shall be preserved to enhance the community's distinct setting and natural beauty. Other amenities such as Lake Santa Margarita, parks, pools, community centers, and pedestrian/bicycle trails will also be protected and well-maintained to meet the needs of the community.

As the community matures, residential, commercial, and industrial areas will be revitalized to enhance quality of life and encourage economic development. Because most facilities in Rancho Santa Margarita are owned and maintained by private organizations, the City will collaborate with public and private organizations, such as public service agencies, Homeowners' Associations, and community foundations, to improve and maintain public services and facilities. The City will also maintain the transportation system to ensure safe and convenient access is provided to serve local and inter-community needs. These factors will continue to attract businesses that are beneficial to and thrive in the community.



HISTORY OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita adopted its first General Plan in 2002. The General Plan Update was initiated in 2016 with the goal and intent to:

- 1) Uphold and honor the Rancho Santa Margarita Master Plan;
- 2) Prepare Rancho Santa Margarita for the next 20 years;
- 3) Update the General Plan to ensure it meets new State requirements;





- 4) Maintain a balance of land uses to ensure compatibility now and in the decades to come; and
- 5) Maintain and support high quality-of-life, community satisfaction and safety.

PURPOSE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

California law requires each city to adopt a comprehensive, long-term General Plan to guide the physical development of the incorporated area and land outside municipal boundaries that bears a relationship to its planning activities. A city's General Plan serves as the blueprint for future growth and development. As a blueprint for the future, the plan must contain policies and programs designed to provide decision makers with a solid basis for decisions related to land use and development.

Per State law, the General Plan is the primary document the City utilizes to regulate land use. Consequently, the Zoning Code, Specific Plans, and individual public and private development proposals must be consistent with the Plan's goals, policies, and standards.

The Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan addresses many issues that are directly related to and influence land use decisions. In addition to land use, State law requires the Plan to address circulation, housing, conservation of natural resources, preservation of open space, the noise environment, and protection of public safety (Section 65302 of the California Government Code). These issues are discussed in the General Plan to the extent that they apply to Rancho Santa Margarita. The Plan also addresses economic development, a topic of special interest.

ORGANIZATION AND USE OF THE GENERAL PLAN

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan contains goals, policies, and plans that are intended to guide land use and development decisions in the future. The General Plan consists of a Land Use Policy Map and the following seven elements, or chapters, which together fulfill the State requirements for a General Plan:

- Circulation Element
- Conservation/Open Space Element (combined Elements)
- Economic Development Element (optional)
- Housing Element
- Land Use Element
- Noise Element
- Safety Element

In addition to the State-mandated elements, provisions of Orange County's Measure M require cities to prepare a Growth Management Element, addressing timely provision of capital facilities and public services associated with new development. The City addresses the Measure M requirement for a Growth Management Element in the Land Use Element.



The Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan elements sometimes deviate from the State mandated elements in non-substantive ways. For example, public utilities are included in the State requirements for the Circulation Element, but are addressed in the Land Use Element of the Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan, and Rancho Santa Margarita has also included a non-mandatory element, Economic Development, in the General Plan.

The Economic Development Element is an integral component of the General Plan and is essential to achieving the community's vision for the future. The Economic Development Element addresses actions the City can take to attract and retain businesses that are beneficial to the community, and maintain fiscal strength and stability. The strategies and programs contained within the Economic Development Element outline a course toward continued fiscal stability for the City.

Supporting Documentation

Several supporting documents were produced during the development of the General Plan, including the General Plan Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR). Other technical reports used in preparing the Plan include an Existing Conditions Report comprised of: air quality, biological resources, cultural resources, noise measurements, and traffic/circulation data, and a Market Retail Analysis and Laborshed Analysis.

Plan Organization and Use

The General Plan is comprised of this Introduction and seven elements. Each element stands alone, but is an integral part of the General Plan. The General Plan is accompanied by an Implementation Plan (under separate cover) and Glossary (Appendix A). The Elements and the Implementation Plan will help the City achieve its vision for the future. Each of the seven General Plan Elements is organized according to the following format:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Issues, Goals and Policies; and
- 3) Plan.

The Introduction of each element describes the focus and the purpose of the element. The Introduction identifies other plans and programs outside of the General Plan that may be used to achieve specific General Plan goals. The relationship of the element to other General Plan elements is also specified in the Introduction.

The Issues, Goals and Policies section of each element contains a description of identified planning issues, goals, and policies related to the element topic. The issues, goals, and policies are based on input received from the community, members of the Planning Commission and City Council, City staff, and other public agencies.





The issues represent the needs, concerns or desires addressed by the General Plan. The goals are overall statements of community and consist of broad statements of purpose or direction. The policies serve as guides to the City Council, Planning Commission, other City commissions and boards, and City staff in reviewing development proposals and making decisions that affect the future growth and development of Rancho Santa Margarita.

Each element also contains a Plan section. The Plan section offers an overview of the City's course of action to implement the identified goals and policies. For example, the Land Use Element contains a "Land Use Plan" indicating the types and intensities of land use permitted in the City. The Circulation Element contains a "Circulation Plan" describing the overall circulation system required to meet the future needs of Rancho Santa Margarita. Wherever possible, the Plan contains illustrative maps, diagrams, and tables.

The Implementation Plan identifies specific actions to achieve the goals, policies, and plans identified in each General Plan element. The Implementation Plan is reviewed and updated periodically to address specific actions, schedules, responsible parties, and measures to ensure that General Plan goals, policies, and plans are implemented. The Glossary is an appendix of the General Plan (Appendix A) and provides a set of definitions for technical terms used in the Plan.

The organization of the General Plan allows users to turn to the section that interests them and quickly obtain an overview of City policies on the subject. However, General Plan users should realize that the policies in the various elements are interrelated and should be examined comprehensively. Policies are presented as written statements.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION IN THE GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM

Public participation played an important role in the Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan program. Because the General Plan reflects community goals, citizen input was essential in identifying issues and formulating goals. Public participation in the General Plan preparation process occurred through the following methods:

Roadshows and Focus Group Meetings. As part of the outreach for the General Plan Update, several roadshow and focus group meetings were conducted. These meetings provided an opportunity for focused outreach to specific groups and organizations. The purpose of the meetings was to provide a forum for attendees to provide input specific to their area of interest or expertise. Each meeting began with an overview presentation of the General Plan Update process.

Attendees then engaged in an open discussion guided by questions specific to the group or topical area. The following organizations and groups participated:



- Chamber of Commerce
- Community Associations of Rancho (CAR)
- Bell Tower Foundation
- Orange County Sheriff's Department
- Age Well
- Boys and Girls Club

Summer Concert Series. During the 2016 Summer Concert Series, the City of Rancho Santa Margarita hosted a General Plan Update community outreach booth to inform the community that the City was initiating an update to the General Plan. Staff interacted with the community about the General Plan Update, answered any questions, and encouraged initial input and feedback about the community's values and priorities. Community members were asked to write down their favorite thing about Rancho Santa Margarita. They were also asked to identify what they valued about Rancho Santa Margarita; if there was anything that they would like to see improved; and to provide any additional comments or ideas.



General Plan Update Webpage. The City of Rancho Santa Margarita website included a page dedicated to the General Plan Update to provide information on the General Plan Update program. The webpage included an overview of the General Plan and update process, summaries of feedback obtained as part of outreach events and meetings, and draft documents for public review.

Rancho Santa Margarita e-Newsletter. The City's e-Newsletter was used periodically throughout the General Plan Update program to inform the community of the General Plan Update, provide an overview of outreach events, and inform the community on how they could receive more information about the General Plan Update on the City's website.

Planning Commission Meetings. Opportunities to address decision-makers regarding the General Plan were provided at Planning Commission meetings. Draft goals and policies and land use designations were reviewed and discussed as part of the update process.





Draft General Plan Documents. The Draft General Plan was made available for public review and comment prior to public hearings. Upon completion, the Draft EIR will also be made available for public review, providing an additional opportunity for input prior to public hearings.

DIRECTION TO THE FUTURE

The General Plan provides the long-range direction for achieving the future that Rancho Santa Margarita has identified for itself. This direction allows the City to take advantage of opportunities to achieve its goals. The policies and plans in the elements and the Implementation Program provide guidance for addressing changing conditions and specific actions to optimize community potential. The direction established by the General Plan represents a combination of community values and actions designed to achieve the vision for the future.



CONSERVATION/ OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

The uniqueness of Rancho Santa Margarita is due in large part to its many natural and open space resources including scenic vistas, parks, lake, creeks, and lush vegetation. The Conservation/Open Space Element focuses on the preservation and enhancement of these resources to ensure the community's distinct setting and natural beauty are preserved and that the quality of the environment is maintained.

Purpose of the Conservation/Open Space Element

The Conservation/Open Space Element describes the open space and natural resources within Rancho Santa Margarita. The Element addresses the following key issues related to environmental resources and conservation and establishes goals and policies to protect and enhance these resources within the community and region:

- 1) Ecological and biological resources;
- 2) Scenic resources;
- 3) Water quality;
- 4) Air quality;





- 5) Energy conservation;
- 6) Cultural resources; and
- 7) Greenhouse gas emissions.

Scope and Content of the Element

The Rancho Santa Margarita Conservation/Open Space Element meets the State requirements for Conservation and Open Space elements as defined in Sections 65302(d) and 65302(e) of the Government Code. According to these requirements, the Conservation Element must contain goals and policies to protect and maintain natural resources such as water, soils, wildlife, and minerals to prevent wasteful resource exploitation and destruction. The Open Space Element must address several open space categories such as those used for the preservation of natural resources and outdoor recreation as well as open space maintained for public health and safety, which is addressed in the Safety Element. Additionally, while air quality is not a State mandated element, air quality is included in the Conservation/Open Space Element to address reducing pollutant levels through stationary source, mobile source, transportation, land use control, and energy conservation measures. Because the subjects required to be addressed under the Conservation Element and the Open Space Element overlap, the two elements have been combined.

The Conservation/Open Space Element is comprised of three sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and
- 3) the Conservation/Open Space Plan.

The Introduction provides an overview of the intent of the Conservation/Open Space Element. The Issues, Goals, and Policies section identifies open space and resource management issues and establishes corresponding goals and policies. The goals are comprised of broad, overall statements of purpose and direction pertaining to open space and resource conservation. The policies serve as guidelines for preserving and enhancing the community's natural environment and resources, while contributing toward improved air quality and energy and resource conservation. The Conservation/Open Space Plan identifies how the City will maintain open space lands and protect its natural resources through implementation of the goals and policies.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Conservation/Open Space Element must be consistent with the other General Plan Elements and many of the goals and policies also address issues that are the primary subjects of other elements. The Conservation/Open Space Element most closely relates to the Land Use, Circulation, and Safety Elements. The Land Use Element provides a planned land use pattern and land use designations, which includes private and public open space such as parks, golf course, and regional open space. These designations apply to areas that have an abundance of natural resources, visual resources, and recreational value. The Conservation/Open Space Element goals and policies protect and maintain these resources,



which in turn ensures the community's distinct setting and natural beauty are maintained. The Circulation Element is responsible for providing residents and visitors with safe and convenient access to open space areas. The Safety Element relates to the Conservation/Open Space Element by identifying hazard-prone areas such as floodplains, potentially unstable hillside areas, and seismic hazard areas that should be conserved as open space.

ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Rancho Santa Margarita possesses valuable assets in the form of its open space and natural resources. The Goals and Policies identified in this Element reflect the community's goals to conserve and enhance these assets and provide a high-quality environment for its residents. These include:

- 1) Protecting and enhancing ecological and biological resources;
- 2) Preserving the community's scenic resources and vistas;
- 3) Protecting water quality;
- 4) Contributing toward improved air quality;
- 5) Encouraging energy conservation;
- 6) Preserving and protecting cultural resources; and
- 7) Reducing greenhouse gas emissions.





Ecological and Biological Resources

Rancho Santa Margarita contains important ecological and biological resources such as Tijeras and Trabuco Creeks, O'Neill Regional Park, the Upper Oso Reservoir Habitat Restoration site, and the natural plants and wildlife that inhabit them. In a region of growth and urbanization, these resources are threatened by the encroachment of urban development. The City understands the importance of these resources and their contribution to the natural environment of the community, and will protect them for future generations.

Goal 1: Protect and enhance the ecological and biological resources within and surrounding the community.

- Policy 1.1:** Preserve ecological and biological resources by maintaining these resources as open space.
- Policy 1.2:** Continue to preserve the coast live oak woodlands in the City by retaining the habitat as open space.
- Policy 1.3:** Protect and enhance the creeks and adjacent wetlands for their value in providing visual amenity, habitat for wildlife, and recreational opportunities.
- Policy 1.4:** Through land use planning, environmental review, and conditions placed on development projects, reduce the impact of urban development on important ecological and biological resources, including the beneficial uses of receiving waters.
- Policy 1.5:** Adopt open space management and park maintenance and development practices that minimize negative impacts to the natural environment.
- Policy 1.6:** Continue to preserve and maintain the Upper Oso Reservoir Habitat Restoration site and consider opportunities for expansion of this area.
- Policy 1.7:** Continue to maintain open space areas for passive recreational use.

Scenic Resources

Rancho Santa Margarita is rich with scenic resources such as Lake Santa Margarita, ridgelines, creeks, open space, and views of the surrounding hillsides (i.e., Santiago Peak). These resources provide open vistas and variety in the scenic quality of the City. The City will preserve these resources and their contribution to the community's character and identity.



Goal 2: Maintain community character and identity by protecting the City's scenic resources and vistas.

Policy 2.1: Maintain scenic resources, such as the City's hillsides, ridgelines, and surface water resources as open space.

Policy 2.2: Encourage and maintain high-quality architectural and landscaping design to preserve the community's visual character.

Water Quality

The City contains ground and surface water resources (Lake Santa Margarita, the Upper Oso Reservoir, Upper Chiquita Reservoir, Tijeras Creek, and Trabuco Creek) that are subject to various sources of pollution associated with urban runoff. Rancho Santa Margarita will continue to monitor and protect the quality of water resources to promote their protection within the community.

Goal 3: Protect the beneficial uses of ground and surface waters.

Policy 3.1: Adopt and enforce water quality regulations and support water quality educational efforts to eliminate pollution from urban runoff.

Policy 3.2: Preserve, and where possible, create or restore areas that provide important water quality benefits, such as riparian corridors, wetlands, and buffer zones.

Air Quality

Cooperation among all agencies in the South Coast Air Basin is necessary to achieve desired improvements to air quality. Goals and policies address reducing pollutant levels through stationary source, mobile source, transportation and land use control, and energy conservation measures. The City will participate and contribute its share to these efforts by proper planning and participation in regional air quality management programs.

Goal 4: Cooperate with local and regional agencies to improve air quality.

Policy 4.1: Cooperate with the South Coast Air Quality Management District and Southern California Association of Governments in their efforts to implement the regional Air Quality Management Plan.

Policy 4.2: Promote land use patterns that reduce the number and length of motor vehicle trips.

Policy 4.3: Encourage the expansion and retention of local serving retail businesses (e.g., restaurants, drug stores) to reduce the number and length of automobile trips to comparable services located in other jurisdictions.





Policy 4.4: Encourage complete streets improvements and alternative modes of transportation, such as walking, biking, and public transportation to reduce emissions associated with automobile use.

Policy 4.5: Consider vehicle miles traveled when creating and implementing planning documents and reviewing development proposals.

Policy 4.6: Require new development and reuse/revitalization projects with sensitive uses in areas within 500 feet of a freeway or urban road with 100,000 vehicles/day to be designed to lessen any potential health risks through site design, landscaping, ventilation systems, or other measures.

Energy Conservation

Urban development depends upon adequate supplies and distribution of energy. The City will promote the conservation of energy to sustain existing and future economic and population growth.

Goal 5: Encourage energy conservation.

Policy 5.1: Participate in local, regional, and state programs that promote energy conservation and alternative energy sources.

Policy 5.2: Collaborate with energy suppliers and distributors to institute energy conservation programs, and inform the public of these programs.

Policy 5.3: Encourage green design features such as passive solar design, natural ventilation, and building orientation during the development review process.

Cultural Resources

Rancho Santa Margarita contains important archeological and paleontological sites. In a region of growth and urbanization, these resources may be threatened by the encroachment of urban development. The City will ensure proper identification of resources through the development review process and promote opportunities for protection of significant resources.

Goal 6: Preserve and protect historical, archaeological, and paleontological resources.

Policy 6.1: Balance the benefits of development with a project's potential impacts to existing cultural resources.

Policy 6.2: Identify, designate, and protect sites of historic importance.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Greenhouse gas emissions have been identified by the State as an environmental issue of concern that requires additional consideration to meet the State's greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals. The City will participate and contribute to those efforts through planning and participation in programs that provide opportunities to reduce greenhouse gas emissions.

Goal 7: Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from activities occurring in Rancho Santa Margarita to levels consistent with state goals.

Policy 7.1: Pursue funding sources to develop and implement programs and projects that reduce greenhouse gas emissions produced within the City.

Policy 7.2: Proactively inform and educate residents, business-owners, and developers regarding techniques for sustainable development and resource conservation.

Related Goals and Policies

The goals and policies in the Conservation/Open Space Element are related to and support subjects included within other General Plan Elements; refer to Table COS-1.

**Table COS-1
Conservation/Open Space Related Goals and Policies by Element**

General Plan Element	Conservation/Open Space Element Issue Areas						
	Ecological and Biological Resources	Scenic Resources	Water Quality	Air Quality	Energy Conservation	Cultural Resources	Greenhouse Gas Emissions
Land Use	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7	2.1, 2.2	3.1, 3.2	4.1, 4.5, 4.6	5.3	6.1, 6.2	7.2
Economic Development							
Circulation	4.1			4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5			
Housing							
Safety				4.6			
Noise				4.6			





CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE PLAN

The combination of unique environmental amenities and relatively modern development gives Rancho Santa Margarita a positive, enduring identity. The Conservation/Open Space Plan reflects the community's goals to protect and enhance these assets and the environmental resources that contribute to the community's distinct setting and natural beauty.

Ecological and Biological Resources

The setting of Rancho Santa Margarita is unique among urban communities due to the many open space areas around and within the City. Approximately 66% of the land area within the City is designated for some form of passive open space or active park use; refer to Figure LU-1. The Land Use Element has four separate open space land use designations: P (Parks), OS (Open Space), OSG (Open Space Golf), and ROS (Regional Open Space). These designations provide for the preservation of natural resources as well as a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. The primary areas of remaining substantive open space include Trabuco Canyon, Tijeras Canyon, the bluffs encompassed within O'Neill Regional park in the City's northwestern corner, and much of the area located between Antonio Parkway and the western boundary of Coto de Caza, south of La Promesa. Chiquita Ridge, a 92-acre property owned by the City, is currently designated open space and contains habitat for many native species. Subject to the terms of the Settlement Agreement which transferred the property to City ownership, 55 acres of the property may be developed. However, if developed, the City is required to preserve and protect the habitat value of the remaining 37 preserved acres.

Open space areas within the City provide valuable habitat for native species, migratory corridors, natural streams and waterways, and wildlife the State has determined to be special status.

Orange County's Southern Subregion Natural Community Conservation Plan/Master Streambed Alteration Agreement/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/MSAA/HCP) primary goal is to protect and preserve coastal sage scrub and other natural vegetation communities that occur within the Reserve System, as well as associated habitats and species. This includes a proposed list of covered species comprising seven plant species, 25 wildlife species and 10 habitat types. The City is located within NCCP/MSAA/HCP subareas 1 – 3.



Vegetation and Native Plant Species

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita continues to support a wide and diverse array of vegetation and habitats. Eleven vegetation communities were identified within the City limits including coastal sage scrub, chaparral, southern sycamore alder riparian woodland, southern willow scrub, southern mixed riparian forest, mulefat scrub, southern riparian scrub, southern coast live oak riparian forest, freshwater marsh, non-native grassland, and agriculture.

Migratory Corridors

There are four officially designated wildlife corridors under the Natural Community Conservation Plan/Master Streambed Alteration Agreement/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/MSAA/HCP) that either occur within City limits or are immediately outside them, and provide movement opportunities into or out of the City. These include: Arroyo Trabuco, Saddleback Meadows, an area north of the Upper Osos Reservoir, and Live Oak Canyon. However, all open space areas in the City provide some level of wildlife linkages and local migration.

Streams and Waterways

The City contains at least five areas determined to be “waters of the U.S.” and/or “waters of the State”: Oso Creek, Trabuco Creek, Tijeras Creek, Dove Canyon Creek, and an unnamed creek flowing roughly parallel to the eastern side of SR-241 in the Chiquita Canyon Conservation Area; refer to Figure COS-1. These creeks fall under the jurisdiction of the USACE, RWQCB, and CDFW.

Special Status Species and Critical Habitat

Thirteen special-status wildlife species are known to regularly occur and are considered present within the City. Based on habitat needs, there is also potential for an additional 23 special-status wildlife species to occur in City limits. Twelve special-status plant species have been recorded in adjacent areas that have suitable habitat within City limits, and the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB) lists seven special-status habitats as being identified in the region. Special status species and plants are covered under the NCCP/MSAA/HCP. The City of Rancho Santa Margarita contains Federally Designated Critical Habitat for three Federally listed species: arroyo toad, California gnatcatcher, and Riverside fairy shrimp.



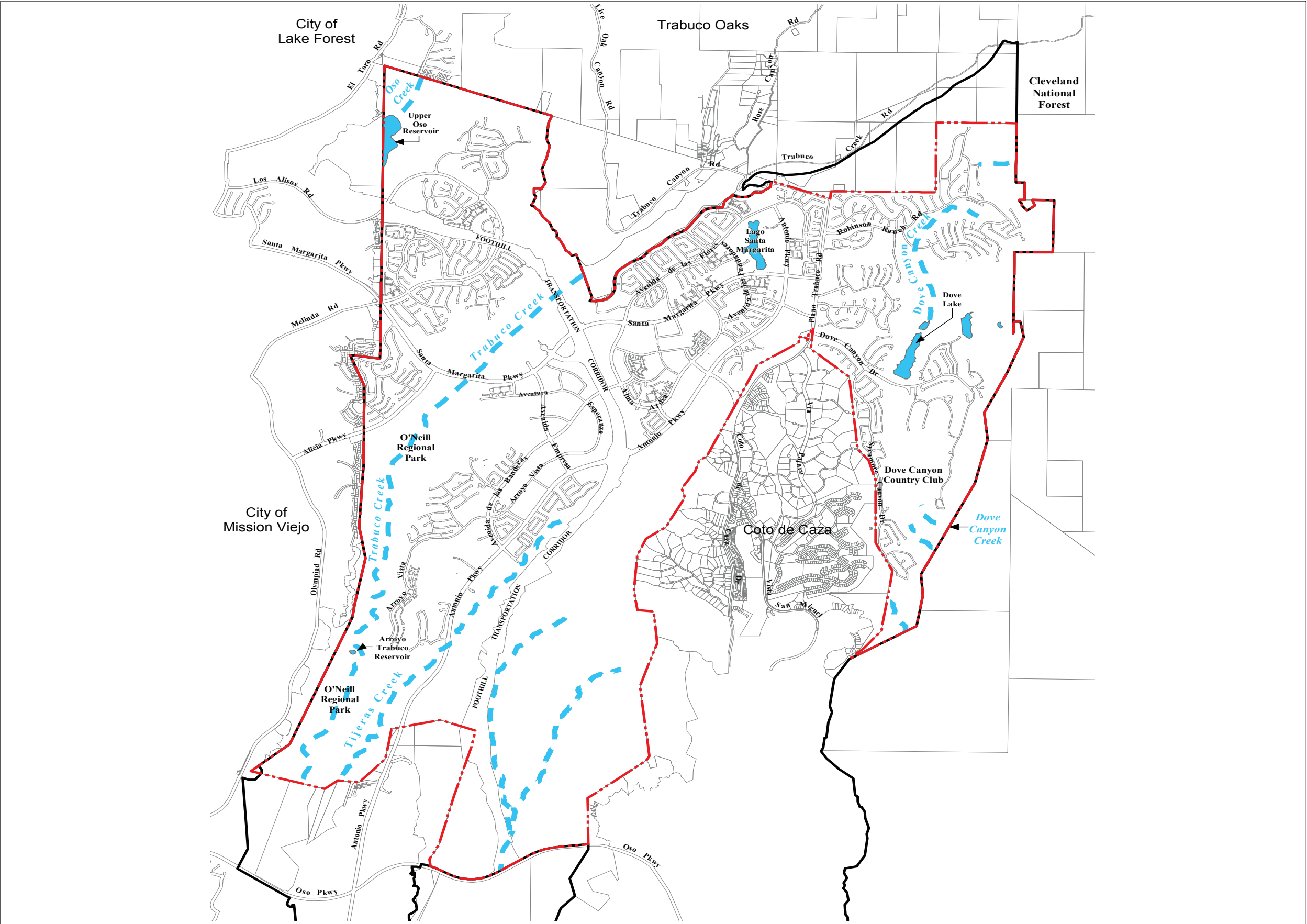


Biological Constraints on Development

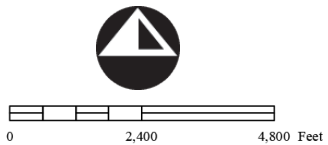
Virtually all remaining open space within City limits has been designated as Reserve Lands under the NCCP/MSAA/HCP, which limits development in these areas. However, the Northeast Future Planned Community area, located within the City's SOI, is not designated as part of the NCCP/MSAA/HCP Reserve or on National Forest System Lands, which could provide opportunity for future development. Future development of the Northeast Future Planned Community is expected to occur following annexation of the properties by the City and the approval of a Specific Plan. As part of this process, detailed analysis of the biological resources and potential development constraints would be identified.

Additionally, Chiquita Ridge is outside of designated Reserve Lands under the NCCP/MSAA/HCP. There is the potential for future development within Chiquita Ridge. As noted above, 55 acres of the property may be developed with the remaining 37 acres required to be preserved and protected. The Chiquita Ridge development is undergoing feasibility studies and has already undergone prescribed mitigation as well as associated land transfers and preservation as part of a settlement between the City, the County of Orange, and the Endangered Habitats League (EHL). As part of this settlement, the City completed a Final Habitat Restoration Plan for the approximately 82.9-acre Upper Oso project located within O'Neill Regional Park; refer to Figure COS-2. The 2013 Restoration Plan was developed in coordination with OC Parks Management Division, USFWS, EHL and Rancho Mission Viejo. The 82.9-acre site has received habitat enhancements and modifications and will continue to receive maintenance and monitoring until 2020. The Upper Oso project mitigation site will remain conserved open space.





- LEGEND**
- City Boundary
 - Sphere of Influence
 - Surface Water Resources
 - Flood Control / Water Conservation



Sources: Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2013 and City of Rancho Santa Margarita, 2016.



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Parks and Recreation

The Rancho Santa Margarita park and recreation system consists of neighborhood parks, community parks, O'Neill Regional Park, joint use parks, community services and facilities, an extensive open space system (described earlier), and the Bell Tower Regional Community Center; refer to Figure COS-3. All parks in the City (except for Santa Margarita's Dog Park, Skate Park, O'Neill Regional Park and County trails) are privately owned, operated, and maintained by homeowners' associations. Rancho Santa Margarita currently has 24 developed parks that range in size from the 0.5-acre Dove Canyon Trail Rest Area to the 21.4-acre Central Park. Local parks in the City can be characterized as primarily neighborhood-serving with most of the neighborhoods located within walking distance of an existing park. Several of the smaller parks function only as passive parks. Active recreational parkland is provided in the City at 17 of the 22 parks. Table COS-2 summarizes the existing parks and recreational facilities in the City.

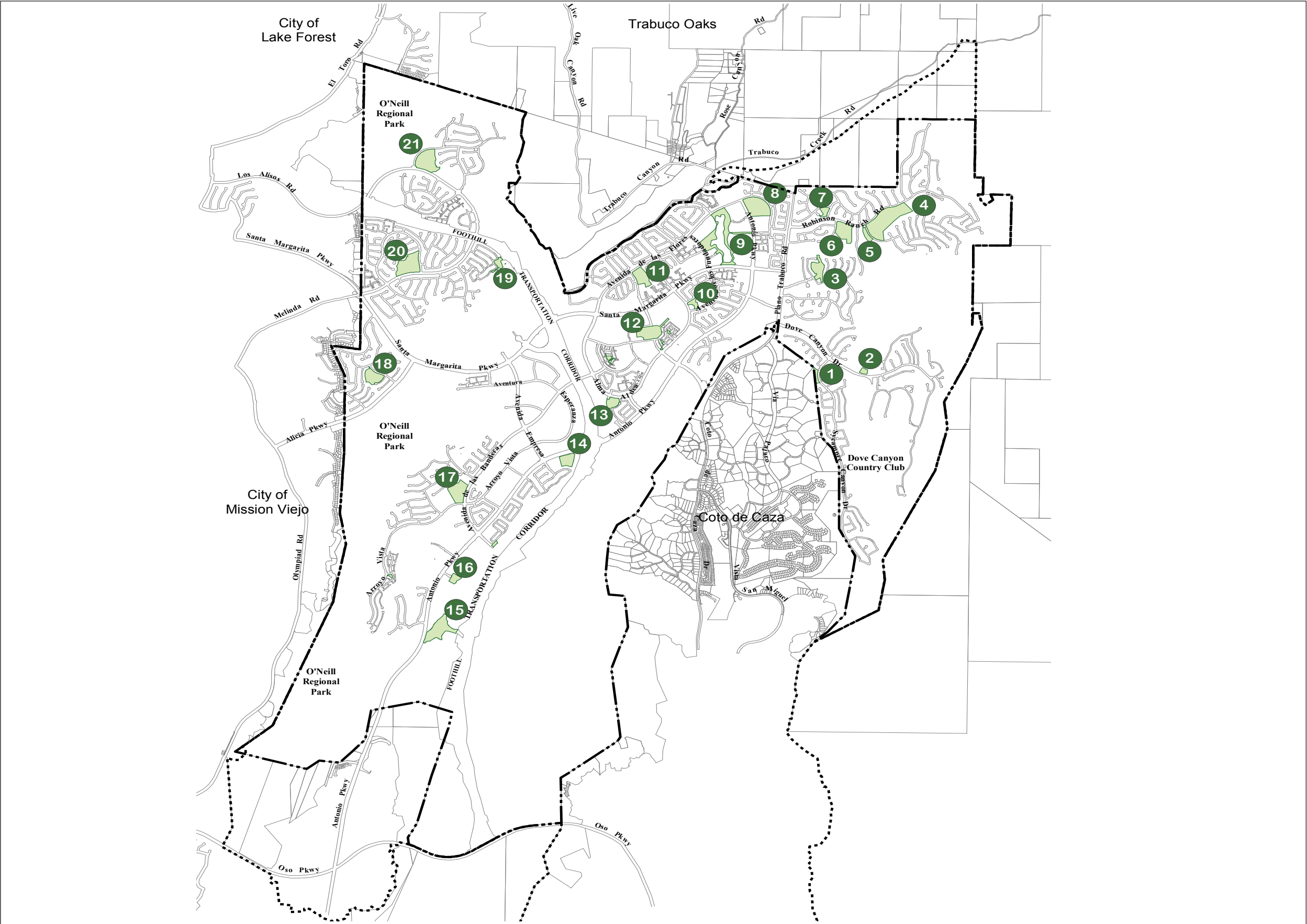




Table COS-2
Existing Parks and Facilities in Rancho Santa Margarita

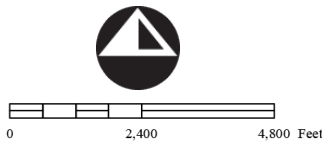
Park	Organized Sports Fields	Baseball	Basketball	Children Play Area/Tot lot	Community Center/Club House	Hiking Trails	Performance Stage	Picnic Tables	Spa	Swimming Pool	Tennis	Volleyball	Other Uses
Dove Canyon													
1 Sycamore Canyon Drive			X					X					
2 Swim and Racquet Complex/Golf Clubhouse			X		X			X	X	X	X	X	
Robinson Ranch, Trabuco Highlands, Walden, and Rancho Cielo													
3 Walden Park					X	X			X	X			
4 Central Park (Trabuco Highlands)	X		X	X				X		X			
5 Heritage Drive Trailhead						X		X					
6 Ike Arnold Park	X	X	X	X				X					
7 Country Hollow Lane Park		X	X	X						X			
SAMLARC¹													
8 Trabuco Mesa Park	X	X	X	X			X	X			X		
9 Lago Santa Margarita					X	X	X	X		X		X	X ²
10 Cielo Vista Park				X				X			X		
11 Monte Vista Park	X	X	X	X		X		X		X	X		
12 RSM Central Park	X			X	X		X	X					X ²
13 Vista Verde Park	X	X		X				X					
14 Tijeras Creek Park	X	X		X		X		X					
15 Cañada Vista Park	X	X	X			X		X					X ²
16 Mesa Linda Park			X	X		X		X			X	X	
17 Arroyo Vista Park	X	X		X				X		X	X	X	
Rancho Trabuco													
18 San Benito Park			X	X				X		X	X	X	
19 Estrella Vista Park ¹	X			X		X		X					
20 Solana Park ¹	X	X	X	X				X		X			
21 Altisima Park ¹	X	X	X	X			X	X		X	X		
Cañada Vista Park²													
Dog Park													X
Skate Park													X
Park # corresponds to Figure COS-3. Central Park provides an indoor soccer arena. Lago Santa Margarita Beach Club includes a sandy four-foot deep lagoon and rentals for boats, water trikes, kayaks, and surrey bikes while the Lago Santa Margarita Lakeshore provides an outdoor gym with fitness stations, the lake, and available fishing stations. 1. Maintained by Rancho Santa Margarita Landscape and Recreation Corporation (SAMLARC). 2. The City of Rancho Santa Margarita Dog Park and Skate Park are located at Canada Vista Park.													





LEGEND

- Parks
- 1. Sycamore Canyon Drive
- 2. Swim & Racquet Complex
- 3. Walden Park
- 4. Central Park (TH)
- 5. Heritage Drive Trailhead
- 6. Ike Arnold Park
- 7. Country Hollow Lane Park
- 8. Trabuco Mesa Park
- 9. Lago Santa Margarita
- 10. Cielo Vista Park
- 11. Monte Visa Park
- 12. RSM Central Park
- 13. Vista Verde Park
- 14. Tijeras Creek Park
- 15. Canada Vista Park
 - Dog Park
 - Skate Park
- 16. Mesa Linda Park
- 17. Arroyo Visa Park
- 18. San Benito Park
- 19. Estrella Vista Park
- 20. Solana Park
- 21. Altisima Park
- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence



Sources: City of Rancho Santa Margarita, 2017 and Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2013.



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The provision and availability of parks and recreation programs in Rancho Santa Margarita is of importance to the community given the community's youthful population. Approximately 37% of the population in Rancho Santa Margarita consists of persons under 24 years of age. This segment of the population presents an increased demand for active recreational facilities and services, including playgrounds, ball fields, and organized sporting events. In addition, accessible and well-maintained parks and recreational facilities and programs provide opportunities for all ages to be active and support a healthy community.

The Land Use Element identifies a citywide parkland level of service of three or more acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Because the City is largely developed, the construction of new parks will likely be limited. This Plan supports the increase of recreational facilities in existing parks and improving the utilization of these facilities. The City will consider the community's needs and the ability for the City to finance, construct, maintain and operate facilities now and in the future prior to any new parkland development. Continued coordination with homeowners' associations and other recreation providers will ensure that parks, community centers, and recreational opportunities and programs that meet the community's needs are provided and maintained.

Active recreational facilities are generally defined by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) as areas where competitive, organized team sports are played, or areas that may require specially built facilities for such competition. In contrast, facilities for passive activities are defined as unstructured and unscheduled, comprising hiking/walking trails, picnic/sitting areas, general open space, and "people watching" areas. No national standards are advocated by NRPA pertaining to passive versus active park space.

Of the approximately 154 acres of parkland located in the City, approximately 85 acres (55%) are devoted to active recreational use. Approximately 69 acres (45%) are devoted to passive uses. This does not include the O'Neill Regional Park, which is 3,358 acres in size, and runs along the western portion of the City. This regional park is maintained and operated by the County of Orange. Table COS-3 approximates the acreages within each park dedicated to active and passive uses.

Applying the definitions of active and passive neighborhood park space from the NRPA to the existing recreational facilities in Rancho Santa Margarita (refer to Table COS-2), the City has approximately 3.17 park acres per 1,000 persons and 1.75 active park acres per 1,000 persons.





Table COS-3
Active and Passive Parkland in Rancho Santa Margarita

Active and Passive Parkland Name	Total Acres	NRPA Active	NRPA Passive
Dove Canyon			
1 Sycamore Canyon Drive	2.5	--	2.5
2 Swim and Racquet Complex/Golf Clubhouse	6.5	6.0	0.5
Trail Rest Area	0.5	--	0.5
<i>Community Total</i>	9.5	6.0	3.5
Robinson Ranch, Trabuco Highlands, Walden, and Rancho Cielo			
3 Walden Park	4.6	2.8	1.8
4 Central Park (Trabuco Highlands)	21.4	8.0	13.4
5 Heritage Drive Trailhead	1.0	--	1.0
6 Ike Arnold Park	13.6	9.0	4.6
7 Country Hollow Lane Park	2.4	1.4	1.0
<i>Community Total</i>	43.0	21.2	21.8
SAMLARC			
8 Trabuco Mesa Park	11.9	9.5	2.4
9 Lago Santa Margarita	16.8	--	16.8
10 Cielo Vista Park	2.5	1.0	1.5
11 Monte Vista Park	6.9	6.2	0.7
12 RSM Central Park	8.5	1.8	6.7
13 Vista Verde Park	3.5	3.2	0.3
14 Tijeras Creek Park	4.0	3.5	0.5
15 Cañada Vista Park	6.0	5.5	0.5
16 Mesa Linda Park	2.1	1.3	0.8
17 Arroyo Vista Park	8.4	5.5	2.9
<i>Community Total</i>	70.6	37.5	33.1
Rancho Trabuco			
18 San Benito Park	4.6	0.7	3.9
19 Estrella Vista Park	2.1	--	2.1
20 Solano Park	11.9	9.8	2.1
21 Altisima Park	11.3	9.3	2.0
<i>Community Total</i>	29.9	19.8	10.1
Cañada Vista Park¹			
Dog Park	0.46	0.43	0.03
Skate Park	0.30	0.30	--
<i>Community Total</i>	0.76	0.73	0.03
City of Rancho Santa Margarita	154.0	85.2	68.8
Park # corresponds to Figure COS-3.			
1. The City of Rancho Santa Margarita Dog Park and Skate Park are located at Canada Vista Park.			





Scenic Resources

Rancho Santa Margarita is located within a natural setting that provides a unique visual character. Along with slopes, ridgelines and bluffs, several surface water resources are located in and near the City. The City has built on this natural character with high-quality architecture and design standards.

Several ridgelines and vista points are in Rancho Santa Margarita. These include Trabuco Canyon, Live Oak Canyon, Plano Trabuco, Ashbury Canyon, Cochise Canyon, and Bell Canyon. In addition, sections of O'Neill Regional Park are located within City limits, providing open space access and views. The topography of the area allows for expansive views of the surrounding communities as well as the Santa Ana Mountains and Cleveland National Forest.

Surface watercourses in the City include Lake Santa Margarita, Upper Oso Reservoir, and Portola Reservoir as well as Tijeras Canyon Creek, Trabuco Creek, Aliso Creek, Canada Chiquita Creek, and Bell Canyon Creek. The creeks are located within canyon areas surrounded by open space and natural habitat that provide views of the natural setting.

Although there are no State-designated scenic highways within or near Rancho Santa Margarita, this Plan recognizes landscape and viewscape corridors designated by the County. Viewscape corridors are defined as a route that traverses a corridor within which unique or unusual scenic resources and aesthetic values are found. The designation is intended to minimize the impact of the highway and land development upon the significant scenic resources along this route. Viewscape corridors are located outside of and within the City limits, providing varying views that include water features, lush trees and vegetation, expansive views of canyon areas, ridgelines, and hillsides. Rancho Santa Margarita's viewscape corridors are:





- Santa Margarita Parkway, west of the City boundary, between Avenida Empresa and Plano Trabuco Road;
- Plano Trabuco Road, south of Santa Margarita Parkway and north of Robinson Ranch Road; and
- Trabuco Canyon Road between Live Oak Canyon Road and Plano Trabuco Road.

Landscape corridors are defined as a corridor that traverses developed or developing areas and has been designated for special treatment to provide a pleasant driving environment as well as community enhancement. Landscape corridors also extend through and outside of the City limits providing lush landscaping and buffering from developed areas. Rancho Santa Margarita's landscape corridors are:

- Santa Margarita Parkway between Melinda Road and Avenida Empresa;
- Antonio Parkway between Oso Parkway and Avenida Empresa; and
- Avenida Empresa between Santa Margarita Parkway and Antonio Parkway.

Scenic resources will continue to be maintained throughout the City since any new development or redevelopment projects will require site plan and environmental review by City staff. The development of areas that contain scenic resources will need to satisfy requirements for the protection of natural resources and to ensure that the community's open space and scenic resources are preserved.

Water Quality

The City is located within the San Juan Creek watershed. Surface water sources are subject to pollutants and sediment carried in runoff. Pollutants such as heavy metals, petroleum products, animal waste, and trash can be carried through the storm drain system into receiving waters, such as Trabuco and Tijeras Creeks. These pollutants affect the beneficial uses of these receiving waters including recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, and preservation of fish and wildlife habitat.

As noted in the Land Use Element, the City is a co-permittee of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit and will continue to implement the most recent provisions adopted by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB). The City will also address surface water quality by coordinating with homeowner's associations to ensure that proper methods to reduce urban runoff are in place. Rancho Santa Margarita also supports and promotes safe water supplies for the community through program coordination with the Santa Margarita and Trabuco Canyon Water Districts and responsible regional, State, and Federal agencies.



Air Quality

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is located within the South Coast Air Basin, a non-attainment area for Federal and State air quality standards for ozone and State standards for particulate matter less than ten microns in diameter (PM₁₀). Motor vehicles are the major source of regional emissions throughout the air basin and within Rancho Santa Margarita. No major point source emitters, such as heavy industrial uses, are located within the City. Although the Basin is identified as a non-attainment area for two pollutants, overall air quality has been improving due to cleaner vehicles, technological advances, and increased regulatory oversight. The City will work with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and the most recent Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP) toward improved regional air quality.

Energy conservation is another strategy for improving air quality. Pollutants are generated by the combustion of fossil fuels to produce electricity, and by the combustion of natural gas. Reducing energy usage decreases the amount of pollutants generated. The next section in this Element, Energy Conservation, provides a discussion of measures to address energy conservation.

Energy Conservation

Energy usage and pollutants associated with the generation of energy can be reduced through innovative architectural design, building construction, structural orientation, and landscaping. The City promotes energy conservation by implementing State Title 24 energy performance requirements through building codes. In addition, Rancho Santa Margarita participates in the HERO property assessed clean energy (PACE) program, which enables homeowners and commercial property owners to pay off energy- and water-efficiency improvements through their property tax bill.

The City will promote the incorporation of energy efficiency measures through the development review process and promote utility company incentive programs to retrofit existing development with energy efficient lighting, air conditioning and heating systems. Energy will be conserved in public buildings and the provision of electric charging vehicle areas will be encouraged in new public and private developments.

Cultural Resources

Rancho Santa Margarita contains many cultural and historic resources within its boundaries. Many of the City's most important archaeological resources are located within O'Neill Park (managed by the County). One of these resources includes the old Trabuco Adobe site which is regarded by many as the single most important historical location within the City of Rancho Santa Margarita. Other important cultural resources within the City include prehistoric archaeological sites relating to Native American tribes, many of which appear to date from 6,000 B.C. to 500 A.D. As the City ages, there could be the potential for additional historic resources to be identified.





The City will review future development proposals and comply with all notification and consultation requirements to ensure that cultural and historic resources are conserved in compliance with this Plan and the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act.



Greenhouse Gas Emissions (GHGs)

Greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) have been identified by the State as an environmental issue of concern. GHGs produced by human activity contribute to the greenhouse effect, and are generated from both direct and indirect sources. Direct GHG emissions include emissions from construction activities, area sources, and mobile sources. Indirect sources of GHGs consist of electricity consumption and water supply. The City will participate and contribute to efforts that reduce greenhouse gas emissions to levels consistent with State goals.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Although Rancho Santa Margarita is largely built out, with relatively little vacant land available for new development, many opportunities exist for expanding the existing commercial and employment/technology base. As described in the Land Use Element, new investment and new complementary uses will occur during the General Plan planning period to meet local shopping, entertainment and dining demands, provide expanded job opportunities, and continue to improve the City's tax base.

Purpose of the Economic Development Element

This Economic Development Element provides the overall framework for decision-making that affects economic development in the City. The purpose of the Economic Development Element is to maintain and improve the economic sustainability of Rancho Santa Margarita by addressing:

- 1) Economic growth and development;
- 2) Business attraction and retention; and
- 3) Fiscal strength and stability.





Scope and Content of the Economic Development Element

The Economic Development Element is an optional element per Section 65303 of the Government Code. However, it is an important component of the Rancho Santa Margarita General Plan and has the same force and effect as the mandatory elements.

The Economic Development Element is comprised of three sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and
- 3) the Economic Development Plan.

The Introduction provides an overview of the purpose of the Economic Development Element specific to Rancho Santa Margarita. In the Issues, Goals, and Policies section, issues related to the enhancement and preservation of the community's economy are identified and related goals and policies are established to address these issues. The goals, which are general statements of the community's desires, comprise broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guides for sustaining and strengthening the local economy. The Plan explains how economic development goals and policies will be achieved and implemented.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

According to State planning law, the Economic Development Element must be consistent with the other General Plan elements. The Economic Development Element is closely related to the Land Use and Circulation Elements. The Land Use Element provides a planned land use pattern and land use designations, that include commercial and business land uses to support economic activities and growth in the community. The Circulation Element provides for the movement of goods, services, and people throughout the community. Access to employment and commercial centers is important to economic growth. Providing efficient and safe access to retail, employment, and services through multiple modes, such as pedestrians and bicycles can increase economic activity.





ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

The Goals and Policies of the Economic Development Element address the broad range of economic development opportunities and challenges within the community. They reflect the community's vision to enhance quality of life and encourage economic development. These include:

- 1) Supporting economic growth;
- 2) Attracting and retaining businesses that are beneficial to the community; and
- 3) Maintaining long-term fiscal strength and stability.

Economic Growth and Development

Economic growth and development during the General Plan planning period will rely on reuse and recycling of existing uses, intensification of development, and the development of mixed-use. The City will ensure economic development maintains and enhances the quality of life and adds value to the community.

Goal 1: Ensure economic development that maintains and enhances the community's character.

Policy 1.1: Develop and implement short- and long-range plans to stimulate jobs and economic growth that complement the City's employment, entertainment, and shopping needs.

Business Attraction and Retention

The City will coordinate with regional and local economic development agencies to address the needs of existing and future businesses in the community and maintain a healthy business environment. Additionally, the City will use a variety of economic strategies to attract new businesses and to retain existing businesses.





Goal 2: Attract and retain the types of businesses and employment generating uses that are beneficial to the community and maintain the City's community character.

- Policy 2.1:** Encourage the retention of existing industry and employment generators in the community by providing and maintaining high-quality services and facilities.
- Policy 2.2:** Encourage the use of incentives, such as fast-tracking development permits, public-private partnerships and other available financing options, and implementation of consistent and understandable development standards and processes, to assist businesses that provide important benefits and contributions to the community.
- Policy 2.3:** Promote economic development activities that encourage interaction and dialogue between business owners, leasing agents, property managers, and local economic development officials for the purposes of improving business recruiting and retention.
- Policy 2.4:** Cooperate with surrounding local jurisdictions, and new technology, and communications providers to ensure that state-of-the-art communications and data facilities and services are available to the community.
- Policy 2.5:** Collaborate with business organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to attract business and industry to the City, especially where the City has a competitive advantage or is losing potential revenue to other jurisdictions.
- Policy 2.6:** Collaborate with business organizations, such as the Chamber of Commerce, to retain and/or expand local businesses within the City. These efforts could include business visitations, regular focus groups, and surveys.
- Policy 2.7:** Attract, retain, and support expansion of industry that complements Rancho Santa Margarita's character and takes advantage of the City's supply of quality housing and locational advantage for goods movement and corporate mobility.
- Policy 2.8:** Promote the development of new retail uses and retention of existing retail uses (e.g., restaurants, specialty stores) that serve local needs, expand the selection of conveniently located goods and services, and help the City to compete for retail sales tax revenue within the region.



Fiscal Strength and Stability

Business attraction and retention contributes to the City's fiscal strength and stability, solid revenue generation, high property values, and access to good jobs. The City will build on existing assets that include the City's location, strong retail and business park base, and desirable quality of life.

Goal 3: Maintain an economic base that provides for long-term fiscal viability.

Policy 3.1: Encourage the attraction, retention, and expansion of industries that generate a positive fiscal impact while balancing these revenue generating land uses in concert with other uses that generally have neutral or negative fiscal impacts.

Policy 3.2: Strive to maintain a substantial fiscal surplus to ensure sufficient financial resources during slow economic periods when revenue generation may be low.

Policy 3.3: Explore additional revenue sources beyond the sales tax (e.g., Transient Occupancy Tax) to promote fiscal viability.

Related Goals and Policies

The goals and policies in the Economic Development Element are related to and support subjects included within other General Plan elements; refer to Table ED-1.

Table ED-1
Economic Development Related Goals and Policies by Element

General Plan Element	Economic Development Element Issue Areas		
	Economic Growth and Development	Business Attraction and Retention	Fiscal Strength and Stability
Land Use	1.1	2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.7, 2.8	3.1
Circulation			
Housing		2.7	
Conservation/Open Space			
Safety			
Noise			

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Economic development covers a wide spectrum of activities focused on creating and maintaining a healthy local economy. Economic development efforts may include business retention, encouraging expansion and growth of new businesses, exploring new opportunities to attract new start-up businesses, encouraging job retention, and promoting job creation. Enhancing and maintaining the City's economic base through increased sales and property tax dollars to the City's General Fund are also essential economic development efforts which sustain





delivery of services to residents and businesses. These activities are explored in the Economic Development Plan.

Existing Retail Market Profile

A Retail Market Analysis (December 2016) was prepared as a basis for the Economic Development Plan. The Analysis provides an overview of the Rancho Santa Margarita retail market to help provide an understanding of the opportunities and challenges related to existing and new retail establishments within the City. A summary of the analysis and key findings are provided below. However, it should be noted that the analysis represents a point in time in a dynamic and rapidly changing retail market, and will be revisited regularly as part of the City's on-going economic development strategy.

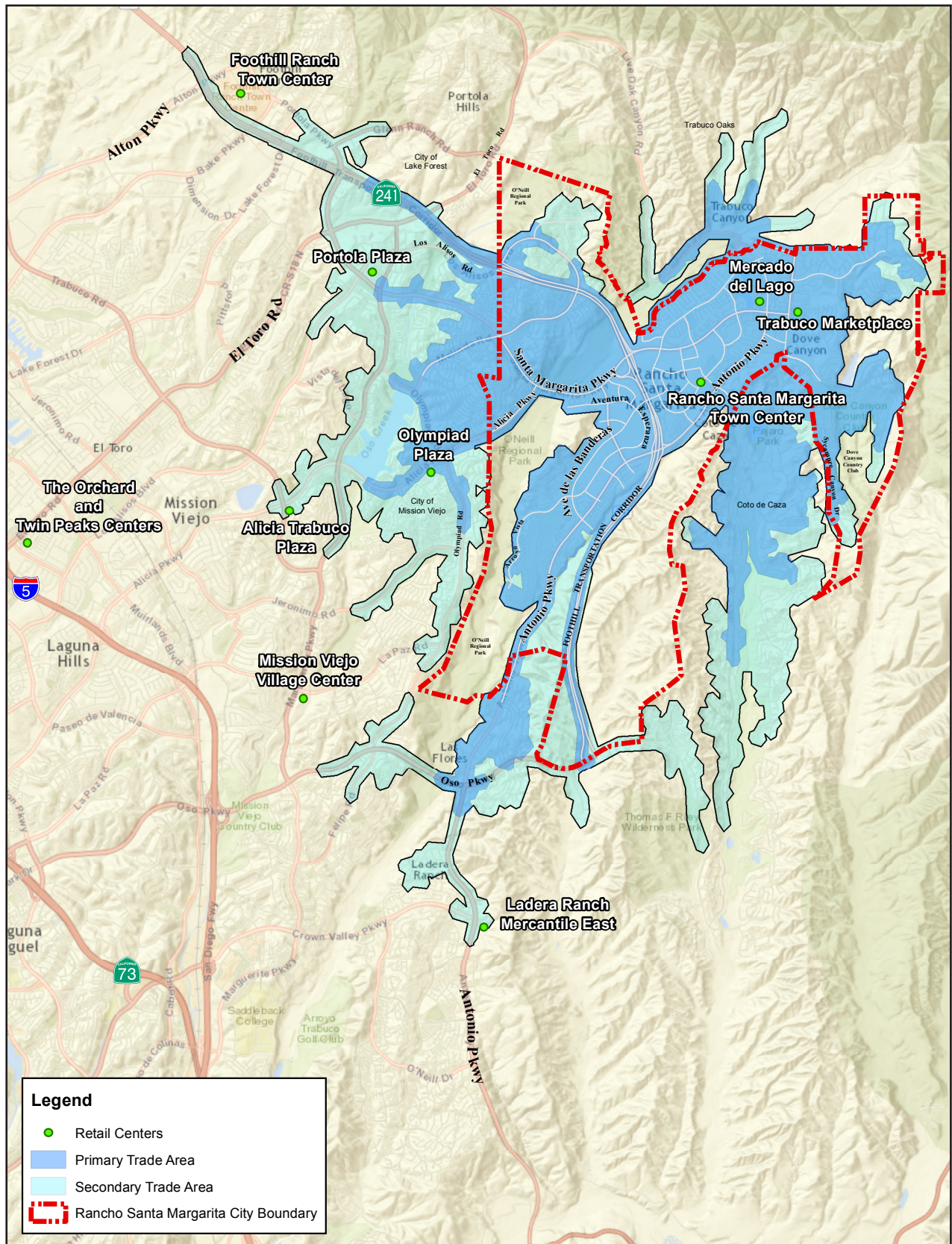
Retail Trade Area

The Rancho Santa Margarita Retail Trade Area ("RSM RTA") is a term used to refer to the geographic area from which retail establishments in Rancho Santa Margarita draw most of their customer base (refer to Figure ED-1). The Retail Market Study established the RSM Retail Trade Area based upon an analysis of consumer selection of shopping locations comprised of competing shopping centers, drive-times and geographic barriers. This analysis showed that the RSM RTA extends outside the City into Las Flores and Coto de Caza, as well as to portions of Trabuco Canyon, Mission Viejo, Lake Forest, and Ladera Ranch. Analysis of the RTA is useful to the overall Economic Development Plan as it helps to determine the area from which new and existing establishments draw customers as well as allows for evaluation of strengths and weaknesses due to competing retailers in surrounding areas. The analysis looks at both retailers and customers within the RTA, as described below, to determine if the supply of retail and services is meeting the current demand. This analysis can reveal opportunities for retail expansion within the City.

The Retail Market Analysis found that the RTA is limited geographically due to its location at the base of the Santa Ana Mountains and adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest. This geography limits population growth, access, and number of households within this area and reduces the size of the RTA in comparison to competing trade areas. The RTA is further constricted by surrounding retail center competition located in proximity to the RTA.

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita accounts for 57 percent of the population within the RTA. The RTA has an estimated 2.8 persons per household, which is higher than the U.S. average and has an adjusted estimated median household income that is 21.6 percent higher than the U.S. average. Residents in the RTA are more educated than the U.S. average, with approximately 45 percent of the residents within the RTA having a Bachelor's degree or Graduate/ Professional Degree compared to an average of 32 percent of the U.S. Compared to the U.S., residents within the RTA are employed in industries and occupations with higher earning potential. Additionally, the RTA has low unemployment. All of these factors are indicators for higher than average household spending power.





NOT TO SCALE

Michael Baker
INTERNATIONAL



02/20 JN 152779

Rancho Santa Margarita Retail Trade Area



Figure ED-1



Retail Trade Area Supply and Demand

Demand within the RTA is measured through consumer expenditures which demonstrate how consumers who live within the RTA allocate their spending. The analysis looks at both retail store type and merchandise type as an indication of demand within the trade area. The RTA generates an estimated \$1.8 billion annually in consumer spending on retail goods and food services. Rancho Santa Margarita resident expenditures of \$566 million annually account for 54 percent of the RTA's sales.

Retail sales are analyzed to determine the overall retail supply within the RTA. Overall sales within the RTA are \$909.6 million annually¹. Businesses within the City of Rancho Santa Margarita capture approximately 62 percent of these sales for a total of \$566.3 million annually (this includes non-taxable retail sales such as most groceries).

Trade Capture and Leakage

The analysis of RSM RTA supply and demand evaluated how much of the current demand is being captured by retail establishments within the RTA, known as "trade capture." Demand is measured by consumer expenditures and supply is measured by retail sales. The gap between supply and demand is known as retail "leakage" and indicates how much consumers living in the RTA spend outside of the RTA. According to the December 2016 Retail Market Analysis, the RTA captures 51 percent of consumer expenditures. Retail leakage of almost \$890 million annually in expenditures outside of the trade area present an opportunity to increase the performance of the RTA and re-capture some of this additional spending within the RSM RTA. The opportunities identified for capturing additional retail expenditures allows the City to focus its Economic Development strategy on expansion of retail opportunities. However, due to the built-out nature of the City, capturing retail expansion is limited. Some expansion opportunities may include the addition of new retail space to existing shopping centers or the introduction of mixed-use, which will be addressed further in the Land Use Element.

Economic Growth and Development

Due to the built-out nature of the City, population growth and new opportunities for commercial or residential development are limited. Economic growth during the General Plan planning period will rely on reuse and recycling of existing uses, intensification of development, and the development of mixed-use. Such opportunities for growth are further described in the Land Use Element. To ensure that economic development maintains and enhances the community's character, the City will do the following:

- Staff will monitor trade capture and leakage as well as restaurant, commercial, and retail trends to develop economic development efforts that maintain and enhance quality of life and add value to the community.

¹ Based on data collected in December 2016.



- Staff will monitor available properties and trends and develop attraction programs to meet local needs for entertainment and shopping.
- Economic development efforts will support local businesses and employment generators by maintaining and improving access to high quality retail and services.
- Economic development efforts will support the policies in the Land Use Element which also encourage high quality developments that maintain community character.

Business Attraction and Retention

Coordination with Regional Economic Development Agencies

The City will coordinate with regional and local economic development agencies to address the needs of existing and future businesses in the community. The City will work with these agencies to obtain input from the business community as to the best means for assisting local businesses and maintaining a healthy business environment.

Business Retention and Attraction Strategies

The City will use a variety of economic development strategies to attract new businesses and to retain existing businesses. Business attraction and retention will be based on customer demand and retail trends. A list of potential strategies is provided below which may be implemented during the General Plan planning period.

- Business attraction efforts may focus on retail goods and services which are desired by the community. Retail and service trends change over time so a balance of store types will provide the greatest level of service for the community as well as reliable revenues to support City services.
- Proactive business outreach efforts can include more regular visitation of key businesses and property managers to understand potential issues and current trends, and a survey of businesses to identify local business needs, expansion or relocation possibilities, and potential economic development actions.
- Staff will maintain an inventory of available commercial space to aid new or expanding businesses to find a location within the City.
- Market City and Retail Trade Area strengths at International Council of Shopping Centers (ICSC) conferences including the international conference and regional conferences.
- Expand common marketing programs and collaborative activities with dealerships to promote the City's Auto Center.





- Explore ways to create expansion opportunities through selected intensification of commercial office or retail sites.
- Examine ways that the potential future completion of the SR-241 connection to the I-5 Freeway offers market opportunities, such as broadening market area reach and visitor- and business-serving lodging, including taking fiscal advantages of growth by exploring the implementation of a Transient Occupancy Tax.
- Maintain information on the City's website about starting a business in Rancho Santa Margarita.

Fiscal Strength and Stability

The City's economic base and the revenues it generates is important to the long-term fiscal viability of providing a high level of the desired services to the community. This Economic Development Element establishes goals and policies to maintain the economic base. The City will build on existing assets that include the City's location, strong retail and business park base, and desirable quality of life. Business attraction and retention and the balance of housing and employment in the community contribute to the City's fiscal strength and stability, solid revenue generation, high property values, and access to good jobs. To strengthen the City's economic profile, the City will do the following:

- Maintain a balanced budget with sufficient reserves and seek additional revenue generating opportunities which will provide funding to maintain the high quality of services provided.
- Continue to operate under a Contract City Model by contracting out for essential services such as law enforcement and street and facility maintenance so the City can maintain a small staff and efficient operating budget.
- Work with the local Chamber of Commerce to address the needs of existing and future businesses in the community.
- Look for ways to retain and attract businesses that generate non-retail taxable sales.
- Explore public-private partnerships and programs to assist small business such as the establishment of Business Improvement Districts and/or Enhanced Infrastructure Financing Districts to allow for revenue sharing and re-investment in existing retail areas to finance infrastructure improvements, parking, beautification, and marketing programs.
- Review all applications for General Plan Amendments for long-term fiscal impacts.



- Participate in Local Agency Formation Commission LAFCO Municipal Service Review (MSR) every 5 years to determine any service-sharing or cost-saving opportunities.





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LAND USE ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

The Land Use Element is a guide to land use planning within Rancho Santa Margarita. This Element identifies the type and location of existing and future land uses within the City. The land uses identified in the Land Use Element reflect the community's goals for its form and character, the desire to maintain a quality living environment for families, strengthen the community's distinctive image, encourage economic development, and preserve the natural areas that make Rancho Santa Margarita unique.

Purpose of the Land Use Development Element

The Land Use Element describes present and planned land use activity, and addresses the relationship between development and environmental quality, protection of natural water resources, potential hazards, and social and economic objectives. As a guide for future growth and development, the Element identifies the general distribution, location, mix and extent of desired land uses including residential, commercial and business, public/quasi-public facilities, open space uses, and other land uses.

Using text, maps, and diagrams, a clear and logical land use pattern is established including standards for future development. An important feature of the Element is the Land Use Policy Map. This map shows the location, density, and intensity of





development for current and future desired land uses in the Rancho Santa Margarita Planning Area.

This Element addresses the following key issues related to land use planning and development and identifies goals and policies to establish a constitutional framework that guides decision-makers in future land use planning and development decisions in the City:

- 1) Balance of land uses;
- 2) Control and direct future land use;
- 3) Land use and water quality;
- 4) Integrate transportation and land use planning; and
- 5) Provision of public services and facilities.

Scope and Content of the Land Use Development Element

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita incorporated to gain local political control and strengthen community identity and pride. One of the responsibilities of an incorporated city is controlling future growth and development. Per State law, cities must prepare and adopt a General Plan as a tool to manage growth and development. The Land Use Element is a mandatory element of the General Plan and pursuant to California Government Code Section 65302(a) designates the proposed general distribution, location, and extent of land uses such as housing, business, industry, open space, natural resources, recreation, scenic beauty, education, public buildings and land, and other public and private uses of land. The Land Use Element is also required to establish standards for residential density and nonresidential building intensity for designated land uses.

The Land Use Element is comprised of three sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and
- 3) the Land Use Plan.

The Introduction summarizes key considerations for land use in the City. The Issues, Goals, and Policies section identifies major land use issues and related goals and policies that are established to address these issues. The goals, which are overall statements of the community's desires, are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guidance for reviewing development proposals, planning facilities to accommodate anticipated growth, and accomplishing community development strategies. The Land Use Plan defines the land use standards and identifies the location and extent of land uses within the planning area. It also identifies future land use opportunities and articulates how future land uses will be directed. The Land Use Plan further ensures that infrastructure and public facilities and services are available to accommodate planned land uses, and that the unique environmental quality of Rancho Santa Margarita is safeguarded and enhanced.

The Land Use Plan contains the Land Use Policy Map that graphically identifies the land use designations within the Rancho Santa Margarita planning area. The



planning area includes land within the municipal boundaries and unincorporated land within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI)¹. Descriptions of the land use designations, including the type and density of allowed uses, and a statistical summary of the future land use composition is provided. Areas of special interest, which involve more focused planning efforts, are also identified.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

Per State planning law, the Land Use Element must be consistent with the other General Plan elements. Each element is independent and all the elements together comprise the General Plan. All elements of the General Plan are interrelated to a degree, and certain goals and policies of each element may also address issues that are the primary subjects of other elements. The integration of overlapping issues throughout the General Plan elements provides a strong basis for implementation of plans and programs, and achievement of community goals.

In 2016, Senate Bill 1000 was passed, which required cities and counties that have disadvantaged communities² to incorporate environmental justice (EJ) policies into their General Plans as either a separate Element or by integrating related goals, policies, and objectives throughout the other elements. Although Rancho Santa Margarita does not contain any disadvantaged communities designated by California Environmental Protection Agency (CalEPA), the City recognizes the importance of public health, quality of life, and economic opportunity for all its residents. Goals and policies are included throughout the General Plan to support improved air quality, promote public facilities, and improve physical activity and access to services.

The Housing Element of the General Plan provides the basis for establishing housing stock that meets the affordability requirements and other special needs of the community. Emphasis is given to the development of housing that is complementary to existing neighborhood character. The Circulation Element provides a Circulation Plan to accommodate increased traffic from planned development. The use of alternative transportation modes and reduction of automobile trips are addressed in the Circulation Element to meet the transportation demands from new development, and to mitigate the impact of development on regional air quality and traffic conditions. The Land Use Element serves to reduce automobile trips by encouraging the development of office,

¹ A Sphere of Influence is defined as a planning boundary outside of an agency's legal boundary (such as the city limit line) that designates the agency's probable future boundary and service area.

² For purposes of SB 1000, "Disadvantaged communities" means an area identified by the CalEPA Pursuant to Section 39711 of the Health and Safety Code OR an area that is a low-income area that is disproportionately affected by environmental pollution and other hazards that can lead to negative health effects, exposure, or environmental degradation (Gov. Code Section 65302(h)(4)(A)).

The statute further defines "low-income area" to mean "an area with household incomes at or below 80 percent of the Statewide median income or with household incomes at or below the threshold designated as low income by the Department of Housing and Community Developments list of State income limits adopted pursuant to Section 50093" (Gov. Code Section 65302(h)(4)(C)).





commercial and light industrial uses, and consequently improves the jobs-to-housing balance.

Rancho Santa Margarita has been recognized as a city that incorporates many of the principles of smart growth. Rancho Santa Margarita includes a mix of housing, commercial, and retail land uses. A system of pedestrian trails and neighborhood parks offers residents numerous alternatives to driving. The City's mixed-use design reduces the number and length of vehicle trips.

Several areas are designated for parks and open space on the Land Use Policy Map for recreational, aesthetic, and resource protection purposes. Conservation/Open Space Element policies are designed to protect environmental and open space resources that contribute to the natural character of the community. The Safety and Noise Elements ensure that the planned land uses identified in the Land Use Element are compatible and will not result in public safety hazards or excessive noise.

As development continues in Rancho Santa Margarita, utilities and public services must be available for new and existing businesses and residents. The *Public Facilities and Services* portion of the Land Use Element addresses the availability of utilities and services for planned development including water supply, treatment and distribution, sewer treatment, solid waste, drainage/flood control, fire protection and emergency services, law enforcement, public education, parks, community centers and recreational opportunities, and libraries. The *Public Facilities and Services* portion of this Element ensures that adequate utilities and services are available for planned development.

ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

The Goals and Policies identified in this Element reflect the community's goals for its form and character, and the desire to maintain a quality living environment for families and strengthen the community's distinctive image. These include:

- 1) Maintaining a mix of land uses that allow residents to live, work, play, and shop within the community;
- 2) Controlling and directing future land use so that it complements and protects the quality of the existing community;
- 3) Protecting water quality associated with development;
- 4) Integrating transportation and land use planning to improve mobility options; and
- 5) Providing adequate public services and facilities to meet the needs of the existing community and future development.





Balance of Land Uses

Rancho Santa Margarita strives to provide an appropriate mix of land uses to meet community needs and desires, which include residential uses that provide housing for those living within the community, commercial and industrial uses that provide revenue, employment, and shopping opportunities for the City's residents, public and institutional uses that provide services such as education and utilities, and open space and recreational uses for the enjoyment of all.

Goal 1: Maintain a mix of land uses and a balance of jobs and housing to support a community in which people can live, work, shop, and play.

Policy 1.1: Attract and retain research and development, light industrial, and high technology developments that provide both community benefits, such as retail and entertainment options and high-paying employment opportunities within the community.

Policy 1.2: Encourage high-quality diverse commercial activities in the community that improve access to essential services and entertainment opportunities.

Policy 1.3: Maintain a land use composition in Rancho Santa Margarita that provides a balance or surplus between the generation of public revenues and the cost of providing public facilities and services.

Policy 1.4: Maintain a variety of housing types that complement the employment opportunities in the community and encourage a jobs/housing balance.





Policy 1.5: Streamline permit approval of developments for industries that produce high-paying employment when considering development applications within the City's business park areas.

Control and Direct Future Land Use

Rancho Santa Margarita is almost fully developed and limited future development is anticipated, as described in the *Land Use Plan* section of this Element. The Land Use Element will guide future development and land use to ensure that it complements the existing community, and protects and enhances the existing character of Rancho Santa Margarita.

Goal 2: Control and direct future land use so that the community is protected and enhanced.

Policy 2.1: Ensure that new development is complementary to the existing small-town village character of the City.

Policy 2.2: Annex land within the Sphere of Influence prior to its development to ensure that new development is compatible with existing development in Rancho Santa Margarita.

Policy 2.3: Ensure that the architecture and other physical characteristics of new development and land uses are consistent and compatible in scale and style with existing development, surrounding land uses, and available infrastructure.

Policy 2.4: Ensure that new development funds its share of community services and facilities (e.g., parks, schools, trails, utilities) and provides fiscal benefit to the community.

Policy 2.5: Preserve and enhance the quality of Rancho Santa Margarita by actively abating any non-conforming uses when a use is changed, abandoned, or destroyed and not rebuilt in a timely manner.

Policy 2.6: Preserve the nighttime sky by reducing excessive artificial lighting and off-site lighting impacts while maintaining nighttime safety and security.

Policy 2.7: Enhance the character of the community by modernizing and upgrading the quality of development and improving the quality of the public realm.

Policy 2.8: Evaluate impacts of proposed new development and land uses on the watershed in accordance with current watershed planning tools.



Land Use and Water Quality

Existing and future development can affect the environment in many ways, including water quality. Rancho Santa Margarita will ensure that pollutant discharge that enters waterways is limited to the extent necessary to meet Federal regulations and protect human and natural environment health.

Goal 3: **Reduce the discharge of pollutants and runoff flow from urban development consistent with Regional Water Quality Control Board (RWQCB) regulations.**

Policy 3.1: Require property owners or developers to use best available practice and techniques to minimize pollutant loading and flow velocity from new development projects and redevelopment/revitalization projects during and after construction.

Policy 3.2: Limit development that disturbs natural water bodies and natural drainage systems consistent with the RWQCB regulations.

Policy 3.3: Provide information and resources to the community that describes how to minimize activities that pollute urban runoff.





Integrate Transportation and Land Use Planning

The transportation network is important to the residents and businesses within the City. The goals and policies of this Element encourage greater mobility through integration of various transportation modes.

Goal 4: Integrate transportation and land use planning to provide mobility options and comfort for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and personal vehicles.

- Policy 4.1: Establish appropriately scaled car-free and pedestrian-only zones in high pedestrian demand locations.
- Policy 4.2: Ensure that City rights-of-way provide adequate infrastructure for the movement of vehicles, bicycles, and pedestrians with facilities that provide safety and comfort for all transportation modes.
- Policy 4.3: Balance street space allocated for alternative transportation options with parking when determining the appropriate future use of street space.
- Policy 4.4: Support the creation of multiuse trails within the City and their connection to regional trails in order to provide enhanced



access to open space, promote alternative transportation options, and increase recreational opportunities.

Policy 4.5: Support transit, bicycle, and pedestrian improvements that connect within the City and to neighboring jurisdictions.

Policy 4.6: Encourage nodes of interest and activity, public open spaces, well-planned development, mixed-use projects, and signature commercial uses that are highly accessible by pedestrians, bicyclists, and transit users.

Provision of Public Services and Facilities

Public facilities and services, such as water supply, treatment and distribution, sewer treatment, solid waste, drainage/flood control, fire protection and emergency services, law enforcement, education, parks, community centers, recreational opportunities, and libraries are provided by the City or other service entities. Other service providers include: Trabuco Canyon Water District, Santa Margarita Water District, Orange County Flood Control District, Orange County Fire Authority, Orange County Sheriff's Department, various school districts and private schools, the Orange County (OC) Public Library system, and homeowners' associations such as the Santa Margarita Landscape and Recreation Corporation (SAMLARC). The provision and maintenance of these services and facilities enhance the quality of life and the livability of the community.

The following goals and policies are designed to ensure that public services and facilities are provided at levels of service that meet or exceed the community's needs.

Water Supply, Treatment and Distribution

Goal 5: Consult with local and regional water suppliers to ensure that an adequate and safe water supply is available and that delivery and treatment capacity are adequate to meet the community's needs.

Policy 5.1: Consult with Santa Margarita Water District and Trabuco Canyon Water District as well as regional water suppliers and distributors to ensure that high quality water is available and deliverable to the community.

Policy 5.2: In cooperation with the Santa Margarita and Trabuco Canyon Water Districts, review development proposals to ensure that adequate water supply, treatment, and distribution capacity are available to meet the needs of proposed development without negatively impacting the existing community.

Policy 5.3: Consult with local and regional water suppliers to ensure adequate water reserves exist in case of natural disaster.





Sewer Treatment

Goal 6: Consult with local sewer treatment providers to provide and maintain adequate levels of sewage treatment.

Policy 6.1: Actively coordinate with Santa Margarita Water District and Trabuco Canyon Water District to ensure that sewer service and facilities are provided and maintained to meet the community's need for sewer collection and treatment.

Policy 6.2: In cooperation with the Santa Margarita Water District and Trabuco Canyon Water District, review development proposals to ensure that adequate sewer collection and treatment facilities are available to meet the needs of development without negatively impacting the existing community.

Solid Waste

Goal 7: Ensure that local providers of solid waste collection and disposal provide sufficient, cost-effective recycling and solid waste disposal services.

Policy 7.1: Ensure solid waste collection and disposal service providers deliver adequate solid waste collection and disposal services to City residents and businesses.

Policy 7.2: Participate in local and regional programs that encourage the per capita reduction of solid waste in Rancho Santa Margarita in order to meet State mandates for waste reduction.

Policy 7.3: Provide recycling collection facilities convenient to residences and businesses.

Drainage/Flood Control

Goal 8: Coordinate with the Orange County Flood Control District (OC Flood) to provide a level of flood control protection that meets the needs of the community.

Policy 8.1: Cooperate with OC Flood and homeowners' associations to ensure an adequate level of drainage and flood control facilities and programs are provided and maintained within the community.

Fire Protection and Emergency Services

Goal 9: Ensure provision of effective fire protection and emergency response service.



- Policy 9.1:** Coordinate with the Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) to provide a sufficient level of fire protection, public education, and emergency response service (including facilities, personnel, and equipment).
- Policy 9.2:** Implement and enforce regulations, such as the most recent building codes, to ensure existing and new development is constructed and maintained to minimize potential fire hazards.
- Policy 9.3:** Coordinate with homeowners' associations to ensure that street widths and clearance areas are sufficient to accommodate fire protection equipment and emergency vehicles.

Law Enforcement

Goal 10: Provide effective and responsive police protection.

- Policy 10.1:** Provide a superior level of police protection (including facilities, personnel, and equipment) and public education through the Orange County Sheriff's Department.
- Policy 10.2:** Continue to implement innovative policing methods, such as Community Oriented Policing to maintain the low crime rate within Rancho Santa Margarita.

Education

Goal 11: Cooperate with local school districts and other educational organizations to ensure that a level of education is provided that meets the community's educational needs.

- Policy 11.1:** Cooperate with local school districts and other educational organizations and assist them in identifying the need for new, expanded, or rehabilitated school sites and facilities so that sufficient educational facilities for programs are provided and maintained.
- Policy 11.2:** Coordinate with school districts to consider the need for new or expanded educational facilities when annexing new land.
- Policy 11.3:** Encourage shared parking arrangements and facilities at community schools and other community gathering places to provide adequate parking for large special events.
- Policy 11.4:** Work with schools to develop cooperative agreements for community use of school facilities, such as recreation fields and gyms.





Policy 11.5: Coordinate with local school districts during planning and environmental review of proposed non-education school reuse projects.



Parks, Community Centers and Recreational Opportunities

Goal 12: Provide a balance of high-quality active and passive public open spaces, a regional trail system, and recreation facilities based on community needs and the ability of the City to finance, construct, maintain, and operate facilities now and in the future.

Policy 12.1: Establish and ensure maintenance of a standard of 3.0 acres of active park land per 1,000 population.

Policy 12.2: Promote and support the Community Center and the provision of a variety of recreational programs, classes, and events that serve the entire community.

Policy 12.3: Coordinate with public, private, and non-profit healthcare and social service providers to better identify and serve the needs of the community.

Policy 12.4: Encourage native and large trees of various ages within parks and open spaces to be provided and maintained.

Policy 12.5: Coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions to facilitate regional trail connections.



Policy 12.6: At the time of review of new residential development, require park dedication and provision of recreational trails that enhance the existing private recreational system.

Goal 13: **Cooperate with homeowners associations and other recreation providers to ensure that parks, community centers, and recreational opportunities and programs are provided and maintained that promote a family-oriented community and encourage community spirit and participation.**

Policy 13.1: Collaborate with homeowners associations and other recreation providers to provide and maintain a variety of community amenities, such as the lake, parks, open space areas, community centers, public meeting facilities/spaces, and pedestrian/bicycle trails.

Policy 13.2: Evaluate the need for, and facilitate the provision of, additional neighborhood, senior, youth, and day-care centers as needed.

Policy 13.3: Cooperate with homeowners' associations and other recreational facility owners and program providers to facilitate the maximum effective utilization of parks and recreational opportunities and programs in the community.

Policy 13.4: Work with school districts in planning for parks and recreation facilities to maximize joint use community recreation opportunities.

Policy 13.5: Encourage homeowners associations and other private recreational facility owners to preserve and maintain active parkland and recreation facilities.

Libraries

Goal 14: **Cooperate with the County of Orange to provide a level of library facilities and services that meets the needs of the community.**

Policy 14.1: Actively work with the County to provide library services and facilities that meet State standards for library facilities and meet the needs of the community.

Policy 14.2: Encourage the maintenance of a high-quality library system that: enhances the cultural life of the community; is the repository of people's ideas, knowledge, and thoughts; and is the information center for the community.

Policy 14.3: Collaborate with the County library system to enhance the provision of programs to the residents of Rancho Santa Margarita and surrounding communities.





Related Goals and Policies

The goals and policies in the Land Use Element are related to and support subjects included within other General Plan elements; refer to Table LU-1.

Table LU-1
Land Use Development Related Goals and Policies by Element

General Plan Element	Land Use Element Issue Areas				
	Balance of Land Uses	Control and Direct Future Land Uses	Land Use and Water Quality	Integrate Transportation and Land Use Planning	Provision of Public Services and Utilities
Land Use	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5				1.3, 2.4
Circulation				4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6	9.3, 12.5
Housing	1.4	2.1, 2.2, 2.3			
Conservation/Open Space		2.8	3.1, 3.2, 3.3	4.4	8.1, 11.5, 12.1, 12.4, 12.6, 13.3, 13.4, 13.5
Safety		2.6, 2.8			
Noise					5.1, 9.1, 9.2, 9.3, 10.1, 10.2



LAND USE PLAN

The Land Use Plan focuses on the balance of land uses within the City by addressing present and planned land use activity. The Land Use Plan is based on the Master Plan documents and reflects the community's goals for its form and character, the desire to maintain a quality living environment for families, strengthen the community's distinctive image, encourage economic development, and preserve the natural areas that make Rancho Santa Margarita unique. The Land Use Plan addresses planned uses through 2040 and directs growth in a way that ensures the desirable aspects of the community are protected and enhanced.

Balance of Land Uses

The variety of land uses within Rancho Santa Margarita creates a desirable community in which people work, shop, reside, and recreate. Most of Rancho Santa Margarita is developed, and limited vacant land is available for future new development. As a result, the majority of future growth in the Rancho Santa Margarita planning area will occur in the Northeast Future Planned Community or through reuse and revitalization of existing development. Based on the Land Use Plan, the City will maintain a land use composition that provides a balance between the generation of public revenues and the cost of providing public facilities and services.





Implementation of the Land Use Plan will also assist in creating a balance between jobs and housing units within the City. A balance between jobs and housing allows some people to live and work within the same community. This results in a reduction of traffic, thereby reducing the level of air pollution and improving the quality-of-life for the community. Furthermore, ensuring that affordable housing is available for those lower income households working within the commercial, office, and retail areas of Rancho Santa Margarita is important. The City has identified land for employment generating uses, as well as residential uses. An economic development strategy is discussed in the Economic Development Element of the General Plan, and the provision of adequate housing is discussed in the Housing Element.

Land Use Classification System

The Land Use Policy Map (Figure LU-1) illustrates where specific land uses are allowed. The land use classification system is presented in Table LU-2. These land use designations identify the types and nature of development allowed as depicted on the Land Use Policy Map. Table LU-2 also identifies the maximum density or intensity of development allowed under each General Plan land use designation.



Table LU-2
Land Use Classification System

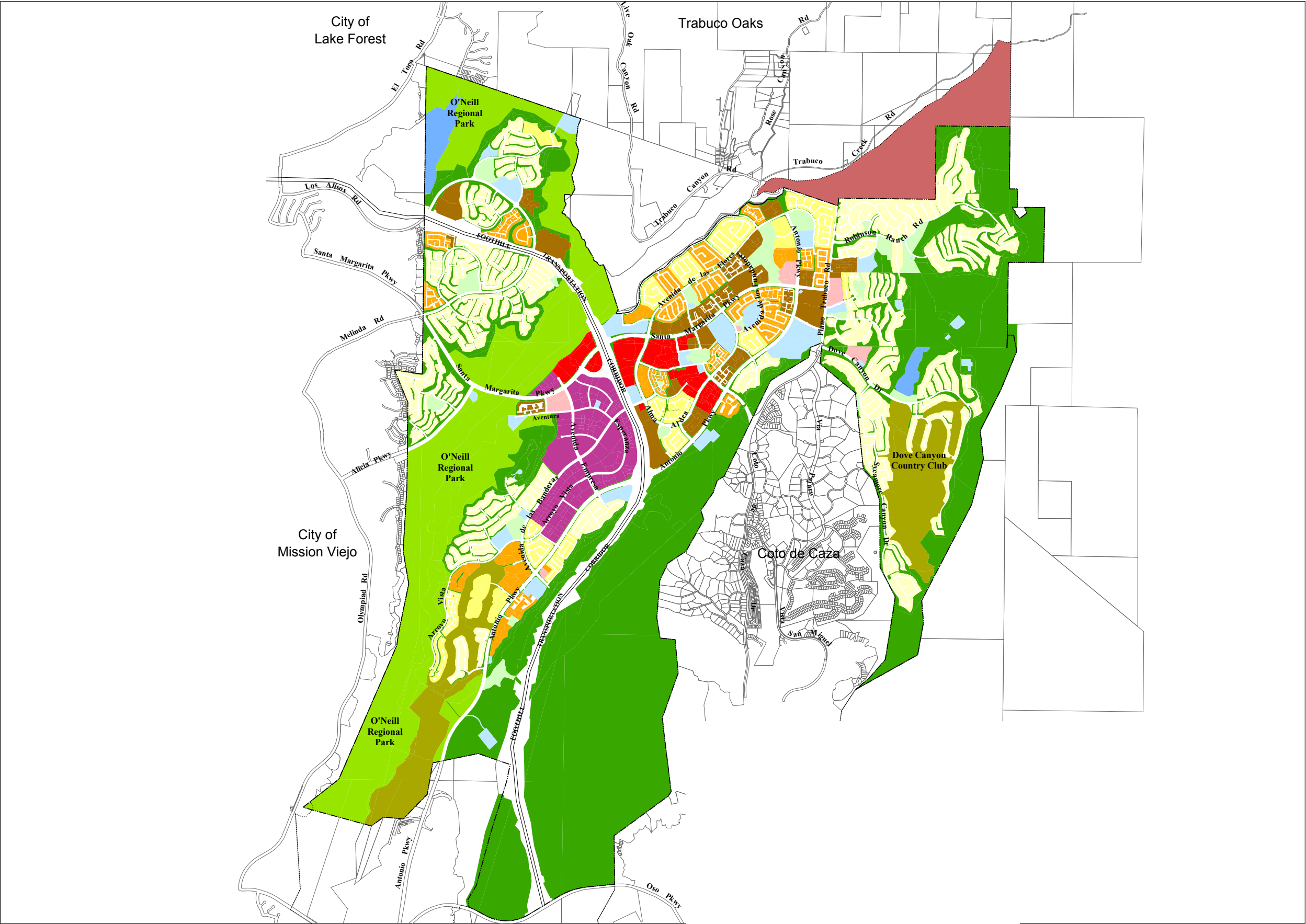
Land Use	Maximum DUs/Net Acre or Maximum FAR/Net Acre	Summary Description of Land Use Designation
Residential Land Uses		
LDR – Low Density Residential	7.0 du/acre	Single-family detached units on moderate to large lots.
LMDR – Low-Medium Density Residential	11.0 du/acre	Small-lot single-family detached homes, as well as some single-family town homes and duplexes.
MDR – Medium Density Residential	18.0 du/acre	Detached single family homes on smaller lots, and attached, town homes, duplexes, multiple-family units such as apartments and condominiums.
HDR – High Density Residential	25.0 du/acre	Attached homes, apartments, condominiums, and senior housing.
Commercial and Business Land Uses		
C – General Commercial	1.0:1 FAR	Retail stores, restaurants, lodging, personal services, business services, and financial services of a citywide or regional nature. Does not promote development of commercial strips.
NC – Neighborhood Commercial	0.6:1 FAR	Retail stores, service stations, restaurants, and services that serve the needs of surrounding neighborhoods.
BP – Business Park	1.0:1 FAR	Service commercial, retail commercial, office, light industrial, open space, and community facilities (excluding public and private schools).
Public/Quasi-Public Facilities Land Use		
CF – Community Facility	0.6:1 FAR	Fire stations, police stations, public and private schools, recreation centers, water tanks, utilities, or other community facilities.
Open Space Land Uses		
P – Parks	0.5:1 FAR	Publicly- or privately-owned and dedicated park lands.
OS – Open Space	N/A	Streams and washes, open space easements, and other private and public open spaces.
OSG – Open Space Golf	0.4:1 FAR	Maintenance and development of golf courses and other private recreational uses.
ROS – Regional Open Space	0.4:1 FAR	Sections of O'Neill Regional Park within the City. Active and passive recreational uses consistent with Orange County regulations.
Other Land Uses		
FPC – Future Planned Community	To Be Determined	Denotes large areas of land within the Sphere of Influence for detailed planning and development for residential, commercial, community facility, recreation and open space uses.
MU – Mixed-Use	25.0 du/acre 1.0:1 FAR	Provides for combinations of uses typically found within the MDR, HDR, C, and NC designations. Mixed-use can take place in a single structure, on a single parcel, or on adjacent parcels.



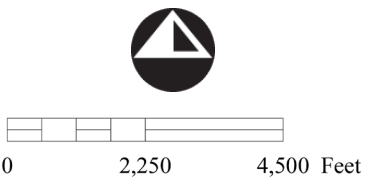


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- LEGEND**
- Low Density Residential (0-7.0 Units/Net Acre, Average 6.5 Units/Net Acre)
 - Low-Medium Density Residential (7.0-11.0 Units/Net Acre, Average 10.0 Units/Net Acre)
 - Medium Density Residential (11.0-18.0 Units/Net Acre, Average 14.3 Units/Net Acre)
 - High Density Residential (18.0-25.0 Units/Net Acre, Average 20.0 Units/Net Acre)
 - Commercial General
 - Neighborhood Commercial
 - Business Park
 - Community Facility
 - Park
 - Open Space
 - Open Space Golf
 - Regional Open Space
 - Water
 - Future Planned Community
 - City Boundary
 - Sphere of Influence



Sources: City of Rancho Santa Margarita, July 2015 and Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2013.



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The General Plan land use designations are grouped according to the following five general land use categories: Residential; Commercial and Business; Public/Quasi-Public Facilities; Open Space; and Other.

The Residential categories include four designations that allow for a range of housing types and densities. The non-residential categories include a variety of designations that promote a range of goods and services for the community, as well as revenue-and employment-generating businesses, such as General Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial, and Business Park. Public/Quasi-Public Facilities uses include community, school, and government facilities. Open Space categories include Parks and a variety of Open Space designations, such as parks and recreational facilities like golf courses. The category of Other includes the Mixed-Use Category and a Future Planned Community designation to address future growth opportunities.

This Element uses certain terminology to describe the land use designations. The term **density** is used for residential uses and refers to the population and development capacity of residential land. Density is described in terms of dwelling units per gross acre of land (du/gross acre).

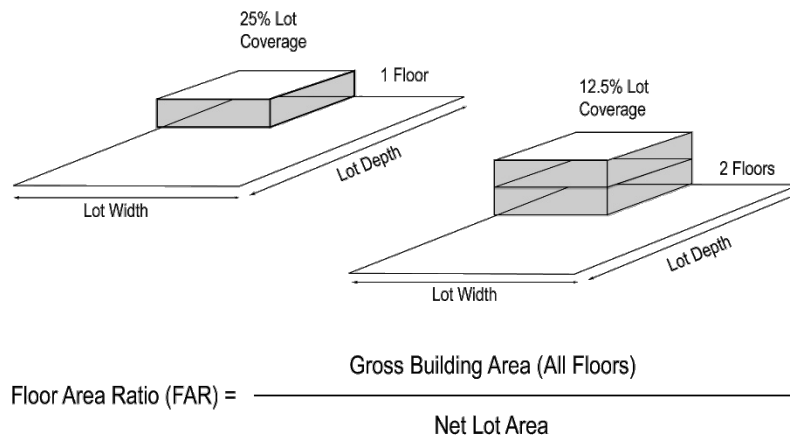
Development **intensity**, which applies to non-residential uses, refers to the extent of development on a parcel of land or lot (i.e., the total building square footage, building height, the floor area ratio, and/or the percent of lot coverage). Intensity is often used to describe non-residential development levels; but, in a broader sense, intensity is also used to express overall levels of both residential and non-residential development types. In this Element, floor area ratio and building square footage are used as measures of non-residential development intensity.

Floor area ratio (FAR) represents the ratio between the total gross floor area of all buildings on a lot and the total area of that lot. The FAR controls the intensity of use on a lot. FAR is determined by dividing the gross floor area of all buildings on a lot by the land area of that lot. For example, a 10,000-square foot building on a 40,000-square foot lot yields a FAR of 0.25:1. A 0.25:1 FAR allows a single-story building, which covers one-quarter of the lot, or a two-story building with reduced lot coverage.





Possible Building Configurations for 0.25 FAR



State General Plan law requires that the Land Use Element indicate the maximum densities and intensities permitted within the Land Use Plan. The land use designations shown on the Land Use Policy Map are described in detail in this Element. Table LU-2 lists each of the land use designations shown on the Land Use Policy Map and provides a corresponding indication of maximum density or intensity of development. Maximum allowable development on individual parcels of land is governed by these measures of density or intensity. The actual density or intensity of development on a parcel is usually less than the maximum permitted within the Land Use Plan.

Land Use Designations

All land in Rancho Santa Margarita is assigned to one of the 14 land use designations described below:

Residential Land Use Designations

Low Density Residential (LDR): The Low Density Residential land use designation provides for single-family detached homes on moderate to large lots. The designation allows a maximum density of 7.0 units per net acre. Uses such as accessory dwelling units, community facilities, parks and open space, day care, churches, and others that are compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of the low-density single-family neighborhood may also be allowed.

The maximum density of this land use designation may be exceeded with General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of California Government Code (CGC) Section 65915 and Section 9.08.120 Density Bonus Process of the Rancho Santa Margarita Zoning Code (RSMZC).

Low-Medium Density Residential (LMDR): The Low-Medium Density Residential land use designation provides for single-family detached homes on smaller lots, as well as development of single-family attached residential units, such as town homes and duplexes. The designation allows a maximum density of 11.0 units per net acre, with an average density of 10.0 units per net acre. Uses such as



accessory dwelling units, community facilities, parks and open space, day care, churches, and others that are compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of the low-medium density single-family neighborhood may also be allowed.

The maximum density of this land use designation may be exceeded with General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of California Government Code (CGC) Section 65915, and Section 9.08.120 Density Bonus Process of the Rancho Santa Margarita Zoning Code (RSMZC).

Medium Density Residential (MDR): The Medium Density Residential designation provides for detached and attached single-family homes, condominiums, duplexes, and apartments. The designation allows a maximum of 18.0 units per net acre, with an average density of 14.3 units per net acre. Uses such as day care, churches and others that are compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of the medium density neighborhood may also be allowed.

The maximum density of this land use designation may be exceeded with General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of California Government Code (CGC) Section 65915, and Section 9.08.120 Density Bonus Process of the Rancho Santa Margarita Zoning Code (RSMZC).

High Density Residential (HDR): The High Density Residential designation provides for attached condominiums, duplexes, and apartments. The designation allows a maximum of 25.0 units per net acre, with an average density of 20.0 units per net acre. The High Density Residential designation also provides for development of senior housing. Uses such as day care, parks and open space, churches and others that are compatible with and oriented toward serving the needs of high density or senior neighborhoods may also be allowed.

The maximum density of this land use designation may be exceeded with General Plan Housing Element policy in accordance with the density bonus provisions of California Government Code (CGC) Section 65915, and Section 9.08.120 Density Bonus Process of the Rancho Santa Margarita Zoning Code (RSMZC).

Commercial and Business Land Use Designations

General Commercial (C): The General Commercial land use designation provides for retail uses that rely on automobile traffic and attract customers from a citywide and/or regional trade area. The maximum intensity of development is 1.0:1 FAR. The average intensity is 0.4:1 FAR.

Neighborhood Commercial (NC): The Neighborhood Commercial land use designation provides for a variety of retail uses that serve the needs of nearby neighborhoods. In addition to retail uses, areas designated Neighborhood Commercial can also include general business, medical, or professional offices. The maximum intensity of development is 0.6:1 FAR. The average intensity is 0.3:1 FAR.





Business Park (BP): The Business Park designation applies to all non-residential properties within the Rancho Santa Margarita Business Park area. Permitted uses include service commercial, retail commercial, office, light industrial, open space, and community facilities (excluding public and private schools). The maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 1.0:1 and the average intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.35:1.

Public/Quasi-Public Land Use Designation

Community Facility (CF): The Community Facility land use designation allows development of fire stations, police stations, public and private schools, recreation centers, water tanks, utilities, or other non-commercial, non-residential, or non-industrial purposes. The maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.6:1 and the average intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.3:1. Ownership and control of properties designated as Community Facility are indicated on the Land Use Policy Map using the following symbols:

- S – Public Schools (Capistrano and Saddleback Valley Unified School Districts)
- R – Churches, Religious Institutions, and Religious Schools
- L – Libraries (Orange County Public Library)
- CH – City Hall and Bell Tower Regional Community Center (City of Rancho Santa Margarita)
- FS – Fire Station (Orange County Fire Authority)
- W – Water District (Santa Margarita and Trabuco Canyon Water Districts)

Open Space Land Use Designations

Parks (P): The Parks designation provides for public and private-owned parklands, which may include areas for active sports play, large multipurpose fields for community sports fields and courts, and informal recreation, tot lots, community event space, maintenance/support facilities, and caretaker facilities. The maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.5:1 and the average intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.1:1.

Open Space (OS): The Open Space designation provides open space for outdoor recreation, buffering of land uses, preservation of natural resources, managed production of resources, and protection of health and public safety. Areas designated as Open Space include: streams and washes, open space easements, and other private and public open space. No density or intensity standards are applied within this designation.

Open Space Golf (OSG): The Open Space Golf designation provides for maintenance and development of golf courses and other private recreational uses. The maximum intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.4:1 and the average intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.05:1.

Regional Open Space (ROS): The Regional Open Space designation applies to sections of O'Neill Regional Park that lie within the City of Rancho Santa Margarita. The designation provides for a variety of active and passive recreational uses, consistent with Orange County regulations for use of the Park. The maximum



intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.4:1 and the average intensity of development is a floor area ratio of 0.05:1.

Other Land Use Designations

Future Planned Community (FPC): The Future Planned Community designation applies to land located within the City's Sphere of Influence (SOI) northeast of the City's existing boundary; refer to Figure LU-1. Future development of the Northeast Future Planned Community is expected to occur following annexation of the properties by the City and the City approval of a Specific Plan. This area is subject to detailed planning and development of residential, commercial, community facility, recreation and open space uses to ensure that it is complementary to the master planned development of Rancho Santa Margarita and properly planned for its interface with Trabuco Canyon and adjacent neighborhoods.

Mixed-Use (MU): The Mixed-Use designation provides for combinations of uses typically found within the Medium Density Residential (MDR), High Density Residential (HDR), Commercial General (C), and Neighborhood Commercial (NC) designations. Mixed-use can take place in a single structure, on a single parcel, or on adjacent parcels. Mixed-use developments may occur as vertical (first-floor commercial with 2 – 3 floors of residential above) or horizontal (adjacent development on the same parcel or site). The maximum density of development is 25 units per net acre with an average density of 20 units per net acre. The maximum intensity for development is 1.0:1 FAR, with a maximum 45-foot height limit and average intensity 0.4:1 FAR.

The intent of this designation is to provide the ability for development projects to combine compatible uses in ways which offer a balance of land uses where people can live, work, shop and dine on a neighborhood scale, and which remain consistent with the City's Master Plan and the Goals and Policies of the General Plan. Mixed-use development encourages property owners to make efficient use of their land and propose unique mixes of development designed to meet the demands of the surrounding area. The maximum density and building height for this designation are specified to ensure compatibility with the existing form and character of the master planned community. Mandatory site conditions and characteristics for the Mixed-Use Residential/Commercial designation will be at least ten acres in size, have close proximity to major employment areas, be located near the City center or existing commercial centers with enough surrounding density to support retail, and promote walkability. Sites should be



Vantis, Aliso Viejo



Vantis, Aliso Viejo



The Village at Irvine
Spectrum





located adjacent to major arterials to capture commuter traffic, but the focus of the internal circulation system should be limited to one or two lanes of traffic (preferably with diagonal parking in each direction) to make for safe and comfortable pedestrian movement.

Future Land Use Opportunities

Northeast Future Planned Community

The unincorporated area located north of Robinson Ranch is known as the Northeast Future Planned Community and designated Future Planned Community (FPC) on the Land Use Policy Map. This area consists of approximately 300 acres within the unincorporated jurisdiction of Orange County and is part of the Foothill-Trabuco Specific Plan adopted by the County in 1991. Future development of the Northeast Future Planned Community is expected to occur following annexation of the properties by the City and City approval of a Specific Plan ensuring that new development is compatible with the character of Rancho Santa Margarita. The City will work with the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) and owners of the area to prepare appropriate development plans and to annex this area into the City.

As part of the annexation plan, developers will need to prepare an urban services plan that outlines how adequate levels of public services and facilities will be provided to serve the new development, without reducing the level of services in the City. The plan will identify who will be responsible for the provision of the various public services and facilities, as well as identify funding sources to finance the services and facilities. Prior to City approval, the urban services plan must demonstrate that the proposed development meets identified service standards.

Chiquita Ridge

The City owns an approximately 92-acre property, known as Chiquita Ridge, along the east side of Antonio Parkway just south of Canada Vista Park. While the property is currently designated as open space, it may be developed in the future subject to the terms of the Settlement Agreement which transferred the property to City ownership. According to the Settlement Agreement, 55 acres of the property may be developed and 37 acres must be preserved for natural habitat. Future development would require the land use designation to be revised. The City will ensure that any development at Chiquita Ridge is compatible with the existing community while providing appropriate uses.

Mixed-Use

As properties transition and areas revitalize, there is the potential for new development to provide a mixture of residential and commercial uses within a single structure, on a single parcel, or on adjacent parcels. Future mixed-use development would require a General Plan Amendment to change a site's existing land use designation to MU. The City would review any request for mixed-use development to ensure the location meets the mandatory minimum site



conditions and characteristics for a mixed-use development, is designed to enhance the community's character, and honors the City's Master Plan. As such, mixed-use projects will be expected to provide walkable opportunities where people can live, work, shop and dine. Any request for mixed-use development will be required to demonstrate the economic feasibility of the non-residential component to ensure a successful balance of uses.

Reuse and Revitalization

During the approximately 20-year lifespan of this General Plan there will be changes in land use. As described above, the only opportunities for significant new development are identified on the Chiquita Ridge property and within the Northeast Future Planned Community. As communities age and to spur economic development, it may be necessary for existing developments to be redeveloped, reused, and revitalized. Reuse will occur through the change-out of one business for another, and revitalization will occur through modernization of buildings and uses. Additionally, property owners may seek to expand or intensify their existing use, consistent with a parcel's land use designation. Thus, there is the potential for currently developed parcels to undergo intensification and/or revitalization during the General Plan planning period. This could involve expansion of an existing development or removal of existing uses and construction of an entirely new development. Land use changes may involve intensification of land uses, such as expansions of existing shopping centers or business park buildings, or may encompass a change from a single-use type to a mixed-use concept involving retail, office, and residential on a single site. Parcels not currently developed to the land use designation's maximum allowable density or intensity may result in increased development when compared to existing conditions. The City would review any proposed intensification and/or revitalization of parcels for consistency with the Land Use Plan and to ensure the development enhances the community and complements the small-town village character. It will also be important to ensure that existing public services and facilities can serve, or be expanded to serve, any new or increased development. Revitalization and intensification of the City's shopping centers and business park will be important to the City's growth during the planning period.

Shopping Centers

Shopping Centers throughout Rancho Santa Margarita are located in the GC and NC zoning districts. The centers developed between 1985 and 2002 and are developed at an average FAR of 0.17 and 0.19, respectively. Table LU-3 assumes additional development within the shopping centers resulting in an average FAR of 0.20 in the NC district and 0.25 in the GC district. Development at this level would result in approximately 462,000 square feet of new commercial development over the life of the plan. However, additional development up to the maximum allowable FAR is possible. All new development will be dependent upon site- and project-specific characteristics and compliance with the Zoning Code.





Business Park

Properties within the Business Park developed between 1986 and 2007. The average FAR within the Business Park is 0.29 and most properties are built well below the allowable FAR. Accordingly, there is opportunity to increase development within the Business Park. In addition, two small undeveloped pads are located on either side of Avenida de las Banderas at 29977 and 29862, representing approximately three acres for new development within currently developed properties. Table LU-3 assumes additional development resulting in an average FAR of 0.45 over the approximately 20-year life of this plan. Development at this level would result in approximately 1,860,899 square feet of new business park development over the life of the plan. However, additional development up to the maximum allowable FAR is possible. All new development will be dependent upon site- and project-specific characteristics and compliance with the Zoning Code.

Land Use Plan Development Capacity

The maximum density or intensity permitted for an individual parcel is controlled by the land use designation, unless a density bonus pursuant to the City's Density Bonus Section 9.08.120 of the RSMZC applies. In addition to the land use designation, development of a parcel is influenced by a variety of factors including the physical characteristics of a parcel, compatibility with nearby uses, access and infrastructure limitations, market factors, and previous development trends.

Within Rancho Santa Margarita, many of the parcels are not developed to their maximum density or intensity. As previously discussed, there are future land use opportunities that could result in new development or redevelopment within the community. In general, it is anticipated that new development will occur in a similar manner with only a limited number of parcels being developed at the maximum density or intensity. Therefore, the projected future development intensity and density identified in Table LU-3 is based upon existing and historical development as well as anticipated development associated with the future land use opportunities identified above.



Table LU-3
Land Use Plan Development Capacity Summary

Land Use	Existing Dwelling Units	Existing Non-Residential Square Feet	Maximum		Assumed		Acres	Estimated Dwelling Units	Estimated Non-Residential Square Feet
			DU/ Acre	FAR	DU/ Acre	FAR			
Residential Land Use Designations									
LDR Low Density Residential	6,032	--	7	--	7	--	895.5	6,268	--
LMDR Low-Medium Density Residential	2,259	--	11	--	10	--	228.2	2,282	--
MDR Medium Density Residential	4,080	--	18	--	16	--	263.3	4,213	--
HDR High Density Residential	5,395	--	25	--	22	--	251.4	5,531	--
Commercial, and Business Land Use Designations									
C General Commercial	--	961,906	--	1.0	--	0.25	129.4	--	1,408,732
NC Neighborhood Commercial	--	363,454	--	0.6	--	0.20	43.5	--	378,961
BP Business Park	--	3,457,374	--	1.0	--	0.45	271.3	--	5,318,273
Public/Quasi-Public Land Use Designation									
CF Community Facility	--	1,184,862	--	0.6	--	0.15	219.4	--	1,433,721
Open Space Land Use Designations									
P Parks	--	3,616	--	0.5	--	0.001	154.0	--	6,706
OS Open Space	--	10,000	--	--	--	--	3,162.6	--	10,000
OSG Open Space Golf	--	67,026	--	0.4	--	0.0035	457.1	--	69,694
ROS Regional Open Space	--	--	--	0.4	--	0.01	1,164.3	--	507,166
Other Land Uses									
Water		--	--	--	--	--	71.2	--	--
Total		--					7,311.0	18,294	9,133,253
Note: Acreage does not account for right-of-way and numbers may vary slightly due to rounding. Future mixed-use development would come from capacity within the MDR, HDR, and C designations.									

Table LU-4 summarizes the growth above existing conditions that could occur with implementation of the General Plan Update. As indicated in Table LU-4, the anticipated growth over existing (2016) conditions is 528 additional dwelling units and 3,085,014 additional square feet of non-residential uses based upon the assumed development intensities and densities identified in Table LU-3.





Table LU-4
General Plan Update Net Growth (increase over existing conditions)

Land Use	Estimated Dwelling Units	Estimated Non-Residential Square Feet
Residential Land Use Designations		
LDR: Low Density Residential	236	—
LMDR: Low-Medium Density Residential	23	—
MDR: Medium Density Residential	133	—
HDR: High Density Residential	136	—
Commercial, Business, and Tourist Land Use Designations		
C: General Commercial	—	446,826
NC: Neighborhood Commercial	—	15,507
BP: Business Park	—	1,860,899
Public/Quasi-Public Land Use Designation		
CF: Community Facility	—	248,859
Open Space Land Use Designations		
P: Parks	—	3,089
OS: Open Space	—	—
OSG: Open Space Golf	—	2,668
ROS: Regional Open Space	—	507,166
Other Land Uses		
Water	—	—
Total	528	3,085,014

Control and Direct Future Land Uses

The prior section of this Plan identifies potential future land use changes which may occur during the planning period. Directed by the goals and policies of this Element, future land uses will be guided to ensure that they complement the existing community, and protect and enhance the existing character of Rancho Santa Margarita.

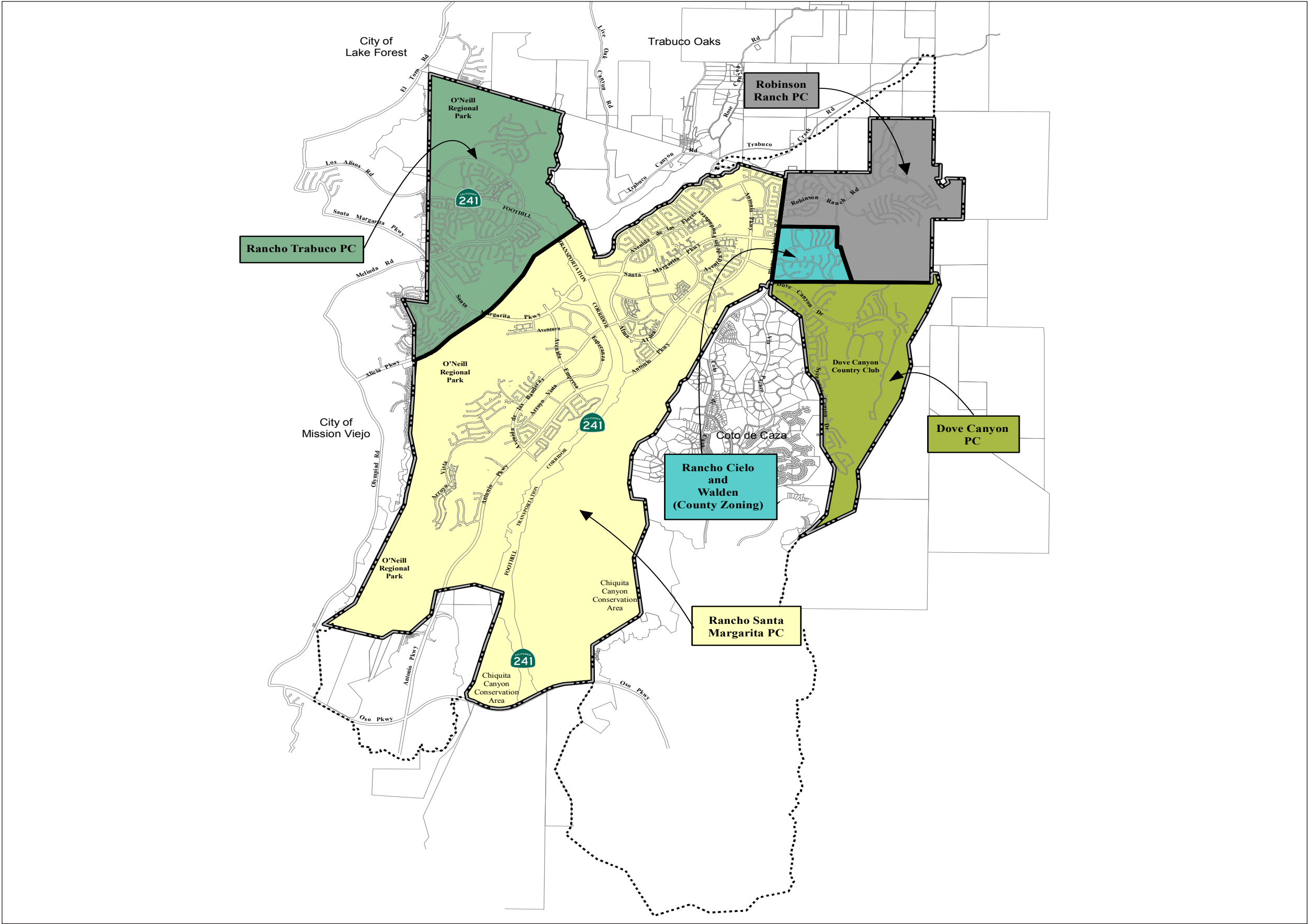
Planned Communities

Rancho Santa Margarita has been primarily developed as a series of Planned Communities prior to incorporation. The Planned Communities comprising the incorporated City include:

- Rancho Santa Margarita Planned Community
- Rancho Trabuco Planned Community
- Robinson Ranch Planned Community
- Dove Canyon Planned Community

The area located southwest of the Robinson Ranch Planned Community is referred to as the Rancho Cielo and Walden Communities. These areas were developed consistent with the Orange County development code. Figure LU-2 identifies the locations of all the above listed planned communities within the City.





- LEGEND**
- City Boundary
 - Sphere of Influence
 - Planned Communities Boundary



Sources: City of Rancho Santa Margarita and Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2013.



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While the Planned Communities once set forth the zoning and site development standards for specific areas within the City, they were replaced by the Rancho Santa Margarita Zoning Code (RSMZC) in 2007. The Planned Communities now serve as a guide for the character of development in specific geographic areas of the City. At this time, the Planned Communities have been built out, leaving little opportunity for significant new development. Redevelopment or reuse which is consistent with the vision of the Planned Communities may occur during the planning period.

Specific Plans

A Specific Plan is a comprehensive planning and zoning document for a defined geographic area of the City. Specific Plans promote comprehensive planning for new and infill development projects and support the master planned character of the City. Three areas within the City are subject to adopted Specific Plans. Additional specific plans may be adopted in the future for infill development, revitalization and/or new development projects.

Foothill/Trabuco Specific Plan

The Foothill/Trabuco Specific Plan was prepared by the County of Orange and adopted in 1991 to address areas within Trabuco Canyon located north of the City. The Specific Plan consists largely of rural and open space designations to preserve the existing character of the canyon area. The Plano Trabuco sub-area described in the Specific Plan corresponds to the Northeast Future Planned Community described in the Land Use Plan within this Element. As described above, future development of the Northeast Future Planned Community is expected to occur following annexation of the properties by the City and City approval of a Specific Plan.

RSM Townhomes Specific Plan

The RSM Townhomes Specific Plan was adopted in 2010 and addresses approximately 4 acres of land located near the center of the City of Rancho Santa Margarita adjacent to SR-241. The RSM Townhomes is now known as Tesoro Trails, a multifamily townhome community with 66 attached homes with on-site parking and other amenities.

Plano Trabuco Townhomes Specific Plan

The Plano Trabuco Townhomes Specific Plan was adopted in 2015 and addresses approximately two acres of land located north of Plano Trabuco Road and north of Santa Margarita Parkway. The Plano Trabuco Townhomes is now known as Dahlia Court and contains 36 attached homes with on-site parking and other amenities.





Sphere of Influence

A "Sphere of Influence" (SOI) is defined as a planning boundary outside of an agency's legal boundary (such as the city limit line) that designates the agency's probable future boundary and service area. Thus, the establishment of the SOI boundary is necessary to determine which governmental agencies can provide services in the most efficient way to the people and property in any given area, promote orderly land use and service, and protect agriculture and open space.

Rancho Santa Margarita's SOI includes the Northeast Future Planned Community area, discussed above, as well as Coto De Caza, Las Flores, Stonecliffe, and Wagon Wheel; refer to Figure LU-1.

Land Use and Water Quality

Urban development can affect the environment in many ways, including water quality, which can be impacted by pollutants from urban runoff. Pollutants such as heavy metals, petroleum products, animal waste, and trash can be carried through the storm drain system into receiving waters, such as Trabuco and Tijeras Creeks. These pollutants affect the beneficial uses of these receiving waters including recreation, aesthetic enjoyment, and preservation of fish and wildlife habitat. To address this problem, the CWA was amended in 1987 to include the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES). This permit, implemented in south Orange County by the San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board (SDRWQCB), requires jurisdictions to enforce requirements reducing polluted urban runoff during all phases of development. Rancho Santa Margarita is a co-permittee of the NPDES permit and will continue to implement the most recent provisions adopted by the SDRWQCB.





Integrate Transportation and Land Use Planning

The Land Use Element and the Circulation Element work together to ensure the transportation system is designed to meet the community's needs based on development assumptions from the Land Use Plan. While single occupancy vehicles are the primary transportation mode, the Land Use Plan encourages greater mobility through integration of various transportation modes. Greater mobility options and comfort for pedestrians, bicyclists, transit users, and personal vehicles provides multiple benefits by decreasing congestion, reducing vehicle miles traveled, and encouraging physical activity. Safe and convenient access between various land uses, including residential, business, commercial, schools/public facilities, and recreational/open space areas further encourage alternative transportation options that are beneficial to the overall health and attractiveness of the community. Integration of transportation into land use planning and opportunities to enhance mobility within Rancho Santa Margarita will continue to be considered as future growth and development occurs.





Provision of Public Facilities and Services

Public facilities and services are provided by the City or other service entities. These facilities and services include:

- 1) Water supply, treatment, and distribution;
- 2) Sewer treatment;
- 3) Solid waste disposal;
- 4) Drainage/flood control;
- 5) Fire protection and emergency services;
- 6) Law enforcement;
- 7) Public education;
- 8) Parks, community centers and recreational opportunities; and
- 9) Libraries.

Other service providers include the Trabuco Canyon Water District (TCWD), Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD), Orange County Flood Control District, Orange County Fire Authority, Orange County Sheriff's Department, various school districts, and the Orange County Public Library system. The provision and maintenance of these services and facilities protect the quality of life and community livability. Such facilities and services will need to be expanded to accommodate future growth and development.

Water and Sewer Service

Adequate municipal water and sewer service is necessary to protect public health in urban settings. The Rancho Santa Margarita planning area is served by two water providers: the SMWD and the TCWD. TCWD serves the eastern part of Rancho Santa Margarita (Robinson Ranch, Trabuco Highlands, Dove Canyon, Rancho Cielo, and Walden Communities) and the Northeast Future Planned Community area. The remaining portions of the incorporated City are served by SMWD.

The SMWD and the TCWD are members of the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC). The MWDOC is a member of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWD). Nearly all of the MWDOC water supply is purchased from MWD, which imports the water from the Colorado River Aqueduct (a small portion comes from Northern California through the State Water Project).

The SMWD and TCWD are also responsible for the collection of wastewater within the City. SMWD owns and operates the Oso Creek Wastewater Reclamation System and the Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant. Additionally, wastewater from SMWD is also treated at the 3A Water Reclamation Plant, J.B. Lathan, and Los Alisos Water Recycling Plant. TCWD collects wastewater and reclaims it at the Robinson Ranch Wastewater Treatment Plant, and also has the capacity to divert wastewater to SMWD Chiquita Water Reclamation Plant. Water reclaimed by both SMWD and TCWD is used for irrigation purposes only.



Both water districts work with MWD to ensure adequate water supplies and sewer services are available to meet the needs of existing development and future growth. As part of this cooperation, the City will provide land use and other necessary data to the districts for use in Urban Water Management Plans as well as other planning documents. The City will also participate in water conservation programs to reduce future water consumption.

Encouraging high quality water and sewer service requires maintaining the existing water and sewer infrastructure and extending new infrastructure to serve new development. Because the incorporated area is almost entirely developed, water infrastructure is in place and few improvements will be required to accommodate new development. Development proposals will be reviewed for consistency with water and sewer infrastructure requirements; the City will rely upon water district assessment of the water and sewer needs of proposed projects and require infrastructure improvements where needed.

Solid Waste Disposal

Sufficient solid waste disposal is necessary to protect public safety and provide for a clean, healthy community. A private sector contractor provides residential solid waste collection services for Rancho Santa Margarita. The City's solid waste is primarily disposed at the County of Orange Integrated Waste Management Department's Prima Deshecha landfill in San Juan Capistrano. The landfill is a permitted Class III landfill accepting only non-hazardous municipal solid waste for disposal (and no hazardous or liquid waste). This landfill is scheduled to remain open until 2067. The City encourages recycling activities and opportunities to provide recycling collection facilities that are convenient to residents and businesses.

Drainage/Flood Control

Flood control systems have been constructed to direct runoff away from developed areas and prevent flooding associated with heavy rains. The two agencies responsible for flood control within Rancho Santa Margarita are the City - local flood control facilities, and the Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) - regional flood control facilities.

As new development occurs, increased runoff will occur. New development is required to provide on-site stormwater retention/detention facilities to regulate runoff. The City will continue to require developments to provide adequate stormwater drainage systems concurrently with the construction of new development, including detention/retention facilities. Development proposals will be reviewed for drainage impacts and required facilities. Through continued coordination with OCFCD and review of proposed development, public safety and private property will be protected from flood hazards.





Fire Protection and Law Enforcement

Adequate fire protection and law enforcement are imperative to protect public health and safety. Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) provides fire protection service. OCFA also serves the unincorporated portions of the planning area. OCFA Fire Station 45 is located at 30131 Aventura within the Rancho Santa Margarita Business Park. Three other stations are located just outside the City, including OCFA Fire Station 18 in Trabuco Canyon, OCFA Fire Station 31 in Mission Viejo, and OCFA Fire Station 58 in Ladera Ranch. Other stations located outside of the City may respond to fire and other emergencies.

OCFA provides fire suppression, emergency medical, and rescue services as well as public education programs for schools, businesses, community organizations, childcare providers and other members of the community. In addition, the OCFA works with the City to adopt and enforce codes and ordinances relative to fire and life safety, and reviews development projects within the City for potential impacts on fire protection services. The OCFA has established service goals and response times for emergency calls.

Rancho Santa Margarita contracts with the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) for all law enforcement needs. OCSD is responsible for public safety and general law enforcement for both the City and unincorporated areas within the planning area. To serve the public safety needs of the City, OCSD operates a Sheriff's Station at City Hall. Public safety needs of unincorporated areas within the planning area are met by the Sheriff's Southeast Orange County Substation in Lake Forest.

OCSD services include patrol services, traffic enforcement and criminal investigations. The Sheriff's Department also provides a variety of community policing programs for the public, including crime prevention, Business Watch/Neighborhood Watch, and community awareness programs.

For both fire protection and law enforcement, ensuring public safety requires maintaining adequate staffing, equipment, and facilities. The City will work with both OCFA and OCSD response times corresponds with the number of residents and businesses in the City as well as current fire hazards and crime problems. Community-oriented policing will continue to be a centerpiece of the City's approach to crime prevention. The City works with homeowner's associations to ensure street widths and clearance areas are sufficient to allow these departments to continue to provide valuable, timely service to the community.

Education

Rancho Santa Margarita public schools are operated by two K-12 districts: the Capistrano Unified School District (CUSD) and Saddleback Valley Unified School District (SVUSD). In addition, the City is home to several prominent Orange County private schools, including Mission Hills Christian School, Rancho Viejo Montessori School, Santa Margarita Catholic High School, St. Junipero Serra Catholic School, and St. John's Episcopal School. There are no two- or four-year colleges located



within the planning area. The closest post-secondary two-year college is Saddleback College in Mission Viejo, and the nearest four-year universities include Concordia University in Irvine and University of California, Irvine.

Capistrano Unified School District

CUSD serves the south and west portions of Rancho Santa Margarita with five schools: Arroya Vista K-8, Tijeras Creek Preschool and K-5 are inside the City of Rancho Santa Margarita, and Las Flores K-5, Las Flores 6-8, and Tesoro High School are outside of the City of Rancho Santa Margarita.

Saddleback Valley Unified School District

SVUSD serves the north and east portions of Rancho Santa Margarita with four elementary schools (Cielo Vista Elementary, Melinda Heights Elementary, Robinson Elementary, and Trabuco Mesa Elementary), one middle school (Rancho Santa Margarita Intermediate School) is located within the planning area. Although located outside of the planning area, some high school students residing in Rancho Santa Margarita attend Mission Viejo High school.

The City will cooperate with the school districts to update information in their Master Plans and long-range facility plans. Should future development or demographic shifts necessitate new school construction, the City will work with the appropriate district to identify appropriate future school sites that are compatible with surrounding development. Similarly, the City will coordinate with the designated district in the event an existing school property is proposed for a non-education reuse.



Parks, Community Centers and Recreational Opportunities

Parks, community centers, and recreational opportunities are essential public services that help maintain a high quality of life in the community. Rancho Santa Margarita benefits from a variety of unique facilities and services with over 4,800 acres within the City that is comprised of open space and park uses.

The Rancho Santa Margarita park and recreation system consists of neighborhood parks, community parks, O'Neill Regional Park, joint use parks, community services and facilities, an extensive open space system, and the Bell Tower Regional





Community Center. All parks in the City (except for Santa Margarita's Dog Park, Skate Park, O'Neill Regional Park, and County trails) are privately owned, operated, and maintained by homeowners' associations. The Open Space and Conservation Element provides a description and map of all parks located in the City; refer to Table COS-2 and Table COS-3.

The City's Land Use Policy Map designates land for parks and open space, including regional open space. These areas are well-distributed throughout the community and provide both active and passive space within walking distance of most neighborhoods. Larger facilities, such as Central Park, serve as a gathering space for community events that foster Rancho Santa Margarita's community spirit. The Bell Tower Regional Community Center also holds a variety of recreational programs for all ages offered by the City's Community Services Department.

The City will promote the value of parkland and recreational opportunities for all residents. The Open Space and Conservation Element establishes community-wide standards for the provision of parklands. The City will continue to work with homeowners' associations and other recreation providers to ensure that a balance of high-quality active and passive public open spaces, a regional trail system, and recreational facilities are provided and maintained. Opportunities to provide additional parks and recreational facilities will be considered in conjunction with the City's ability to finance, construct, maintain and operate any existing and new facilities. Community programs and events will continue to be supported and promoted as an opportunity to serve and gather as a community. Coordination with public, private, and non-profit healthcare and social service providers will also be important to ensure the needs of the community are adequately identified and served.



Libraries

Public libraries serve several community purposes including education, recreation, and dissemination of public information. Orange County Public Libraries is a network of community libraries with a mission to “Empower and Enrich our Communities” that serve the planning area and surrounding communities. The Rancho Santa Margarita Branch Library is located at 30902 La Promesa in the Plaza El Paseo shopping center.



The City continues to work with the OC Public Libraries to provide a level of library facilities and services that meets the needs of the community. The City will work with OC Public Libraries to ensure that library services in Rancho Santa Margarita are high quality, enhance the cultural life of the community, and provide for an information center within the community.





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NOISE ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Noise levels within Rancho Santa Margarita can affect the quality of life of residents living and those working within the community. High noise levels can create stress and irritation, and even impact health. The Noise Element includes goals to ensure the compatibility of land use are considered as part of the land use planning and site development process, as well as the effects of transportation and non-transportation related noise on the community. Effective strategies are provided to reduce excessive noise and limit community exposure to loud noise sources.

Purpose of the Noise Element

The purpose of the Noise Element is to ensure and maintain the community's desired quality-of-life and community's character through noise compatibility. The Noise Element identifies and assesses the community's existing noise environment, and provides guidance to proactively avoid or limit noise and land use compatibility problems in the future. The Element addresses the following key issues related to noise and establishes goals and policies to achieve and maintain acceptable noise levels associated with various land uses and activities:





- 1) Land Use and Noise Compatibility
- 2) Transportation Related Noise
- 3) Non-Transportation Related Noise

Scope and Content of the Noise Element

The State of California recognizes the relationship between noise and noise sensitive uses, and has adopted State Guidelines for Noise Elements. This Noise Element satisfies the requirements of State planning law and is a mandated component of the General Plan. Government Code Section 65302(f) establishes the required components of the Noise Element, which includes identifying and evaluating noise problems in the community and analyzing and quantifying existing and projected noise levels for applicable noise sources to the extent practicable. The Element also complies with California Health and Safety Code Section 56050.1 guidelines for Noise Elements.

The Noise Element considers existing and potential noise sources and identifies noise exposure contours associated with major transportation systems within the planning area. This information serves as a guide for establishing land use patterns, site design and development standards, and addressing existing and potential noise problems within the planning area.

The Noise Element is comprised of three sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and
- 3) the Noise Plan.

The Introduction summarizes the general intent of the Noise Element and the Issues, Goals, and Policies section identifies transportation and non-transportation related noise issues and goals and policies to address these issues. The goals are statements of the community's desires and comprise broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guides for reducing or avoiding adverse noise impacts within the community. Policies and programs assist noise control through land use regulation and enforcement of City ordinances, which limit the exposure of the community to excessive noise levels. The Noise Plan describes the fundamentals of sound and noise, identifies noise standards, illustrates existing and future noise contours, and demonstrates how the goals and policies will be achieved and implemented.

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

Policies and plans in the Noise Element are designed to protect existing and planned land uses from significant noise impacts. The Element identifies potential noise sources and establishes programs to avoid or mitigate noise impacts. Concurrently, the Land Use Element contains policies to ensure that environmental conditions, including noise, are considered in all land use decisions. Adequately planning for future residential and other noise-sensitive land uses can avoid



incompatible development where noise impacts cannot be reduced or mitigated to acceptable levels.

The Noise Element is linked to transportation policies in the Circulation Element, as transportation noise is a primary contributor to the noise environment in Rancho Santa Margarita. The projected noise contours identified in this Element directly correspond to the Circulation Plan and projected traffic associated with implementation of the Land Use Plan. Both the Noise and Circulation Elements contain policies and programs to minimize the effects of transportation noise on existing and planned land uses.

The Noise Element also relates to the Conservation/Open Space Element. Excessive noise can diminish enjoyment of parks and other designated open space. Noise levels are considered in the planning of new recreational and open space areas. Additionally, open space areas can be used to separate and buffer noise sensitive land uses from noise producers.

ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Human activities in the community create noise levels that can affect overall quality of life. The Goals and Policies identified in the Noise Element are designed to protect the community from excessive noise and ensure the small-town village character is protected. These include:

- 1) Minimizing the effects of noise associated with new development and reuse/revitalization projects;
- 2) Minimizing the impact of transportation-related noise; and
- 3) Minimizing the impact of noise associated with activities, such as construction, business operations and property maintenance.

Land Use and Noise Compatibility

Rancho Santa Margarita provides a mix of land uses for people to live, work, shop, and play. Thoughtful placement and development of these uses will minimize the exposure and effects of noise on the community.

Goal 1: Minimize the effects of noise through land use planning, project design and development review.

Policy 1.1: Consider the compatibility of new development and reuse/revitalization projects with the noise environment by utilizing noise/land use compatibility standards and the Noise Contours Map as a guide.

Policy 1.2: Require the inclusion of noise-reducing features within the site design of development and reuse/revitalization projects to reduce impacts on noise-sensitive uses.





Policy 1.3: Ensure proposed development meets noise insulation standards for noise-sensitive uses.

Transportation Related Noise

The primary source of noise impacting Rancho Santa Margarita results from transportation-related noise. The Foothill Transportation Corridor, along with other major roadways, create higher levels of noise that can affect the overall quality of life if noise-sensitive uses are in close proximity without appropriate noise-reduction measures. Reduction in transportation-related noise, especially truck-related noise, in noise-sensitive areas would reduce potentially unhealthy effects attributable to excessive noise.

Goal 2: Minimize transportation-related noise impacts.

Policy 2.1: Reduce and avoid excessive transportation-related noise levels to noise-sensitive land uses that may occur due to the transition of existing uses or the development of noise-sensitive uses located near the toll road (SR-241) or major arterials, through the use of noise control measures within the site design of development and reuse/revitalization projects.

Policy 2.2: Identify and implement a system of truck routes that provide for the effective transport of goods while minimizing impacts on noise-sensitive land uses.



Non-Transportation Related Noise

Noise sources not directly related to transportation such as construction, manufacturing or business operations, and property maintenance activities should be considered and controlled to minimize the community's exposure to excessive noise levels.

Goal 3: Minimize current and future non-transportation related noise impacts.

Policy 3.1: Reduce the impacts of noise-producing land uses, activities, and businesses on noise-sensitive land uses for items such as, but not limited to: delivery and service hours, parking and loading areas, ingress/egress points, landscape maintenance activities, and refuse collection areas.

Policy 3.2: Incorporate noise-reducing features within the site design of new construction or rehabilitation projects impacted by non-transportation-related noise for items such as, but not limited to: parking and loading areas, ingress/egress points, HVAC units, entertainment speakers, and refuse collection areas.

Policy 3.3: Direct noise emanating from stationary noise sources, construction activities, and special events away from noise-sensitive land uses.

Policy 3.4: Orient mixed-use and multi-family residential units and the location of balconies and common recreation areas away from major roadways and other noise sources.

Related Goals and Policies

The goals and policies in the Noise Element are related to and support subjects included within other General Plan elements; refer to Table N-1.

**Table N-1
Noise Related Goals and Policies by Element**

General Plan Element	Noise Element Issue Areas		
	Land Use and Noise Compatibility	Transportation Related Noise	Non-Transportation Related Noise
Land Use	1.1, 1.2, 1.3	2.1, 2.2	3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Economic Development			
Circulation		2.1, 2.2	3.4
Housing			3.3, 3.4
Conservation/Open Space			3.3
Safety			





NOISE PLAN

Rancho Santa Margarita experiences typical noise associated with urbanized environments and the City receives relatively few noise complaints. Complaints typically pertain to noise associated with schools and transportation, specifically motorcycles. The City recognizes the importance of maintaining a high-quality of life for its residents and providing an environment where people are not negatively impacted by excessive noise levels. The Noise Plan describes how noise is measured and controlled and identifies the existing and future noise environment of the community. It articulates the community's desire to minimize unhealthy noise exposure associated with new development and revitalization/reuse projects, transportation, and other noise sources.

Land Use and Noise Compatibility

Noise is problematic when noise sensitive land uses are affected. Land uses considered sensitive by the State of California include schools, playgrounds, athletic facilities, hospitals, rest homes, rehabilitation centers, long-term care, and mental care facilities. The City considers sensitive land uses to include residences, schools, hospitals, churches, and recreation areas. Generally, a sensitive receptor is identified as a location where human populations (especially children, senior citizens, and sick persons) are present.

Most noise impacts can be avoided when noise sources, sensitive land uses, and information about the future noise environment are considered in land use planning and development decisions.

Noise Standards and Land Use Compatibility

Noise generally is defined as unwanted or intrusive sound. Because noise consists of pitch, loudness, and duration, describing noise with a single unit of measure presents a challenge. The A-weighted decibel scale (dBA) has been developed to describe the loudness of a sound or sound environment based on the sensitivity of the human ear.

The dBA descriptor only reports noise from a single source or combination of sources at a point in time. To allow a more comprehensive description of a noise environment, Federal and State agencies have established noise and land use compatibility guidelines that use averaging approaches to noise measurement. Two measurement scales commonly used in California are the Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) and the day-night level (Ldn). To account for increased human sensitivity at night, the CNEL level includes a 5-decibel penalty on noise during the 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. time period and a 10-decibel penalty on noise during the 10:00 p.m. to 7:00 a.m. time period. The Ldn level includes only the 10-decibel weighting for late-night noise. These values are nearly identical for all but unusual noise sources.



The City's primary goal regarding community noise is to minimize the excessive exposure of residents to noise levels to the extent possible, given the City's developed condition. The Noise Plan establishes noise/land use compatibility guidelines based on cumulative noise criteria for outdoor noise. Table N-2 outlines the criteria the City uses to review development proposals.

Table N-2
Noise/Land Use Compatibility Criteria

Land Use Category	Community Noise Exposure (CNEL)			
	Normally Acceptable	Conditionally Acceptable	Normally Unacceptable	Clearly Unacceptable
Residential-Low Density, Single-Family, Duplex, Mobile Homes	50 - 60	55 - 70	70 – 75	75 – 85
Residential – Multiple Family	50 – 65	60 – 70	70 – 75	70 – 85
Transient Lodging – Motel, Hotels	50 – 65	60 – 70	70 – 80	80 – 85
Schools, Libraries, Churches, Hospitals, Nursing Homes	50 – 70	60 – 70	70 – 80	80 – 85
Auditoriums, Concert Halls, Amphitheaters	NA	50 – 70	NA	65 – 85
Sports Arenas, Outdoor Spectator Sports	NA	50 – 75	NA	70 – 85
Playgrounds, Neighborhood Parks	50 – 70	NA	67.5 – 77.5	72.5 – 85
Golf Courses, Riding Stables, Water Recreation, Cemeteries	50 – 70	NA	70 – 80	80 – 85
Office Buildings, Business Commercial and Professional	50 – 70	67.5 – 77.5	75 – 85	NA
Industrial, Manufacturing, Utilities, Agriculture	50 – 75	70 – 80	75 – 85	NA
CNEL = community noise equivalent level; NA = not applicable				
NORMALLY ACCEPTABLE: Specified land use is satisfactory, based upon the assumption that any buildings involved are of normal conventional construction, without any special noise insulation requirements. CONDITIONALLY ACCEPTABLE: New construction or development should be undertaken only after a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements is made and needed noise insulation features have been included in the design. Conventional construction, but with closed windows and fresh air supply systems or air conditioning, will normally suffice. NORMALLY UNACCEPTABLE: New construction or development should be discouraged. If new construction or development does proceed, a detailed analysis of the noise reduction requirements must be made and needed noise-insulation features must be included in the design. CLEARLY UNACCEPTABLE: New construction or development should generally not be undertaken.				

The guidelines rank noise land use compatibility in terms of “normally acceptable,” “conditionally acceptable,” “normally unacceptable”, and “clearly unacceptable” noise levels for various land use types. Single-family homes are “normally acceptable” in exterior noise environments up to 60 CNEL and “conditionally acceptable” up to 70 CNEL. Multiple-family residential uses are “normally acceptable” up to 65 CNEL and “conditionally acceptable” up to 70 CNEL. Schools, libraries, and churches are “normally acceptable” up to 70 CNEL, as are office buildings and businesses, commercial, and professional uses.

Construction Standards

The provisions of the State Noise Insulation Standards (Title 24, Part 2, CCR) are enforced in Rancho Santa Margarita. Title 24 specifies that combined indoor noise for multi-family living spaces shall not exceed 45 dBA CNEL. This standard must be implemented when the outdoor noise level exceeds 60 dBA CNEL. Title 24 requires that the same standard be applied to all new hotels, motels, apartments and multi-family projects. The Development Services Director acts as the noise control coordinator. This designation of responsibility allows consistent and continued enforcement of the established noise standards.





Project Design

New development or redevelopment/revitalization projects could introduce new land uses or intensification of land uses. When reviewing a development project, noise generation and potential impacts to surrounding development are considered in accordance with CEQA. An acoustical analysis is required for projects that will generate noise potentially affecting sensitive receptors. Where significant impacts are identified, mitigation measures are required.

Common mitigation measures for non-residential uses include acoustically treated and quiet-design furnaces, fans, motors, compressors, valves, and pumps. The City may also require limited delivery hours and hours of operation to minimize impacts to adjacent residential users or other sensitive receptors.

Projects involving residential uses may require special consideration and adjustments to site plans. Site planning involves arrangement of land uses, lots, and buildings to minimize noise levels. The placement of noise compatible land uses between the roadway and more sensitive uses is an effective site planning technique. The use of buildings as noise barriers, and their orientation away from the source of noise, can shield sensitive activities, entrances, and common open space areas. Mixed-use developments require special consideration of the placement of uses within the development so that the residential component is protected from the commercial/office component, as well as exterior noise sources. Incorporation of design features such as placing bedrooms, windows, balconies and courtyards/open space areas away from noise sources, as well as increased setbacks and landscape buffers can also contribute to noise reduction. The City will require noise-reducing features within the site design of new development and reuse/revitalization projects to reduce noise exposure to noise-sensitive uses.

Transportation Related Noise

Transportation noise refers to noise from automobile use, trucking, airport operations, and rail operations. There are no airports or rail operations within the planning area. The major source of noise within the City is transportation-related, with vehicular traffic being the most substantial source.

The roadways within the City that generate the most traffic noise from vehicle and truck traffic include SR-241 due to higher traffic volumes and vehicle speeds than other roadways. Major arterials that generate noise include Santa Margarita Parkway, Antonio Parkway, Alicia Parkway, and Avenida Empresa.

Residential neighborhoods are located in close proximity to portions of CA-241 including near its intersection with Antonio Parkway and Melinda Road. Antonio Parkway itself is a major 6-lane arterial with relatively high-speed traffic that runs through numerous residential neighborhoods.

Vehicular noise is enforced by the Orange County Sheriff's Department (OCSD) through the California Vehicle Code (CVC).



Noise Contours

The transportation noise environment for the community can be described with noise contours. The noise contours are used to guide land use and development decisions. Vehicular noise along major roadways were modeled to estimate existing (2016) noise levels from mobile traffic. The roadway noise levels were projected using the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) Traffic Noise Prediction Model (RD-77-108), together with several roadway and site parameters. The existing roadway noise contours are illustrated in Figure N-1.

There are areas along the major arterials within the City that experience traffic noise levels in excess of 70 CNEL. The highest noise levels occur along Santa Margarita Parkway, west of Avenida Empresa. Many of the City's commercial areas experience noise levels in excess of 65 CNEL adjacent to major arterial roadways and SR-241 rights-of-way. Residences located within this area may experience unacceptable noise levels. It should be noted that the contours depicted do not include attenuation from intervening structures, walls, or topography, and these are modeled traffic noise levels, and are not based upon actual site measurements.

Highways typically result in greater noise levels than other roadways due to higher traffic volumes and vehicle speeds. As shown on Figure N-1, SR-241 traverses the City and represents a primary source of traffic noise. SR-241 bisects the City with interchanges at Antonio Parkway, Santa Margarita Parkway, and Los Alisos Boulevard. Based on Caltrans traffic data, average daily traffic along the segments of SR-241 that pass through the City is approximately 59,200 vehicles for both northbound and southbound traffic.

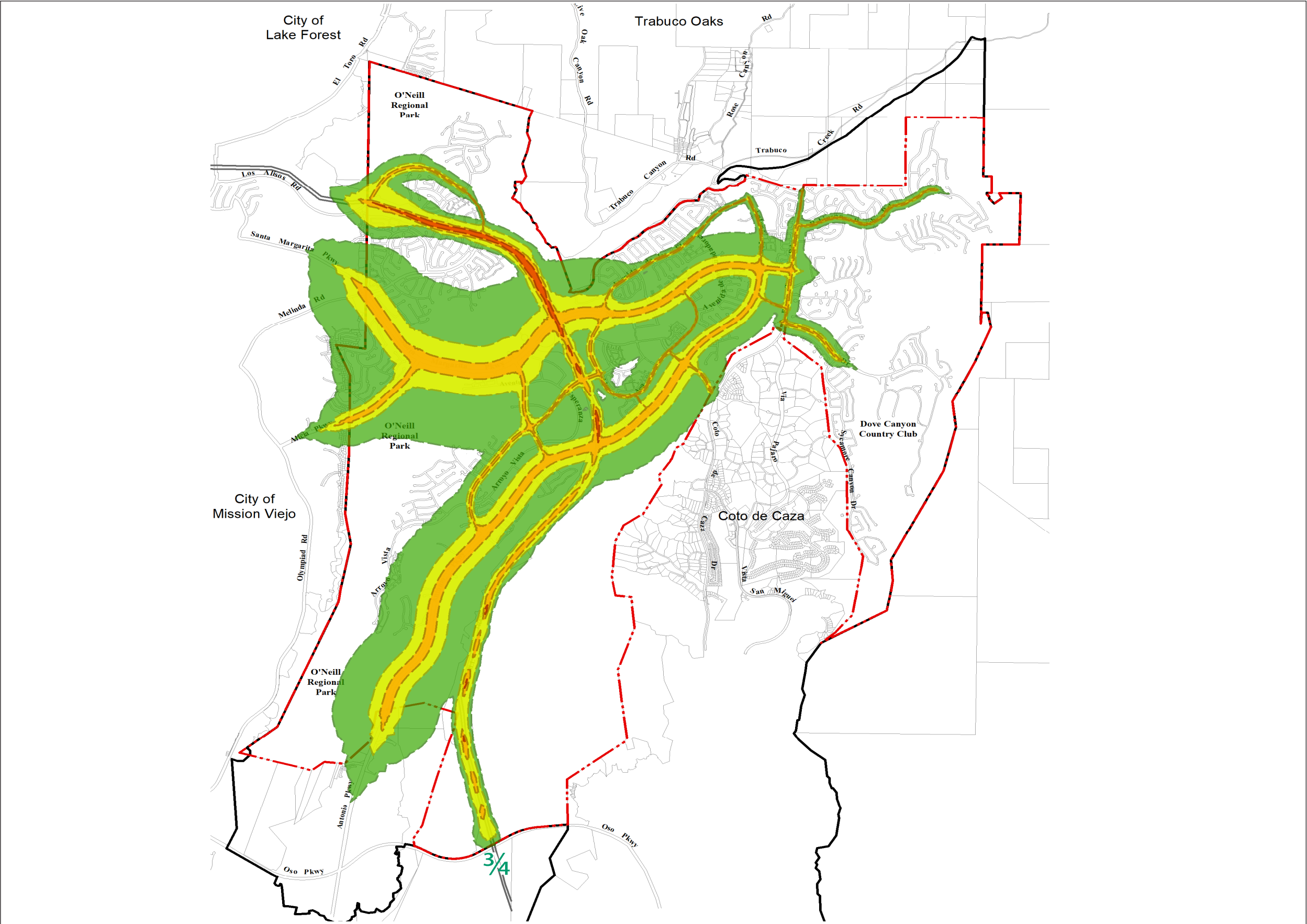
The Land Use Element anticipates the potential for future development during the General Plan planning period. Additional development would result in an increase in traffic volumes. Figure N-2 shows projected roadway noise contours associated with future traffic volumes. As shown, projected roadway noise contours would slightly increase along the major roadways, including SR-241, Santa Margarita Parkway, and Antonio Parkway.





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LEGEND

- 75 CNEL
- 70 CNEL
- 65 CNEL
- 60 CNEL
- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence



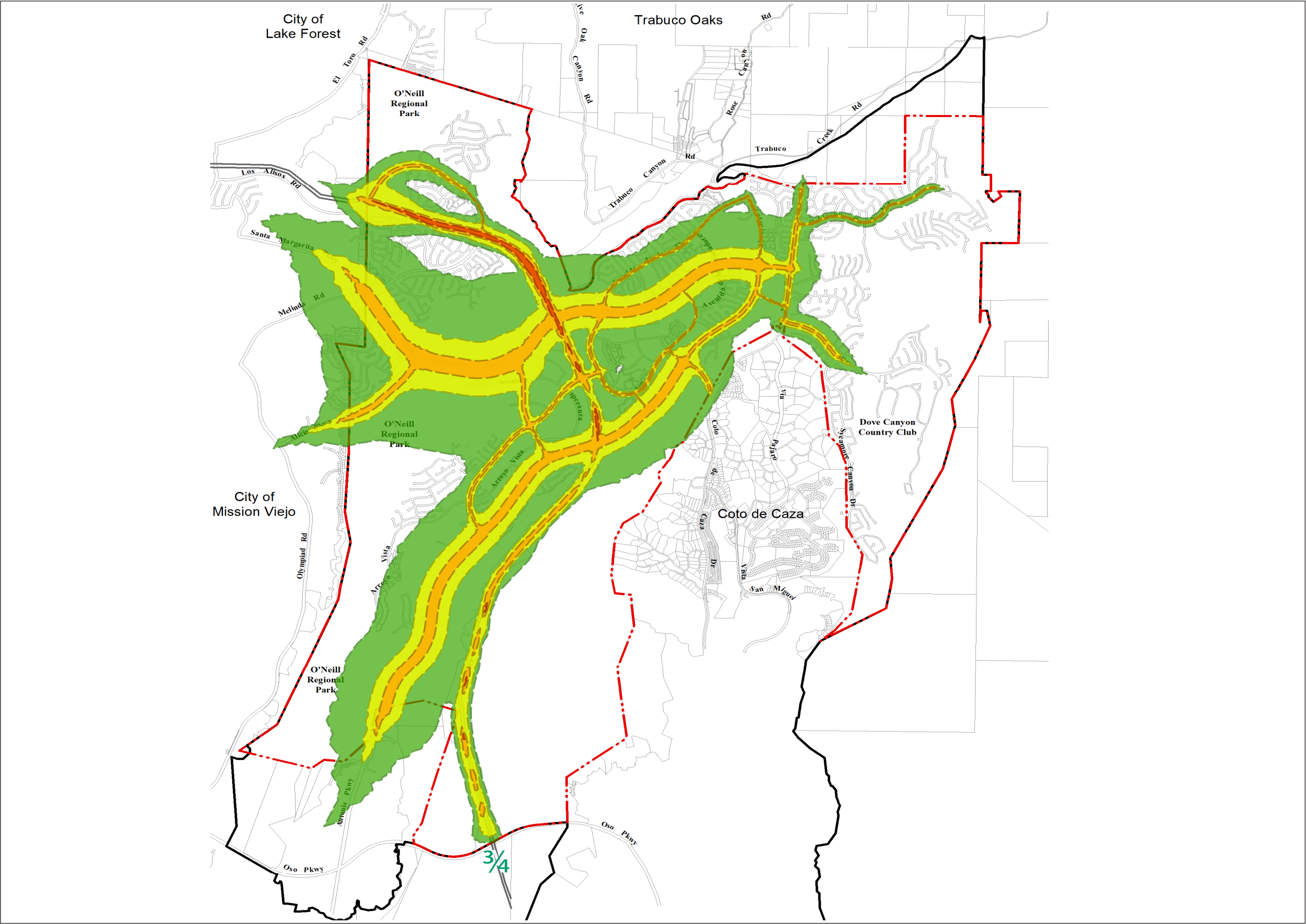
0 2,400 4,800 Feet

Sources: Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2017 and City of Rancho Santa Margarita, 2016 Traffic Flow Map, May 2016.



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LEGEND

- 75 CNEL
- 70 CNEL
- 65 CNEL
- 60 CNEL
- City Boundary
- Sphere of Influence



0 2,400 4,800 Feet

Source: Michael Baker International, 2018.



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Noise Control at Reception Sites

The most effective means of controlling noise from transportation systems is to reduce noise at the source. However, the City has little direct control over noise produced by transportation sources since State noise regulations preempt local regulations. Because the City cannot control noise at the source, City noise programs focus on reducing the impact of transportation noise reception sites.

During the planning stages of the development process, potential impacts from transportation noise will be identified and mitigation measures will be required as needed to meet City noise standards. Site planning, as discussed above, landscaping, topography and the design and construction of noise barriers are the most common method of alleviating vehicular traffic noise impacts. Setbacks and buffers can also achieve noise reduction.

Noise attenuating barriers are commonly incorporated into projects and can be extremely effective in reducing noise levels. Noise barriers incorporate the placement of berms walls, or a combination of the two with appropriate landscaping. Although noise barriers can be extremely effective, the visual effect of barriers on neighborhoods must be considered. Potentially significant aesthetics impacts associated with noise barriers must be addressed and mitigated through landscaping or other project design measures in all new public and private projects.

Truck Routes

Truck traffic generates noise that can disturb people in noise-sensitive land uses. Truck trips within Rancho Santa Margarita typically occur on higher capacity roadways near commercial and business areas. The City will identify a system of truck routes to provide for efficient transport of goods while minimizing potential impacts on noise-sensitive land uses.

Non-Transportation Related Noise

Non-transportation noise typically refers to noise from stationary sources such as commercial establishments, machinery, air conditioning systems, compressors, residential and recreational uses, special events, and landscape maintenance equipment. The most common sources of stationary noise within the City consist of construction activities, and commercial and industrial uses. Commercial and industrial land uses located near residential areas may generate occasional noise impacts. Residential land uses and areas identified as noise-sensitive should be protected from excessive noise from stationary sources including commercial, business park, and auto centers. These noise sources are best controlled through effective land use planning and application of the City's Noise Ordinance.





City of Rancho Santa Margarita Noise Control Ordinance

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita's regulations with respect to noise are included in RSM Municipal Code Chapter 5.04, Noise Control, also known as the Noise Ordinance. Construction-related and operational noise restrictions are discussed below.

Sections 5.04.050 and 5.04.060 of the Rancho Santa Margarita Municipal Code define the exterior and interior noise level limits for residential land uses; the City does not have specific noise level limits for commercial or industrial zones. Table N-3 summarizes the City's exterior and interior residential noise level standards.

Table N-3
Rancho Santa Margarita Municipal Code Noise Standards

Noise Level	Time Period
Exterior	
55 dBA	7 A.M. – 10 P.M.
50 dBA	10 P.M. – 7 A.M.
Interior	
50 dBA	7 A.M. – 10 P.M.
45 dBA	10 P.M. – 7 A.M.



Section 5.04.050(b) further defines the applicability of the exterior noise level limits in the event the alleged offensive noise consists entirely of impact noise, simple tone noise, speech, music, or any combination thereof. Each of the above noise levels shall be reduced by five dB(A).

Chapter 5.04 Noise Control is enforced by Code Enforcement for the City of Rancho Santa Margarita and by the OCSD depending upon the type and nature of the violation. Enforcement of the Ordinance ensures that adjacent properties are not exposed to excessive noise from stationary sources and requires proposed development projects to demonstrate compliance with the Ordinance and that construction activity adheres with established work schedule limits. Noise sources associated with construction, repair, remodeling, or grading are permitted between 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. Monday through Saturday, between 9:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. on Sunday's and federal holidays.





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SAFETY ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

The quality of life in Rancho Santa Margarita is directly impacted by the sense of security of its residents and businesses. Addressing and reducing the risks associated with natural and human-induced hazards will further the City's overall goal to provide a safe and enjoyable environment for its citizens. The Safety Element focuses on understanding the hazards and safety issues that affect the community and ensuring public safety concerns are adequately addressed.

Purpose of the Safety Element

The purpose of the Safety Element is to identify and address those features or characteristics existing in or near Rancho Santa Margarita that represent a potential hazard to the community's citizens, sites, structures, public facilities, and infrastructure. This Element addresses the following key issues related to safety, and establishes goals and policies to regulate existing and proposed development in hazard-prone areas:





- 1) Citywide safety and education;
- 2) Seismic and geologic hazards;
- 3) Flood hazards;
- 4) Wildland fire hazards;
- 5) Human activity hazards; and
- 6) Crime risk and prevention.

Scope and Content of the Safety Element

The Safety Element satisfies the requirements of State planning law and is a mandated component of the General Plan. Government Code Section 65302(g) identifies the hazards and associated risks, as they pertain to conditions in the City, that are required to be addressed in the Safety Element, which include:

- Seismically induced ground shaking, surface rupture, ground failure, tsunami, seiche, and dam failure;
- Slope instability leading to mudslides and landslides, subsidence, liquefaction, and other seismic and geologic hazards;
- Flooding;
- Wildland and urban fires; and
- Evacuation routes.

State law allows communities to add additional safety issues to this list. The City has chosen to address the following safety issues within this Element:

- Crime and public safety; and
- Hazardous materials.

The Safety Element is comprised of three sections:

- 1) Introduction;
- 2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and
- 3) the Safety Plan.

The Introduction provides an overview of the Safety Element. The Issues, Goals, and Policies section identifies issues pertaining to hazardous conditions and safety that could potentially affect the City and establishes related goals and policies. The goals are overall statements of the City's desires and consist of broad statements of purpose and direction pertaining to the community's safety. The policies serve as guidelines for reducing the risk and vulnerability associated with natural and human activity hazards and directs and maximizes community emergency preparedness. The Safety Element also explains how natural and human-induced hazards are addressed within the community and how the goals and policies will be achieved and implemented.



Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

The Safety Element must be consistent with the other General Plan elements. Furthermore, the goals and policies must address issues that are the primary subjects of other elements. The Safety Element most closely relates to the Land Use, Circulation, and Open Space/Conservation Elements. Policies and plans in the Safety Element are designed to protect existing and planned land uses identified in the Land Use Element (and associated persons and properties) from potential natural and man-made hazards. Potential hazards are identified in the Safety Element and associated action programs are established to avoid or mitigate impacts to public safety. Concurrently, the Land Use Element contains policies to ensure that environmental conditions, including hazards, are considered in all land use decisions. The distribution of residential and other sensitive land uses on the Land Use Policy Map is designed to avoid areas where hazardous conditions have been identified. Similarly, the Circulation Element provides the policy framework for a safe and efficient circulation system, which is critical during response to an emergency or in the event an evacuation is necessary. The Open Space/Conservation Element also identifies the protection of open space areas that may also contain hazardous conditions, such as wildland fires and landslides.

ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Certain natural conditions and human activities in Rancho Santa Margarita create risks to individuals and properties within the community. Excessive risk from such hazards can be reduced or avoided through implementation of the Safety Element. The Goals and Policies within this Element reflect the community's intent to provide and foster a safe community for all of its residents, that include:

- 1) Protecting and preparing the community for natural and man-made hazards;
- 2) Reducing risks associated with geologic conditions and seismic activity;
- 3) Protecting the community from flooding;
- 4) Protecting the community from wildfires;
- 5) Reducing risks to the community from air pollution, hazardous materials, and ground transportation; and
- 6) Protecting the community from criminal activity.

Citywide Safety and Education

Major emergencies can occur periodically in all communities. Proper preparation for emergencies, and the mitigation of risks and vulnerabilities specific to Rancho Santa Margarita, are essential to minimize disruption, personal injury, and property damage associated with such events. Preventative measures and preparatory responses before an emergency occurs will reduce the time and cost of recovery from these emergencies.





Goal 1: Protect and prepare the community for natural and man-made hazards.

- Policy 1.1:** Support the development of local preparedness plans and multi-jurisdictional cooperation and communication for emergency situations consistent with the National Incident Management System (NIMS) and Standardized Emergency Management System (SEMS).
- Policy 1.2:** Maintain and update the City's Emergency Operations Plan to ensure consistency and relevancy of conditions and issues within the City.
- Policy 1.3:** Update the City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan in conjunction with the General Plan Safety Element every five years, to ensure consistency and relevancy of hazards and issues within the City, and to maintain consistency with Assembly Bill 2140, Senate Bill 379, and applicable subsequent State and/or federal legislation. The Rancho Santa Margarita Local Hazard Mitigation Plan is incorporated by reference as part of this Safety Element and should be consulted when addressing hazards in order to ensure the general health and safety of the community.
- Policy 1.4:** Educate City staff, residents, and businesses regarding appropriate actions to safeguard life and property before, during, and immediately following emergencies.

Seismic and Geologic Hazards

Due to its geographic location in a seismically active region and geologic conditions, Rancho Santa Margarita is subject to seismic and geologic hazards, such as earthquake-induced ground shaking, liquefaction, landslides, and erosion. This risk of exposure can be reduced through appropriate land use planning, development engineering, and building construction practices.

Goal 2: Reduce the risk to the community from hazards related to geologic conditions and seismic activity.

- Policy 2.1:** Reduce the risk of impacts from geologic and seismic hazards by applying and enforcing development standards and building construction codes to meet minimum State standards for seismic safety.
- Policy 2.2:** Incorporate design and development techniques to avoid or minimize and mitigate development of areas that are particularly susceptible to erosion and sediment loss.



Policy 2.3: Protect the community from flooding hazards by providing and maintaining flood control facilities and limiting development within the floodplain.

Policy 2.4: Reduce the risk of wildfire hazards by working with Homeowner Associations, Business Park Associations, and community foundations to maintain fire retardant landscaping and buffer zones in areas of high wildfire risk.

Policy 2.5: Participate in local, regional, State, and federal programs that educate residents and businesses about how to protect themselves and their property from hazards.

Flood Hazards

Natural drainage features traverse the City, providing opportunities for flooding to occur during severe weather conditions, such as prolonged rain events. Flooding conditions could threaten public safety and result in property damage. The City is comprised of areas subject to 100-year and 500-year flood events. The risk of flood exposure can be reduced through land use planning, proper assessment of flood hazards, and adequate sized and properly maintained storm drain facilities.

Goal 3: Protect the community from injury or loss of life and damage due to flooding hazards.

Policy 3.1: Work with OC Flood Control District to ensure flood control facilities are provided and maintained.

Policy 3.2: Work with local, State, and federal agencies to update, monitor, and maintain the most current flood hazard and floodplain information.

Policy 3.3: Require evaluation of potential flood hazards and identify methods to minimize flood risk and damage associated with new redevelopment/revitalization projects located in flood hazard zones.

Policy 3.4: Require essential public facilities to be located and designed to minimize potential flood risk.





Wildland Fire Hazards

Rancho Santa Margarita's location in proximity to wildland areas can result in destructive fires, especially during Santa Ana wind conditions. The risk of, and potential for, wildland fires to spread to urbanized areas and result in loss and damage can be reduced through land use planning, adherence to building and fire codes, and the implementation of adequate evacuation routes.

Goal 4: Protect the community from loss of life or injury and damage to property due to wildfire hazards.

- Policy 4.1:** Reduce the risk of wildfire hazards by working with Homeowner Associations, Business Park Associations, and other property owners and Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) to maintain fire retardant landscaping and buffer zones in areas of high wildfire risk.
- Policy 4.2:** Work with local, State, and federal agencies to update, monitor, and maintain the most current fire hazard and fire protection information to disseminate to the public.
- Policy 4.3:** Identify methods to avoid or minimize wildfire risk and damage associated with new land uses.
- Policy 4.4:** Require essential public facilities to be located and designed to minimize potential wildfire risk, including locating outside of high fire hazard severity zones when feasible.



- Policy 4.5:** Reduce wildfire risks through adoption and implementation of triennial updates to the California Fire Code.
- Policy 4.6:** Require new development to be located, designed, and constructed to provide adequate defensibility and fuel modification zones, and minimize the risk of loss resulting from fires through pre-development review by OCFA and through on-going implementation of OCFA Fire Prevention Programs.
- Policy 4.7:** In coordination with OCFA, encourage all new developments to incorporate fire safe design, including sufficient ingress/egress, evacuation routes, emergency vehicle access, defensible space, visible home addressing and signage, and fuel modification zones.
- Policy 4.8:** Coordinate with OCFA, Santa Margarita Water District, and Trabuco Canyon Water District to ensure adequate infrastructure for water supply and fire flow in new and existing developments.



Human Activity Hazards

Rancho Santa Margarita is subject to many of the same human-related hazardous conditions that are encountered in other communities. Certain human activities such as use of cars and other gasoline powered vehicles, use of hazardous or toxic materials, and use of combustibles expose the population of Rancho Santa Margarita to risk. The risk of exposure to these hazards can be reduced to acceptable levels through proper planning and regulation of human activity.





Goal 5: Protect the community from hazards related to air pollution, hazardous materials and ground transportation.

- Policy 5.1:** To reduce the risk posed by air pollution, work with responsible federal, State and county agencies to decrease air pollution emissions occurring within the air basin.
- Policy 5.2:** Coordinate with Southern California Edison and other State agencies to ensure the complete decommission and reduction of residual radioactivity at the San Onofre Nuclear Generating Station.
- Policy 5.3:** Cooperate with responsible federal, State, and county agencies to minimize the risk to the community from the use, transportation, disposal, and storage of hazardous materials through the City.
- Policy 5.4:** Participate in local and regional programs that facilitate the proper disposal and reduce the per capita production of household hazardous waste in Rancho Santa Margarita in concert with the County of Orange plans for reducing hazardous waste.

Crime Risk and Prevention

Occasionally, residents, businesses, and visitors to Rancho Santa Margarita are exposed to criminal activity. Creating and maintaining a safe environment requires not only traditional policing activities, but also programs that address the source of criminal activity. The risk of exposure to criminal activity can be reduced through proper planning, education methods, and regulation of human activity. Additionally, proper design and effective use of the built environment can lead to a reduction in fear and the incidence of crime, thus improving the quality of life and helping create a sense of community.

Goal 6: Protect citizens and businesses from criminal activity.

- Policy 6.1:** Utilize the services of local, State, and federal law enforcement agencies to reduce the risk of criminal activity.
- Policy 6.2:** Promote after school programs, volunteer programs, and Business and Neighborhood Watch programs to help maintain a safe environment.
- Policy 6.3:** Continue to implement existing programs that promote a peaceful, non-violent problem-solving approach for conflict resolution within the community.
- Policy 6.4:** Work with the Orange County Sheriff's Department to identify and incorporate new techniques and technological advances that create a community in which the residents feel safe.



- Policy 6.5:** Facilitate collaborative partnerships between the Orange County Health Care Agency, Orange County Sheriff's Department, medical professionals, community-based agencies, and service providers to provide social and mental health care support that reduces recidivism and prevents criminal behaviors.
- Policy 6.6:** Work with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the local schools to educate parents and students regarding bullying and internet safety.
- Policy 6.7:** Encourage the development and operation of community and recreational facilities as a pre-emptive strategy to reduce youth related crime.
- Policy 6.8:** Promote public awareness of both the responsiveness of local law enforcement and ways to reduce criminal activity.
- Policy 6.9:** Apply Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles aimed at reducing criminal activity to new development and redevelopment.
- Policy 6.10:** Ensure that adequate street and property lighting is provided and maintained in order to protect public health and safety.

Related Goals and Policies

The goals and policies described in the Safety Element are related to and support subjects included within other General Plan elements; refer to Table SAF-1.

Table SAF-1
Safety Related Goals and Policies by Element

General Plan Element	Safety Element Issue Areas					
	Citywide Safety and Education	Seismic and Geologic Hazards	Flood Hazards	Wildland Fire Hazards	Human Activity Hazards	Crime Risk and Prevention
Land Use		2.2, 2.3, 2.4	3.2, 3.3, 3.4	4.1, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6		7.7, 7.9
Circulation						
Housing				4.6	5.3	
Conservation/Open Space						
Safety		2.3	3.1, 3.2, 3.3		5.1, 5.3	7.7
Noise						





SAFETY PLAN

As in all communities, human activities and natural conditions occur in Rancho Santa Margarita that influence the quality of life of its residents. Providing an environment where businesses and residents can operate and feel safe, as well as being prepared for emergency situations, is essential. The Safety Plan reflects the community's goal to provide a safe environment that educates and prepares its residents and reduces potential impacts associated with natural and human-induced hazards.



Citywide Safety and Education

The City will minimize hazards and protect public safety through prevention and emergency preparedness planning and education. The City maintains an Emergency Operations Plan (EOP) to address the planned response to emergency situations, such as natural disasters, national security emergencies, and technological incidents. The EOP's primary focus is coordinated mutual aid within the City and fulfilling reporting requirements to the Orange County Operational Area. The EOP establishes policies and procedures for emergency response, identifies authorities, and assigns responsibilities for response activities. Local emergency preparedness plans serve as extensions of the California Emergency Plan and the Emergency Resource Management Plan.



To support the EOP, the City will institute multi-jurisdictional cooperation and communication for emergency planning and response management. Private individuals and organizations will be solicited to enhance local communication and response with cellular phones, ham radios, AM/FM radio, and cable television. Effective emergency response also requires vital facilities such as hospitals, fire stations, communication centers and schools to be functional and operational after a disaster. In addition, the City will work cooperatively with law enforcement in the event of an emergency requiring evacuation. Major arterials serve as the primary routes for evacuation; however, evacuation routes will depend upon the emergency event and area affected. Law enforcement will identify the appropriate routes and assist residents leaving the City in the event an evacuation of all or part of the City is required.

Educating residents and businesses about potential disasters and the EOP can increase the effectiveness of response efforts. An educated public will know how to prevent injury and property damage during and after emergency episodes. The City will work to educate residents and businesses about appropriate actions to safeguard life and property during and after emergencies. Education about emergency preparedness can occur through distribution of information on the City's website and on social media platforms, presentations to civic groups and homeowner's associations, and instruction in local schools.

Seismic and Geologic Hazards

Fault Rupture and Ground Shaking

Earthquake severity is normally classified according to magnitude (a measure of the amount of energy released when a fault ruptures), and seismic intensity (a qualitative estimate of the damage caused by an earthquake at a given location). No active faults are known to pass through Rancho Santa Margarita. The closest active faults are the Elsinore-Glen Ivy fault (10.1 miles away), the Chino fault (11.1 miles away), and the Newport Inglewood fault (14.4 miles away). The occurrence of surface rupture on these segments would not be expected to produce fault surface rupture within the City.

The two known local faults, Aliso and the Cristianitos, are thought to be inactive and are not zoned under the State's Alquist-Priolo Earthquake Fault Zone Act. An earthquake on either of these two faults would be particularly damaging to residential buildings, particularly those of wood or unreinforced masonry construction, and to mobile homes. Other buildings that do not typically perform well in earthquakes are soft-story buildings. These types of buildings have a story (typically the first floor) that lacks adequate strength or toughness due to fewer shear walls. Two types of soft-story buildings are common: 1) buildings with large window openings used for display purposes on the first floor, and 2) buildings housing the garage on the first floor.





Geologic Hazards

Rancho Santa Margarita lies primarily on a long narrow older river terrace called the Plano Trabuco. The land rises and steepens eastward while, across Trabuco Creek to the north and Tijeras Creek to the south, the land becomes more rolling and underlain by less stable geologic materials. Elevations range from about 350 feet above mean sea level in the valleys to about 2,400 feet at the highest ridgeline north of the City. Most of the City sits on competent alluvial materials that are less prone to natural hazards than the perimeter portions of the City. Potential geologic hazards in the planning area include liquefaction, landslides, subsidence, expansive soils, and collapsible soils.

Liquefaction

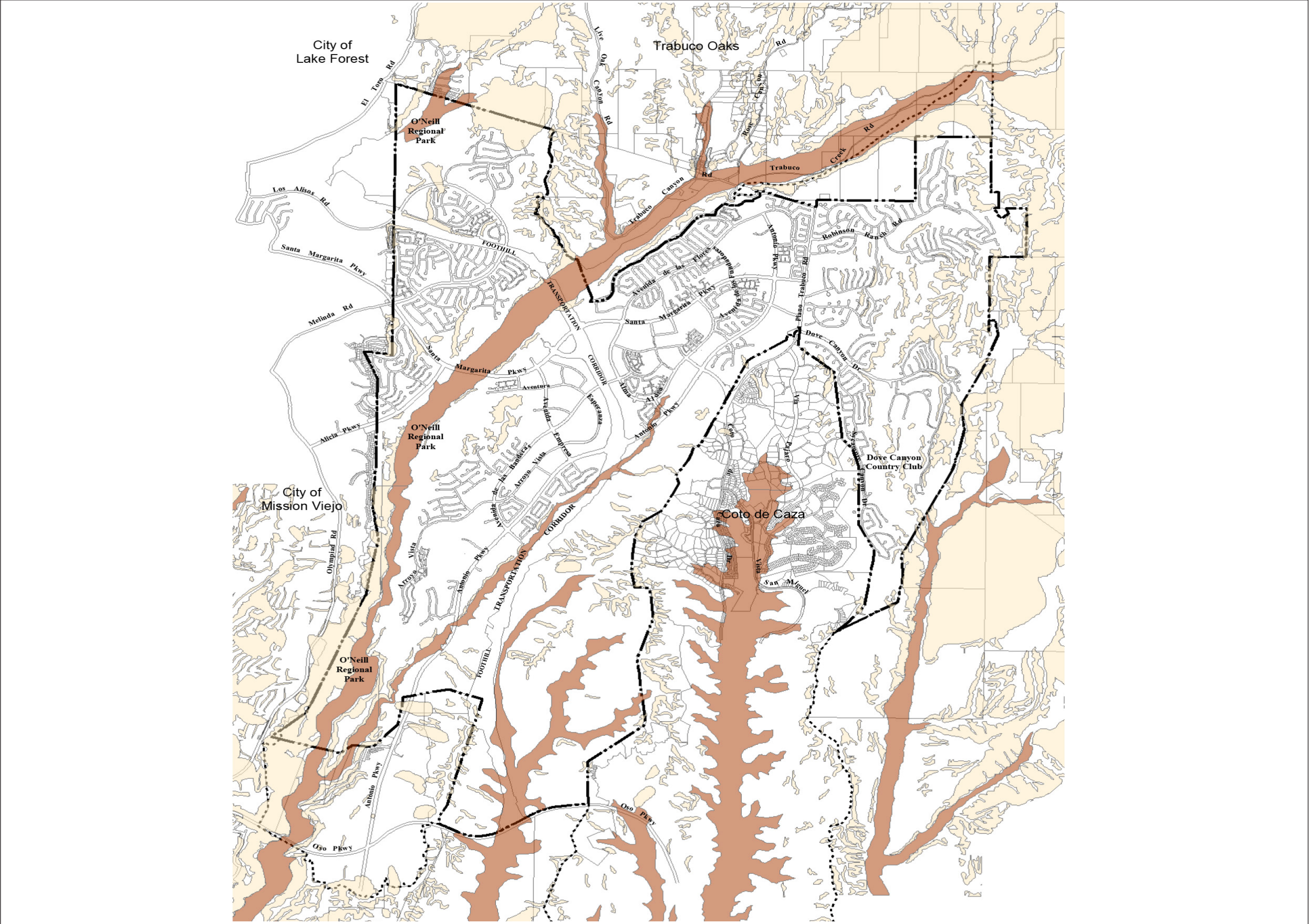
Seismic ground shaking of relatively loose, granular soils that are saturated or submerged can cause the soils to liquefy and temporarily behave as a dense fluid. Liquefaction is caused by a sudden temporary increase in pore water pressure due to seismic densification or other displacement of submerged granular soils. Liquefaction more often occurs in earthquake-prone areas underlain by young (i.e., Holocene age) alluvium where the groundwater table is higher than 50 feet below ground surface.

The California Geological Survey maintains Seismic Hazards Zone Maps (the City is located within the Santiago Peak and Canada Gobernadora Quadrangles) that depict seismic hazards such as liquefaction and landslides. According to the California Geologic Survey Quadrangles, liquefaction susceptibility is located along Trabuco Canyon and Tijeras Canyon Creek traversing through the City; refer to Figure SAF-1. Most of the lowlands in the Rancho Santa Margarita area have a high liquefaction potential because shallow ground water, within 50 feet of the ground surface, has been historically reported.

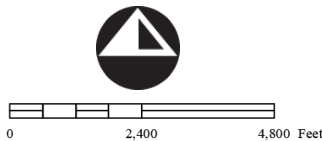
Seismic-Induced Landslides

Strong ground motions can worsen existing unstable slope conditions, particularly if coupled with saturated ground conditions. Seismically-induced landslides can overrun structures, people, or property, sever utility lines, and block roads. Thereby, hindering rescue operations after an earthquake. Areas underlain by shale and siltstone are more prone to landslides when compared to other bedrock geology, and the Capistrano, Monterey and Topanga Formations, prevalent throughout hillside areas in the City, are most prone to slow-developing, slump-type failure. The area east of Rancho Santa Margarita and some steep slopes within the City would be most vulnerable to seismically-induced slope failure, due to the steep terrain and the presence of weak sedimentary rock units. Areas on the gentler slopes may also be susceptible where slopes have been undercut by streams or roadcuts. Figure SAF-1 shows areas mapped by the State as having a potential for seismically-induced landsliding.





- LEGEND**
- Landslide
 - Liquefaction
 - City Boundary
 - Sphere of Influence



Source: Orange County Local Agency Formation Commission, 2013 and California Geological Survey, 2002.



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A combination of geologic conditions leads to landslide vulnerability. The hilly and mountainous areas within the planning area are underlain by soft sedimentary bedrock. The sedimentary bedrock units that underlie the hillside areas appear to be grossly stable in their natural conditions, as few landslides have been mapped in the planning area. However, an earthquake on a nearby seismic source could trigger landslides.

Numerous landslides have been mapped in the eastern half of the Rancho Santa Margarita area, as sediments in the area have the potential to fail (by landsliding) during an earthquake. Sections of Trabuco Canyon Road or Live Oak Canyon Road could be blocked by fallen rock debris immediately following an earthquake, or worse, could be destroyed by landsliding. This would hinder rescue and evacuation operations. Earthquake-induced landslides could also impact developments adjacent to the mountain front. In addition to geologic processes, climatic conditions, man-induced topographical alterations and earthquakes also trigger failure to unstable slopes. Slope stability hazards in the City relate to the undeveloped hillside areas, as grading activities and soil remediation techniques are used to mitigate these hazards prior to development.

Subsidence

Ground subsidence is the gradual settling or sinking of the ground surface with little or no horizontal movement. Most ground subsidence is man-induced and is usually associated with the extraction of oil, gas or ground water from below the ground surface in valleys filled with recent alluvium. No regional subsidence as a result of either groundwater pumping or oil extraction has been reported for the Rancho Santa Margarita area. However, thick alluvial deposits may be susceptible to subsidence should rapid groundwater withdrawal occur beneath these areas in response to population increase. These areas are primarily located in designated open spaces in the City, but development in the northeastern portion of the City and adjacent to Antonio Parkway may be susceptible.

Expansive Soils

Expansive soils create a shrink-swell hazard. Structural damage may result over a long period of time, usually from inadequate soils and foundation engineering or the placement of structures directly on expansive soils. Most of Rancho Santa Margarita is underlain by sedimentary units (both bedrock and alluvium) that are composed primarily of granular soils (silty sand, sand, and gravel). Such units are typically in the low to moderately-low range for expansion potential. However, every sedimentary unit in the area contains layers of fine-grained soils that are typically in the moderate to highly expansive range. The areas that are most susceptible to expansive soils are located along the western boundary of the City.

Collapsible Soils

Collapse occurs when saturated, collapsible soils lose cementation, resulting in substantial and rapid settlement under relatively low loads. The alluvial deposits in the valley and canyon floors are susceptible to collapse.





Tsunamis and Seiches

Seiching involves an enclosed body of water oscillating due to ground shaking, usually following an earthquake. Lakes and reservoirs are typical bodies of water affected by seiching. Rancho Santa Margarita Lake is located north of Santa Margarita Parkway and west of Antonio Parkway. Lake Mission Viejo is located approximately one mile southwest from the City. The City also has three reservoirs (Upper Oso Reservoir, Upper Chiquita Reservoir, and Trabuco Water Treatment Plant). The Upper Oso reservoir is located near the Foothill Transportation Corridor State Route 241 (SR-241) in the northwestern portion of the City and extends into Mission Viejo. The Upper Chiquita Reservoir was built in 2011 on the western slope of Chiquita Canyon. The Trabuco Water Treatment Plan is located on the eastern portion of the City and provides water at peak demand periods to augment water supply. These areas of the City may be vulnerable to seiching.

The City will enact programs to reduce geologic hazards to protect public safety. To minimize hazards from earthquakes and other geologic hazards, the most recent State seismic guidelines and guidelines for other geologic hazards will be implemented for structural design. During the review of development proposals involving slopes, grading, unstable soils and other hazardous conditions, surveys of soil and geologic conditions by a State-licensed engineering geologist will be required. Based on the results of the survey, design measures will be incorporated into projects to minimize geologic hazards.

Flood Hazards

FEMA Flood Zones

The unpredictable seasonal range in rainfall that is typical of coastal southern California, coupled with geographic and geologic conditions, makes Rancho Santa Margarita and all of Orange County vulnerable to flooding during the winter storm season.

The City of Rancho Santa Margarita is subject to atmospheric events and severe weather conditions that could threaten public safety, including weather patterns leading to flooding and other storm damage. Flooding is a natural attribute of any stream and is influenced by the intensity and distribution of rainfall. According to the latest FEMA Flood Insurance Rate Maps (FIRMs), there are areas identified within the City that are subject to a 100-year flood and a 500-year flood (refer to Figure SAF-2).





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As can be seen from Figure SAF-2, potential flooding could occur along the Arroyo Trabuco Creek (also known as Trabuco Creek) and Tijeras Canyon Creek areas. Along Trabuco Creek, a dense growth of trees and brush are located in the main channel, which may raise flood levels considerably. If flooding were to occur, it would be difficult to predict and plan for since rainfall in the area is extremely variable. Floods that would impact the City would typically be of short duration, with high peak volumes and high velocity. This is due to the arid to semi-arid nature of the area. When a major storm occurs, water collects rapidly and runs off quickly due to the rapid descent of the mountains into Trabuco Creek, Tijeras Canyon Creek, and Dove Canyon. Consequently, resultant flows are of the flash-flood type, generally having sharp peaks and short durations. Although some severe floods have impacted the area in the past, flooding damage in this area has generally been lower than in other areas of Orange County because of its relatively undeveloped state in the upper watershed areas. No homes or structures are located within the 100-year or 500-year flood zones within the City.

Dam Failure Induced Flooding

No major dam is located upstream from the planning area. However, Rancho Santa Margarita has three reservoirs (Upper Oso Reservoir, Upper Chiquita Reservoir, and Trabuco Water Treatment Plant) located within the City. The Upper Oso reservoir is located in the northwestern portion of the City and extends into Mission Viejo. The reservoir has been in use since 1979 and holds 1.3 billion gallons of water. The Upper Chiquita Reservoir was built in 2011 on the western slope of Chiquita Canyon and holds 244 million gallons of water. The Trabuco Water Treatment Plant is located on the eastern portion of the City and provides water at peak demand periods to augment water supply. Seismically-induced inundation can also occur if strong ground shaking causes structural damage to above-ground water tanks. Several other reservoir sites are within the planning area. Most of these are owned and operated by either the Trabuco Canyon or Santa Margarita Water Districts.

Additionally, Lake Mission Viejo is located near the City to the southwest. Other, smaller flood control improvements, such as canals, culverts, levees, and retention basins may crack and suffer some structural damage during an earthquake, especially in areas prone to ground failure. These facilities could pose an inundation hazard if they contain water at the time of the seismic event, or if they are not repaired soon after an earthquake and prior to the next winter storm season.

Drainage Facilities

The Orange County Flood Control District (OCFCD) is the agency responsible for the regional flood control, while the City is responsible for storm drain systems within the City boundaries. The local storm drain facilities were developed in coordination with the planned communities. The City's Drainage Master Plan addresses the storm drain system. This system is fully developed and no future expansions are planned.





The flood hazard areas in Rancho Santa Margarita are within open space lands in the City. These areas remain open space, as outlined in the Land Use Element. The City will monitor the local drainage system and will work with the OCFCD to identify needed improvements for new development projects.

Wildland Fire Hazards

Given the large portion of land that remains as open space within the planning area, including rugged topography with highly flammable native vegetation, wildland fires are a significant risk. The California Government Code requires safety elements of a general plan to identify land designated as a State Responsibility Area for fire services and land designated within a very high fire hazard severity zone. CAL FIRE prepares wildfire hazard severity maps including mapping areas of significant fire hazards based on fuels, terrain, weather, and other relevant factors (refer to Figure SAF-3). These zones, referred to as Fire Hazard Severity Zones (FHSZ), define the application of various mitigation strategies and influence how people construct buildings and protect property to reduce risk associated with wildland fires. Very high fire severity zones are located in the west, south, and east areas of the City.

Wildland fires have occurred in Orange County, particularly in the fall, ranging from small localized fires to disastrous fires covering thousands of acres. The most severe fires have typically occurred during Santa Ana wind conditions. According to OCFA, since 1993 there have been 37 fires in the areas surrounding Rancho Santa Margarita, most of them in adjacent areas. The most recent fire in Orange County, The Holy Jim Fire, originated in Trabuco Canyon in August 2018. Wildland fires are difficult to control due to adverse weather conditions, such as excessive wind and heat; large quantities of combustible fuel; inaccessible terrain; nonexistent or very limited water supply; and large fire frontage requiring disbursement of fire forces.

Fire protection challenges exist within Rancho Santa Margarita including higher density residential areas and urbanized areas located within and directly adjacent to high hazard wildland areas. As the number of structural features increase, so does the incidence of fire. Certain development patterns pose more difficult fire problems. These include multi-story, wood frame, high-density apartment developments, multi-story research developments, large continuous developed areas with combustible roofing materials, and facilities that use and/or store hazardous materials. Features of structural conditions that affect fire control include the type and use of structure, area of building, number of stories, roof covering, and exposures to the building.





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Areas posing a significant risk to the City are subject to the Public Resources Code, Sections 4291-4299, which require property owners to conduct maintenance to reduce the fire danger. The Orange County Fire Authority (OCFA) has responsibility for wildfire suppression on all private land in Rancho Santa Margarita. Any proposed development plans are reviewed by the OCFA to determine if fuel modification plans or other preventative measures are required. The fire flow rates from the Uniform Fire Code are also implemented by the OCFA and reviewed for any new development.

The City will continue to reduce the potential for dangerous fires by coordinating with the OCFA to implement fire hazard education, fire protection, and fuel modification programs. In particular, OCFA has a Ready, Set, Go Defensible Space initiative with guidelines for property owners to use to protect their homes and other property. OCFA provides education via the Homeowner Associations and the City about hardening of homes in FHSZ's. The current California Fire Code will be used to reduce structural fire hazards. In addition, the City will work closely with the local water districts and OCFA to ensure that water pressure is adequate for firefighting purposes.

Defensible Space: Defensible space refers to a separation zone between wildlands and structures where fuel, including natural and ornamental vegetation, man-made combustible materials, and ancillary structures, is managed or modified to minimize the spread of fire to the structure and allow space for defending structures from burning vegetation. The separation is important to improving the survivability of structures in a wildland fire event and is most readily maintained when planned for as part of project design.

The City's Local Hazard Mitigation Plan addresses threats from Wildfire Hazards in more detail.

The City's Emergency Operations Plan (2016) characterizes potential hazards within the community, including urban and wildland fires, and outlines the effective mobilization of both public and private resources in the event of an emergency. As an operations plan, the EOP is designed to provide the framework for Rancho Santa Margarita Emergency Operations Center (EOC) operations during incidents regarding the activation and use of the EOC.

The County of Orange Community Wildfire Protection Plan (2017) covers all OCFA service areas and portions of 17 cities that either threaten or are threatened by State Responsibility Areas (SRA). Rancho Santa Margarita is served by OCFA and is located within the Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) area. The CWPP provides an overview of wildland fire risks, hazards, and values within the planning area; recommends possible actions to reduce impacts of wildfire in the planned area; and provides an action plan.





Drought

A drought is a period of drier than normal conditions that can result in decreases in water supplies. In California, drought is commonly associated with below normal precipitation. Drought hazards increase with the length of the drought, as water supplies in reservoirs are depleted and groundwater levels decline due to increased pumping. The extent of drought impacts is dependent on many factors including climate, water use patterns, available water supplies and geography. Drought hazards can vary as well, and can include lack of adequate drinking water, loss of vegetation or increased fire risks. Floods and drought cycles occur regularly in southern California, and are influenced by cyclical El Niño and La Niña events.

The most severe drought in the City began in 2012 and continued into 2017. The City formed partnerships with Santa Margarita Water District (SMWD) and Trabuco Canyon Water District (TCWD) to assist in their efforts to ensure future supply and reliability. Additionally, the City offers educational resources and events highlighting water awareness.

Human Activity Hazards

Hazardous Materials

Hazardous materials are used in Rancho Santa Margarita for a variety of purposes, including in service industries, small businesses, schools, and households. Many chemicals used in household cleaning, construction, dry cleaning, landscaping, and automotive maintenance and repair are considered hazardous. Accidents can occur in the production, use, transport, and disposal of hazardous waste.

Uses known to handle, store, and/or maintain hazardous materials within the City involve fixed facilities comprised of gas stations, pump stations, commercial and retail businesses, and municipal uses. The majority of properties within the City containing hazardous materials are located along Santa Margarita Parkway, Antonio Parkway, Aventura, and Arroyo Vista. These facilities include gasoline service stations, utility facilities, dry cleaner facilities, and a former military site.

Over 250 miles of interstate highway, including the third busiest highway transportation corridor in the country (Highway 5), and 719 miles of other major transportation routes run through Orange County. The CHP has designated these highways as hazardous materials transportation corridors. Hazardous substance incidents could occur within the planning area due to the transportation systems (major arterials and SR-241) that traverse the area.

To effectively manage hazardous materials and waste, the City implements applicable portions of both the Orange County Hazardous Materials Area Plan and the Orange County Hazardous Waste Management Plan. Both the Federal government and the State require all businesses that handle more than a specified amount of hazardous materials or extremely hazardous materials, termed a reporting quantity, to submit a business plan to the local Certified Unified



Program Agency (CUPA). The CUPA with responsibility for the City is the Orange County Environmental Health Department. These business plans are submitted to the CUPA annually.

The City participates in a Household Hazardous Waste (HHW) collection program set up by the County of Orange in accordance with the California Integrated Solid Waste Management Act of 1989. HHW drop-off facilities are located throughout the county. The City also participates in a recycling program operated under private sector contract.

The City will work to minimize accident and health risk from hazardous materials with the following approaches:

- Cooperate with Federal, State, and county agencies to effectively regulate the management of hazardous materials and hazardous waste;
- Cooperate with the County of Orange to implement the applicable portions of the County Hazardous Waste Management Plan and the Hazardous Materials Area Plan;
- Identify roadway transportation routes for conveyance of hazardous materials;
- Implement the emergency response plan for accidents involving hazardous materials; and
- Cooperate with the Certified Unified Program Agency (CUPA) for Rancho Santa Margarita (the Orange County Environmental Health Department) and the Orange County Fire Authority to administer risk management plans for businesses within the City.

Ground Transportation

Rancho Santa Margarita is traversed by a variety of transportation systems including SR-241, Antonio Parkway, Oso Parkway, and Santa Margarita Parkway. The Orange County Transportation Authority (OCTA) transit system provides bus service. The City's ground transportation system is an asset to local economic development, but poses several potential hazards including automobile accidents and pedestrian and bicycling accidents. The risk of accidents can be reduced by properly maintaining the transportation infrastructure and correcting deficiencies. The City will work with the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the California Highway Patrol to monitor the ground transportation system for hazardous conditions. When safety problems are identified, the City will request the appropriate agency (i.e., Caltrans, OCTA or the City's Public Works Department) to take corrective measures.





Crime Risk and Prevention

Rancho Santa Margarita has one of the lowest crime rates of any city in Orange County, and is typically one of the top safest cities in the nation when compared to other cities with a population over 25,000. Protecting citizens and businesses from criminal activity is a priority in Rancho Santa Margarita. Police protection is provided by the Orange County Sheriff's Department. A Police Services Department (OCSD sub-station) is located at City Hall and provides a variety of community policing programs, including Community Oriented Policing and youth programs. The City will ensure that contracted staffing levels correspond to the City population and needs, and will monitor mutual aid agreements between the Orange County Sheriff's Department and the police departments of surrounding jurisdictions. Crime prevention programs will continue to be implemented through Police Services for both residential and business communities. Through the development review process, the City will encourage the incorporation of Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) techniques into site planning and architectural design of new development and redevelopment/revitalization projects to deter on-site crime.



APPENDIX A

Glossary

Access - A way of approaching or entering a property, including ingress (the right to enter) and egress (the right to leave).

Acres, Net - The portion of a site that can actually be built upon. The following generally are not included in the net acreage of a site: public or private road right-of-way, public open space, and floodways.

ADT - Average daily trips made by vehicles in a 24-hour period.

Air Pollutant Emissions - Discharges into the atmosphere, usually specified in terms of weight per unit of time for a given pollutant from a given source.

Air Pollution - The presence of contaminants in the air in concentrations that exceed naturally occurring quantities and are undesirable or harmful.

Air Quality Standards - The prescribed level of pollutants in the outside air that cannot be exceeded legally during a specified time in a specified geographical area.

Ambient Noise Level - The combination of noise from all sources near and far. In this context, the ambient noise level constitutes the normal or existing level of environmental noise at a given location.

Annexation - The incorporation of a land area into an existing city with a resulting change in the boundaries of that city.

Application for Development - The application form(s) and all accompanying documents and exhibits required of an applicant by an approving authority for development review by governmental agency(ies).

Aquifer - An underground bed or layer of earth, gravel, or porous stone that contains water.

Arterial - A major street carrying the traffic of local and collector streets to and from freeways and other major streets, with controlled intersections and generally providing direct access to nonresidential properties.

Assisted Housing - Generally multi-family rental housing, but sometimes single-family ownership units, whose construction, financing, sales prices, or rents have been subsidized by federal, state, or local housing programs, including, but not limited to, Federal Section 8 (new construction, substantial rehabilitation, and loan management set-asides), Federal Sections 213, 236, and 202, Federal Section 221(d)(3) (below-market interest rate program), Federal Section 101 (rent supplement assistance), CDBG, FmHA Section 515, multi-family mortgage revenue





bond programs, local redevelopment and in lieu fee programs, and units developed pursuant to local inclusionary housing and density bonus programs.

A-Weighted Decibel Scale or dBA - A numerical method of rating human judgment of loudness. The A-weighted scale reduces the effects of low and high frequencies in order to simulate human hearing.

Bicycle Lane (Class II facility) - A corridor expressly reserved for bicycles, existing on a street or roadway in addition to any lanes for use by motorized vehicles.

Bicycle Path (Class I facility) - A paved route not on a street or roadway and expressly reserved for bicycles traversing an otherwise unpaved area. Bicycle paths may parallel roads but typically are separated from them by landscaping.

Bicycle Route (Class III facility) - A facility shared with motorists and identified only by signs, a bicycle route has no pavement markings or lane stripes.

Bikeways - A term that encompasses bicycle lanes, bicycle paths, and bicycle routes.

Buffer - A strip of land designated to protect one type of land use from another incompatible use. Where a commercial district abuts a residential district, for example, additional use, yard, or height restrictions may be imposed to protect residential properties. The term may also be used to describe any zone that separates two unlike zones, such as a multi-family housing zone between single-family housing and commercial uses.

Building - Any structure having a roof supported by columns or walls and intended for the shelter, housing or enclosure of any individual, animal, process, equipment, goods, or materials of any kind or nature.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) - A state law (California Public Resources Code Section 21000 et. seq.) requiring state and local agencies to regulate activities with consideration for environmental protection. If a proposed activity has the potential for a significant adverse environmental impact, an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) must be prepared and certified as to its adequacy before taking action on the proposed project. General Plans usually require the preparation of a "Program EIR."

California Housing Finance Agency (CHFA) - A state agency, established by the Housing and Home Finance Act of 1975, authorized to sell revenue bonds and generate funds for the development, rehabilitation, and conservation of low- and moderate-income housing.

Caltrans - California Department of Transportation.

Capital Improvement Program (CIP) - A proposed timetable or schedule of all future capital improvements (government acquisition of real property, major construction project, or acquisition of long lasting, expensive equipment) to be carried out during a specific period and listed in order of priority, together with cost estimates and the anticipated means of financing each project. Capital



improvement programs are usually projected five or six years in advance and should be updated annually.

Census - The official decennial enumeration of the population conducted by the federal government.

City - City, with a capital "C," generally refers to the government or administration of a city. City, with a lower case "c" may mean any city.

City Council - The governing board of the City. The five-member elected council is responsible to the electorate for keeping pace with changing community needs, for establishing the quality of municipal services through the open conduct of public affairs, and for encouraging constructive citizen participation.

Collector - A street for traffic moving between arterial and local streets, generally providing direct access to properties.

Community Care Facility - Any facility, place, or building which is maintained and operated to provide non-medical residential care, day treatment, adult day care, or foster family agency services for children, adults, or children and adults, including, but not limited to, the physically handicapped, mentally impaired, incompetent persons, and abused or neglected children, and includes residential facilities, adult day care facilities, day treatment facilities, foster family homes, small family homes, social rehabilitation facilities, community treatment facilities, and social day care facilities.

Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) - A grant program administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) on a formula basis for entitlement communities, and by the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for non-entitled jurisdictions. This grant allots money to cities and counties for housing rehabilitation and community development, including public facilities and economic development.

Community Noise Equivalent Level (CNEL) - The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of five decibels to sound levels in the evening from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. and after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night after 10 p.m. and before 7 a.m. See also "A-Weighted Decibel."

Compatibility - The characteristics of different uses or activities that permit them to be located near each other in harmony and without conflict. The designation of permitted and conditionally permitted uses in zoning districts are intended to achieve compatibility within the district. Some elements affecting compatibility include: intensity of occupancy as measured by dwelling units per acre; pedestrian or vehicular traffic generated; volume of goods handled; and such environmental effects as noise, vibration, glare, air pollution, or the presence of hazardous materials. On the other hand, many aspects of compatibility are based on personal preference and are much harder to measure quantitatively, at least for regulatory purposes.





Condominium - A building, or group of buildings, in which units are owned individually, and the structure, common areas and facilities are owned by all the owners on a proportional, undivided basis.

Congestion Management Plan (CMP) - A mechanism employing growth management techniques, including traffic level of service requirements, development mitigation programs, transportation systems management, and capital improvement programming, for the purpose of controlling and/or reducing the cumulative regional traffic impacts of development. AB 1791, effective August 1, 1990, requires all cities, and counties that include urbanized area, to adopt and annually update a Congestion Management Plan.

Congregate Care Housing - generally defined as age-segregated housing built specifically for the elderly which provides services to its residents, the minimum of which is usually an on-site meal program, but which may also include housekeeping, social activities, counseling, and transportation. There is generally a minimum health requirement for acceptance into a congregate facility as most do not offer supportive health care services, thus differing from a nursing home. Residents usually have their own bedrooms and share common areas such as living rooms, dining rooms, and kitchens; bathrooms may or may not be shared.

Conservation - The management of natural resources to prevent waste, destruction, or neglect.

Council of Governments (COG) - A regional planning and review authority whose membership includes representation from all communities in the designated region. The Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) is an example of a COG in Southern California.

Coverage - The proportion of the area of the footprint of a building to the area of the lot on which it stands.

Critical Facility - Facilities housing or serving many people which are necessary in the event of an earthquake or flood, such as hospitals, fire, police, and emergency service facilities, utility "lifeline" facilities, such as water, electricity, and gas supply, sewage disposal, and communications and transportation facilities.

Critical Habitat - As defined in the Endangered Species Act, a specific geographic area that contains features essential to the conservation of endangered or threatened species that may require special management and protection.

Critical Movement - Any of the conflicting through or turning movements at an intersection which determine the allocation of green signal time.

Cumulative Impact - As used in CEQA, the total impact resulting from the accumulated impacts of individual projects or programs over time.

Day-Night Average Level (Ldn) - The average equivalent sound level during a 24-hour day, obtained after addition of 10 decibels to sound levels in the night after 10 p.m. and before 7 a.m. See also "Community Noise Equivalent Level."



Decibel (dB) - A unit for describing the amplitude of sound, as it is heard by the human ear. See also "A-Weighted Decibel," "Community Noise Equivalent Level," and "Day-Night Average Level."

Dedication - The turning over by an owner or developer of private land for public use, and the acceptance of land for such use by the governmental agency having jurisdiction over the public function for which it will be used. Dedications for roads, parks, school sites, or other public uses often are made conditions for approval of a development by a city.

Density - The number of families, individuals, dwelling units or housing structures per unit of land; usually density is expressed "per acre." Thus, the density of a development of 100 units occupying 20 acres is 5 units per acre.

Density Bonus - The allocation of development rights that allow a parcel to accommodate additional square footage or additional residential units beyond the maximum for which the parcel is zoned, usually in exchange for the provision or preservation of an amenity at the same site or at another location.

Density Transfer - A way of retaining open space by concentrating densities, usually in compact areas adjacent to existing urbanization and utilities, while leaving unchanged historic, sensitive, or hazardous areas.

Developer - An individual who or business which prepares raw land for the construction of buildings or causes to be built physical building space for use primarily by others, and in which the preparation of the land or the creation of the building space is, in itself, a business and is not incidental to another business or activity.

Development - The division of a parcel of land into two or more parcels; the construction, reconstruction, conversion, structural alteration, relocation or enlargement of any structure; any mining, excavation, landfill or land disturbance, and any use or extension of the use of land.

Development Impact Fees - A fee or charge imposed on developers to pay for the costs to the City of providing services to a new development.

Development Intensity - Refers to the extent of development on a parcel of land or lot; only applicable to non-residential uses.

Development Phasing Program - A program which establishes the requirement that the issuance of building and grading permits shall be phased in a manner that assures implementation of required transportation improvements within the City. However, through the CEQA process, the City may tie the phasing of development to improvements outside of the City as mitigation measures/conditions of approval for project-generated traffic impact fees. The City shall specify the order of improvements and phasing of dwelling units based, at a minimum, on mitigation measures adopted in conjunction with environmental documentation and other relevant factors.





Development Plan - A plan, to scale, showing uses and structures proposed for a parcel or multiple parcels of land. It includes lot lines, streets, building sites, public open space, buildings, major landscape features and locations of proposed utility services.

Development Rights - The right to develop land by a landowner that maintains fee-simple ownership over the land or by a party other than the owner who has obtained the rights to develop. Such rights usually are expressed in terms of density allowed under existing zoning. For example, one development right may equal one unit of housing or may equal a specific number of square feet of gross floor area in one or more specified zone districts.

Dwelling - A structure or portion of a structure used exclusively for human habitation.

Dwelling, Multi-family - A building containing two or more dwelling units for the use of individual families maintaining households; an apartment or condominium building is an example of this dwelling unit type.

Dwelling, Single-family Attached - A one-family dwelling attached to one or more other one-family dwellings by a common vertical wall; duplexes and townhomes are examples of this dwelling unit type.

Dwelling, Single-family Detached - A dwelling which is designed for and occupied by not more than one family and surrounded by open space or yards and which is not attached to any other dwelling by any means.

Dwelling Unit - One or more rooms, designed, occupied or intended for occupancy as separate living quarters, with cooking, sleeping and sanitary facilities provided within the unit for the exclusive use of a single family maintaining a household.

Easement - A grant of one or more of the property rights by the property owner to and/or for use by the public, a corporation, or another person or entity.

Economic Base - The production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services within a planning area.

Element - A division of the General Plan referring to a topic area for which goals, policies, and programs are defined (e.g., land use, housing, circulation).

Endangered Species - A species of animal or plant is endangered when its prospects for survival and reproduction are in immediate jeopardy from one or more causes.

Environment - The sum of all external conditions and influences affecting the life, development, and survival of an organism.

Environmental Impact Report (EIR) - A report, as prescribed by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), on the effect of a development proposal and other major actions which significantly affect the environment.



Exaction - A contribution or payment required as an authorized precondition for receiving a development permit; usually refers to mandatory dedication (or fee in lieu of dedication) requirements found in many subdivision regulations.

Fault - A fracture in the earth's crust forming a boundary between rock masses that have shifted.

Fault, Active - A fault that has moved within the last 11,000 years and that is likely to move again within the next 100 years.

Fault, Inactive - A fault which shows no evidence of movement in the last 11,000 years and no potential for movement in the relatively near future.

Fault, Potentially Active - A fault that last moved within the Quaternary Period (the last 2,000,000 to 11,000 years) before the Holocene Epoch (11,000 years to the present); or a fault that, because it is judged to be capable of ground rupture or shaking, poses an unacceptable risk for a proposed structure.

FEMA - Federal Emergency Management Agency. Administers National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) and provides Federal disaster relief for presidentially-declared disasters.

FHWA - Federal Highway Administration. Administers Federal programs providing financial assistance to states for construction and improvement of freeways and roadways.

Finding(s) - The result(s) of an investigation and the basis upon which decisions are made. Findings are used by government agents and bodies to justify action taken by the entity.

Fire Flow - A rate of water flow that should be maintained to halt and reverse the spread of a fire.

Flood Insurance Rate Map (FIRM) - For each community, the official map on which the Federal Insurance Administration has delineated areas of special flood hazard and the risk premium zones applicable to that community.

Flood, Regulatory Base - Flood having a one percent chance of being equaled or exceeded in any given year (100-year flood).

Floodplain - A lowland or relatively flat area adjoining the banks of a river or stream which is subject to a one percent or greater chance of flooding in any given year (i.e., 100-year flood).

Floodway - The channel of a watercourse or river, and portions of the flood plain adjoining the channel, which are reasonably required to carry and discharge the base flood of the channel.

Floor Area Ratio (FAR) - The gross floor area of all buildings on a lot divided by the lot area; usually expressed as a numerical value (e.g., a building having 5,000 square feet of gross floor area located on a lot of 10,000 square feet in area has a floor area ratio of 0.5:1).





Future Planned Community - Land within the Sphere of Influence for detailed planning and development for residential, commercial, community facility, recreation and open space uses.

General Plan - A legal document that takes the form of a map and accompanying text adopted by the local legislative body. The plan is a compendium of policies regarding the long-term development of a jurisdiction. The state requires the preparation of seven elements or divisions as part of the plan: land use, housing, circulation, conservation, open space, noise, and safety. Additional elements pertaining to the unique needs of an agency are permitted.

Goal - The ultimate purpose of an effort stated in a way that is general in nature and immeasurable; a broad statement of intended direction and purpose (e.g., "Achieve a balance of land use types within the City").

Grade - The degree of rise or descent of a sloping surface.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions - Greenhouse gases absorb and emit radiant energy and have been identified by the State as an environmental issue of concern. Greenhouse gases include: carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, and others.

Ground Failure - Mudslide, landslide, liquefaction (see this Glossary), or the compaction of soils due to ground shaking from an earthquake.

Ground Shaking - Ground movement resulting from the transmission of seismic waves during an earthquake.

Groundwater - The supply of fresh water under the ground surface in an aquifer or soil that forms a natural reservoir.

Group Quarters - A dwelling that houses unrelated individuals.

Growth Management - Techniques used by government to control the rate, amount and type of development.

Habitat - The physical location or type of environment in which an organism or biological population lives or occurs.

HCD - State Department of Housing and Community Development. Administers State housing programs and reviews Housing Elements for compliance with State law.

HDC - Non-profit Housing Development Corporation.

HOME - Home Investment Partnership Act.

Hazardous Materials - An injurious substance, including pesticides, herbicides, toxic metals and chemicals, liquefied natural gas, explosives, volatile chemicals and nuclear fuels.



Household - According to the U.S. Census, a household is all persons living in a dwelling unit whether or not they are related. Both a single person living in an apartment and a family living in a house are considered households.

Household Income - The total income of all the people living in a household. Households are usually described as very low income, low income, moderate income, and upper income for that household size, based on their position relative to the regional median income.

Housing Affordability - Based on state and federal standards, housing is affordable when the housing costs are no more than 30 percent of household income.

Housing Unit - A room or group of rooms used by one or more individuals living separately from others in the structure, with direct access to the outside or to a public hall and containing separate toilet and kitchen facilities.

HUD - U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Administers federal housing programs, including Section 8 housing assistance.

Implementation Measure - An action, procedure, program, or technique that carries out general plan policy.

Income Categories - Four categories for classifying households according to income based on the median income for each County. The categories are as follows: Very Low (0-50% of County median); Low (50-80% of County median); Moderate (80-120% of County median); and Upper (over 120% of County median).

Infrastructure - The physical systems and services which support development and population, such as roadways, railroads, water, sewer, natural gas, electrical generation and transmission, telephone, cable television, storm drainage, and others.

Intensity - A measure of the amount or level of development often expressed as the ratio of building floor area to lot area (floor area ratio) for commercial, business, and industrial development, or units per acre of land for residential development (also called "density").

Intersection – A location where two or more roads cross at grade.

Issue - A problem, constraint, or opportunity requiring community action.

Jobs/Housing Balance; Jobs/Housing Ratio - The jobs/housing ratio divides the number of jobs in an area by the number of employed residents. A ratio of 1.0 indicates a balance. A ratio greater than 1.0 indicates a net in-commute of employed persons; less than 1.0 indicates a net out-commute of employed persons.

Land Use - A description of how land is occupied or used.

Land Use Plan - A plan showing the existing and proposed location, extent and intensity of development of land to be used in the future for varying types of





residential, commercial, industrial, agricultural, recreational and other public and private purposes or combination of purposes.

Landslide - A general term for a falling or sliding mass of soil or rocks.

Liquefaction - A process by which water-saturated granular soils transform from a solid to a liquid state due to groundshaking. This phenomenon usually results from shaking from energy waves released in an earthquake.

Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) - A five or seven-member commission within each county that reviews and evaluates all proposals for formation of special districts, incorporation of cities, annexation to special districts or cities, consolidation of districts, and merger of districts with cities. Each county's LAFCO is empowered to approve, disapprove, or conditionally approve such proposals.

Local Street - A street providing direct access to properties and designed to discourage through-traffic.

Lot - The basic unit of land development. A designated parcel or area of land established by plat, subdivision, or as otherwise permitted by law, to be used, developed or built upon as a unit.

LOS - Level of Service, a descriptor of traffic operating conditions based on an intersection's volume-to-capacity ratio.

Median Income - The annual income for each household size which is defined annually by the federal Department of Housing and Urban Development. Half of the households in the region have incomes above the median and half are below.

Migratory Corridors - Routes followed by animals when traveling between different habitats; migratory corridors are necessary to maintain flourishing wildlife populations.

Mitigate - To ameliorate, alleviate, or avoid to the extent reasonably feasible.

Mixed Use - Medium- and high-density residential and commercial uses within a single structure, on a single parcel, or on adjacent parcels.

Mobile Home - A structure, transportable in one or more sections, which is at least 8 feet in width and 32 feet in length, which is built on a permanent chassis and designed to be used as a dwelling unit, with or without a permanent foundation when connected to the required utilities.

National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) - The National Flood Insurance Program, managed by FEMA, makes Federally-backed flood insurance available in communities that agree to adopt and enforce floodplain management ordinances to reduce future flood damage.



Natural Community Conservation Plan/Master Streambed Alteration Agreement/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/MSAA/HCP) - The goal of this plan is to protect and preserve coastal sage scrub and other natural vegetation communities that occur within Orange County's southern Subregion.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System Permit - As authorized by the Clean Water Act, the NPDES Permit Program controls water pollution by regulating point sources that discharge pollutants into waters of the United States.

Noise - Any undesired audible sound.

Noise Exposure Contours - Lines drawn about a noise source indicating constant energy levels of noise exposure. CNEL and Ldn are the metrics utilized to describe community noise exposure.

Non-Attainment - The condition of not achieving a desired or required level of performance. Frequently used in reference to air quality.

Non-Conforming Use - A use that was valid when brought into existence, but by subsequent regulation becomes no longer conforming. "Non-conforming use" is a generic term and includes (1) non-conforming structures (by virtue of size, type of construction, location on land, or proximity to other structures), (2) non-conforming use of a conforming building, (3) non-conforming use of a non-conforming building, and (4) non-conforming use of land. Thus, any use lawfully existing on any piece of property that is inconsistent with a new or amended General Plan, and that in turn is a violation of a zoning ordinance amendment subsequently adopted in conformance with the General Plan, will be a non-conforming use.

Open Space - Any parcel or area of land or water essentially unimproved and set aside, designated, dedicated, or reserved for public or private use or enjoyment.

Ordinance - A law or regulation set forth and adopted by a governmental authority, usually a city or county.

Overcrowding - As defined by the State Department of Housing and Community Development, a household with greater than one person per room, excluding bathrooms, kitchens, hallways, and porches.

Parcel - A lot or tract of land.

Planning Area - The Planning Area is the land area addressed by the General Plan. Typically, the Planning Area boundary coincides with the Sphere of Influence which encompasses land both within the City limits and potentially annexable land.

Planning Commission - A group of people appointed by the City Council that administer planning and land use regulations for the City and provide recommendations on a wide array of land use and land use policy issues.





Policy - Statements guiding action and implying clear commitment found within each element of the general plan (e.g., "Provide incentives to assist in the development of affordable housing").

Pollution - The presence of matter or energy whose nature, location, or quantity produces undesired environmental effects.

Program - A coordinated set of specific measures and actions (e.g., zoning, subdivision procedures, and capital expenditures) the local government intends to use in carrying out the policies of the general plan.

Recreation, Active - A type of recreation or activity which requires the use of organized play areas, including, but not limited to: softball, baseball, football and soccer fields, tennis and basketball courts and various forms of children's play equipment.

Recreation, Passive - Type of recreation or activity which does not require the use of organized play areas.

Redevelopment - Redevelopment, under the California Community Redevelopment Law, is a process with the authority, scope, and financing mechanisms necessary to provide stimulus to reverse current negative business trends, remedy blight, provide job development incentives, and create a new image for a community. It provides for the planning, development, redesign, clearance, reconstruction, or rehabilitation, or any combination of these, and the provision of public and private improvements as may be appropriate or necessary in the interest of the general welfare. In a more general sense, redevelopment is a process in which existing development and use of land is replaced with new development and/or use.

Regional - Pertaining to activities or economies at a scale greater than that of a single jurisdiction, and affecting a broad homogeneous area.

Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) - The Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) is based on State of California projections of population growth and housing unit demand and assigns a share of the region's future housing need to each jurisdiction within the SCAG (Southern California Association of Governments) region. These housing need numbers serve as the basis for the update of the Housing Element in each California city and county.

Rehabilitation - The upgrading of a building previously in a dilapidated or substandard condition, for human habitation or use.

Restoration - The replication or reconstruction of a building's original architectural features, usually describing the technique of preserving historic buildings.

Retail Trade Area - The geographic area from which retail establishments draw most of their customer base.



Rezoning - An amendment to the map and/or text of a zoning ordinance to effect a change in the nature, density, or intensity of uses allowed in a zoning district and/or on a designated parcel or land area.

Right-of-Way - A strip of land acquired by reservation, dedication, prescription or condemnation and intended to be occupied by a road, crosswalk, railroad, electric transmission lines, oil or gas pipeline, water line, sanitary or storm sewer, or other similar uses.

Risk - The danger or degree of hazard or potential loss.

San Diego Regional Water Quality Control Board - The Regional Water Quality Control Board's purpose is to preserve, enhance, and restore the quality of California's water resources for the protection of the environment, public health, and all beneficial uses. The SDRWQCB implements the NPDES permits.

Seiche - An earthquake-generated wave in an enclosed body of water such as a lake, reservoir, or bay.

Seismic - Caused by or subject to earthquakes or earth vibrations.

Sensitive Species - Includes those plant and animal species considered threatened or endangered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and/or the California Department of Fish and Game according to Section 3 of the Federal Endangered Species Act. Endangered - any species in danger of extinction throughout all, or a significant portion of, its range. Threatened - a species likely to become an endangered species within the foreseeable future throughout all, or a portion of, its range. These species are periodically listed in the Federal Register and are, therefore, referred to as "federally listed" species.

Sewer - Any pipe or conduit used to collect and carry away sewage from the generating source to a treatment plant.

Significant Effect - A beneficial or detrimental impact on the environment. May include, but is not limited to, significant changes in an area's air, water, and land resources.

Site - A parcel of land used or intended for one use or a group of uses and having frontage on a public or an approved private street; A lot.

Site Plan - The development plan for one or more lots on which is shown the existing and proposed conditions of the lot including: topography, vegetation, drainage, floodplains, marshes and waterways; open spaces, walkways, means of ingress and egress, utility services, landscaping, structures and signs, lighting, and screening devices; any other information that reasonably may be required in order that an informed decision can be made by the approving authority.

Slope - Land gradient described as the vertical rise divided by the horizontal run, and expressed in percent.

Solid Waste - Unwanted or discarded material, including garbage with insufficient liquid content to be free flowing, generally disposed of in landfills or incinerated.





Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) - The Southern California Association of Governments is a regional planning agency which encompasses six counties: Imperial, Riverside, San Bernardino, Orange, Los Angeles, and Ventura. SCAG is responsible for preparation of the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA).

South Coast Air Basin - The South Coast Air Basin is one of several regional air basins designated by the state of California, for the purpose of air quality management and air pollution control, and encompasses Orange County and portions of Los Angeles, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties.

Special District - A district created by act, petition or vote of the residents for a specific purpose with the power to levy taxes.

Special Status Species - Species designated by federal or state agencies as species of concern.

Special Needs Groups - Those segments of the population which have a more difficult time finding decent affordable housing due to special circumstances. Under State planning law, these special needs groups consist of the elderly, handicapped, large families, female-headed households, farmworkers and the homeless.

Specific Plan - Under Article 8 of the Government Code (Section 65450 et seq), a legal tool for detailed design and implementation of a defined portion of the area covered by a General Plan. A specific plan may include all detailed regulations, conditions, programs, and/or proposed legislation which may be necessary or convenient for the systematic implementation of any General Plan element(s).

Sphere of Influence - The probable ultimate physical boundaries and service area of a local agency (city or district) as determined by the Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) of the County.

Standards - (1) A rule or measure establishing a level of quality or quantity that must be complied with or satisfied. The State Government Code (Section 65302) requires that General Plans describe the objectives, principles, "standards," and proposals of the General Plan. Examples of standards might include the number of acres of park land per 1,000 population that the community will attempt to acquire and improve. (2) Requirements in a zoning ordinance that govern building and development as distinguished from use restrictions; for example, site-design regulations such as lot area, height limit, frontage, landscaping, and floor area ratio.

Stationary Source - A non-mobile emitter of pollution.

Structure - Anything constructed or erected which requires location on the ground (excluding swimming pools, fences, and walls used as fences).

Subdivision - The division of a lot, tract or parcel of land that is the subject of an application for subdivision.



Subdivision Map Act - Division 2 (Sections 66410 et seq) of the California Government Code, this act vests in local legislative bodies the regulation and control of the design and improvement of subdivisions, including the requirement for tentative and final maps. (See "Subdivision.")

Subsidence - The sudden sinking or gradual downward settling and compaction of soil and other surface material with little or no horizontal motion. Subsidence may be caused by a variety of human and natural activities, including earthquakes.

Subsidize - To assist by payment of a sum of money or by the granting of terms or favors that reduce the need for monetary expenditures. Housing subsidies may take the forms of mortgage interest deductions or tax credits from federal and/or state income taxes, sale or lease at less than market value of land to be used for the construction of housing, payments to supplement a minimum affordable rent, and the like.

Topography - Configuration of a surface, including its relief and the position of natural and man-made features.

Trade Capture - How much of the current demand is being captured by retail establishments within the Retail Trade Area.

Transportation Demand Management (TDM) - A strategy for reducing demand on the road system by reducing the number of vehicles using the roadways and/or increasing the number of persons per vehicle. TDM attempts to reduce the number of persons who drive alone on the roadway during the commute period and to increase the number in carpools, vanpools, buses and trains, walking, and biking. TDM can be an element of TSM (see below).

Transportation Systems Management (TSM) - Individual actions or comprehensive plans to reduce the number of vehicular trips generated by or attracted to new or existing development. TSM measures attempt to reduce the number of vehicle trips by increasing bicycle or pedestrian trips or by expanding the use of bus, transit, carpool, vanpool, or other high occupancy vehicles.

Trip - A one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination via a single mode of transportation; the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end," (or origin – often from home, but not always), and one "attraction end," (destination).

Uniform Building Code (UBC) - A standard building code which sets forth minimum standards for construction.

Watershed - An area of land that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet such as the outflow of a reservoir, mouth of a bay, or any point along a stream channel.

Waters of the U.S./Waters of the State - Watercourses or wetlands that are regulated by the Clean Water Act and considered jurisdictional by federal or state agencies.





Wetland - An area that is inundated or saturated by surface water or groundwater at a frequency and duration sufficient to support a prevalence of vegetation typically adapted for life in saturated soil conditions, commonly known as hydrophytic vegetation.

Zoning - A police power measure, enacted primarily by units of local government, in which the community is divided into districts or zones within which permitted and special uses are established as are regulations governing lot size, building bulk, placement, and other development standards. Requirements vary from district to district, but they must be uniform within the same district. The zoning ordinance consists of a map and text.

Zoning District - A geographical area of a city zoned with uniform regulations and requirements.

Zoning Map - The officially adopted zoning map of the City specifying the uses permitted within certain geographic areas of the City.



