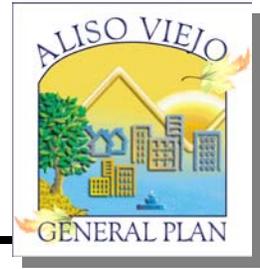


CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



INTRODUCTION

Aliso Viejo recognizes its role as steward of the natural and biological resources within the City's jurisdiction. Some of the City's most valuable assets are parks and open spaces. The City intends to take an active role in the management of these resources, not only for the benefit of current and future residents, but also for their intrinsic value. Protection and enhancement of these resources is the central objective of the Conservation/Open Space Element.

PURPOSE OF THE CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The purpose of the Conservation/Open Space Element is to identify natural, cultural, and open space resources within Aliso Viejo. The Element focuses on the conservation, preservation, and enhancement of these resources to ensure a high quality living environment for community residents. This Element contains policies and describes programs to achieve these goals.

SCOPE AND CONTENT OF THE CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

State legislation requires that a Conservation Element and an Open Space Element be included in all local government general plans. Due to the interrelationship of the goals and policies of these elements, and the overlap in State requirements, the two elements have been combined for this Plan. The Government Code requires a Conservation Element for the conservation, development, and use of natural resources, including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, harbors, fisheries, wildlife, minerals and other natural resources. The Open Space Element is used to manage all open space areas, including undeveloped wilderness lands and outdoor recreation uses. The Government Code defines that open space should be preserved for:

- ❖ Preservation of natural resources;
- ❖ Managed production of resources;
- ❖ Recreation; and
- ❖ Public health and safety.

While not required by State law, the Aliso Viejo's Conservation/Open Space Element also addresses air quality issues in compliance with the South Coast Air Quality Management Plan.





The Conservation/Open Space Element has three sections: 1) this Introduction; 2) Issues, Goals, and Policies; and 3) the Conservation/Open Space Plan. In the second section (Issues, Goals and Policies), goals and policies are established which address conservation of natural resources and preservation of open space and parks. The Conservation/Open Space Plan describes how the goals and policies will be achieved, or implemented. Specific implementation for the Conservation/Open Space Element is provided in the General Plan Implementation Program, located in Appendix A.

RELATED PLANS AND PROGRAMS

Many plans and programs enacted through federal, State and local legislation relate directly to the goals of the Conservation/Open Space Element. These plans and programs are administered by agencies with powers to enforce federal, State and local laws.

Federal Endangered Species Act

The Federal Endangered Species Act (ESA), administered by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, applies to federally listed species and habitat occupied by federally listed species. Federally listed species are most likely to occur within riparian habitat areas in the City's floodplains. ESA Section 9 forbids specified acts that directly or indirectly harm listed species. Section 9 also prohibits "taking" any species of wildlife or fish listed as endangered. These restrictions apply to all federal agencies and all persons subject to United States jurisdiction.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and California Department of Fish and Game

Both the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) have regulations to protect wildlife resources. Special permits are required for alteration, dredging, or any activity in a lake or stream, as well as other activities that may affect fish and game habitat. Both agencies also regulate impacts to sensitive plant and animal species as described above. Future development in Aliso Viejo that has the potential to affect wildlife habitat will be subject to the regulations of both of these federal and State agencies.

California Endangered Species Act

The California Endangered Species Act (CESA) generally parallels the main provisions of the Federal Endangered Species Act and is administered by CDFG. CESA prohibits the "taking" of listed species except as otherwise provided in State law. Any future development or redevelopment in Aliso Viejo that has the potential to affect wildlife will be subject to the restrictions contained in CESA.



Natural Community Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP)

The Orange County Environmental Management Agency (EMA) has prepared a Natural Community Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) for the Central and Coastal Subregion of the County of Orange, including portions of Aliso Viejo. The NCCP/HCP was prepared in cooperation with CDFG and USFWS. The intent of the NCCP/HCP program is to provide long-term, regional protection of natural vegetation and wildlife diversity, while allowing compatible land use and appropriate development and growth. NCCP/HCP is accomplished with the institution of a subregional Habitat Reserve System, and implemented through a coordinated program to manage biological resources within the habitat reserve.

National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES)

Under the NPDES storm water permit, all development and significant redevelopment must be implemented with runoff pollution control measures known as Best Management Practices (BMPs). Proposed development projects (both public and private) within Aliso Viejo must incorporate structural and non-structural BMPs to preclude significant water quality impacts from non-point source pollutants.

California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and Guidelines

The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) was adopted by the State legislature in response to a public mandate for thorough environmental analysis of projects that might affect the environment. The provisions of the law and environmental review procedure are described in the CEQA Statutes and Guidelines. Implementation of CEQA ensures that during the decision making stage of development, City officials and the general public will be able to assess the environmental impacts associated with private and public development projects, and ensure that they are appropriately mitigated.

South Coast Air Quality Management Plan

The South Coast Air Quality Management Plan (SCAQMP) mandates a variety of measures to reduce emissions and improve air quality. These measures include the requirement that each jurisdiction develop an air quality component within its General Plan.

Regional Transportation Plan and Improvement Program

The Southern California Association of Governments has adopted a Regional Transportation Plan and a Regional Transportation Improvement Program to implement the projects and programs listed in the Regional Transportation Plan. These plans work together to help improve vehicular traffic within the region and thereby reduce air pollution.



Urban Water Management Plans

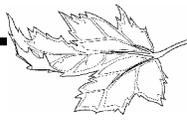
Urban water purveyors are required to prepare and update an Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) every five years. The Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water Districts, which serve Aliso Viejo, adopted their Plans in 2000. Applicable to the Conservation/Open Space Element, the UWMPs address water supply, treatment, reclamation, water conservation, and contain a water shortage contingency plan. Local UWMPs, such as those prepared by the Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water Districts, are supplemental to the regional plans prepared by the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California (MWDSC) and the Municipal Water District of Orange County (MWDOC).

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER GENERAL PLAN ELEMENTS

State planning law requires the Conservation/Open Space Element be consistent with other General Plan elements. The Land Use and Safety Elements relate most closely to the Conservation/Open Space Element.

The Land Use Element provides a planned land use pattern, identifying residential, commercial, business park, professional office, and community facility land use designations. Public and private lands intended for conservation, open space, and recreational uses are identified using the Recreation and Open Space land use designations.

The Safety Element identifies hazard-prone areas such as floodplains, seismic and geologic hazard areas, most of which are located in Recreation and Open Space designations. These areas are identified in the Conservation/Open Space Element and preserved for such purposes.



ISSUES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

Aliso Viejo’s physical assets and quality of life are largely defined by the City’s natural, scenic and recreational resources. The community was designed to maximize the benefits of these assets, and residents value these resources and desire to improve them for the long term enjoyment of all. Successfully achieving this objective requires identification of valued resources, diligent stewardship of the resources as development occurs over time, and compliance with a variety of federal and State laws intended to support such efforts.

Seven major conservation and open space issues are addressed by the goals, policies and implementation measures of the Conservation/Open Space Element: (1) water supply and quality; (2) ecological and biological resources; (3) landform features and scenic resources; (4) air quality; (5) energy supply and conservation; (6) open space and recreation; and (7) cultural resources.

WATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY

Urban activity in Aliso Viejo relies on the availability of imported water. Maintaining an adequate supply of water to support development in the City is a high priority. City residents and businesses have a responsibility to conserve water and ensure it is used wisely. Water quality is also an important consideration, both from the perspective of maintaining the quality of potable water, and taking all practical steps to ensure that stormwater runoff draining to the ocean meets established water quality standards when it leaves Aliso Viejo.

Water Supply and Conservation



Goal COS-1	Ensure provision of sufficient water to meet community needs, while emphasizing the importance of water conservation and maximizing the use of native, low-water landscaping.
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Policy COS-1.1 Continue to work with local water districts and regional suppliers to ensure that adequate supplies of water are provided to meet the demands of new development and reuse projects in the City.

Policy COS-1.2 Reduce the amount of water used for landscaping and increase use of native and low water plants. Maximize use of native, low-water plants for landscaping of areas adjacent to sidewalks or other impermeable surfaces.

Policy COS-1.3 Encourage the production, distribution and use of recycled and reclaimed water for landscaping projects throughout the community, while maintaining urban runoff water quality objectives.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



Policy COS-1.4 Promote water conservation measures, reduce urban runoff, and prevent groundwater pollution within development projects, property maintenance, City operations and all activities requiring City approval.

Water Quality



Goal COS-2	Ensure acceptable quality and security of ground and surface water.
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Policy COS-2.1 Participate in applicable and enforceable local, regional, State and federal efforts to protect and enhance potable water quality.

Policy COS-2.2 Adopt and enforce regulations and engage in educational efforts to eliminate pollution from urban runoff.

Policy COS-2.3 Preserve, and where possible, create or restore areas that provide important water quality benefits, such as riparian corridors, wetlands and buffer zones. Encourage land purchase and preservation of such areas by AVCA or other organizations that assist in land acquisition.

Policy COS-2.4 Limit disturbances of natural water bodies and natural drainage systems caused by development including roads, highways and bridges.

ECOLOGICAL AND BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

The canyons that traverse and surround Aliso Viejo contain natural habitat that supports a variety of animal populations. A substantial amount of research and planning has taken place in the central and coastal Orange County region to identify and preserve ecological systems. Preserving ecological systems, supporting continued ecological research and planning, and creating a balance between habitat preservation and community needs for housing, jobs and resources are important objectives for the City.



Goal COS-3	Identify, protect and improve significant ecological and biological resources within and surrounding Aliso Viejo.
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Policy COS-3.1 Support regional and sub-regional efforts to conserve ecological and biological resources.

Policy COS-3.2 Protect sensitive habitat areas and vegetation, particularly along Aliso Creek, within Aliso Woods, and within the Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, by maintaining these resources as long term open space.



LANDFORM FEATURES AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Aliso Viejo is characterized by a variety of scenic resources including hillsides, ridgelines, canyons and view corridors. Together, these resources ensure that the community offers a variety of unique views and scenery, and that the City remains visually attractive. Once a scenic resource is altered or developed upon, it is lost forever.



**Goal
COS-4 Identify and preserve unique landform features and scenic resources within
and surrounding Aliso Viejo.**

Policy COS-4.1 Protect scenic landform features such as hillsides, ridgelines, canyons and view corridors through designation of key areas as open space and use of other land use planning tools.

Policy COS-4.2 Encourage and maintain high-quality architectural and landscaping designs that enhance or complement the community’s visual character.

AIR QUALITY

Air quality in the South Coast Air Basin, of which Aliso Viejo is a part, does not presently meet State and/or federal standards. Cooperation among all agencies in the basin is necessary to achieve desired improvements to air quality. Aliso Viejo can do its part by participating in these efforts, and exercising local land use and circulation planning authority to promote reductions in local air pollution.



**Goal
COS-5 Improve air quality within Aliso Viejo and the region.**

Policy COS-5.1 Integrate air quality planning with City land use, economic development and transportation planning efforts.

Policy COS-5.2 Support programs that reduce air quality emissions related to vehicular travel.

Policy COS-5.3 Support alternative transportation modes and technologies, and develop bike- and pedestrian-friendly neighborhoods to reduce emissions associated with automobile use.



ENERGY SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

Most activity in Aliso Viejo depends on adequate supply and distribution of energy in the form of electricity and natural gas. The City promotes both conservation of energy and identification of alternative energy sources to sustain economic and population growth.



Goal	Encourage conservation of energy and identification of alternative energy sources.
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Policy COS-6.1 Encourage green building designs for new construction and renovation projects within the City.

Policy COS-6.2 Coordinate with regional and local energy suppliers to ensure adequate supplies of energy to meet community needs, implement energy conservation and public education programs, and identify alternative energy sources where appropriate.

Policy COS-6.3 Encourage building orientations and landscaping that enhance natural lighting and sun exposure.

Policy COS-6.4 Encourage expansion of neighborhood-level products and services and public transit opportunities throughout the City to reduce automobile use.

OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Open space and recreation resources in Aliso Viejo consist of designated private and public park lands, the Aliso Viejo Resort and Golf Club, portions of Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, conservation and transmission line easements, and off-road bicycle, equestrian and pedestrian paths. Most of these facilities are privately owned and operated, many by the Aliso Viejo Community Association (AVCA). Other open spaces are not officially designated for open space or recreational use, but support these activities, such as school yards, vacant land areas, and private yards within residential neighborhoods. Open spaces are another important component in the community's identity, established as part of Aliso Viejo's original urban form. These spaces need to be improved when possible to promote the natural physical and visual quality of the City, and to provide desired recreational opportunities to residents.



Goal	Ensure continued long-term provision of open spaces, and expansion of parks and recreational opportunities within the community.
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Policy COS-7.1 New parks shall be owned and operated in a manner consistent with the rest of the park and recreation system.

Policy COS-7.2 Ensure long-term preservation of identified open spaces through the use of conservation easements or land purchases by community organizations that assist in land acquisition.



Policy COS-7.3 Work with AVCA and school districts in planning for parks and recreation facilities to maximize community recreational opportunities through joint use.

Policy COS-7.4 Encourage completion of a multi-use trail connecting Wood Canyon to the beach.

Policy COS-7.5 Ensure that new development provides park land and/or improvements at a fair share ratio, pursuant to the City’s Parkland Ordinance.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGIC RESOURCES

Aliso Viejo contains important historic, archeological and tribal sites. In a region characterized by growth and urbanization, these resources are threatened by the encroachment of urban development.



Goal COS-8	Preserve and protect historical, archeological and tribal resources.
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Policy COS-8.1 Balance the benefits of development with a project’s potential impacts to cultural resources.

Policy COS-8.2 Identify, designate, and protect sites of historic importance.

Policy COS-8.3 Encourage procurement of cultural resources and artifacts for public education and enjoyment.



CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE PLAN

The Conservation/Open Space Element sets forth an approach to protect and enhance Aliso Viejo's natural, open space and recreation resources. The City has established goals and policies (listed in the previous section) to conserve and preserve these resources. The Conservation/Open Space Plan provides a general outline of action programs. As an extension of the Conservation/Open Space Plan, implementation contained in Appendix A of the General Plan describes specific actions the City will take to protect the overall quality of life in the community.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE POLICY MAP

Aliso Viejo's conservation and open space policies and plan are illustrated graphically in Figure COS-1, the Conservation/Open Space Policy Map. This map identifies the locations of Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, privately and publicly operated parks within the City, public trails and access points, surface water resources, and landscape and viewscape corridors. As applicable, the Conservation/Open Space Plan refers to the Policy Map for identification of significant locations, conditions, or development requirements.

WATER SUPPLY AND QUALITY

Ensuring adequate water supplies and protection of water quality are critical to the health and quality of life of Aliso Viejo residents and visitors.

Water Supply

Aliso Viejo is served by two water Districts: Moulton Niguel Water District and El Toro Water District. Water for both districts comes from the Colorado River and the State Water Project (which draws water from the San Francisco-San Joaquin Bay Delta) and travels hundreds of miles to the local water districts through an intricate delivery system operated by Metropolitan Water District of Southern California. Imported water is treated at the Diemer Filtration Plant in Yorba Linda and transported to each District via the Allen-McColloch Pipeline.

The Moulton Niguel Water District (MNWD) provides water services to most of Aliso Viejo. Its 2000 Urban Water Management Plan (UWMP) was developed based on a buildout scenario of 20,000 residential units in addition to non-residential uses outlined in the Aliso Viejo Planned Community Development Plan. The UWMP states that the District expects to meet all member jurisdiction's water needs for at least ten years. Although optimistic about the adequacy of future supplies, MNWD continually looks for opportunities to increase its storage capacity to offset effects of unforeseen water shortages.

Figure COS-1
Conservation/Open Space Policy Map

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE
ELEMENT



Figure COS-1
Conservation/Open Space Policy Map (Back side of 11x17" Figure)



The El Toro Water District serves a small portion of northern Aliso Viejo. The District's 2000 Urban Water Management Plan estimates that current water supplies, facilities, and storage will be adequate to meet future demands within areas under its jurisdiction.

The City will continue to work with the Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water Districts to implement their Urban Water Management Plans and ensure that adequate water supplies are available to meet the needs of current and future growth. The City will review proposed development projects to ensure that approved projects do not degrade water pressure or reduce supplies available to the rest of the community. Those projects found to be subject to California State Water Code Sections 10910-10915 will be required to prepare 20-year water supply assessments to ensure adequate water supplies will be available to support proposed development.

Water Conservation

Although the Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water Districts expect to have adequate water supplies available to meet the demands of projected growth within their jurisdictions, Aliso Viejo encourages water conservation.

Use of recycled or reclaimed water for irrigation instead of expensive and increasingly scarce imported potable water helps to ensure the long-term availability of drinking water to residents. As of 2000, the El Toro Water District provides 360 acre-feet per year of recycled water to the Aliso Viejo Resort and Golf Club for irrigation and landscaping purposes. Due to the uncertainty of future Statewide water supply and projected cost increases of imported potable water, both the Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water Districts plan to expand their reclaimed water distribution system to offset future development water demands. The recycled water system is completely independent of the drinking water system and requires its own dedicated pipelines, pump stations, and reservoirs.

The City will coordinate with the Aliso Viejo Community Association (AVCA) to ensure that landscaping, park maintenance and other services provided by the Association employ water conservation measures, use recycled water if available from water suppliers, and prevent groundwater pollution from fertilizer application and other potential pollutants.

City officials will collaborate with the Transportation Corridor Agency (TCA) to achieve attractive, well-maintained low-water landscaping within the San Joaquin Hills Transportation Corridor (SR-73) right-of-way that provides effective erosion control.

The City will develop and implement a plant palette consisting of native and xeriscape plant species to serve as a model for private landscaping projects. In addition, to conserve water, any new landscaping projects within the City will be required to consist of at least 50 percent low water native or xeriscape plant species drawn from the palette. These requirements will be re-evaluated periodically and the required percentage of low water plants will be increased over time.



Water Quality

The water in Aliso Viejo has traveled hundreds of miles to reach the community. As water travels over the surface of the land or through the ground, it can pick up substances left by plants, animals or people, and it dissolves minerals. Water is treated at the Deimer Filtration Plant in Yorba Linda by Metropolitan Water District and delivered to the Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water District's distribution systems. Both Districts meet State and federal standards for water quality for all water distributed to residents of Aliso Viejo. Since potable water is imported to Aliso Viejo, the City has little control over source water quality. However, the City will continue to support efforts by the Moulton Niguel and El Toro Water Districts to improve overall potable water quality.

In addition to the preservation and improvement of imported potable water quality, Aliso Viejo recognizes the importance of preserving the quality of surface water bodies. City efforts can reduce the impact of urban pollutants on regional wildlife and plants that depend on healthy aquatic habitat. Pollutants in urban runoff include landscape pesticides and fertilizers, automobile products, and degreasers. The storm drains outlet into regional drainage facilities including the Laguna Canyon, Woods Canyon, and Aliso Creek channels, all significant sources of ecological and biological resources.

New development projects increase the amount of impermeable surface area in Aliso Viejo, which contributes to increased amounts and speeds of urban runoff. Increased runoff levels may lead to erosion along stream banks, thus increasing sediment load within the surface water. While Aliso Creek is the only significant natural surface water body within the City, storm water and other urban runoff flows into the regional channels and eventually to the Pacific Ocean.

To address these problems, the Clean Water Act was amended in 1987. One of the amendments included the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) permit. 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. Aliso Viejo is a co-permittee of the NPDES permit and will continue to implement the most recent provisions adopted by the SDRWQCB.

The City will also coordinate with the Aliso Viejo Community Association (AVCA) to ensure that landscaping and park maintenance activities prevent groundwater pollution from fertilizer application and other potential pollutants. In addition, the City will produce and distribute information and educate residents about water quality issues, especially as it pertains to community activities such as car washes.

Aliso Viejo supports efforts by AVCA and other organizations to acquire land to protect surface water bodies from encroachment. The City will also establish roadway standards designed to limit disturbances to natural water bodies, require the use of on-site retention and detention facilities as part of new development projects, and ensure that such projects are compliant with water quality measures contained in the California Water Code and other applicable requirements.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

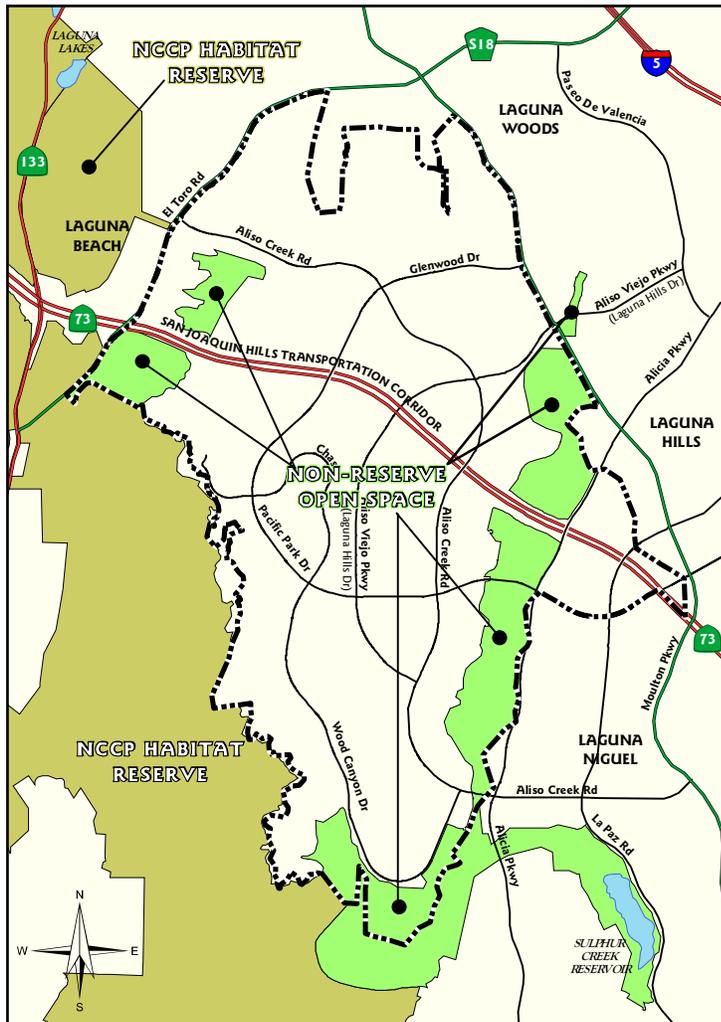


nose snake. Sensitive species associated with riparian or woodland habitat include cooper’s hawk, long-eared owl, northern harrier, Least Bell’s vireo, red-shouldered hawk, red-tailed hawk, sharp shinned hawk, white-tailed kite, southwestern arroyo toad, southwestern pond turtle, silvery legless lizard, coastal rosy boa, coast patch-nose snake, and two-striped garter snake. Fairy shrimp and the western spadefoot toad are often found in vernal pools, seeps, or wet meadows.

Extensive research and planning efforts conducted by the County of Orange and other jurisdictions prior to the City’s incorporation have identified the locations of sensitive habitats and species. Aliso Viejo lies within the Coastal subregion of the Orange County Natural Community Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP). In 1996, the County approved the Central and Coastal Subregion Natural Community Conservation Plan and Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) and an associated Implementation Agreement. Three species were designated as “target species” by the NCCP/HCP to be used as umbrella species to guide the design of a permanent habitat system within the Central and Coastal Subregion. The three species are the coastal California gnatcatcher, coastal cactus wren, and the

orange-throated whiptail lizard, all of which are currently on the federal list of threatened or endangered species. By providing long-term protection for habitat required by the three target species, sufficient coastal sage scrub (CSS) and other habitat would be protected to benefit a much broader range of CSS-related species.

As shown in Figure COS-3, several areas within Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park are designated as Non-Reserve Open Space within the NCCP/HCP, while substantial area west of the City is designated as NCCP Habitat Reserve. Within the Habitat Reserve area, the NCCP/HCP restricts the kinds of permitted uses to protect long-term habitat values. Residential, commercial and industrial uses are prohibited, as are new active recreational uses outside already disturbed areas. However, the NCCP/HCP recognizes that some new non-habitat uses will need to be sited in the Reserve area, particularly public infrastructure, and that some current uses will be maintained. New recreational facilities will be sited in locations compatible with habitat protection based on the understanding that recreational



**Figure COS-3
NCCP/HCP Designations**



use is subordinate to habitat protection within the reserve.

Non-Reserve Open Spaces designate regional open spaces that were in public ownership prior to adoption of the NCCP/HCP. These open spaces are not subject to the development requirements associated with the Reserve system, but they are recognized as integral components of the overall subregional conservation strategy.

All sensitive species and habitat are protected by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and are subject to regulation by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game. The City supports further implementation of the Central and Coastal NCCP/HCP, and will participate in any future updates to the Plan. The City will continue to assess development proposals for potential impacts to significant natural resources pursuant to CEQA, NCCP, and associated federal regulations. Biological resource surveys will be required where appropriate and where potential significant impacts are identified, appropriate mitigation will be proposed binding on new development prior to issuance of a grading permit. Aliso Viejo will also partner with the County of Orange and other interested parties to maintain and restore the riparian corridor along Aliso Creek.

LANDFORM FEATURES AND SCENIC RESOURCES

Aliso Viejo's diverse topography and prominent natural landforms make it a community rich in scenic resources. Elevations range from approximately 120 feet above sea level at the southern end of the City to more than 890 feet at Moulton Peak in the northern end. Canyon views and scenic highways are examples of scenic qualities benefiting the community. Architectural and landscaping design guidelines contained in Planned Community documents complement the natural setting, enhancing the City's unique visual character.

Scenic Qualities

Public and private portions of Aliso Viejo bordering the Aliso and Woods Canyons are situated with highly valued viewsheds, or scenic overlooks of the canyons. The unique character and aesthetic qualities of these canyons make preservation of these viewsheds an important consideration. In addition, several City roadways have been designated by the County of Orange Master Plan of Scenic Highways as having scenic qualities worth preserving. These roadways, classified as Viewscope or Landscape Corridors, are depicted on the Conservation/Open Space Policy Map, Figure COS-1. The criteria for designating scenic roadways are as follows:



Viewscope Corridor: A route that traverses a corridor within which unique or unusual scenic resources and aesthetic values are found. This designation is intended to minimize the impact of the highway and land development upon the significant scenic resources along the route.

Landscape Corridor: 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.

The City's scenic resources are preserved for the mutual enjoyment of community residents and visitors. Impact to community aesthetics, including viewsheds and scenic highways, will be considered during review of development proposals. The Zoning Ordinance or any Specific Plan developed following adoption of this General Plan will include standards for development visible from major thoroughfares and identified view corridors. In addition, the Local Coastal Program requires protection of viewsheds along the western edge of the City.

Architecture and Landscape Design Standards

Aliso Viejo was developed according to architectural and landscaping design standards established in the Aliso Viejo and Rossmoor-Leisure World Planned Communities documents. Application of these standards has led to the high-quality architecture and landscaping visible throughout the community. To maintain high-quality architecture and landscaping of future development projects and ensure compatibility with Aliso Viejo's natural setting, the City will develop specific architecture and landscape design standards to be included in the Zoning Ordinance or any Specific Plan developed following adoption of the General Plan.

AIR QUALITY

Aliso Viejo is located within the South Coast Air Basin, which covers all of Orange County as well as portions of Los Angeles, Riverside, and San Bernardino Counties. The air basin is a non-attainment area for the State Ambient Air Quality Standards for ozone and inhalable particulate matter (PM₁₀).



Most of Aliso Viejo consists of residential land uses and there are no major point source emitters located in the City that directly impact local and regional air quality. Motor vehicles are the major source of regional air emissions. The City will continue to 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. In addition, Aliso Viejo will implement measures identified in the SCAQMP regarding hot spots and shading, and will encourage the continued use of alternative transportation technologies, such as non-gasoline powered automobiles, bicycles, and electric-powered personal transportation devices.

ENERGY SUPPLY AND CONSERVATION

Conservation of energy resources can benefit Aliso Viejo residents and the region. Efforts to conserve non-renewable energy resources are important to provide and maintain a healthy, viable community. In the first few years of this century, California has experienced times of acute electricity shortages that have negatively impacted the local and regional economy. Energy resource conservation can reduce these fiscal and economic impacts, as well as improve air quality.

Aliso Viejo desires to be a leader among southern California jurisdictions in the practice of green design. Green design and construction practices significantly reduce or eliminate the negative impact of new buildings on the environment and occupants in five broad areas:

- ❖ Sustainable site planning
- ❖ Safeguarding water and water efficiency
- ❖ Energy efficiency and renewable energy
- ❖ Conservation of building materials and resources
- ❖ Indoor environmental quality

To achieve these objectives, the City will evaluate proposed development projects using Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) standards developed by the US Green Building Council for new construction, major renovation, existing building operations, and commercial interior projects as a part of the development review process. The City strongly encourages all future development and major renovation projects within the following General Plan designations to achieve LEED certification: Very High Density Residential, Town Center Commercial, Recreation Commercial, Business Park, Professional Office, and Community Facility. The City will provide education to staff, the public, and the development community regarding green building standards and methods of compliance.

In addition, the City will continue to promote energy conservation by implementing State Title 24 building construction standards, complying with Energy Star conservation standards, and considering appropriate building orientation and landscaping during the development/design review process through implementation of the Zoning Ordinance. Aliso Viejo will also coordinate with the Orange County Transportation Authority to expand transit opportunities and resources in Aliso Viejo and encourage alternative transportation technologies.



OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

Parks and open space are very important community amenities. In addition to providing opportunities for recreation and leisure, parks and open space enhance community aesthetics and character. As a master planned community, Aliso Viejo was developed with ample parks and open spaces that provide a variety of recreational opportunities for community residents.

Resources

Aliso Viejo's open space and recreational resources include many parks and greenbelts located throughout the community and the Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park that surrounds most of the City south of Aliso Creek Road and Glenwood Drive (see Figure COS-1).



Accessible to City residents, the Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park, portions of which are located within or contiguous to the City limits, has an extensive trails network suitable for hiking, biking and equestrian use with scenic overlooks of the canyons and nearby communities. Trails in the vicinity of Aliso Viejo are depicted on the Conservation/Open Space Policy Map, Figure COS-1. In addition, the Wilderness Park has a nature center with exhibits and programs for visitors. The Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park

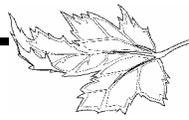
is operated and maintained by the Orange County Harbors, Beaches, and Parks Division of the Resources and Development Management Department.

Most recreational facilities and active parkland in Aliso Viejo were established during the development of the Aliso Viejo Planned Community, prior to incorporation. With the exception of Iglesia Park, which is owned and maintained by the City, the Aliso Viejo Community Association (AVCA) operates all of the community's neighborhood and community parks. The acreage of each park and amenities offered are listed in Table COS-1 and depicted on Figure COS-1.

Standards

The City will adopt by ordinance a development standard of 5.0 acres of community or neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents. As of 2003, Aliso Viejo residents enjoyed a ratio of 5.37 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. New residential development will be required to provide land and/or fees necessary to maintain the City's adopted parkland standard, consistent with the California Subdivision Map Act.





**Table COS-1
Aliso Viejo Parkland (2003)**

Park	Acreage	Amenities
1. Acorn Park	3.0	Picnic tables & benches, restrooms, passive walk, slope slides, sports field, and tot lot.
2. Aliso Canyon Community Park Phase I: Phase II:	22.1 24.0	Sports fields.
3. Aliso Viejo Community Park	14.0	Passive walk with lighting and hiking trail connection, picnic tables & benches, softball field, bike rack, sports field, tot lot, and restroom.
4. Argonaut Park	12.2	Basketball court, passive walk, picnic tables & benches, sports fields, and tot lot.
5. Brookline Park	6.0	Basketball court, passive walk, picnic tables & benches, and sand volleyball courts.
6. Canyon View Park	10.6	Passive walk with hiking trail connection, picnic tables & benches, sand volleyball courts, and tot lot.
7. Creekside Park	21.5	Benches, passive walk with hiking trail connection, shaded picnic table & benches, and sports fields.
8. Crestview Park	4.1	Benches and passive walk.
9. Foxborough Park	7.3	Barbeques, hiking trail, passive walk with hiking trail connection, shaded picnic tables, and sports field.
10. Glenbrook Park	11.9	Benches and passive walk with lighting.
11. Grand Park	5.5	Passive walks with lighting, picnic tables & benches, and tot lot.
12. Hillview Park	20.5	Bike racks, passive walk with hiking trail connection, and picnic tables & benches.
13. Hummingbird Park	5.3	Benches, passive walk with hiking trail connection, and tot lot.
14. Iglesia Park *	7.0	Sheltered picnic areas with benches & barbecues, tot lot, playground, softball field, tennis and handball courts, passive walks, sand volleyball court, restrooms, and shaded picnic tables.
15. Oak Park	2.4	Basketball half court, passive walk, picnic table & benches, and tot lot.
16. Pinewood Park	6.1	Passive walk with lighting, and softball fields with bleachers.
17. Ridgecrest Park	17.3	Basketball court with lights, interpretive garden, passive walk, picnic tables & benches, tennis courts with lights, and tot lot.
18. Springdale Park	17.6	Basketball court, passive walk, picnic tables & benches, sports field, and tot lot.
19. Westridge Park	2.5	Passive walk, shaded picnic tables & benches, and tot lot.
20. Wingspan Park	19.8	Passive walk, and shaded picnic tables & benches.
21. Woodfield Park	16.8	Baseball fields with bleachers, field lighting, hiking trail connection, park lights, picnic tables, and restrooms.
Total	257.5	

Sources: Aliso Viejo Community Association, City of Aliso Viejo, 2003.

* Iglesia Park is owned and maintained by the City of Aliso Viejo.

CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



Conservation Strategies

As the community matures, open space, parkland, and recreational opportunities should be preserved, expanded and made accessible to the public for future enjoyment. To this end, the City will pursue the following courses of action to conserve these valuable community resources:

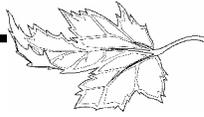
- ❖ *Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park:* Aliso Viejo will coordinate with the County of Orange to secure permanent access easements and establish additional trailheads to Aliso and Woods Canyon Wilderness Park within the City. In addition, the City will work with Soka University to gain public access to trailheads on University property.
- ❖ *Aliso Viejo Community Association Parks:* The City will support implementation of AVCA's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The City will continue to support efforts by AVCA to provide and improve parks, trails and recreational activities and to increase resident access to these resources. The City will also support efforts by AVCA or others to acquire and develop land for new parks appropriate to meet the needs of the community.
- ❖ *City Parks and Facilities:* Aliso Viejo will ensure the continued operation and improvement of Iglesia Park and the Family Resource Center as resources to the community. In addition the City's Capital Improvement Program will specifically address maintenance needs of City Parks.
- ❖ *Open Space Conservation:* The City will support future efforts by community organizations to establish conservation easements or purchase land to be set aside as permanent open space.
- ❖ *Future Trail Improvements:* The City will work with AVCA and the County of Orange to identify and fill gaps in the regional trail system. Key among City objectives in this area is completion of a trail connecting the City to the beach through Aliso and Wood Canyon Wilderness Park.



In addition, the City will coordinate with school districts to enter into joint-use agreements with local schools to make recreational facilities available to the community during non-school hours.

CULTURAL AND PALEONTOLOGIC RESOURCES

Aliso Viejo contains cultural and historic resources within its boundaries. Prior to development of the Aliso Viejo Planned Community, which includes most of the current City, the project area was extensively surveyed for significant archaeological resources. Among the sites identified, 33 were in areas currently designated as open space. Assorted pictographs and carvings of historical significance have also been found throughout the City; however, the number of these are relatively few and a located among rock outcroppings and shelters in the Aliso and Wood Canyons Wilderness Park. Numerous artifacts retrieved



CONSERVATION/OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

from archaeological sites and areas in the City and surrounding Wilderness Park are stored at the interpretive center located at the convergence of Aliso and Wood Canyons.

The Aliso Creek and Aliso Woods areas and other portions of the City contain many fossils, with exposed outcrops of chitin shells (clams), mollusks, oyster shells, marine mammal bones, and sharks' teeth. In addition, largely intact sea lion and sea cow specimens have been discovered.

The City will review future development proposals to ensure that cultural and historic resources are conserved in compliance with this Element and the requirements of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

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ELEMENT



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