

1.10.6 Open Space Subelement

Overview

The Open Space Subelement guides and regulates the management of land that is undeveloped and maintained in a natural or landscaped condition consistent with Best Management Practices (BMPs). Open space includes both public and private lands. These lands are reserved for their natural values and are important for preserving native vegetation and wildlife habitat, maintaining scenic quality, and protecting watersheds.

Although open space is not a threshold program area of the Regional Plan, the Compact specifically requires it to be included in “a conservation plan for the preservation, development, utilization and management of scenic and natural resources.” As part of the Conservation Element, open space -- and the strategies developed to preserve it -- directly and indirectly aids in the attainment of other threshold areas.

Open space areas that are urban in nature and contain developed facilities for parks, playgrounds, plazas etc. are provided for in the Goals and Policies of the Urban Subelement of the Recreation Element. These statements support the creation of park areas and give management direction for public parcels with the potential to become neighborhood parks.

The Open Space Subelement of the 1987 Regional Plan contains one Goal and two associated Policies. They focus on managing open space to conserve vegetation and protect watersheds, protecting the beneficial uses of open space, and managing open space for natural values when consistent with other goals and policies.

Open space measures are currently implemented indirectly within several sections of the TRPA Code of Ordinances (including the definition of “open space” in Chapter 18 and the provisions limiting land coverage in Chapter 20). Open space goals and policies are implemented through the following measures:

- regulation of land uses within the Plan Area Statements and Community Plans
- restrictions to limit access to sensitive areas, as appropriate
- restriction of vehicular access to authorized roads and trails only
- implementation of methods to protect uncommon plants and reduce fire hazards

Alternative 1—Continuation of Existing Regional Plan

Summary

Under Alternative 1, “open space” would continue to be defined as land with no coverage that is maintained either in a natural condition or in a landscaped condition consistent with BMPs. Preserving open space is important for maintenance and protection of wildlife, vegetation, scenic, watershed, and other natural values.

Goals and Policies

Under Alternative 1, the Goals and Policies from the 1987 Regional Plan would remain in place.

Implementation Measures

Under Alternative 1, the Implementation Measures from the 1987 Regional Plan would remain in place

Alternative 2

Summary

Under Alternative 2, Open Space would continue to be defined as it is currently. A system of natural open space areas connected to recreational facilities preserves scenic quality, reduces loss, degradation and fragmentation of biological resources, and provides opportunities to restore degraded habitat.

Preserving open space for natural values is consistent with the development pattern established for Alternative 2 (i.e., providing incentives to transfer development rights from sensitive areas to walkable communities). Opportunities to restore and preserve additional open space may be created during redevelopment.

Open space is important to maintain and protect wildlife, vegetation, scenic, watershed and other natural values throughout the Tahoe Region. One new goal and two associated policies would be added regarding “intermix” parcels.

Goals and Policies

The goal and policies in the Open Space Subelement of the 1987 Regional Plan would be retained and amended in Alternative 2. The goal related to conserving vegetation and protecting watersheds would be expanded to address connectivity of wildlife habitat.

A new goal would be added to promote the management of publicly-owned intermix parcels (i.e., conserved open space parcels within the urban boundary). New policies will be added to promote the following:

- Management of publicly-owned intermix parcels for better ecosystem health and reduced wildfire potential through hazard tree removal and defensible space improvements
- The purchase of urban intermix parcels for open space with existing and new funding sources.

Implementation Measures

The measures used to implement the new open space-related policies in Alternative 2 would be the same as in Alternative 1 (maintain Code Sections 18.4, Definitions, and 20.3, Land Coverage).

Alternative 3

Summary

The purpose of the Open Space Subelement as outlined in Alternative 2 would be applied to Alternative 3.

Goals and Policies

The goals, policies, and implementation measures included in the Open Space Subelement under Alternative 3 would be the same as those proposed for Alternative 2.

Implementation Measures

The measures used to implement the new open space–related policies described above for Alternative 3 would be the same as in Alternative 1 (maintain Code Sections 18.4, definitions, and 20.3 for land coverage).

Alternative 4

Summary

The purpose of the Open Space Subelement as outlined in Alternative 2 would be applied to Alternative 4. Of the action alternatives, Alternative 4 would promote the least amount of new development, with a greater emphasis on public land acquisitions that would facilitate land retirement, contributing to the permanent dedication of additional open space.

Goals and Policies

The goals, policies, and implementation measures included in the Open Space Subelement under Alternative 4 would be the same as those proposed for Alternative 2.

Implementation Measures

The measures used to implement the new open space–related policies described above for Alternative 4 would be the same as in Alternative 1 (maintain Code Sections 18.4, definitions, and 20.3 for land coverage).

