

10 OPEN SPACE, PARKS + RECREATION

10.1 Purpose of the Chapter

This chapter presents a framework for governing future decisions about how Tiburon will sustain open space and provide parks and recreational opportunities for today's residents, as well as future generations. The Town's parks and open space lands can provide biodiversity, recreation, flood risk reduction, and protection from hazardous conditions. The Town recognizes that development of open space lands can degrade its natural resources and impact the many benefits provided by these areas, and therefore seeks to discourage the conversion of open space land to urban uses. The chapter focuses on the protection, maintenance, and enhancement of Tiburon's open spaces, parks, and recreational facilities and addresses State requirements for the open space element of the general plan. Together with the Town's Zoning Ordinance regulations related to open space, this chapter constitutes the Town's open space plan. A description of the biological communities and special status species in the planning area, and goals, policies, and programs to protect their habitat, are located in the Conservation chapter.

The Open Space, Parks + Recreation chapter includes the following sections.

- **10.2 Open Space.** Identifies open space areas in Tiburon.
- **10.3 Scenic Resources.** Describes visual resources in the planning area, including ridgelines, greenbelts, water, and wooded areas.
- **10.4 Parks and Recreation.** Describes community parks, mini-parks, regional parks, and recreational facilities and programming in Tiburon.
- **10.5 Goals, Policies, and Programs.** Identifies goals, policies, and programs to conserve, protect and improve open space lands, parks, and recreational facilities.

10.2 Open Space

Open space and preservation of the natural environment are valued and defining characteristics of the Tiburon Peninsula. The Tiburon Peninsula consists of over 800 acres of protected and publicly owned open space land. Additionally, there are approximately 115 acres of private open space protected from development through easement or another legal instrument. These open space areas are generally not open to public use. As shown in Table OS-1, approximately 769 acres of public open space land is located within the planning area.

Table OS-1: Public Open Space in the Planning Area

OPEN SPACE AREA	ACRES
Hamon (Rock & Tree) Open Space	10.5
Mt. Tiburon Subdivision Open Space	12.3
Hilarita Project Open Space	2.8
Cibrian Subdivision Open Space	3.8
Ring Mountain (County of Marin)	389.1
La Cresta Open Space	65.3
Del Madera Subdivision Open Space	29.2
Miraflores Subdivision Open Space	17.2
Mateo Drive Subdivision Open Space	2.8
Town Hall Area Open Space	2.0
Eavey Open Space	21.3
El Marinero Subdivision Open Space	9.3
Reed School District Open Space	11.8
Atkinson Open Space	59.7
Highlands Subdivision Open Space	3.1
Old Saint Hilary's	123.9
Pt. Tiburon Marsh Open Space	5.1
Total	769.1

Public and private open spaces and parks are shown in Figure OS-1, which constitutes the Town's open space inventory and map. The open space inventory includes any parcel or area of land or water within the Tiburon town limits and sphere of influence that is essentially unimproved and devoted to open space use for natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, public health and safety, and tribal resources, as required by California Government Code §65560. The policies and programs contained in Section 9.5 are aimed at the continued preservation and conservation of these lands.

Figure OS-1 Open Space Areas and Parks

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10.3 Scenic Resources

Tiburon has a unique visual environment with a diversity of landscapes and views of open space, Richardson Bay shoreline, San Francisco Bay shoreline, Angel Island, hills, ridgelines, stands of various types of trees, and other natural features.

Water, shorelines, and wetlands are important visual resources that provide critical habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic vistas. Views of Richardson and San Francisco Bays are cherished by residents and contribute to the enjoyment of daily life. Another visual attraction is the abundance of wildlife, particularly birds and other special status species which are constantly moving around the Bay waters, marshes, and mudflats in search of food and refuge. Wildlife refuges like the Audubon Society Wildlife Refuge, located in Tiburon, provide scenic areas where wildlife can congregate and move freely.

Trees and woodland areas are important natural resources that provide habitat for birds and shaded, protected areas for other animals, and help to stabilize hillsides. Trees and wooded areas also contribute to the visual character of the community. Trees and woodlands are valued by the Town for their ecological importance, their visual enhancement of the community, and their contribution to residential privacy and quiet.

Ridgelines are defined as a line formed along the highest points of a mountain ridge, or as an area of higher ground separating two adjacent streams or watersheds. Besides water, ridgelines are the most visually defining open space attribute in the planning area. Ridgelines also provide the greatest opportunity for community scenic value. Public access to these ridgelines allows community members to enjoy unique views within the Town.

Open Space policies place the highest value on protecting undeveloped ridgelines. The Tiburon Ridge and Significant Ridgelines in the planning area are designated by Town Council Resolution 2859 and shown in Figure OS-2. The figure also identifies other scenic characteristics, including upland greenbelts, areas with significant tree cover, streams, and wetlands.

Open Space policies call for the protection and preservation of view corridors and open space views from key roadways, including Tiburon Boulevard, Trestle Glen Boulevard, and Paradise Drive. These roadways are identified on Figure OS-2.

Figure OS-2 Ridgelines and Scenic Characteristics

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10.4 Parks and Recreation

The Town owns and operates twelve parks as well as a multi-use path and the landscaped medians throughout Tiburon. The parks include community parks, mini-parks, and specialty facilities, defined as follows:

Community parks are developed primarily to meet the recreational needs of a large portion of the town. Community parks range in size according to their purpose and often feature community facilities or natural resources. In Tiburon, the Richardson Bay Lineal Park offers a multi-use path and amenities along the bay waterfront, including an athletic field at McKegney Green, a playground at South of Knoll Park, historical interpretation signage along the Old Rail Trail, a wildflower exhibition garden at Blackie’s Pasture, and a bronze, life-size statue of “Blackie,” a retired U.S. Calvary horse that for 28 years grazed in the pasture that now bears his name.

Mini-parks primarily serve a small portion within the town, usually within one-half radius of the park. Mini-parks are generally oriented toward the recreational needs of children and youth. In Tiburon, the Cypress Hollow Park provides playground equipment while the Bel Aire Play Area is an unimproved green area for residents of the Bel Aire neighborhood.

Specialty facilities primarily provide for specific recreational activities, such as the Teather Park Tennis Courts in Tiburon.

In addition to the Town’s parks, two regional parks are located within the planning area in unincorporated Marin County, which are maintained by the Marin County Parks and Open Space Department. The Paradise Beach Park provides a swimming area, kayak and canoe launch, and fishing pier as well as spacious lawns for picnicking and enjoying views across the water to the East Bay. The Tiburon Uplands Nature Preserve offers a hiking loop with access to the Old St. Hilary’s Open Space Preserve and panoramic Bay views.

Table OS-2 provides a summary of the existing parks in the Tiburon planning area, totaling 94.1 acres of parkland. The Town currently manages approximately 56.7 acres of parkland, which represents approximately 6.3 acres of Town parkland per 1,000 residents based on the 2010 Census population count.

Table OS-2: Parks in the Planning Area

PARK NAME	TYPE	ACREAGE
Richardson Bay Lineal Park	Community Park	
<i>Blackie’s Pasture</i>	Community Park	15.5
<i>McKegney Green</i>	Community Park	11.6
<i>South of Knoll Park and Playground</i>	Community Park	0.16
<i>Multi-Use Path</i>	Community Park	0.10
<i>Cypress Grove Garden Park</i>	Community Park	0.1

PARK NAME	TYPE	ACREAGE
Pt. Tiburon Shoreline Park	Community Park	2.3
<i>Elephant Rock Fishing Pier</i>	Community Park	--
Reed Park	Community Park	1.8
Belveron Mini Park	Mini-Park	0.5
Bel Aire Play Area	Mini-Park	0.17
Cypress Hollow Park	Mini-Park	0.5
Zelinsky Park	Mini-Park	1.5
Teather Park Tennis Courts	Specialty Park	1.5
Paradise Beach Park	Regional Park	18.6
Tiburon Uplands Nature Preserve	Regional Park	18.8
TOTAL		94.1

Angel Island

In addition to the parks on the Tiburon Peninsula, 726 of the 740 acres of Angel Island State Park are within the incorporated Town of Tiburon; the remaining 14 acres are in the City and County of San Francisco. The historic park offers peninsula residents and visitors opportunities for hiking, biking, camping, and boating. The Ranch provides popular youth summer camps on Angel Island.

Recreational Facilities and Programs

The Town manages recreational programs and facilities through a joint powers agreement with the City of Belvedere. Programs are provided by The Ranch, which is governed by a nine-member board. The Ranch offers over 500 classes each year and registers over 4,800 participants.

The Ranch provides classes and activities for toddlers through older adults, including after-school sports, summer camps, fitness and specialty programming, and special events. The organization also manages facility rentals and key access for six tennis/pickleball courts at three locations.

In addition to public facilities, the Tiburon planning area is home to private facilities that require membership for access and use, including the Corinthian Yacht Club, the Tiburon Peninsula Club, the Belvedere Tennis Club, and the Tiburon Yacht Club/Paradise Cay Yacht Harbor. These facilities provide boat slips, tennis courts, swimming pools, and a fitness center.

10.5 Goals, Policies, and Programs

OPEN SPACE PRESERVATION

Goal OS-A

Protect, preserve, and enhance the Town’s unique open space and natural beauty for its recreational and environmental benefits.

Goal OS-B

Permanently preserve as much open space as possible to protect shorelines, open water, wetlands, significant ridgelines, streams, drainageways, riparian corridors, steep slopes, rock outcroppings, special status species and their habitat, woodlands, cultural and historic resources, and areas of visual importance, such as views of and views from open space.

Goal OS-C

Permanently protect, to the maximum extent feasible, the unique open space character of the Town which is attributable to its large amounts of undeveloped land and open water.

Goal OS-D

Permanently protect as conservation areas, to the maximum extent feasible, all lands and other areas in the public trust.

Goal OS-E

Protect open space for its visual values, habitat, and native vegetation and minimize impacts of any additional development.

Policy OS-1 Open Space Preservation

Strive to permanently preserve through setbacks, dedication, purchase, easement, or other appropriate means exceptional structures, sites, open space, and sensitive environmental resources. Encourage the permanent protection of open space through conveyance of fee title to an appropriate government agency or land trust; by easement; deed restriction; or other appropriate mechanism acceptable to the Town.

Policy OS-2 Open Space Dedication

When considering whether open space land should be dedicated to the Town or other public entity, weigh the benefits to the community of public ownership against the costs of management efforts and other liabilities associated with owning the land.

Policy OS-3 Public Access

Strive to secure public access to those portions of open space land most appropriate for public use through trail easements that connect to other public trails or through other appropriate legally permissible mechanisms.

Policy OS-4 Retention of Publicly Owned Open Space

Permanently protect public or private open space. Publicly owned open space land should not be sold and should only be traded in exchange for open space which provides improved trail connections, resource protection, or other public benefits.

Policy OS-5 Contiguous Open Space Dedication

Land that is proposed for preservation as permanent open space shall typically be contiguous to existing open space and/or open space areas that may in the future be permanently preserved.

Policy OS-6 Development Review

Ensure that new development respects the ecological, visual, and safety benefits of hillsides, ridgelines, and other natural areas that serve as habitat and erosion protection as well as visual backdrops to the community. Use the development review process to retain the visual character and environmental attributes of the planning area.

Program OS-a Environmental Constraints Assessment

Require applicants to demonstrate that proposals for development minimize environmental impacts and comply with the General Plan and applicable regulations, ordinances, and guidelines. Require preparation of an assessment of environmental constraints that addresses applicable topics identified by California Environmental Quality Act and open space characteristics, including those associated with aesthetics, biological resources, and cultural and tribal cultural resources, prior to the submittal of Precise Development Plan applications for large undeveloped parcels.

Program OS-b Review Development Applications within Sphere of Influence

Review development applications that are submitted to the County and that are within the Town's sphere of influence and areas of interest in order to encourage conformance with Town policies, including minimizing the visual impact of development on surrounding hills visible from the Town.

Program OS-c Environmental Assessment

Require an environmental assessment for development proposed on sites that may contain sensitive biological resources, including wetlands, occurrences of special-status species and sensitive natural communities, native wildlife nurseries and nesting locations, and native wildlife movement corridors. The assessment shall be conducted by a qualified professional to determine the presence, potential presence, or absence of any sensitive resources which could be affected by proposed development, shall provide an assessment of the potential impacts, and shall define measures to avoid significant adverse impacts to the resource. The development project shall be required to implement feasible measures to avoid or, if avoidance is not feasible, reduce significant adverse impacts.

Policy OS-7 Cluster Development

Cluster lots in new subdivision design to maximize the preservation of open space to the greatest extent feasible. Where the Town determines that a project would better conform to the goals and policies of the General Plan, "estate lot" type development (i.e., large homes on large lots) may be considered. Easement, deed restriction, or other appropriate mechanism acceptable to the Town shall be used to preserve open space within common areas or individual lots.

Policy OS-8 Greenbelt Separators

Require undeveloped greenbelts to separate development areas or to link open space areas where appropriate.

Policy OS-9 Ridgeline Protection

Protection of predominantly undeveloped ridgelines shall have the highest priority in balancing open space interests with development interests. Undeveloped ridgelines have overriding visual significance to the Town.

Policy OS-10 Setbacks from Tiburon Ridge

Development and the construction of buildings and yard improvements associated with development, including landscaping and trees, shall be set back from either side of Tiburon Ridge as established in Figure OS-2:

- 1) a minimum of 150 horizontal feet, and
- 2) a minimum of 50 vertical feet, measured from the highest point of the roofline of a structure or tree.

If strict application of these requirements prevents all reasonable use of the property, encroachment into the setbacks may be allowed provided that structures are limited to a maximum 15 feet in height, as defined by the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance, and provided that both horizontal and vertical encroachment are minimized.

Program OS-d Ridgeline and Hillside Development Regulations

Amend the Zoning Ordinance to incorporate the required setbacks from Significant Ridgelines contained in Policies OS-10 and OS-11, limitations on development of steep slopes in Policy OS-13, and the objective hillside development standards from the Design Guidelines for Hillside Dwellings.

Policy OS-11 Setbacks from Significant Ridgelines

Development shall be set back from Significant Ridgelines as established in Figure OS-2. Setbacks shall be based on an evaluation of the following characteristics: local and regional visual prominence, ability to connect to existing or potential open space, potential to act as a neighborhood separator, views of and views from, length, height, presence of trees, presence of unusual physical characteristics, highly visible open slopes, significant vegetation, sensitive habitat, special silhouette or back-drop features, difficulty of developing or accessing, and integrity of the ridgeline land form.

In evaluating Significant Ridgelines for protection, all characteristics identified in Policy OS-11 should not be judged equally. Significant Ridgelines that have a high visual prominence, have the potential to connect to the Tiburon Ridge Trail, or have a distinct ridgeline land form, such as those found at the eastern terminus of the Tiburon Ridge, should be afforded greater protection than those that have low visibility, do not connect to the Tiburon Ridge, or do not have distinct ridgeline land forms.

If strict application of these requirements prevents all reasonable use of the property, encroachment into the setbacks may be allowed provided that structures are limited to a maximum 15 feet in height, as defined by the Tiburon Zoning Ordinance, and provided that both horizontal and vertical encroachment are minimized.

Policy OS-12 Roads and Utilities Crossing Ridgelines

Roads and utilities constructed along or across the Tiburon Ridge or Significant Ridgelines as established in Figure OS-2 shall be strongly discouraged. If no other vehicular access is viable, crossing of ridges shall be minimized and shall be as near to perpendicular to the ridgeline as possible.

Policy OS-13 Development on Steep Slopes

Strongly discourage development on slopes exceeding 40%.

Policy OS-14 Grading

Keep grading to a minimum to the maximum extent possible and make every effort to retain the natural features of the land including ridges, rolling landforms, knolls, vegetation, trees, rock outcroppings, and water courses.

Policy OS-15 Landslide Mitigation

Avoid site grading that is not required by the Town’s Landslide Mitigation Policy to the maximum extent feasible to retain natural landforms.

Program OS-e **Hillside Stabilization**

Where hillslope stabilization is proposed as part of a development proposal, or wherever such stabilization is required by the Town to protect public safety, require the project to evaluate all slope repair-related modifications such as the secondary impacts of subsurface drainage on site and watershed ecological communities, including special-status species, sensitive natural communities, and wetlands. In the event impacts are likely, modifications to the proposed project shall be considered. In the event avoidance and project modification are infeasible, appropriate on- or off-site habitat mitigation shall be required prior to project approval, as mandated by the State and federal regulatory agencies.

Policy OS-16 Restoration after Grading

Restore natural vegetation and habitat to the maximum extent feasible where grading is required to stabilize areas of geologic instability.

Policy OS-17 Minimize Grading Impacts

Minimize the impact of grading on adjacent properties, water quality, and air quality.

Policy OS-18 Graded Slopes

Slopes created by grading shall be at a slope angle determined to have long-term stability for the materials being used, not exceeding 30 percent wherever possible. Final contours and slopes shall reflect natural land features, including natural vegetation.

Policy OS-19 Retaining Walls

The visual impact of retaining walls and similar engineering elements shall be reduced in size and scope to the maximum extent feasible by minimizing their use unless necessary as a foundation to reduce above-grade building mass and by requiring appropriate visual screening.

Policy OS-20 View Preservation

Identify and preserve principal vistas, view points, and view corridors affected by development to the extent feasible.

Policy OS-21 Protect Vistas from Roadways

Protect open space views from key roadways, including Tiburon Boulevard, Trestle Glen Boulevard, and Paradise Drive, through the permitting process.

Policy OS-22 Views from Open Space

Encourage development in areas where it least interferes with views of and views from open space to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy OS-23 Water Views

Protect visual access to the bayfront and scenic vistas of water and distinct shorelines through land use and development review procedures to the greatest extent feasible.

OPEN SPACE MANAGEMENT

Goal OS-F

Manage the Town’s open spaces for the benefit of the entire community.

Policy OS-24 Use of Public Open Space

Encourage conservation and educational uses of public open space lands. Authorize or provide conservation and education facilities, including nature trails, interpretive exhibits, day camps, nature study areas and other related facilities in areas where the impacts on the natural environment will be minimal.

Program OS-f **Improve Trail Signage**

Provide improved trail signage to the public open space, including information on trail safety and identifying/protecting habitat for endangered species.

Program OS-g **Trail Connection to Downtown**

Evaluate the potential for an off-road trail connection between the Town’s public open space and Downtown/Tiburon Boulevard, securing trail easements over private property where possible.

Policy OS-25 Open Space Partnerships

Encourage and seek agreements with other governmental jurisdictions such as County, State, Federal and other agencies and non-profit organizations for funding, acquisition, maintenance, and use of open space areas.

Policy OS-26 Cooperation with Private Organizations and Individuals

Encourage and promote cooperation and participation of private groups, organizations, and individuals in the planning, operation, and preservation of open space lands as deemed necessary.

Policy OS-27 Open Space Coordination

Coordinate the use of open space lands with other public and quasi-public lands that are contiguous or otherwise inter-related to Town open space where desirable.

Policy OS-28 Restoration and Enhancement

Engage in or authorize landscape restoration and/or enhancement programs where the natural landscape has been altered or degraded and when funding and resources allow on Town open space land.

Program OS-h **Open Space Management Plan**

Implement the adopted Open Space Management Plan that identifies maintenance projects and funding sources.

Policy OS-29 Native Plants

Encourage the use of native plants for landscaping and discourage the planting of invasive, exotic species

Policy OS-30 Invasive Species

Require the removal of invasive, exotic species, such as broom and pampas grass, as a condition of approval for new developments.

Program OS-i **Invasive Species**

Encourage homeowners' associations to disseminate information about the harmful effects of invasive exotic species in landscaping.

Policy OS-31 Ongoing Maintenance of Private Property

Require new developments to ensure ongoing removal of invasive, exotic species through homeowners' associations, covenants, conditions, and restrictions (CC&Rs), or other appropriate mechanisms.

PARKS AND RECREATION

Goal OS-G

Provide sufficient land and facilities for a balanced system of parks and recreation opportunities that serve all ages, abilities, and income levels.

Goal OS-H

Anticipate population growth and to plan for and provide funds for the acquisition of adequate lands or installation of adequate facilities to address future parks and recreation needs of the community.

Policy OS-32 Maintain Sufficient Park Facilities

Maintain sufficient park land and recreational facilities over time.

Program OS-j Coordinate Park and Recreation Planning

Work with the Belvedere-Tiburon Recreation Department and the City of Belvedere to consider the long- and short-term need for additional parklands, sporting facilities, picnic facilities, play areas, or programs to meet the community's recreational programming and facilities needs.

Program OS-k Future Recreation Facilities

Consider development of a community pool, community center/gymnasium, a dog park, and bocce courts if sites and funding become available. Consider acquisition of the Richardson Bay Sanitary District site for recreational use if it becomes available.

Policy OS-33 Parkland Dedication

Continue to require new parkland dedication and/or collection of in-lieu fees during the development review process. A ratio of 5.0 acres of park land per 1,000 persons is established for the Planning Area pursuant to the Quimby Act.

Policy OS-34 Use of Park Funds

Continue to use park funds and any future in-lieu fees for improvement of existing and future parks and for parkland acquisition purposes.

Policy OS-35 Pursue Outside Funding

Pursue federal, state, county, and other funds to assist in the maintenance, improvement, and acquisition of existing and/or future park facilities.

Policy OS-36 Park Maintenance

Strive to adequately fund the ongoing maintenance of the Town's park and recreation facilities.

Policy OS-37 Blackie's Pasture

Retain the area known as Blackie's Pasture for passive, informal recreational use, including uses such as picnicking, hiking, wildlife watching, and open play areas which require minimal improvements such as pathways, benches, picnic tables, or restrooms. The quality and preservation of the environment should be the focus of the recreational experience.

Policy OS-38 Water Recreation

Maintain, and enhance where practical, existing water recreation opportunities.

Program OS-l Small Watercraft Launch

Consider locations and funding for creation of a launch facility for small watercraft (e.g., kayaks and paddleboards), possibly in the Downtown area.

Policy OS-39 Public Shoreline Access

Encourage additional public shoreline access from publicly accessible land consistent with the Bay Conservation and Development Commission's (BCDC) San Francisco Bay Plan, especially in areas where none currently exists.

Program OS-m **Richardson Bay Linear Park**

Prepare a framework or decision-making criteria for future improvements to the Richardson Bay Linear Park.

Policy OS-40 Public Trails

Continue to enhance the network of public trails within the Tiburon Planning Area, including connections between and to public trails.

Program OS-n **Trail Easements**

Evaluate development applications for the existence and potential creation of easements and/or trails that connect or continue to allow public access to shoreline, recreation, and open space areas.

Policy OS-41 Recreational Amenities

Encourage public convenience facilities such as restrooms, bicycle racks, drinking fountains, and trash receptacles which may be provided by the State of California, the Town of Tiburon, and/or the local community.

Policy OS-42 Angel Island

Maintain a positive, mutually beneficial working relationship with the California Department of Parks and Recreation and Angel Island administration to ensure that Angel Island remains a unique state resource and that the unique character of Downtown Tiburon is protected.

Policy OS-43 Recreation Programs

Continue to work cooperatively with the Belvedere/Tiburon Joint Recreation Committee to administer and operate recreation programs and facilities for the residents of Belvedere and Tiburon.

Policy OS-44 Equal Access to Recreation Programs

Ensure recreation programming is responsive to and serves the needs, interests, and desires of the entire community, including those of different ages, abilities, and income levels.

Program OS-o **Financial Assistance for Recreation Programs**

Explore ways of providing financial support to allow full access to recreation programs by residents of need.