

## OPEN SPACE AND CONSERVATION PLANNING OVERVIEW

### A. INTRODUCTION

The preparation of the Open Space and Conservation Element was divided into four phases, each phase building upon the findings of the previous phase. During each phase, city staff worked in conjunction with interested members of the community through a series of public meetings and with consultants to ensure that the element contains an appropriate plan with valid and reasonable goals, objectives, policies, recommendations and implementation programs.

The first phase of the work involved research by consultant teams and planning division staff on numerous issues including physical and environmental characteristics of remaining open space areas within the city, community input on topics of open space and recreational land, hillside development standards, landscaping standards, significant biological resources, population and demographic trends, history of subdivision density and history of City acquisition of open space land.

This assessment provided a firm basis for a series of community workshops, City Council and Planning Commission study sessions and technical and community task

force review meetings, which formed the second phase of the process. The input received from this portion of the process provided valuable information that was included in the formulation of the goals, objectives, policies and implementation program of this element.

The third phase of the work involved the refinement of the preferred concepts and the development of an implementation program reflective of the element's goals, objectives and policies. Through public hearing process on the draft element, comments from the Environmental and Planning Board, Planning Commission, applicable County, State and Federal agencies, regional planning organizations and the public was solicited during this phase. Subsequent refinements were made to the element that incorporate input received during the public hearing process. The purpose of refining the element is to ensure that the Open Space and Conservation Element is realistic, that it can be implemented within the capabilities of the City and other responsible public agencies and that it furthers the goals and policies of the community as they are expressed in the General Plan.

The fourth phase of the work involved public hearings before Planning Commission and City Council, final revisions based on input thus received and adoption of the element. Implementation of the element will be an ongoing process throughout the identified planning period of the document.

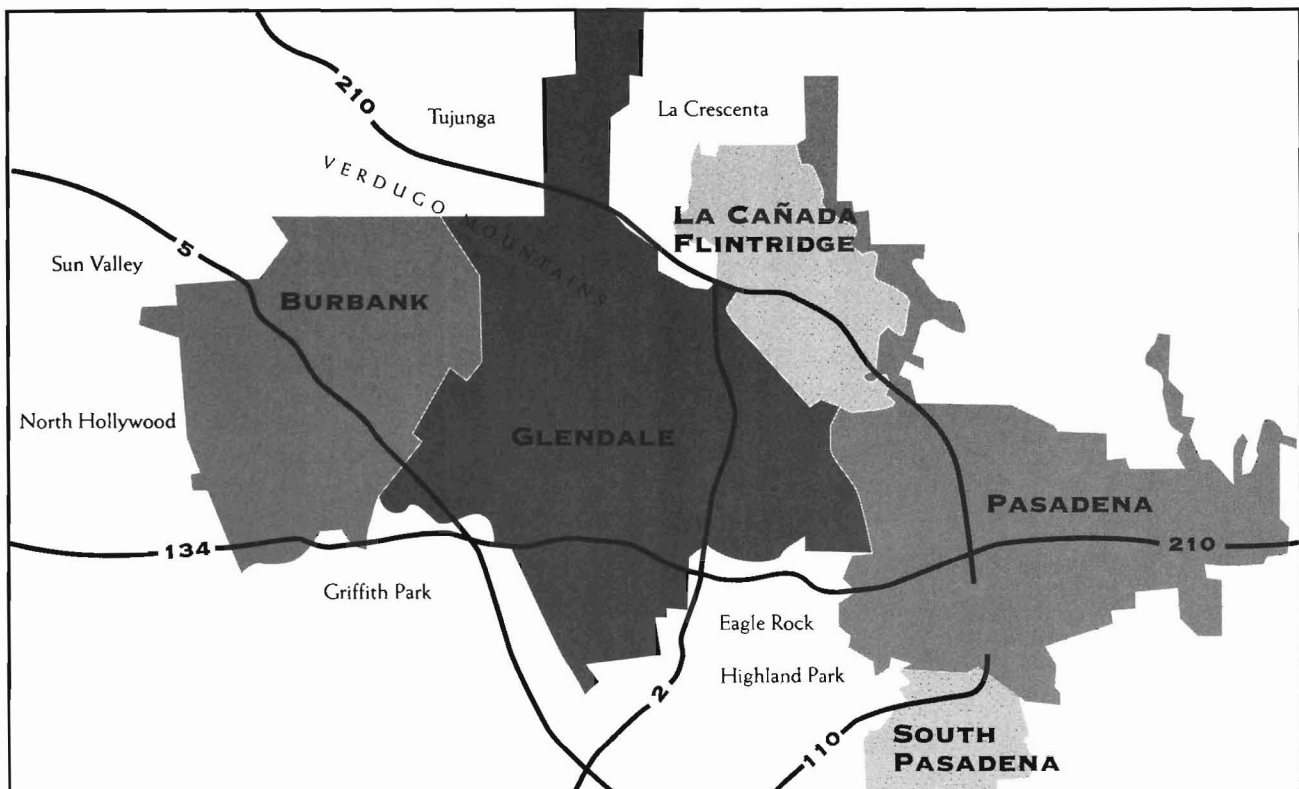
## **B. REGIONAL PLANNING CONTEXT AND LOCAL CONDITIONS**

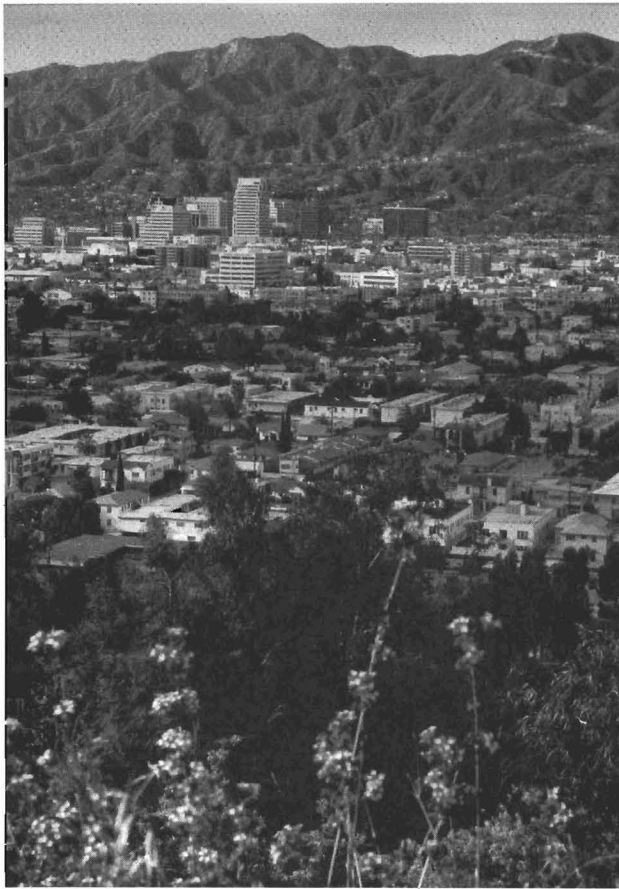
Glendale is bordered on the north by the San Gabriel Mountains, on the northwest by the Verdugo Mountains and on the east by the San Rafael Hills. See Map 3-1 for the regional location of Glendale. To the southwest, just beyond the city boundary, are the Santa Monica Mountains as they reach their eastern most point in Griffith Park. At the southeast edge of the city are the Repetto Hills. Although Glendale abuts the base of the San Gabriel Mountains and is intersected at three points by the San Rafael Hills, the Verdugo Mountains and the Repetto Hills, most land within the city exhibits a very gentle slope with elevations ranging from a low of 420 feet to a high of 4,774 feet above sea level. However, the city does include terrain that exhibits slopes in ex-

cess of 50 percent. Because Glendale, and its surrounding cities of Los Angeles, Burbank, La Canada Flintridge and Pasadena are virtually built out, the hillside areas within the city have been the focus of development pressure for the construction of single family homes during the past 20 years. Only 13 percent of the land in the city is vacant, and 57 percent of this is located in hillside areas where slopes exceed 50 percent, according to Planning Division records. These areas in Glendale, as well as in the surrounding communities, will continue to come under consideration for development in the future as the very small amount of remaining flat land in the core of the Los Angeles metropolitan area is developed for single family use.

Glendale is located between the extreme eastern edge of the San Fernando Valley and the western edge of the San Gabriel Valley, and enjoys a climate similar to most other portions of the valleys. The variance in climate is moderate with warm, dry summers. Precipitation usually occurs in the winter and early spring months. The average annual rainfall is approximately 17 inches. Sun shine is abundant during the summer and fall months. Temperatures range from a mean minimum of 51 degrees to a mean maximum of 77 degrees. Prevailing winds are from the southwest.

**MAP 3-1 REGIONAL LOCATION OF THE CITY OF GLENDALE**





*View of Downtown Glendale and the Verdugo Mountains as seen from Adams Hill*

The City of Glendale is strongly affected by its location near the core of the Los Angeles metropolitan area. A portion of the labor force comes from outside the city, and a portion of the City's population is employed outside the city. Commercial, industrial and retail business in Glendale is dependent upon inter- and intra-community exchange. Recreational and housing demands in the city follow the same inter/intra community exchange pattern found in the commercial sector of the community. Residential uses occupy 33 percent of the city's land area. Expansion of City boundaries may occur if existing unincorporated communities such as portions of La Crescenta and Montrose seek annexation. However, the major portion of new growth will occur through regeneration of previously developed land.

Recent long range planning goals for the metropolitan Los Angeles area include the reintroduction of a mass transit system using light rail, commuter rail and shuttle bus services. After nearly 30 years of reliance on the private automobile and to a lesser extent the auto bus, congestion and air pollution are serious obstacles to further development, a healthy economy and the quality of

life most individuals associate with the region. Glendale is fortunate to be located on one of the first commuter rail lines in the metropolitan area. Morning and evening rush hour trains currently provide service to and from Los Angeles, Moorpark and Santa Clarita with stops in Glendale. As familiarity with the new rail system grows and service, schedules and costs become more attractive, Glendale should benefit from its geographically central location and its relationship to the commuter rail line. New business growth and increased demand for regeneration of developed areas may bring increased pressure for residential development throughout the city. These factors will increase demand for the utilization of natural and environmental resources and development pressure in hillside, open space and conservation areas may increase. Therefore, thoughtful planning of open space and conservation areas will ensure that sufficient natural, environmental and aesthetic resources remain for future generations.

### **C. COMMUNITY SETTING**

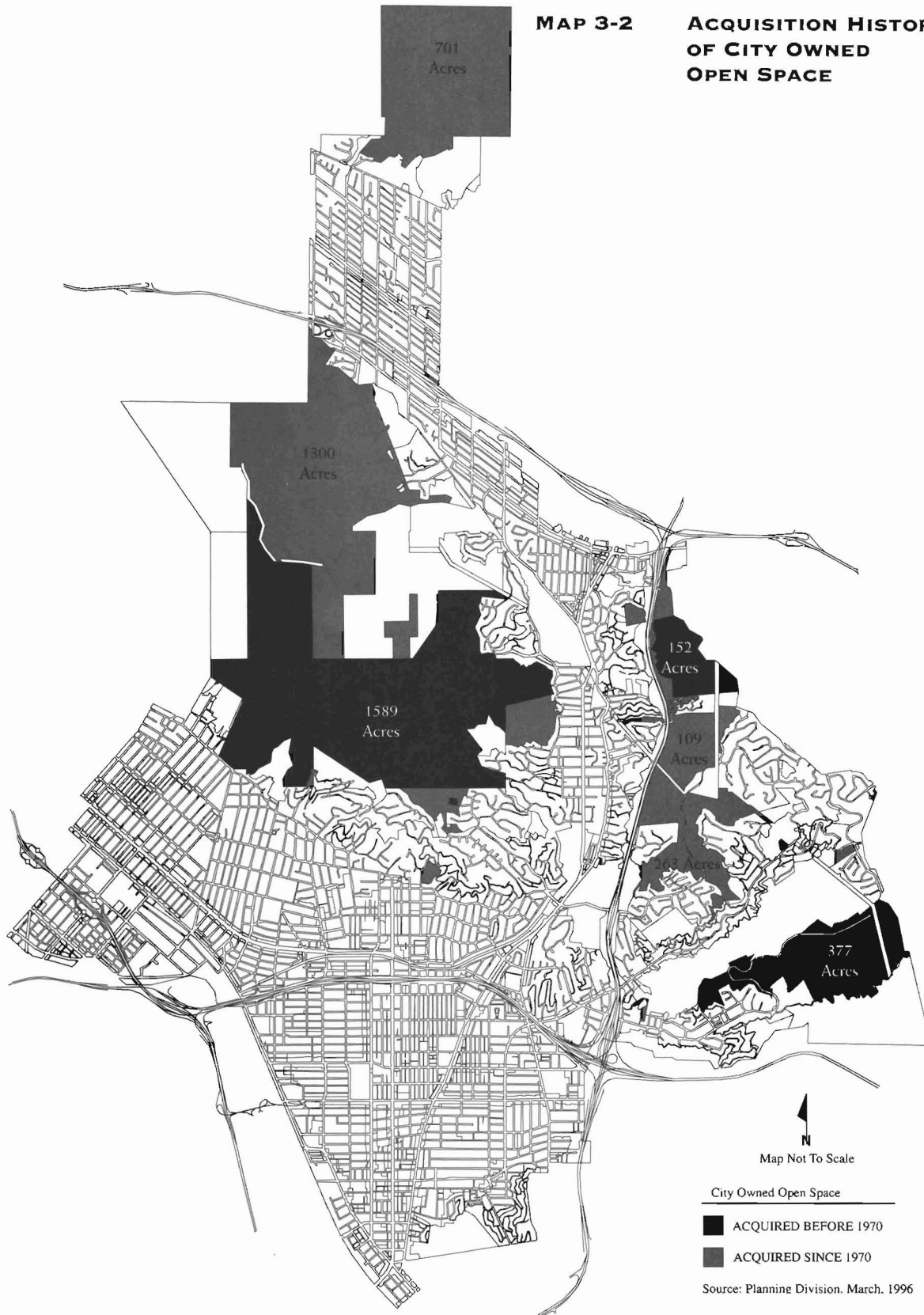
The Land Use Element of Glendale's Comprehensive General Plan, most recently revised in 1986 and again in 1991, predicted and planned for a moderate growth rate.<sup>4</sup> It also anticipated a development process that would improve, rehabilitate and revitalize urban areas. This development was to be supplemented by moderate growth in the lower sections of major hillsides. This scenario essentially has been realized. However, Glendale experienced a greater increase in population and development pressure than anticipated during the late 1980s, which led to a revision again in 1991 which has emphasized the importance of the city's remaining natural resources.

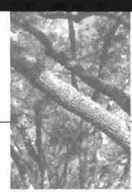
Among the by-products of the City's growth are the assembly, demarcation and definition of open space and conservation areas. The inventory of land dedicated to these purposes has increased from 2,524 acres to 5,860 acres, an increase of more than 75 percent since the 1990 Open Space, Recreation and Conservation Element was prepared in 1972, as shown in Map 3-2, Acquisition History. These resources are divided among City-owned open space, open space created through subdivision conditions, sensitive site design and open space owned by other public agencies and utility companies and constitute a substantial and significant percentage of the City's total land area.

The accumulation of open space generates questions about how it is to be used. Also, because the pattern of growth has surrounded the boundaries of this major environmental resource, an increased pressure for devel-

**MAP 3-2**

**ACQUISITION HISTORY  
OF CITY OWNED  
OPEN SPACE**





opment of privately owned hillside land, has also generated questions about the protection, maintenance and disposition of this important community asset. The purpose of this plan is to determine and define the character of this natural resource and to develop goals, objectives, policies and recommendations for the conservation and management of open space land and the resources it contains.

#### **D. ISSUES AND OPPORTUNITIES**

Part of this determination and planning process evolves from the diverse nature of Glendale's development. The juxtaposition of industrial, intensive commercial, high-density residential, suburban and open space lands requires decisions regarding the effect each land use classification has on the others. This is especially true for those uses that abut open space and conservation areas. The activity associated with a residential development, for example, has obvious and definite impacts on the viability and integrity of an adjacent open space area. Conversely, given the susceptibility of natural open space to fire, flood, mud slide and other natural occurrences, specific steps need to be taken to insulate and protect nearby residential areas from these hazards. Effective planning must acknowledge conflicting uses and seek a workable balance between them. Further, it must find a way to protect and sustain those resources most essential to the City's existence and identity. This involves detailed analysis of various areas, neighborhoods, environmental conditions and an evaluation of natural resources as internal and external changes and adjustments effect sensitive natural habitats, risk zones, aesthetic and recreational opportunities.

Finally, to understand more subtle forms of internal change and to adjust to the conditions that arise from them, planning and policy must deal with the specific needs of a diverse population. Resolving the disposition of environmental resources means dealing with resident populations that are becoming specialized communities of interest. To residents living in multi-family dwellings, for example, the question of access to open space areas is an important one. For future City residents, the prudent conservation and management of natural resources will ensure that choices and opportunities remain to meet the needs of the years to come. The decreasing availability of land and natural resources and the increasing emphasis on internal reshaping and quality of life constitutes the issue and the challenge for open space and conservation planning.

#### **E. POLICIES, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Meeting the challenges of growth, diversity, conservation and management of resources requires the formation of basic policy. The assortment of goals and objectives necessary to establish a framework for evaluating, planning and problem solving require policies that unify and support the strategies and programs which will result. Such policies amount to a declaration of intent. They are, by definition, those positions that encompass all decisions and activities inherent in the management of natural resources in the City of Glendale. All statements included in this element, including the implementation of its goals, should be considered in light of the policies established by this element.

##### **POLICIES**

The policies discussed here establish the character and scope of the goals and objectives that comprise the Open Space and Conservation Element. The underlying assumptions and implementation of environmental management projects and programs require a meaningful focus and a conceptual consistency which not only shapes individual decisions but also ensures a reasonable amount of flexibility and choice.

The fundamental purpose of this element as required by state law, is recognizing the importance of the City's natural resources and providing a means for their management. Within this context, this element is based on the balance of environmental quality and design. No single project should be undertaken, no program developed, without an understanding of shared community policy and the range of actions thus represented.

**Policy 1: Natural resources, including open spaces, biological habitats and native plant communities should be maintained and, where necessary, restored.**

Natural resources contribute to the quality of community life by improving the environment and providing visual character and identity for the city.

**Policy 2: The City shall provide a variety of outdoor recreational opportunities to all residents.**

Opportunity and access are consistent with the needs of an increasingly diverse population for a variety of recreational experiences.

**Policy 3: Cultural, historical, archaeological and paleontological structures and sites are essential to community life and identity and should be recognized and maintained.**

This policy recognizes the value and contribution to



the City that its heritage makes, providing both a bridge to the past and a sense of place through the judicious management of cultural and natural resources.

**Policy 4:** Natural and man made aesthetic features should be recognized and identified as important natural resources to the community that require proper management.

The contribution of aesthetics and design to environmental quality is an important principle. Such community enhancement can be achieved through preservation of natural or scenic resources and through the recognition of urban form and the context in which the built environment has evolved.

**Policy 5:** Proper management of environmental resources, especially natural resources, can assist in reducing hazards to the life and property of the City's residents and should be considered in project planning.

Natural resource areas, open spaces, recreational and other limited development areas used as buffer zones can significantly reduce risk of damage or injury from a variety of naturally occurring environmental conditions such as fire, flood or earthquake. This strategy supplements the plans and programs undertaken in response to Safety and Seismic Safety Element objectives.

**Policy 6:** Opportunities shall be provided for residents to be involved in the development of community environmental policy and programs to the maximum extent possible.

Successful implementation of this policy entails a commitment to public participation in the decision-making process. Environmental management is but one area where citizen input should be sought and encouraged in the development of City goals, policies and objectives.

**Policy 7:** Projects proposed by public agencies, special districts and private developers should demonstrate compliance with the policies, goals and objectives of this element prior to proceeding.

Projects inconsistent with this element should be approved only when it is demonstrated that public benefit would result from such approval and the appropriate amendments to the element are effectuated.

**Policy 8:** Important open space and conservation resources should be protected and preserved through acquisition, development agreements, easements, development exactions and other regulatory strategies.

Ridgelines, canyon and stream areas and ecological habitats identified as significant must be protected in accordance with State law in order to meet the policies, goals and objectives of this element. Future generations need to have aesthetic, ecological and open space re-

sources available to them.

**Policy 9:** Specific issues that arise as a result of Open Space and Conservation Element policies, goals and objectives require a methodical approach to their resolution.

Identified areas of concern should be addressed through a combination of specific needs assessment, master planning, preservation or maintenance strategies.

**Policy 10:** Public and private funding, grants, loans, donations, fees and other forms of financial support shall be actively sought to realize community goals and objectives and all programs.

Implicit in the development of policies, goals and objectives in this document is the commitment to seek appropriate funding to realize programs and projects. This process is a comprehensive one that involves the identification of issues and opportunities, the development of strategies, establishing priorities for acquisition, development and improvement and seeking funding.

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The realization of City policies and the recognition of significant community issues are embodied in the goals and related objectives discussed below. These position statements direct decisions and choices designed to deal with specific needs or issues. They are grouped under general topic headings and contain a summarized discussion of findings.

The accumulation of open space is a public asset and is a result of City policy aimed at acquiring this significant resource for the environmental, educational, recreational and conservation benefits it provides. This policy has been implemented in many ways over many years. Initially, it was implemented through grants and donations and, later, as an extension of the 1990 Open Space, Conservation and Recreation Element. Glendale's open space acquisition efforts have been very successful in acquiring important open space areas. Only a few identified properties and linkages between major holdings need to be acquired in order to complete the open space system. The present inventory of undeveloped land in the City is comprised of approximately 7,400 acres, of which approximately 5,860 acres (79%) is held in public ownership (City, County, other cities and public utilities). The remaining 1540 acres is privately owned. Public ownership of Glendale's open space includes City of Glendale, Los Angeles County, City of Burbank, Southern California Edison and other agencies. The future challenge for open space management will be completing the acquisition program and managing these resources through preservation and maintenance and by providing appropriate



access to these areas. The following open space and conservation goals and objectives are designed to meet this challenge.

**Goal 1: Continue identification, acquisition and protection of open space land vital to ensure enhancement of the quality of life within the city.**

Objective 1: Prioritize acquisition of open space land according to its environmental sensitivity, ecological, historic or cultural value, impact on surrounding areas, development potential, traffic impacts and its uniqueness or relationship to other open space areas.

Objective 2: Allocate funding for acquisitions through the budgetary process.

Objective 3: Develop a fee structure for open space acquisition and management in connection with the development review process.

Objective 4: Where acquisition of open space land is impractical, ensure that subsequent development incorporates desirable configurations of open space through careful environmental analysis, site planning and other strategies.

Objective 5: During the environmental and development review processes, on- and off-site impacts of development on open space and related biological and geological systems should be evaluated. Mitigation measures should be applied to alleviate specific impacts through site planning and design modifications that will protect the integrity of valuable open spaces.

**Goal 2: Protect vital or sensitive open space areas including ridgelines, canyons, streams, geologic formations, watersheds and historic, cultural, aesthetic and ecologically significant areas from the negative impacts of development and urbanization.**

Objective 1: Regulate public access for the protection of sensitive land and habitats and regulate uses in hazard zones.

Objective 2: Provide buffer transition areas between sensitive open space and development.

Objective 3: Continue to apply and monitor open space protection measures as part of the environmental and development review processes.

Objective 4: Provide incentives to defer development that is inconsistent with future acquisition priorities or other objectives of this plan.

Objective 5: Prohibit incompatible recreational activities which may damage sensitive open space areas or be inconsistent with other recreational pursuits.

**Goal 3: Establish a management program for open space that provides for appropriate public access for all segments of the population while recognizing preservation goals.**

Objective 1: Provide for recreational and educational opportunities.

Objective 2: Provide for safe hiking trails that respect the integrity of open space lands.

Objective 3: Coordinate with non-profit organizations to establish docent programs in an effort to provide outdoor educational experiences for the public.

**Goal 4: Develop a program that sustains the quality of Glendale's natural communities.**

Objective 1: Develop a program for the on-going monitoring of those natural resources identified by the California Department of Fish and Game Natural Diversity Data Base and those sensitive habitats identified in the Element's biological assessment report.

Objective 2: Prevent development that jeopardizes or diminishes the integrity and value of native plant and animal communities.

Objective 3: Encourage acquisition of parcels integral to the integrity of the larger ecosystem.

Objective 4: Naturalize, through native revegetation programs, disturbed areas, and prevent the invasion of exotic plant materials.

Objective 5: Encourage the development of landscape plans that incorporate native species in those areas adjoining open space land.

Objective 6: Evaluate and monitor the impact of public access on habitat.

Objective 7: Encourage the continuation of hazard management and safety programs to reduce impacts from wildland fires, floods, mud slides and soil subsidence.

**Goal 5: Preserve prominent ridgelines and slopes in order to protect Glendale's visual resources.**

Objective 1: Identify visually prominent ridgelines and establish regulations to promote their preservation.

Objective 2: Establish standards and design criteria which minimize the visual intrusion/impact of development in hillside areas.

Objective 3: Recognize visual resources as a key element in open space acquisition programs.

**Goal 6: Preserve and protect valuable water and mineral resources.**

Objective 1: Preserve and protect important natural stream channels, particularly those identified as blue-line streams by the California Department of Fish and Game.

Objective 2: Protect percolation areas important to ground water recharge.

Objective 3: Encourage the use of naturalized channels in new development projects.

Objective 4: Recognize the importance of watersheds to groundwater recharge and minimize impermeable surfaces.

Objective 5: Design drainage devices in a manner that is compatible with the natural terrain and environment.

Objective 6: Maintain current prohibition of rock, sand, gravel and mineral extraction in designated open space areas.

**Goal 7: Continue programs which enhance community design and protect environmental resource quality.**

Objective 1: Extend landscape treatments along major arterials, into major activity centers, at major city/neighborhood access points and along parkways and medians to provide aesthetic continuity and solidify open space linkages.

Objective 2: Ensure that the design of community facilities within open space areas is harmonious and integrated with the natural environment.

Objective 3: Continue to implement Glendale's comprehensive streetscape program.

Objective 4: Provide for comprehensive, non-obtrusive signage which identifies and links roads, bikeways, trails and parks, vista points, recreational facilities, historic and cultural sites and scenic drives.

Objective 5: Review and revise hillside development standards to minimize the environmental impacts of new

hillside development and to ensure preservation of important natural resources.

Objective 6: Foster design objectives which ensure development that respects the character of existing neighborhoods and the natural setting.

**Goal 8: Continue efforts directed at the identification, preservation and maintenance of structures or sites with historic or cultural value consistent with the goals of the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive General Plan of the City of Glendale.**

Objective 1: Conduct inventories of buildings and sites to determine historic, cultural, archaeological, architectural and aesthetic value.

Objective 2: Revise and update the Historic Preservation Element of the Comprehensive General Plan of the City of Glendale.

Objective 3: Utilize historic and cultural structures and sites for public use where appropriate.

Objective 4: Encourage adaptive reuse of historic and cultural structures, where appropriate.

Objective 5: Continue programs to improve the aesthetic quality and integrity of residential neighborhoods.

**Goal 9: Develop and integrate a trail system consistent with scenic roadway and bikeway plans as specified in the Circulation and Scenic Highways Element of the Comprehensive General Plan.**

Objective 1: Develop a multi-functional path and trail system in open space areas recognizing natural resource conservation constraints.

Objective 2: Expand the existing hiking trail system, providing for trailheads, trail improvements, rest stops, picnic areas, view areas and path demarcation, paying particular attention to scenic resources, recreational opportunities and the impact of accessways on sensitive habitats. The development of a trail master plan for each mountain range within the City is recommended.

Objective 3: Encourage use and maintenance of trails by recreational, educational and other similar institutions or organizations.

Objective 4: Work with adjacent jurisdictions including the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy to connect hiking and equestrian trails to other local or regional systems.





**Objective 5:** Coordinate, through the Circulation Element, transportation systems to provide access to trailheads and other recreational opportunities.

**Objective 6:** Ensure that private development provides access to open space areas.

**Goal 10: Integrate safety concerns into the management of natural resources including recognition of geologic hazards and flood, fire and seismic risks.**

**Objective 1:** Follow the recommendations of the Seismic Safety Element with particular emphasis on hazard management zones.

**Objective 2:** Consider selective acquisition, clustering, regulation of development rights and other similar mechanisms for creating open space buffers in earthquake risk areas.

**Objective 3:** Follow the recommendations of the Safety Element.

**Objective 4:** Recognize fire risk areas as identified within the Safety Element of the Comprehensive General Plan.

**Objective 5:** Provide for fuel modification zones and their maintenance between open space areas and peripheral development.

**Objective 6:** Minimize fire damage risk through subdivision and building design and proper emergency vehicle access.

**Objective 7:** Develop a fire awareness program including limited or controlled access for adjacent residents and users of wildland areas.

**Objective 8:** Identify and prevent future development encroachment on natural areas subject to flooding or mud slide damage.

**Objective 9:** Continue the existing program of maintaining and improving Glendale's flood control systems.

**Goal 11: Minimize environmental hazards including noise, unhealthful air, water and composite hazards.**

**Objective 1:** Provide adequate buffers from noise sources for open space and recreation users.

**Objective 2:** Adopt an Air Quality Element as part of the Comprehensive General Plan following the requirements of the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD).

**Goal 12: Continue to conserve water resources and provide for the protection and improvement of water quality.**

**Objective 1:** Continue innovative and expanded uses of reclaimed water as an irrigation resource.

**Objective 2:** Continue to promote sewer connections in areas not sewered which feed Glendale's ground water basis.

**Objective 3:** Continue water conservation programs through public awareness efforts and encourage use of drought tolerant landscaping.

**Objective 4:** Adhere to the requirements of the National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System (NPDES) to ensure surface water quality and to minimize the introduction of pollutants into drainage courses.

**Objective 5:** Continue Glendale's hazardous materials collection program to minimize the potential introduction of toxics into groundwater basins and landfills.

**Objective 6:** Continue to monitor, inventory land uses and coordinate with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to avoid ground water pollution and improve groundwater quality with particular emphasis on industrial areas and landfills.

**Goal 13: Ensure maximum public participation and input for all aspects of environmental resource planning and implementation.**

**Objective 1:** Involve concerned community groups in the identification, acquisition and management of natural resource areas, recreational facilities, historic and cultural sites, aesthetics and beautification programs.

**Objective 2:** Facilitate a continuing program of environmental resource presentations, surveys and workshops to educate and inform the public.

