

# Conservation Element | 8



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## DISCUSSION

The San Ysidro Community Plan Conservation Element builds on the General Plan Conservation Element with policies tailored to conditions in San Ysidro. The Conservation Element contains policies on how to meet the City's sustainable development goals in areas that have been identified as suitable for development. Water is identified as a critical issue, as well as the need for urban runoff management techniques. The Community Plan is also responsive to state legislation calling for greenhouse gas emission reductions, to be achieved in part, through coordinated land use and transportation planning, and through more sustainable development practices. The Conservation Element also addresses open space and habitat protection. Finally, the community's location next to the international border and the high volumes of truck traffic associated with the border, present additional environmental challenges and opportunities. For additional conservation related policies cross reference SYCP Element Sections 4.3, 7.2, and GP Conservation Element and RE-C, RE-F.

## GOALS

- A healthy and sustainable community at the border
- Application of the highest possible standards for environmentally sensitive design and sustainable development practices
- Responsible stewardship for open space lands and sensitive resources
- Assured water supply to meet future needs
- Implementation of urban runoff management techniques
- A community-wide urban forest
- Local food generation through community farms and gardens
- Safe and healthy air quality within San Ysidro



## 8.1 SUSTAINABILITY

The City of San Diego's sustainable development strategies seek to improve the region's ecology, economy, and equity while protecting the rights of future generations. These strategies are becoming increasingly important as local, state, and national efforts accelerate to curb global climate change. Citywide climate change policies are found in the General Plan Conservation Element, Section A. The San Ysidro Community Plan provides additional specificity related to water recycling and conservation, and alternative energy generation. The Community Plan also encourages implementation of green building measures, and community farms and gardens.

Climate change impacts in San Diego could result in a hotter and drier climate, water supply shortages, more frequent and intense wildfires, increasingly unhealthy air quality, sea level rise, and threats to the survival of native plants and wildlife species. Although a global issue, the community can help reduce practices that contribute to climate change and devise local plans to adapt to anticipated changes.

Conservation Element policies address: development and use of sustainable energy types, including solar; reuse or recycling of building material; adaptively retrofitting and reusing existing buildings; constructing energy-efficient buildings with healthy and energy-efficient interior environments; creating quality outdoor living spaces; improving recycling programs; water resources management, sustainable local food practices, and other issues.

- 8.1.1 Implement applicable General Plan sustainable development and resource management goals and policies, as discussed in its Conservation Element and the Urban Design Element.
- 8.1.2 Assure that required recycling facilities for buildings with alleys are accessed by the alleys, but do not encourage the alley right-of-way to become the location for the recycling containers. Recycling containers should be located on private property.

- 8.1.3 In residential and mixed-use locations, create quality outdoor spaces that offer protection from excess noise, and are designed to minimize shadow impacts and maximize the positive effects of breezes for natural cooling. See also the **Urban Design Element**.
- 8.1.4 Encourage the use of solar energy systems to supplement or replace traditional building energy systems.

## 8.2 RESOURCE MANAGEMENT & PRESERVATION

San Ysidro has approximately 181 acres (ten percent of the community planning area) designated as open space. The open space areas include the Dairy Mart Ponds in the southwestern portion of San Ysidro, and the steep slopes on the community's eastern boundary. The Dairy Mart Ponds, with approximately 113 acres of wetland habitat, 88 of which are in the San Ysidro community planning area, are one of the community's major natural resources. They are located off of Dairy Mart Road, southwest of I-5.

The steep slopes on the community's eastern boundary are one of San Ysidro's major visual open area resources and dramatically frame the eastern portion of the community. They are immediately adjacent to the open space network in the Otay Mesa Community Plan area. The steep slopes area has been identified as containing unstable soils.

The Tijuana River Valley, immediately to the west of San Ysidro, is another designated open space area. The Tijuana River Valley includes the floodplain extending west of the Tijuana River Levee, Border Field State Park, and the Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve. Located between the cities of Tijuana and San Diego, the river valley provides an open, natural area in an otherwise urban atmosphere. Although not within the San Ysidro Community Plan boundaries, the river valley has a dramatic visual impact on that community, and serves as its major natural resource. The opportunity exists to provide multimodal trail connections to the river valley to the west, and to Otay Mesa to the east.

## MULTIPLE SPECIES CONSERVATION PROGRAM

Some lands within the Dairy Mart Ponds area and the Tijuana River Valley are within the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) and Multi Habitat Planning Area (MHPA). The Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) is a comprehensive habitat conservation planning program for southwestern San Diego County. The MSCP preserves a network of habitat and open space, protecting biodiversity, and enhancing the region's quality of life. The plan is designed to preserve native vegetation and meet the habitat needs of multiple species.

## COASTAL RESOURCES

After the adoption of the MSCP by the San Diego City Council in March 1997, the Local Coastal Program's goals of the Tijuana River Valley Plan Local Coastal Program (LCP) was updated to correspond to the vision for the Tijuana River Valley, as primarily a regional park and natural estuary. The land uses in the Tijuana River Valley focus almost exclusively on long-term restoration, enhancement, and preservation of the natural ecosystem in the area. Figure CE-1 provides the MHPA boundaries and coastal resource area within the San Ysidro community.

- 8.2.1 Implement the Environmentally Sensitive Lands regulations, related to biological resources and steep hillsides, for all new development in the eastern portion of the community. Plan development to minimize grading and relate to the topography and natural features of the San Ysidro Hillsides.
- 8.2.2 Implement the MSCP Adjacency Guidelines through the project review process for properties in proximity to the Dairy Mart Ponds and Tijuana River Valley.
- 8.2.3 Foster local stewardship and develop positive neighborhood awareness of the open space preserve areas with environmental education programs, through local schools, Homeowner's Associations (HOAs), community groups, and other public forums that address the local ecosystem and habitat preservation.

- 8.2.4 Incorporate hands-on learning via neighborhood hikes or other initiatives that present information in a manner that will increase interest in the natural world.
- 8.2.5 Incorporate interpretive information on kiosks and in tour guides that identify historic or open space areas, in order to raise awareness and appreciation of the value of the areas in the community.



*Views of the Dairy Mart Ponds and the Tijuana River Valley.*



## 8.3 AIR QUALITY

Air is shared by all members of a community, and suitable air quality is important in fostering a healthful living and working environment. Maintaining suitable air quality requires continual attentiveness to mitigate or eliminate unfavorable conditions. Air quality, specifically poor air quality due to air pollution, causes harm to humans, animals, plant life, water quality, and visibility. There are many different sources of air pollution, including naturally occurring and man-made sources. In the San Diego region, 80 percent of air pollution is caused by fossil fuel-burning vehicles. Within San Ysidro, the majority of fossil fuel emissions come from vehicles that travel through the Port of Entry, as discussed in the Mobility Element. As expanded active transportation infrastructure is achieved through implementation of the Mobility Element policies, the San Ysidro community will have options for walking, bicycling, and public transit to reduce GHG emissions and improve the air quality as a result of fewer vehicle miles traveled.

- 8.3.1 Encourage enforcement of air quality regulations by the San Diego County Air Pollution Control District (APCD).
- 8.3.2 Implement a pattern of land uses that can be served efficiently by a multimodal transportation system that directly and indirectly minimizes air pollutants.
- 8.3.3 Support the monitoring of particulate pollution at the Port of Entry, and pursue methods of reducing emission, while accommodating the expansion of the Port of Entry activities.
- 8.3.4 Educate businesses and residents on the benefits of alternative modes of transportation, including public transit, walking, bicycling, car and van pooling, and teleworking.
- 8.3.5 Encourage street tree and private tree planting programs throughout the community to increase absorption of carbon dioxide and pollutants.

## 8.4 STREET TREE GUIDELINES

Street tree and private tree planting programs are low cost, low-technology methods for improving the visual landscape and air quality in San Ysidro. As San Ysidro's urban forest grows in size and number, the benefits increase with the growth. These benefits include lower energy consumption, resulting from reduction in the size of the urban heat island; reduced stormwater runoff through absorption of water by the trees; improved air quality, achieved as the trees convert carbon dioxide into oxygen; and an improved pedestrian environment created by providing protection from the heat and glare of the sun. A primary component of the San Ysidro urban forest is the San Ysidro Community Street Tree Plan that can be found in the Appendix.

- 8.4.1 Ensure the overall tree cover and other vegetation throughout San Ysidro is no less than 20% in urban residential areas and 10% in the commercial areas so that the natural landscape is sufficient in mass to provide significant benefits to the City in terms of air and water management.
- 8.4.2 Work with the City's Urban Forestry Division to coordinate the appropriate selection and location of shade-producing trees from the San Ysidro Community Street Tree Plan.
- 8.4.3 Require new development to retain significant and mature trees, where feasible.
- 8.4.4 Support public outreach efforts to educate business owners, residents, and school children on the care of, and environmental benefits of, shade-producing street trees.
- 8.4.5 Plant trees, strategically, to achieve energy savings. Generally, orient tree plantings so that building structures maximize shading and cooling benefits from the canopy spread.
- 8.4.6 Work cooperatively with Caltrans to buffer the community from the freeways with appropriate plant materials, such as the bougainvillea, to create visual separation.

## 8.5 COMMUNITY FARMS & GARDENS

The General Plan encourages the establishment of community farms and gardens as a way to promote sustainability and healthy communities. Local food production is an environmental issue because food that is produced and consumed locally requires less transportation energy. Community gardens offer an opportunity to develop sustainable source of local food within the community.

- 8.5.1 Locate community gardens where there is sufficient demand, appropriate land, and where they will not generate adverse impacts on adjacent uses, either on public or private land.
- 8.5.2 Consider locating community gardens adjacent to school facilities and within village locations. See the Urban Design Element for more details.
- 8.5.3 Provide space in new developments or multifamily developments.
- 8.5.4 Locate a community garden near the Dairy Mart Ponds if possible.
- 8.5.5 Seek small, City-owned sites, not suitable for recreation use, as opportunities for community gardens where individuals can supplement their food supply.
- 8.5.6 Identify commercially-designated lots that may be appropriate for commercial farms, where a business person may create income by selling locally-produced agricultural products.
- 8.5.7 Support urban agriculture endeavors in San Ysidro where consistent with other goals of the Community Plan and the City's General Plan.



*Engage the community in growing food and enhance the urban street with trees and landscaping.*

## 8.6 WATER

Water is provided to San Ysidro by the City of San Diego. The City depends on wholesale water supply by the San Diego County Water Authority (SDCWA). The SDCWA, in turn, obtains most of its imported supply from the Metropolitan Water District (MWD). The City's South Bay Water Reclamation Plant contributes to the water supply by providing local wastewater treatment services and reclaimed water to the South Bay. Its distribution system consists of a pipeline in Dairy Mart Road, which provides recycled water. As part of the Community Plan, a Water Supply Assessment (WSA) from the City of San Diego was prepared as a part of the update process.

- 8.6.1 Promote the expansion of the reclaimed water distribution system to allow greater use of recycled water.
- 8.6.2 Utilize information, tools, and other resources from the City's Water Conservation Program to increase water conservation opportunities.
- 8.6.3 Require new development and redeveloping properties to use water-conserving plant material and techniques to comply with the landscape water budget of the Municipal Code.
- 8.6.4 Require installation of recycled water infrastructure as a part of the development review process.

## 8.7 WATERSHED URBAN RUNOFF MANAGEMENT

Urban runoff is stormwater runoff generated from impervious surfaces associated with urbanization. The runoff picks up pollutants from city streets, parking lots, sidewalks, building roofs, and other surfaces, which then enter into the storm drains, creeks, and other receiving waters. Citywide policies for urban runoff management are found in Section E of the General Plan Conservation Element.

Advances in urban runoff management practices now give more consideration to the small runoff quantities that have an erosive effect on local streams, due to the longer duration and greater frequency of occurrence. The practice of managing these flows is referred to as hydromodification management.

- 8.7.1 Manage stormwater using Low Impact Development principles for development proposals, and include the most current restrictions/allowances for sustainable development and environmental maintenance.
- 8.7.2 Consider topography, soils, and other site features that are essential when planning for Low Impact Development design.
- 8.7.3 Incorporate sufficient land areas to locate stormwater management facilities early in the planning process.
- 8.7.4 Include Low Impact Development practices, such as bioretention, porous paving, and green roofs, early in the development process to find compatibilities with other goals.
- 8.7.5 Encourage the use of pervious materials in planting areas, driveways, and parking areas.
- 8.7.6 Design streets with sufficient right-of-way to implement quality design practices for runoff management.
- 8.7.7 Encourage private property owners to design or retrofit landscaped areas to better capture stormwater runoff. See the Public Facilities Element for more details.
- 8.7.8 Identify opportunities for additional hydromodification management measures, such as preserving open space uses for areas that are natural sources of sediment supply for streams. Give particular attention to protecting steep canyon drainages that receive urban runoff from developed mesas.