

Chapter 7
Conservation

Overview of Chapter

Conservation of local resources has been a key asset for the City since its incorporation in 1964. While many natural resources have already been permanently protected as a part of Thousand Oak’s extensive natural open space system, others fall under the jurisdiction of other public agencies, or are located on privately owned land. The purpose of this Element is to describe the general characteristics of natural, cultural, and historic resources and identify appropriate goals and policies to protect these resources while guiding future development in a sensitive manner. Balancing community needs with resource protection will facilitate long-term conservation and protection of vital resources for future generations.

The following topics are included in this chapter:

- Statutory Requirements
- Conservation Setting
- Scenic Resources and Landforms
- Community Forest
- Biological Resources
- Air Quality
- Cultural Resources
- Historic Resources
- Key Issues and Opportunities
- Goals and Policies

Statutory Requirements

State law requires that the General Plan include a chapter on Conservation that addresses the identification, conservation, development, and use of natural resources including water and its hydraulic force, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, wildlife, minerals, and other natural resources (Government Code 65302(d)). This chapter was prepared to meet the legal requirements of a Conservation Element and identifies water courses, flood corridors, riparian habitats, and land that may accommodate floodwater for purposes of groundwater recharge and stormwater management.

Water supply and conservation and surface water and groundwater quality are addressed in the Community Facilities and Services Element.



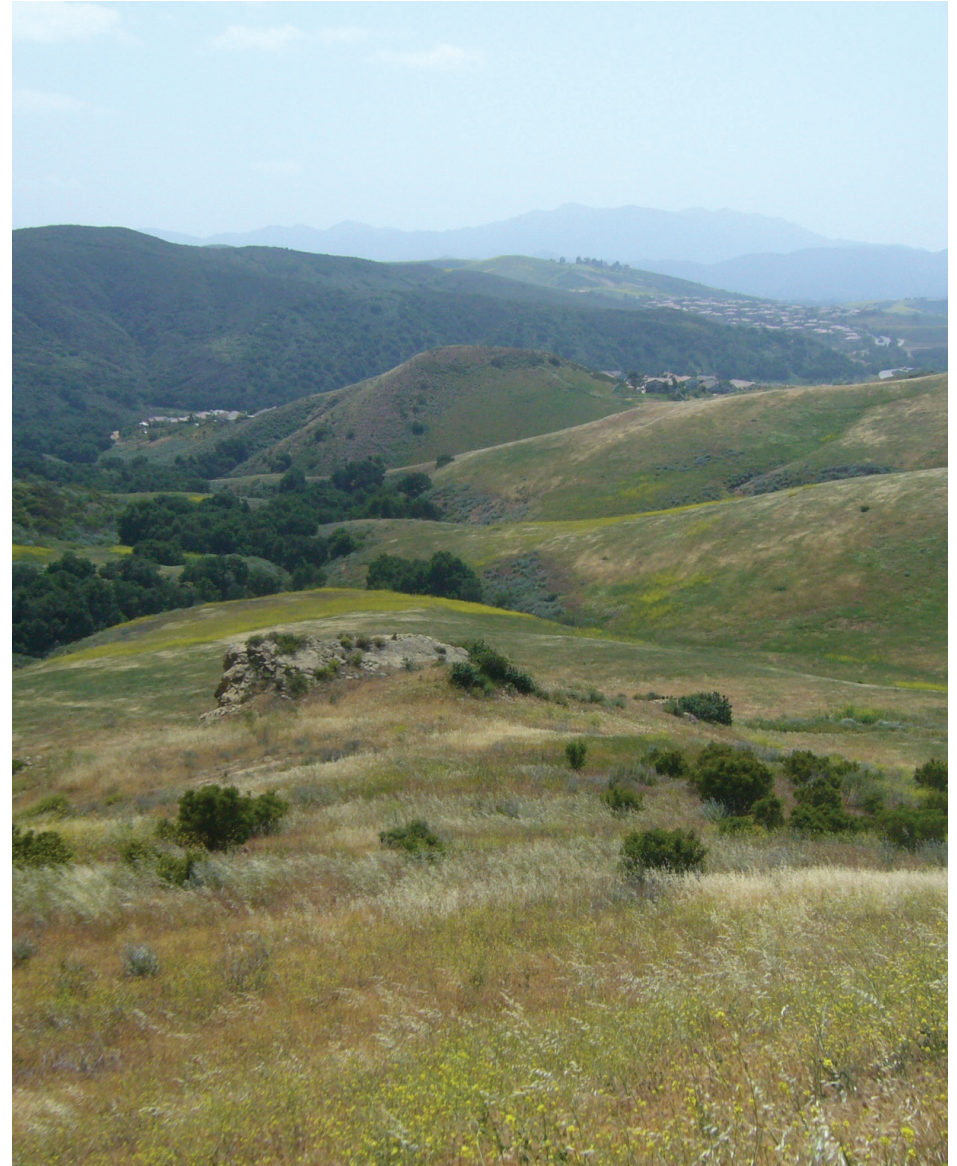
Old growth oak trees within Thousand Oaks

Background

Thousand Oaks lies in the Conejo Valley, which encompasses topographically diverse landscapes of mountains, hills, valleys, and canyons that support a variety of natural vegetation types and many sensitive plant and animal species. The City has a rich cultural heritage and is home to numerous archaeological and historic sites. Together, these resources enhance the community's character and substantially contribute to the overall quality of the environment.

Protection and management of these resources is done collaboratively through various local agencies, but a large portion of the responsibility belongs to the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency (COSCA). COSCA was created in 1977 by a joint power agreement (JPA) between the City of Thousand Oaks and the Conejo Recreation and Park District (CRPD). COSCA owns or manages approximately 12,700 acres of the 15,250 total acres of protected open space in Thousand Oaks. COSCA contributes to land use planning and policy decisions, actively acquires open space land, and implements consistent land management which assists in meeting goals identified in the General Plan. COSCA's actions are also guided by its Management Policies and Guidelines (2000), the Conejo Canyons Management Plan (Management Plan) (2010), and the COSCA Strategic Plan (2013).

Policies aimed at protection of natural resources and adaptation to climate change are also found in the Parks and Open Space Element and the Safety Element. Policies aimed at mitigating flood hazards are included in the Safety Element. Other City and local agency policy documents address energy, water and ecosystem sustainability-related policies.



The conservation of natural resources has been a cornerstone of the City's policies since incorporation

Scenic Resources and Landforms

Due to the community’s high regard for open space and the City’s natural setting, developed areas in Thousand Oaks do not dominate the views in the City. Rather, major natural landscape features are generally more prevalent. The City’s appearance is that of a community nestled within a ring of open space, distinguished by its oak trees, and the prominence of knolls, ridges and hills which contribute to the community character.

The City protects and maintains its scenic resources through comprehensive planning that includes specific site planning guidelines and development policies that effectively serve to minimize any potentially adverse visual impacts and help retain the appearance of the community. Local policies encourage the location of buildings on relatively flat land between knolls or on moderate slopes, blending with the natural surroundings, while avoiding the placement of structures on ridge lines, conspicuous hilltops or steep hillsides where silhouetting or extensive grading would be necessary.

The City has a comprehensive set of local ordinances that serve to limit the height of manufactured cut and fill slopes, encourage the clustering of development in areas with shallow sloping hillside terrain and minimize significant modifications to prominent ridgelines and other important landform features. In keeping with these adopted policies and regulations, the natural landform features in the community have been classified by their inherent suitability for development (see Table 7.1).

TABLE 7.1 Landform Classification

Land Form	Classification
Flat Land	Flat land is defined as land with a natural slope less than 10%. It is suited to many types of land uses ranging from the most intensive urban uses to recreation and agriculture.
Moderately Sloping Hillsides	Moderately sloping hillsides are defined as land with natural slope between 10% and less than 25%. They are suited to less intensive land development patterns than those appropriate to flat land
Steeply Sloping Hillsides	Land 25% and over natural slope is classified as steeply sloping. Open space, certain recreation facilities such as trail systems, and very low-density residential development are most appropriate for steep hillside terrain.



Views in Thousand Oaks are dominated by undeveloped hillsides

Community Forest

The community forest, with its native oak trees, is Thousand Oaks' largest, most visible, and arguably most important natural resource. Both environmentally and aesthetically, the forest makes the City a better place to live.

Trees provide a variety of benefits to the community. For example, trees:

- Impart a distinctive character and identity to the City and its various neighborhoods.
- Help increase and stabilize property values.
- Enhance people's sense of connection to nature and history, encouraging a sense of civic pride and involvement.
- Provide shade and help cool "urban heat islands", reducing energy costs and consumption.
- Absorb carbon dioxide, counteracting the global "greenhouse effect" while producing oxygen and filtering airborne particulates, helping to reduce air pollution.
- Help reduce soil erosion and surface runoff, leading to improved water quality in local streams.
- Provide benefits to the built and natural environment by modifying wind patterns and providing habitat for birds and other wildlife.

The community of Thousand Oaks values trees as an essential element of the City's character. Planting and caring for public trees are performed by the City's Public Works Department as directed by the City's Forestry Master Plan. Trees are further promoted and protected as part of the development process by the Community Development Department. New development entitlements include approved landscape plans and a commitment to maintain this landscaping. Other public agencies, such as CRPD, COSCA, Cal Trans, and Conejo Valley Unified School District have responsibility for trees in other areas of the City.

Oak and Landmark Trees

Oak trees native to Thousand Oaks are Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*), Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Scrub Oak (*Quercus berberidifolia*), and Palmer's Oaks (*Quercus palmeri*). Prior to the development of the City, oaks and grasslands were widespread in the Conejo Valley. As the City grew, many of these oaks were removed. In order to avoid further loss of oaks, the City has adopted ordinances to protect oak and other landmark tree species. These are discussed below.

Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance

The Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance requires that the owner of any property that contains oak trees must maintain all trees in a state of good health, as outlined by the Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines. A Protected Tree Permit is required for any person to cut, remove, or relocate any species of oak tree, whether native or not, on any public or private property in the City.

Landmark Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance

The Landmark Tree Preservation and Protection Ordinance requires the preservation of healthy landmark trees. Trees protected under the ordinance include the following species: California sycamore, California bay laurel, California black walnut and the California holly (Toyon). A Protected Tree Permit must be issued by the City for any person to cut, remove or relocate any landmark tree on any public or private property in the City.

Biological Resources

Thousand Oaks is rich with native biological resources, especially in the northwest portion of the City. Much of this area, identified as a community treasure since the mid-1970s, is protected within the Conejo Canyons, Arroyo Conejo, and Wildwood open space areas. These contain many of the dominant vegetation types found in Southern California's coastal Mediterranean region: coastal sage scrub, chaparral, oak woodlands and riparian woodlands. The presence of these open spaces makes Thousand Oaks home to healthy populations of rare and endangered plants and animals as well as a regionally significant wildlife corridor.



Native flowers grow in the City's Mediterranean climate

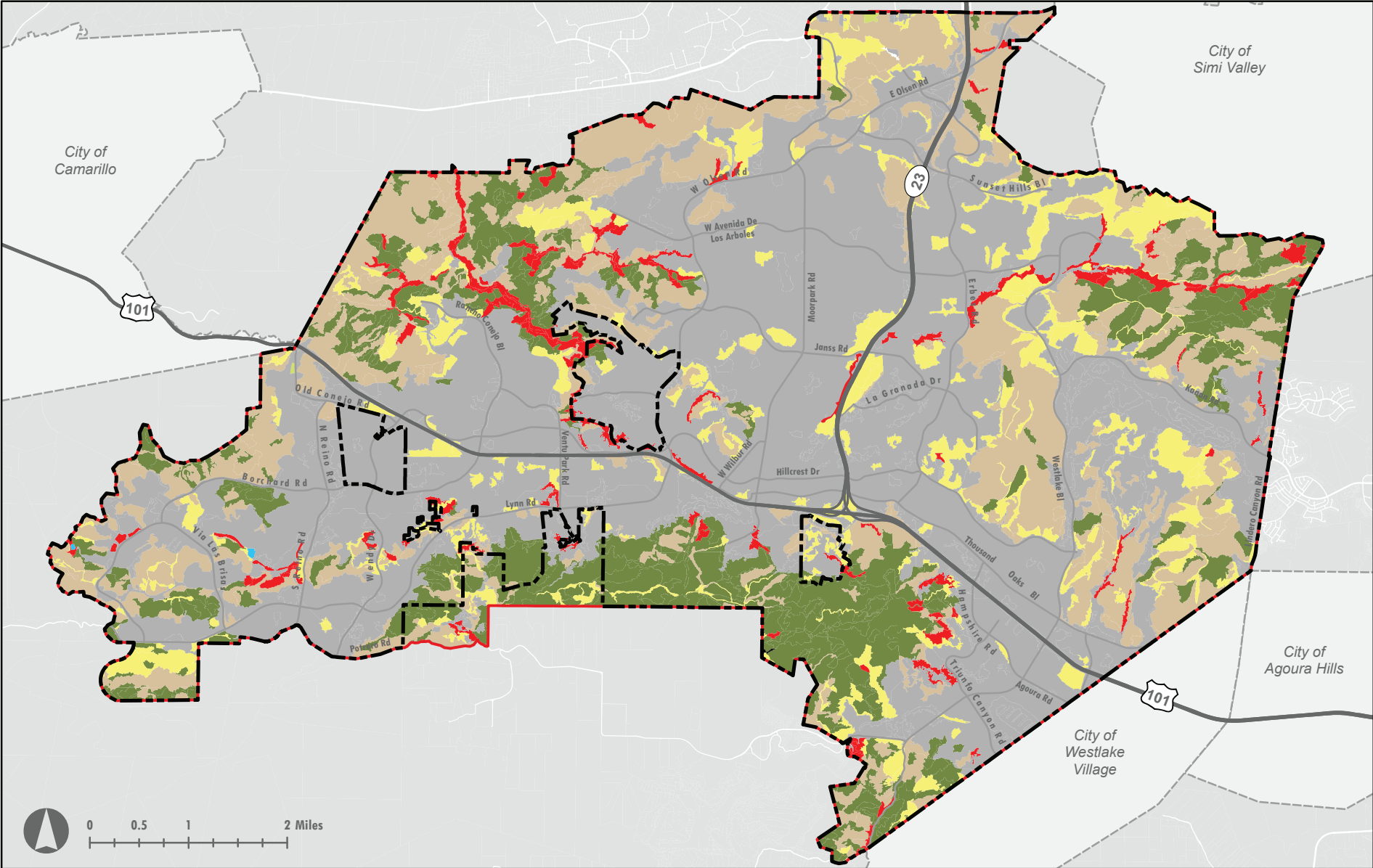
Native Plant Communities

Thousand Oaks has a Mediterranean climate characterized by warm, dry summers and cool, moist winters. Plants in this climate have adapted to grow in the winter and early spring, when water is available, and become mostly dormant in the long dry summers, when water availability is limited. The varied topography and soil types of Thousand Oaks have enabled a mix of native plant communities to survive in the region. Figure 7.1 shows the main habitat types in the City. In general, Thousand Oaks contains six native plant communities, which are representative of the larger Santa Monica Mountains region. These include grasslands, chaparral, Coastal sage scrub, southern oak woodland/oak savannah, riparian/coast live oak woodland, and freshwater marsh.

Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

Thousand Oaks provides habitat for several federal and State protected plant and animal species in addition to the native plant communities discussed above. These critical habitat areas are generally located within the open spaces that surround the City and include at least three known endangered species: Coastal California Gnatcatcher, Lyon's pantachaeta, and Braunton's milkvetch.

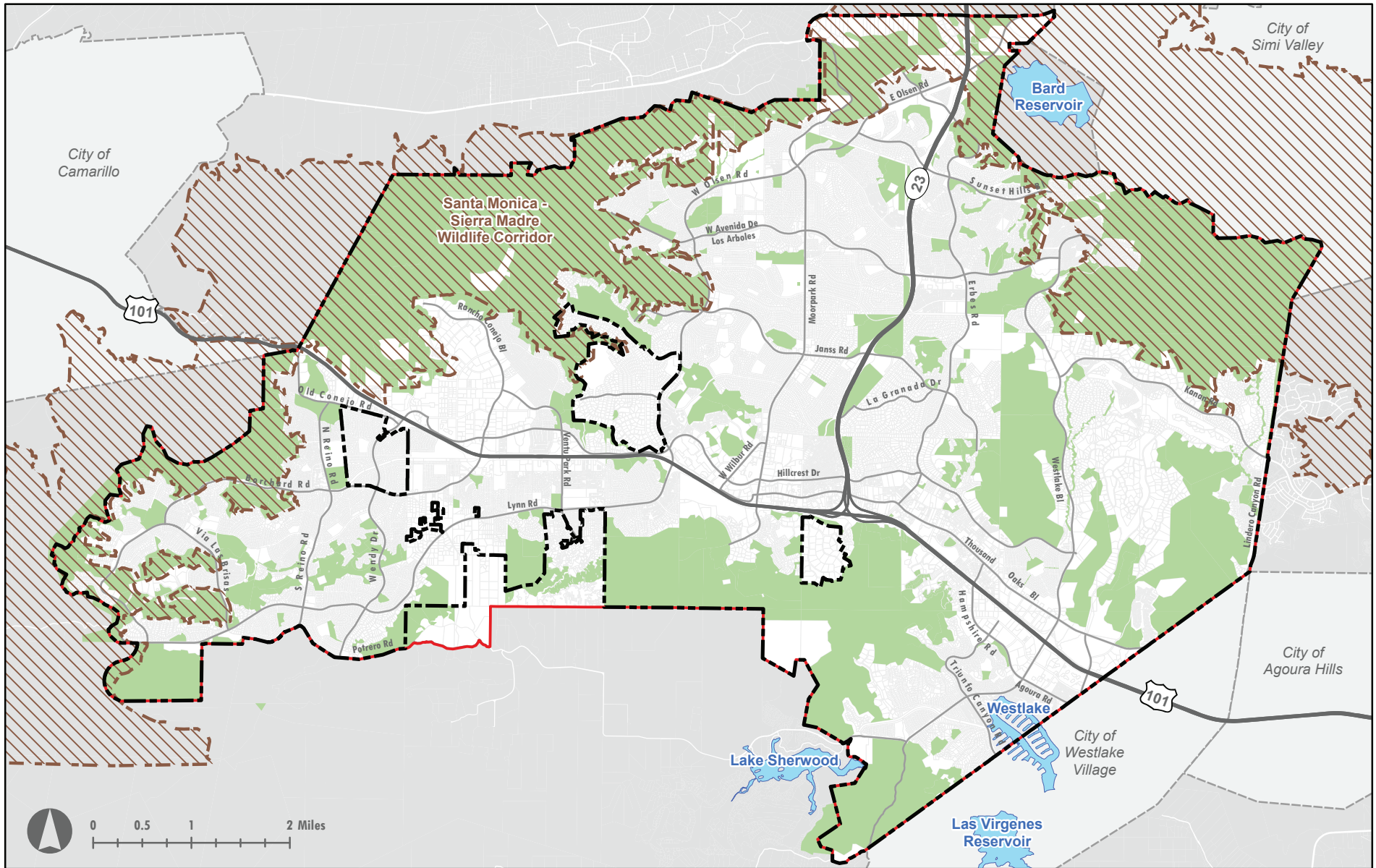
FIGURE 7.1 Vegetation Communities




Raimi + Associates 2023 | Data Source: City of Thousand Oaks, County of Ventura, County of Los Angeles, Vegetation data updated by the City, 2023

- City Limits
- City Sphere
- Major Roads
- Freeways
- Chaparral
- Coastal Sage Scrub
- Grassland and Barren
- Riparian/Coastal Live Oak Woodland
- Valley Oak Woodland
- Agriculture
- Lakes
- Urban
- Unincorporated Counties Land
- Adjacent cities

FIGURE 7.2 Wildlife Corridors



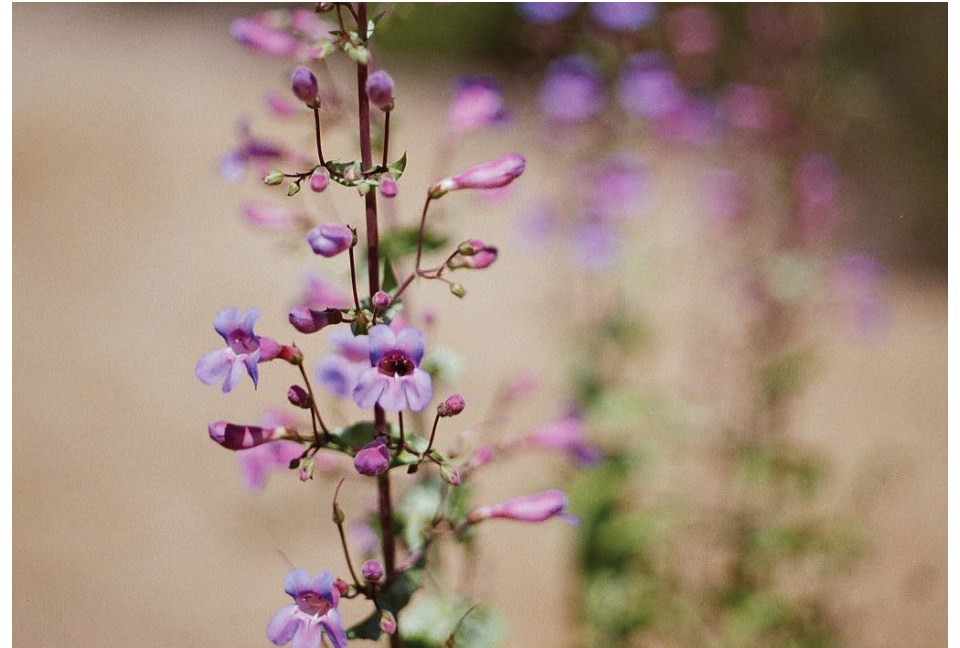
Raimi + Associates 2023 | Data Source: City of Thousand Oaks, County of Ventura, County of Los Angeles; National Wetlands Inventory, 2023

- | | | |
|---|---|--|
|  City Limits |  Major Roads |  Parks and Open Space |
|  City Sphere |  Freeways |  Unincorporated Counties Land |
|  Regional Wildlife Corridors | |  Adjacent cities |

Wildlife Migration Corridors

Many local wildlife species, including mountain lions, bobcats, gray foxes, coyotes, and mule deer, depend on access to large areas of connected habitats for feeding and dispersal. Urban development patterns have the potential to fragment habitats and limit the ranges of wildlife. Wildlife corridors represent the last remaining access areas that connect fragmented patches of habitat. Maintaining and enhancing existing habitat linkages is essential to ensuring the preservation of regional natural resources, biodiversity, and sensitive species.

The Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Wildlife Corridor, located along the northern fringes of Thousand Oaks, is one of the few remaining coastal connections in the South Coast Ecoregion. It is designed to protect landscape linkages for 20 focal species that are sensitive to habitat loss and fragmentation. Figure 7.2 shows the Santa Monica-Sierra Madre Wildlife Corridor region in relation to Thousand Oaks. COSCA open space protects portions of this wildlife corridor and provides adjacent habitats for migrating wildlife.



Native plants enhance the wildlife corridors



Wildlife corridors enable rabbits and other species to thrive

Water Resources

Watershed

Thousand Oaks is predominantly situated in the 343-square mile Calleguas Creek watershed, though a portion of the City—generally east of North Westlake Boulevard and southeast of Potrero Road—drains to the Malibu Creek watershed. Figure 7.3 shows watersheds and surface water bodies in Thousand Oaks.

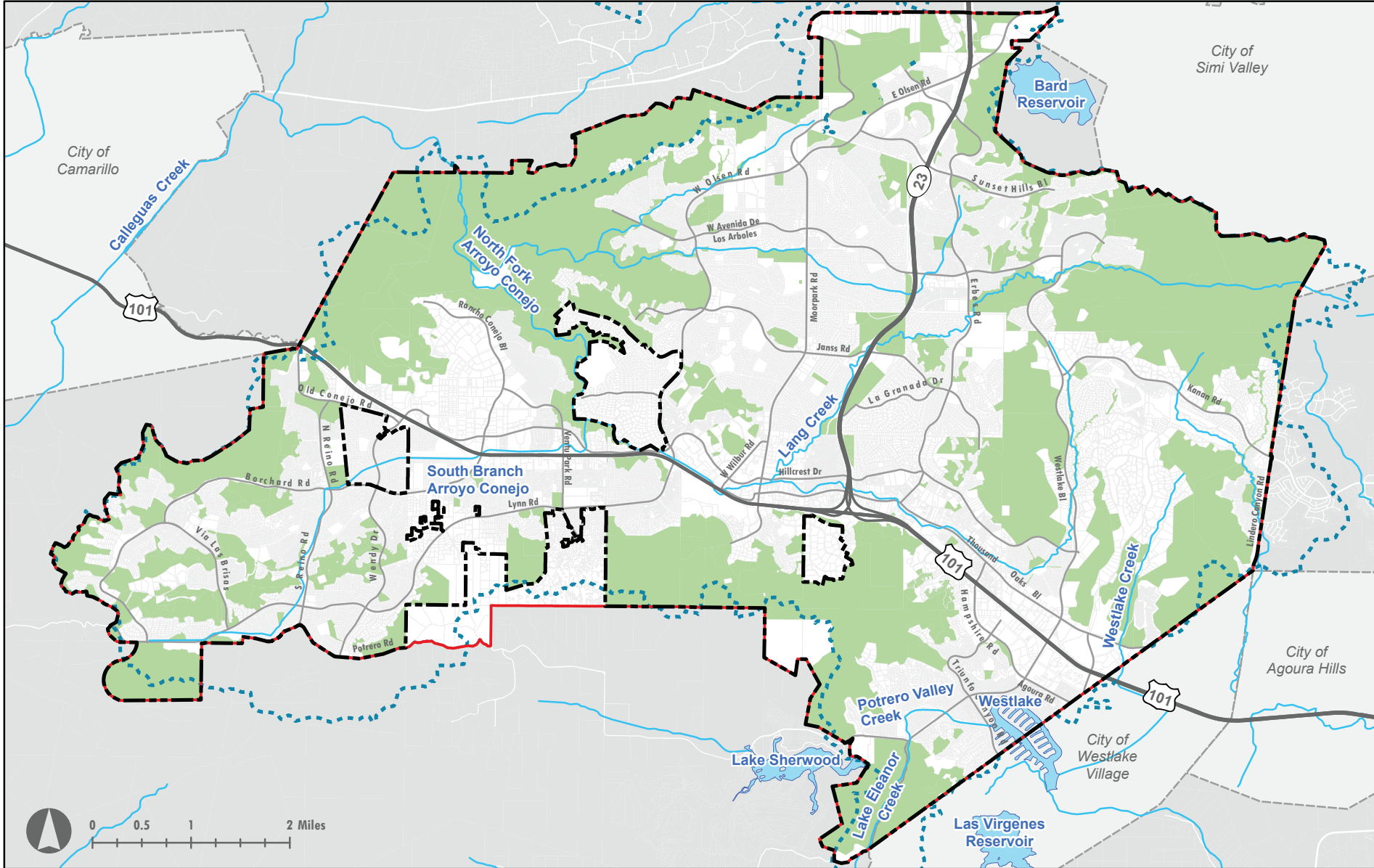
Thousand Oaks contains two manmade lakes: Westlake Lake (bisecting the Cities of Thousand Oaks and Westlake Village), which is privately owned, and Lake Eleanor, which is owned by COSCA. Just outside of the Thousand Oaks Sphere of Influence are Lake Sherwood, Las Virgenes Reservoir, and Bard Reservoir. Westlake Lake and Lake Sherwood allow for private recreation, while Lake Eleanor, Las Virgenes Reservoir and Bard Reservoir are not recreational facilities. Westlake Lake and most of Lake Sherwood are surrounded by residential development. Lake Eleanor, Bard Reservoir and Las Virgenes Reservoir have a mix of open water, freshwater marsh, and riparian habitat, which provide natural habitat for migratory birds and other wildlife.

Conejo Creek/Arroyo Conejo Creek and Lang Creek, flow through Thousand Oaks in the Calleguas Creek watershed. Calleguas Creek is a primarily perennial, effluent-dominated stream, with flows fed by treated wastewater discharges, agricultural and urban runoff, and rising groundwater. From the watershed headwaters in eastern Simi Valley, Calleguas Creek flows approximately 30 miles west to Mugu Lagoon before draining to the Pacific Ocean. Creeks in the Malibu Creek watershed in the southeastern portion of the city include Potrero Valley Creek, Lake Eleanor Creek, and Westlake Creek.



Conejo Creek flows through the City

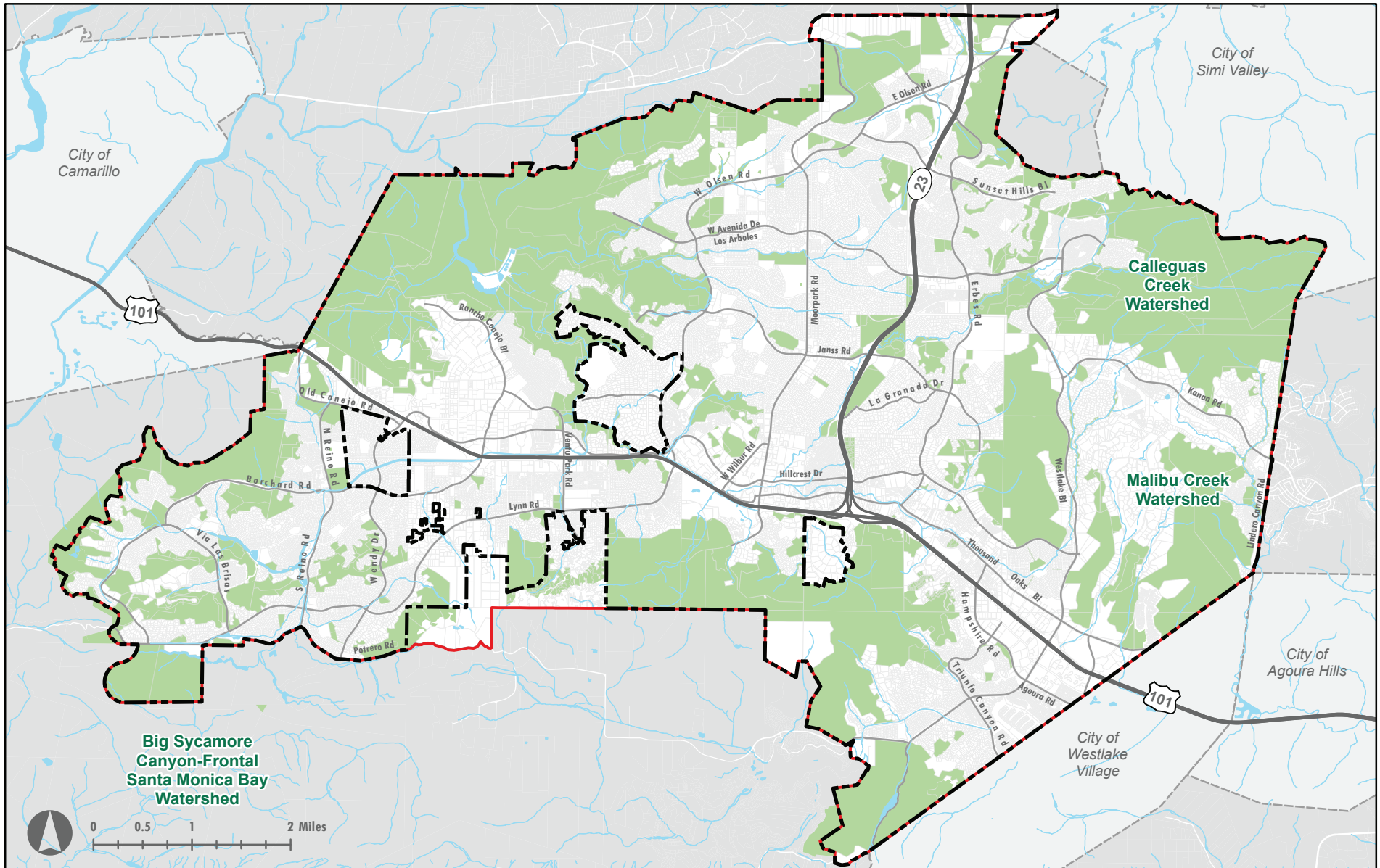
FIGURE 7.3 Surface Waters & Watersheds



Raimi + Associates 2023 | Data Source: City of Thousand Oaks, County of Ventura, County of Los Angeles; National Wetlands Inventory, 2023

- City Limits
- City Sphere
- Water Bodies
- Watershed Boundaries
- Major Creeks
- Major Roads
- Freeways
- Parks and Open Space
- Unincorporated Counties Land
- Adjacent cities

FIGURE 7.4 Wetlands



Raimi + Associates 2023 | Data Source: City of Thousand Oaks, County of Ventura, County of Los Angeles, National Wetlands Inventory, 2023

- City Limits
- City Sphere
- Major Roads
- Freeways
- NWI Wetlands
- Parks and Open Space
- Adjacent cities
- Unincorporated Counties Land

Riparian Areas and Wetlands

The word “riparian” means streamside and refers to the vegetation that grows along the edges of freshwater bodies such as streams, ponds, and lakes. Riparian zones are typically characterized by moisture-dependent vegetation such as willows, cottonwoods, and mule fat. Typically, riparian woodland is comprised of an overstory of large trees and an understory of shrubs and herbaceous perennials. Other types of riparian habitats may consist entirely of herbaceous perennials such as sedges and rushes and lack trees and shrubs.

In Thousand Oaks, larger perennial streams such as the Conejo Creek and the North and South Forks of Arroyo Conejo Creek support good examples of riparian woodland. Smaller tributaries in the City, such as Lang Creek, Potrero Valley Creek, Skelton Creek, Lake Eleanor Creek, and Westlake Creek contain running water only part of the year and are considered intermittent streams. However, even these intermittent streams retain substantial soil moisture and may support riparian vegetation.

Thousand Oaks contains several United States Fish and Wildlife Service recognized wetlands, which are registered in the National Wetlands Inventory (NWI). These wetlands provide habitat for fish, wildlife, and plants; and provide value in the form of groundwater recharge and stormwater retention. NWI wetlands in Thousand Oaks and the surrounding region consist primarily of streams and lakes and are shown in Figure 7.4.

Air Quality

Thousand Oaks is in the South Central Coast Air Basin (Basin), which includes all of Ventura, Santa Barbara, and San Luis Obispo counties. The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (VCAPCD) is required to monitor air pollutant levels in the Basin to ensure National Ambient Air Quality Standards (NAAQS) and California Ambient Air Quality Standards (CAAQS) are met. If the standards are met, the Basin is classified as being in “attainment.” If the standards are not met, the Basin is classified as being in “nonattainment,” and the VCAPCD is required to develop strategies to meet the standards. Thousand Oaks is in a basin identified as being in nonattainment for ozone (O₃) for both NAAQS and CAAQS, and for particulate matter less than 10 microns in diameter (PM₁₀) CAAQS.⁵ In Thousand Oaks, O₃ standards were exceeded 7 times and PM₁₀ standards were exceeded 6 times in 2020.⁶ On December 13, 2022, the VCAPCD adopted the 2022 Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan (AQMP), which provides a strategy for the attainment of federal O₃ standards.⁷ Nonattainment for O₃ is common in California, however, and Thousand Oaks air quality is superior to more urban communities.

The primary sources of air pollution in Thousand Oaks are passenger cars, medium- and heavy-duty trucks, buses, motorcycles, and other vehicles operating on highways, freeways, and local roads. Other sources include agricultural and construction machinery, and lawn and garden equipment. The City does not have major stationary sources of air pollution, such as heavy industry or energy-generating facilities.

⁵ National Ambient Air Quality Standards.” <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/national-ambient-air-quality-standards>; “California Ambient Air Quality Standards.” <https://ww2.arb.ca.gov/resources/california-ambient-air-quality-standards> (accessed September 2020).

⁶ <https://www.arb.ca.gov/adam/topfour/topfour1.php>.

⁷ 2022 Ventura County Air Quality Management Plan. <http://www.vcapcd.org/pubs/Planning/AQMP/2022/Final-2022-AQMP-with-appendices-20221130.pdf>.

Criteria Pollutants and Toxic Air Contaminants

Six criteria air pollutants are regulated by the federal Clean Air Act and California Clean Air Act and form the primary basis for regulating air quality. Both the state and federal governments have adopted ambient air quality standards for these criteria pollutants (see “Air Quality Standards” below), which include ozone (O₃), carbon monoxide (CO), nitrogen dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM₁₀ and PM_{2.5}), sulfur dioxide (SO₂), and lead (Pb).^{8,9,10,11,12,13} O₃ is a secondary pollutant because it is created by atmospheric chemical and photochemical reactions between reactive organic compounds (ROC) and nitrogen oxides (NOX).¹⁴ The other pollutants are emitted directly into the atmosphere.

Toxic air contaminants (TACs) are a diverse group of air pollutants that may cause or contribute to an increase in deaths or serious illness, or that may pose a present or potential hazard to human health. TACs include both organic and inorganic chemical substances that may be emitted from a variety of common sources. Ambient air quality standards have not been established for TACs, but certain TACs are regulated based on their potential health effects. Health effects associated with exposure to TACs can include cancer, respiratory irritation, nervous system problems, and birth defects. Some health problems occur very soon after a person inhales a TAC. These immediate effects may be minor, such as watery eyes, or may be serious, such as life-threatening lung damage. Other health problems, such as cancer, may not appear until many months or years after a person’s first exposure to the TAC. A TAC of particular concern in California is diesel particulate matter (DPM), which is associated with diesel exhaust and which the California Air Resources Board (CARB) estimates is responsible for about 70% of that state’s estimated known cancer risk attributable to TACs air pollution sources.

Sensitive Receptors

Sensitive receptors are facilities that house or attract children, the elderly, people with illnesses, or others who are especially sensitive to the effects of air pollution or noise. Hospitals, schools, convalescent facilities, residential areas and parks are examples of sensitive receptors. Residential areas are considered sensitive to poor air quality as occupants are often at home for extended periods.

Standards are designed to protect that segment of the public most susceptible to respiratory distress, such as children under 14; older adults over 65; persons engaged in strenuous work or exercise; and people with cardiovascular and chronic respiratory diseases. Sensitive receptors should not be located near any major air pollution sources and businesses that have a high odor and/or nuisance potential.

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- ^{8.} Ozone is produced by a photochemical reaction (triggered by sunlight) between NOX and ROC. NOX is formed during the combustion of fuels, while ROCs are formed during combustion and evaporation of organic solvents.
 - ^{9.} CO is a colorless, odorless, poisonous gas, is automobile traffic. Elevated concentrations, therefore, are usually only found near areas of high traffic volumes. Other sources include fuel combustion equipment.
 - ^{10.} NO₂ is a by-product of fuel combustion, with the primary source being motor vehicles and industrial boilers and furnaces. The principal form of nitrogen oxide produced by combustion is nitric oxide (NO), but NO reacts rapidly to form NO₂, creating the mixture of NO and NO₂ commonly called NOX. Nitrogen dioxide is an acute irritant.
 - ^{11.} SO₂ is a colorless, pungent, irritating gas formed primarily by the combustion of sulfur-containing fossil fuels.
 - ^{12.} Lead (Pb) is a metal found naturally in the environment, as well as in manufacturing products. Lead occurs in the atmosphere as particulate matter. The major sources of Pb emissions historically have been mobile and industrial sources.
 - ^{13.} The particulates that are of particular concern are PM₁₀ (small particulate matter that measures no more than 10 microns in diameter) and PM_{2.5} (fine particulate that measures no more than 2.5 microns in diameter).
 - ^{14.} Organic compound precursors of ozone are routinely described by a number of variations of three terms: hydrocarbons (HC), organic gases (OG), and organic compounds (OC). These terms are often modified by adjectives such as total, reactive, or volatile, and result in a rather confusing array of acronyms: HC, THC (total hydrocarbons), RHC (reactive hydrocarbons), TOG (total organic gases), ROG (reactive organic gases), TOC (total organic compounds), ROC (reactive organic compounds), and VOC (volatile organic compounds). While most of these differ in some significant way from a chemical perspective, two groups are important from an air quality perspective: non-photochemically reactive in the lower atmosphere, or photochemically reactive in the lower atmosphere (HC, RHC, ROG, ROC, and VOC). The Ventura County Air Pollution Control District uses the term ROC to denote organic precursors.

Cultural Resources

Archaeological and Native American Resources

The cultural history of the City and the surrounding Conejo Valley can be divided into three major eras: Native-American, Spanish-Mexican, and Anglo-American. Remnants from these unique eras exist in the region as a diverse range of tribal, archaeological, and architectural resources. The Conejo Valley served as an integral part of the larger Chumash territory that extended from the coast and Channel Islands to include Santa Barbara, most of Ventura, parts of San Luis Obispo, Kern and Los Angeles Counties. The late 18th and early 19th centuries saw the influx of Spanish-Mexican culture, with the establishment of a large Spanish land grant “Rancho el Conejo,” while the modern Anglo-American era began in the late 19th century with the break-up and sale of the Spanish Land Grants.

Traces of this inhabitation remain in the form of archaeological and tribal resources. As urbanization in Thousand Oaks has increased, more cultural resources have been identified as site surveys have been conducted. A cluster of 11 archaeological sites constitutes the Oakbrook Regional Park Archaeological Area and Chumash Interpretive Center.

Existing state laws, including Senate Bill 18 and Assembly Bill 52 ensure that cultural resources are considered in community planning and that impacts to resources are mitigated through acceptable means.^{15,16} Senate Bill 18 protects tribal cultural resources by requiring that cities and counties conduct consultations with California Native American tribes prior to adoption or amendment of a General Plan. Assembly Bill 52 established procedures and requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act for the purposes of avoiding or minimizing impacts to tribal cultural resources.

Paleontological Resources

Paleontology is the study of prehistoric life as shown by fossil remains. Fossils are mineralized or petrified impressions of plants and animals from past geologic ages. Virtually all the fossils in the City are contained in sedimentary rocks due to the depositional nature of their origin. These rocks consist of shales, sandstones, siltstones and conglomerate, and date from ancient times when the area was submerged under shallow seas or when swampy terrestrial environments were more frequent. In these kinds of environments hard parts of once living organisms can fall into the substrate and become covered by sediment, gradually becoming mineralized and eventually forming a fossil. The principal sedimentary bedrocks in the City include the Miocene age Topanga and Monterey formations in the eastern and southern areas of the City and the Sespe, Llajas, Santa Susana and Chatsworth formations of Oligocene to Cretaceous age found near the northeast part of the City.

^{15.} Public Resources Code §5097.9 and §5097.995

^{16.} Public Resources Code §5097.94, §21073, §21074, §21080.3.1, §21080.3.2, §21082.3, §21083.09, §21084.2, and §21084.3

Historic Resources

Americans began arriving in California in the 1840s, but the Conejo Valley remained largely undeveloped until the 1870s. A depression in the cattle business in the 1860s, which is partially attributed to drought, led to the subdivision and sale of large private land ownerships in California to pioneers arriving from the eastern United States. The Conejo Valley was subdivided in the 1870s, which marks the beginning of permanent modern settlement in what is now Thousand Oaks.

The first post office in the Conejo Valley was established in 1875 by James Newbury. During these early settlement days, the Conejo Valley served as both a rest stop for travelers passing through between Los Angeles and Ventura, as well as the location of large ranching operations that became the basic economic activity of the Valley. This way of life continued until the late 1930s, when the community of Thousand Oaks began developing.

By 1961, the town contained two shopping centers, an industrial park, schools, places of worship and California Lutheran University. The community voted to incorporate the town of nearly 20,000 in 1964, with the name Thousand Oaks, in honor of the area's abundant oak trees.

The history of Thousand Oaks is preserved in several historical landmarks and points of interest. The City Council has the authority to determine whether a proposed historic landmark is suitable for designation based on recommendations from the Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board. Locations of the City's existing historical landmarks and points of interest as designated by the City Council are shown in Figure 7.5 and include the following:

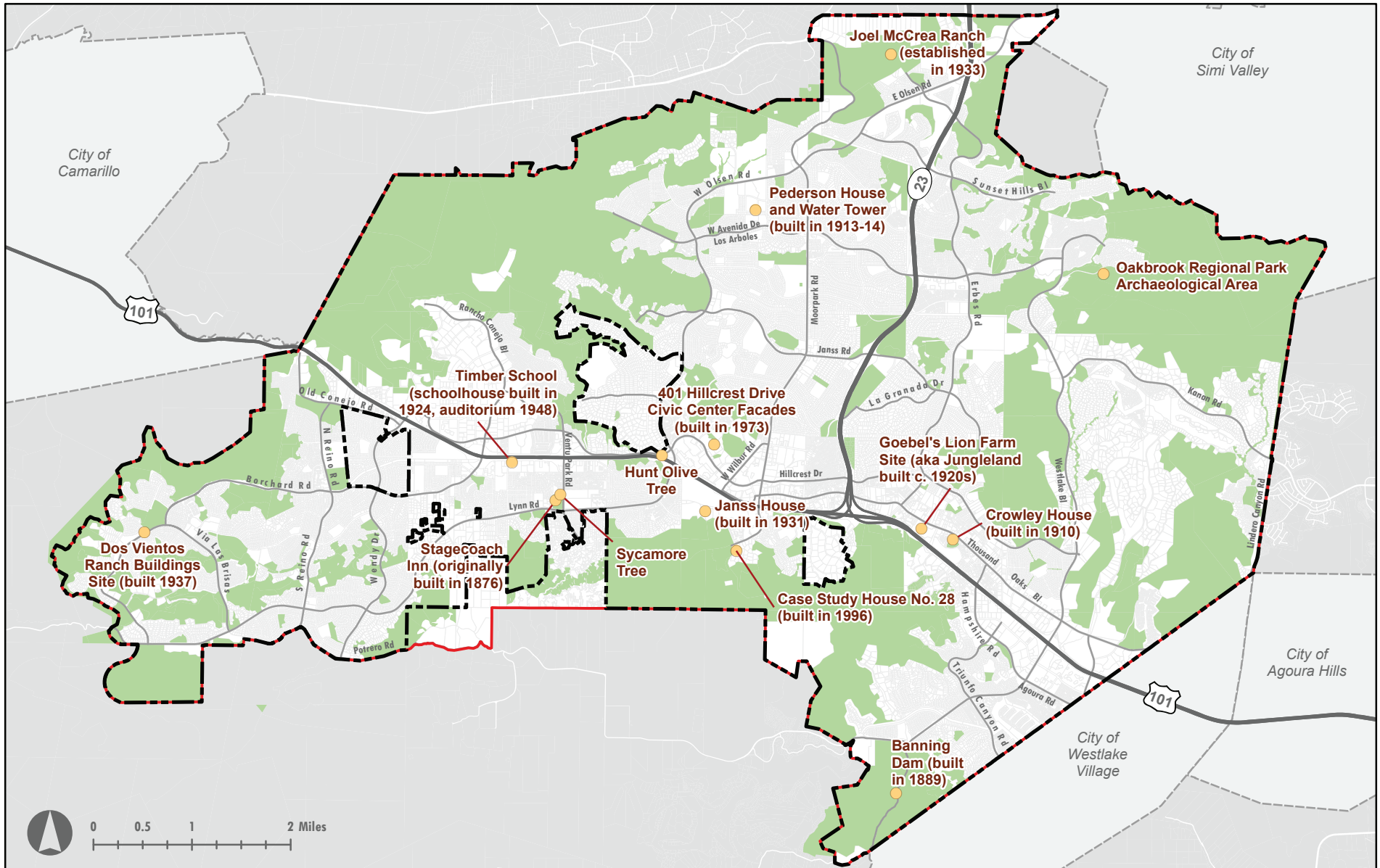
- **City Landmark #1: Stagecoach Inn** was placed on the National Register of Historic Places and designated a State Historical Landmark in December of 1975. The original structure was built in 1876 but was destroyed by fire in the early 1970s. The Inn is a Monterey style structure of northern California redwood with a wrap-around porch and balcony. The original structure served as a school, post office, steak house, church, gift shop, and movie set.
- **City Landmark #2: Sycamore Tree** is an unusually large and old specimen of a California Sycamore and was over 150 years old when it was designated as a landmark in 1978. The Chumash are said to have bent the lower branches to mark the location of underground water.
- **City Landmark #3: Pederson House and Water Tower** is a typical turn-of-the-century farmhouse and water tower built in 1913-1914 for Lars and Karn Pederson, members of the Norwegian Colony that settled the northern end of the Conejo Valley in 1890.
- **City Landmark #4: Hunt Olive Tree** is the only surviving tree of an orchard planted by R. O. Hunt on the Salto Ranch, which he established in 1876. The tree was moved to its present site in 1993 and is in excellent condition.



Jungleland, home to Hollywood's animal stars, was once located on the site of the current Civic Arts Plaza

- **City Landmark #5: Oakbrook Regional Park Archaeological Area and Chumash Interpretive Center** is a 428-acre park that contains 11 archaeological sites within a few yards of one another along the streambed of a narrow oak-wooded canyon, with bedrock mortars and shelters containing Chumash pictographs. At the park is a small interpretive museum and hiking trails. The Woolsey Fire of 2018 severely damaged the park, including damage to the museum building and a complete loss of the Chumash replica village, stairs, and bridges for nature hike tours.
- **City Landmark #6: Dos Vientos Ranch Buildings** were built in 1930 on the Dos Vientos Ranch, which was a portion of the 30,593-acre Rancho Guadaluca Mexican land grant made to Isabel Yorba in 1836. Joseph Lewis, a business partner of Adolfo Camarillo, farmed 8,000 acres of the Ranch, and established the lima bean industry in Ventura County.
- **City Landmark #7: Crowley House** was built in 1910 for newlyweds Frank and Mae Casey Crowley on the Newbury Ranch. The house earned the nickname “Mother of Thousand Oaks” because in the early 1920s it served as a real estate office for the first housing development in the Conejo Valley.
- **City Landmark #8: Janss House** was built for Peter Janss as a weekend retreat in 1931. Peter Janss moved to Los Angeles in 1893. In Los Angeles, he became a land developer and was joined in his business by his sons Harold and Edwin. The Janss Corporation planned and developed in Monterey Park, the San Fernando Valley and Westwood Village, donating the land on which UCLA is built. In 1943 the house became the principal home of Janss’ younger son, Edwin Janss. The house is now owned by the City of Thousand Oaks and was designated as County Landmark #112 in July 1987 and Local Historical Landmark #8 in November 1997. It is located at 482 Greenmeadow Drive.
- **City Landmark #9: Banning Dam (Lake Eleanor Dam)**, also known as Banning Dam, was built in 1889 and is considered one of the earliest concrete arch dams in California. Its 8-acre lake and adjacent 529 acres of natural open space provide habitat for wildlife. Designated as County Landmark #120 in May 1988. The property is owned by the Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency and located on the west side of Westlake Boulevard, about one-half mile south of East Potrero Road. The Lake Eleanor Dam was designated as Local Historical Landmark #9 in November 1997.
- **City Landmark #10: Hillcrest Center** was designated as a historic landmark on April 8, 1997, by the Thousand Oaks Cultural Heritage Board (CHB Resolution No. 1). It is the site of Thousand Oaks’ first city hall.
- **City Landmark #11: Joel McCrea Ranch** is a former cattle ranch comprised of approximately 220 acres of gently sloping chaparral covered hillsides forming a long, narrow valley at the eastern end of the Santa Rosa Valley.
- **City Landmark #12: Former Timber School House and Auditorium**, constructed in 1924 and 1948, was designed in the Mission Revival architectural style by Roy C. Wilson, the first licensed architect in Ventura County.
- **City Landmark #13: Goebel’s Lion Farm Site (aka Jungleland)** established in 1927 as a site to import, breed, and maintain exotic animals for rental to movie studios, including the famous MGM lion. The compound was later demolished in the mid-1970s and the site is now occupied by the Thousand Oaks Civic Arts Plaza.
- **Case Study House # 28** was built as part of a series of case study houses for an experimental housing program between 1945 and 1966 in southern California. Built in 1966, Case Study House #28 was designed by architects Conrad Buff and Donald Hensman and was the program’s last single-family home and the only one in Ventura County. Because of its significance as an important example of modern architecture, this house was been placed on the National Register of Historic Places in July 2013. It is located in a gated community on Inverness Road, near the southern terminus of Moorpark Road.

FIGURE 7.5 Historic and Cultural Resources



Raimi + Associates 2023 | Data Source: City of Thousand Oaks, County of Ventura, County of Los Angeles

- City Limits
- City Sphere
- Historic Landmarks
- Major Roads
- Freeways
- Parks and Open Space
- Unincorporated Counties Land
- Adjacent cities

Key Issues & Opportunities

This section identifies the key issues and opportunities facing the City, relative to conservation topics. This concise list was developed through public engagement and with existing data to address issues facing the city now, and in the future, and the opportunities for positive change. The topics below inform the overall direction identified in the goals and policies listed in the following section.

Robust Conservation Planning

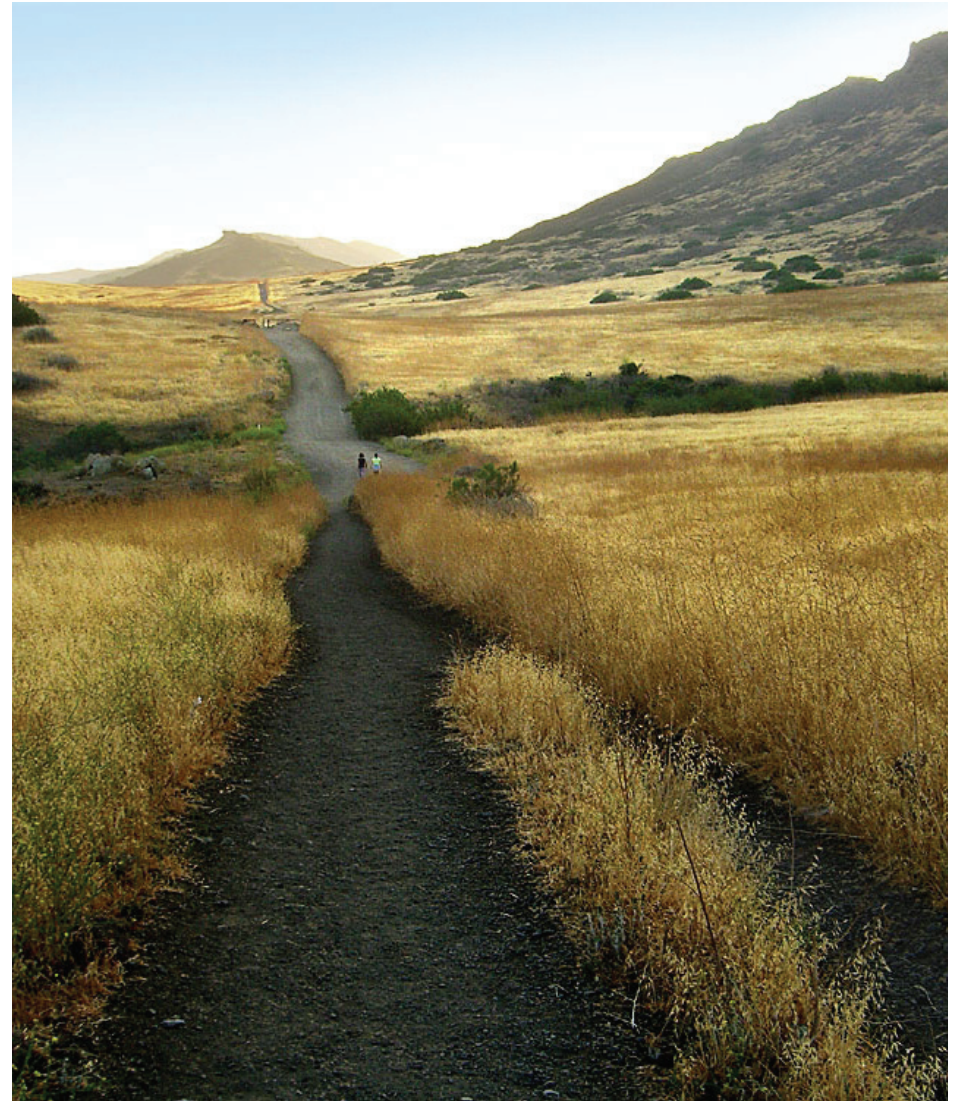
Thousand Oaks has a range of policies and programs aimed at protecting the City's scenic resources, which has been a priority for the city since its incorporation. The City will continue to maintain and expand its expansive open space network in coordination with COSCA.

Expansive Community Forest

The City has an expansive community forest and a robust program to manage and expand the forest on public and private properties. Maintaining and expanding the community forest will be a priority for the City to preserve community character, protect property values, sequester carbon dioxide, and mitigate the effects of climate change.

Biological Resource Protection

The City's open space network supports a variety of plant and wildlife species, including species that are rare, threatened, or endangered. In collaboration with COSCA and other resource agencies, the City will continue to protect wildlife, their native habitats, and regional migration corridors. Open space will be managed with a primary goal of natural resource protection and enhancement.



Conservation planning protects the City's unique natural resources

Achieving Air Quality Standards

Although air quality in Thousand Oaks is generally good, the City periodically fails to meet state and federal ozone standards. Climate change will present new challenges in meeting these standards. In addition, the introduction of residential development along commercial corridors may increase the potential for exposure to carbon monoxide. The City will continue to work with the Ventura County Air Pollution Control District (APCD) to achieve air quality standards. The City will carefully plan new residential developments to minimize exposure to air pollution.

Threats from Climate-Driven Changes

The effects of climate change on Thousand Oaks may include increased heat exposure, more serious flood events, and increased periods of drought. The latter may increase the potential for, and severity of, local wildfire events. Additionally, climate change may impact the composition of plant communities and their ability to support local wildlife. Addressing these potential threats will be a priority for the community and will be addressed through efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, prevent wildfire ignitions, restore native plant communities, protect vulnerable populations, and adapt to climatological changes in a manner that minimizes disruption to residents and businesses.

Cultural Resource Protection

Thousand Oaks is home to important historic and Native American resources. The City will continue to preserve already designated resources, identify new resources, and protect resources through application of federal, state, and local requirements. Coordination with local Native American tribes as required by in State law will be a critical component of the review of new development with the potential to affect Native American resources.



Trails provide residents and visitors with access to conserved open spaces

Goals and Policies

This section includes goals and policies for the Conservation Element. Policies address integrated infrastructure, clean air, enhanced ecosystems, and open space that provide multiple climate and sustainability functions. Related implementation actions can be found in Chapter 13: Implementation.

Scenic Resources and Landforms

Goal C-1: Conserve Thousand Oaks' physical setting and natural scenic resources.

1.1 Scenic resources.

Protect and preserve public viewsheds of the mountains and hillsides along roadways, open space, and other key locations.

1.2 Preservation of natural land features.

Preserve significant natural features including ridges, rock outcroppings, natural drainage courses, wetland and riparian areas, steep topography, important or landmark trees, and views.

1.3 Update standards and guidelines.

Update and consolidate existing Design Guidelines to include standards for hillside development and the preservation of special scenic resources that prohibit development that impact ridgelines, steep slopes and other natural land features.

1.4 City gateways.

Ensure that development proposed in defined gateway areas conforms to the City's planning policies and guidelines for City Gateways.

1.5 Freeway corridors.

Ensure that development occurring in the view corridors of the Highway 101 and State Route 23 conforms to the Freeway Corridor Design Guidelines.

Goal C-2: Minimize and mitigate the visual effects of new urban development on hillsides.

2.1 Hillside areas.

Employ site and architectural design techniques to blend development into the hillside terrain.

2.2 Slope development.

Limit development on steep slopes and ridgelines.

2.3 Grading.

Update standards for the height of manufactured slopes and limitations on grading in areas of 25% or greater natural grade.

Community Forest

Goal C-3: Maintain and expand a healthy community forest in Thousand Oaks.

3.1 Street tree plantings.

Ensure the use of street tree plantings of appropriate species, scale and spacing in all new developments, in accordance with City tree standards.

3.2 Tree diversity.

Maintain a diversity of species and ages of trees throughout the City in order to avoid potentially unhealthy monocultures.

3.3 Tree planting.

Actively plant or replant trees in existing neighborhoods where trees are sparse or lacking.

3.4 Tree replanting.

Enhance the community forest to a level of 25% canopy coverage by planting climate-appropriate street trees, including the City's legacy oak trees, in public spaces and corridors as described in the Forestry Master Plan.

Goal C-4: Protect oak and landmark trees to maintain Thousand Oak's unique environmental character.

4.1 Protected tree preservation.

Continue to implement the City's Oak Tree and Landmark Tree Ordinances per the municipal code and the Oak Tree Preservation and Protection Guidelines.

Goal C-5: Properly manage, conserve, and protect native plant communities.

5.1 Prohibit destructive practices.

Prohibit practices such as off-road vehicle use, hunting, and trapping that are incompatible with the long-term survival and viability of resident and migratory wildlife populations.

5.2 Critical habitat protection.

As feasible, protect, restore, and enhance critical wildlife habitat resources such as movement corridors, chaparral and coastal sage scrub plant communities, surface water impoundments, streams, and springs in order to maintain the biodiversity, biological productivity, and ecological integrity of natural open space areas.

5.3 Critical habitat restoration.

Support local and regional conservation projects that will have beneficial effects on vegetation and wildlife, including the restoration and enhancement of critical habitat resources that have been degraded or disturbed.

5.4 Native landscaping and plant viability.

Utilize native, pollinator-friendly plants appropriate to the soil type and environmental conditions of the site.

5.5 Landscape design.

Encourage new development to incorporate native or regionally adaptive vegetation into landscape plans and prohibit the use of species known to be invasive according to the California Invasive Plant Inventory.

5.6 Nesting sites and foraging areas.

Foster a holistic habitat that provides nesting sites and foraging areas for native pollinators.

5.7 Discontinue anticoagulants and rodenticides.

Continue to educate the public on ecosystem impacts of using anticoagulant rodenticides and discourage the use of anticoagulant rodenticides within the City.

5.8 Public education.

Produce materials to educate the public regarding the importance of native plant and animal species and best practices for encountering these species along trails or in other recreational spaces.

Goal C-6: Protect sensitive, rare, threatened, or endangered species.

6.1 Avoidance of species disturbance.

Prioritize protection of rare and endangered species through avoidance as a first priority, utilizing other forms of mitigation only if avoidance is infeasible.

6.2 Natural space.

Preserve complete ecosystems as natural open space in order to avoid the loss of sensitive plant and animal species.

6.3 Legislation.

Support legislation that encourages and facilitates the protection of endangered, threatened, sensitive and rare species as well as their habitats and movement corridors.

6.4 Reintroduction programs.

Support regional and state programs that facilitate the reintroduction of endangered, threatened, sensitive and rare species.

Goal C-7: Connect wildlife habitat and wildlife populations.

7.1 Wildlife movement corridors.

Design urban land uses adjoining natural open space in a manner that is sensitive to the needs of wildlife and avoids or minimizes adverse impacts to wildlife movement corridors.

7.2 Habitat linkages.

Support efforts by other government agencies or non-profit organizations to acquire additional land to complete vital habitat linkages and provide access by wildlife to these resources.

7.3 Urban-wildlife education.

Educate the public on local wildlife species and their habits and provide recommendations to reduce human-wildlife conflicts.

Goal C-8: Preserve natural streams.

8.1 Stream and creek protection.

Maintain streams and creeks in as natural a state as possible and protect from the adverse effects of development.

8.2 Restoration enhancement.

Restore and enhance degraded sections of streams and creeks as opportunities arise and financial resources become available.

8.3 Regional rehabilitation.

Support regional rehabilitation efforts for the Calleguas and Malibu Creek Watersheds.

8.4 Flood control.

Use of concrete for flood control improvements in natural drainage courses should occur only when no other alternatives can be found that would maintain natural hydrological and ecological functions.

8.5 Recreational opportunities.

Incorporate recreational amenities as part of restoration improvements, such as bike paths and walking paths, when compatible with riparian corridors, wetlands, and adjacent areas.

8.6 Development review.

Review all development projects on properties that include or are adjacent to streams to ensure stream protection.

8.7 Ventura County Watershed Protection District permit.

Ensure compliance with Ventura County Watershed Protection District permitting requirements for any development proposed over, under, adjacent to, or within the boundaries of a Watershed Protection District jurisdictional red line channel.

Goal C-9: Minimize disturbance of wetlands and riparian habitat.

9.1 Wetlands and riparian habitat.

Preserve wetlands and riparian habitat by maintaining existing wetland and riparian buffers as open space to protect the community's water quality, biodiversity, and aesthetic value.

9.2 Wetland and riparian restoration.

Encourage the restoration and enhancement of degraded wetland and riparian habitats in order to conserve and protect native plant and animal species, increase biological diversity and productivity, and maintain permanent access for wildlife to surrounding open space.

Air Quality

Goal C-10: Achieve and maintain air quality that protects public health, safety, and welfare for those who live or work in the City and for visitors.

10.1 Ambient air quality.

Air quality should meet State and Federal standards, whichever are more protective, for human health.

10.2 Alternative transportation.

City actions shall seek to reduce dependency on gasoline- or diesel-powered motor vehicles by encouraging the use of alternative transportation modes and energy sources (e.g., transit, walking, bicycling) thereby reducing vehicle trips and vehicle miles traveled.

10.3 Non-vehicular pollution sources.

Reduce air pollution from non-vehicular sources, such as landscape equipment, manufacturing, power generation, and construction activity by transitioning to the use of electric equipment or low emission alternatives.

10.4 Air pollution exposure mitigation.

Minimize exposure to harmful levels of air pollution of residents and employees by reducing toxic air contaminants.

10.5 Vulnerable communities.

Avoid locating residences, schools, retirement homes, hospitals, etc. and vulnerable communities near major sources of air pollution, when feasible.

10.6 Health Risk Assessments for residential near freeways.

Require new development within 500 feet of freeways and roadways with over 100,000 vehicle trips per day that include residential uses or other sensitive receptors prepare a health risk assessment (HRA) to identify potential health risk impacts. Based on the results of the HRA, the City shall require mitigation measures as necessary, to reduce potential exposure to toxic air contaminants.

10.7 Construction Health Risk Assessments.

Require new development that is within 1,000 feet of sensitive receptors, will take longer than 2 months, and or does not utilize construction equipment that is USEPA Tier 4, fitted with Level 3 Diesel Particulate Filter, or uses alternative fuel to prepare a construction health risk assessment (HRA) to identify potential health risk impacts. Based on the results of the HRA, the City shall require mitigation measures as necessary, to reduce potential exposure to toxic air contaminants.

Cultural and Historic Resources

Goal C-11: Protect historical and culturally significant resources, which contribute to the community's sense of identity.

11.1 Cultural resource identification and recognition.

Identify and, as appropriate, recognize significant cultural resources by identifying significant cultural resources with landmark designation plaques, directional signage, self-guided tours, programs, and events.

11.2 Cultural resource preservation.

Require that new development preserve or mitigate impacts to significant historic, archaeological, and paleontological resources.

11.3 Archeological site protection.

The preferred method for protecting any previously recorded archeological site shall be by deed restriction as permanent "open space", in order to prevent any future development or use that might otherwise adversely impact these resources.

11.4 Native American consultation.

Conduct Native American consultation consistent with most recent regulations when new development is proposed in culturally sensitive areas.

11.5 Historic resource management.

Maintain, rehabilitate, and reuse significant historic resources, as feasible.

11.6 Archaeological site confidentiality.

Maintain a list of the locations of previously recorded archaeological sites confidential unless the release of such information to the public is specifically authorized by local Native American organizations or other entities with jurisdiction over such sites.

11.7 Resource stakeholder engagement.

Decisions pertaining to the disposition of archaeological,

paleontological, historical, and cultural resources shall be made in concert with recognized public agencies, groups or individuals having jurisdiction, expertise, or interest in these matters, including but not limited to the State Office of Historic Preservation, Ventura County Cultural Heritage Board, and local Native American organizations, and affected property owners.

11.8 Public and private involvement.

Collaborate with private and public entities whose goals are to protect and preserve historic resources and important cultural resources.