

## CHAPTER V

# LAND USE

### GOALS:

*The City of Brisbane will...*

*Preserve the Mountain for its own sake and as the symbol of the unique character and identity of the City;*

*Incorporate and reflect the natural environment as an integral part of land use;*

*Celebrate diversity as essential to the physical character of the City;*

*Incorporate a mix of land uses to best serve its citizens; and*

*Design infrastructure and public facilities to be efficient, cost-effective and to contribute to the cohesion and character of the community.*



# LAND USE

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## CHAPTER V

### LAND USE

Question: In your opinion, what is the most important problem that Brisbane residents will have to face and try to solve over the next ten years?

Respondents: "Development of lands currently vacant, to make certain they contribute and not diminish the quality of life."

"Managing growth to keep our independence."

"The Mountain. Save it."

*General Plan Issues Questionnaire (GP-5)*

Citizens who know and love the City will often explain that to understand Brisbane it is necessary to read the oral histories. A look to the past makes it clear that the City was incorporated as a defense against development that would have destroyed San Bruno Mountain and the quality of life of the community that had become established there. The passion for self-determination remains one of the most essential values of this community. This Land Use chapter begins with a look at the history of land use and subdivision patterns in the planning area.

This update of the General Plan provides an opportunity to reaffirm that Brisbane will control its destiny. If development is to occur, this community will set the standards. And the basis for these standards are the land uses and policies in the General Plan.

A General Plan usually includes an illustration of the general location of land uses on a map. Figures LU-1 and LU-2 constitute the Land Use Map for the Brisbane General Plan. These land uses are categorized into land use designations, and this chapter includes a narrative description of each land use designation shown on the Land Use Map. Table 1 within this chapter describes the density and intensity of future planned land uses. The chapter closes with land use policies and programs, which describe how these land use designations are to be implemented. The policies in this section for the most part apply on a city-wide basis. Land use policies and programs specific to each of the subareas are found in Chapter XII.

#### **V.1 HISTORY OF LAND USE AND SUBDIVISION**

Land uses in Brisbane are well-established in many subareas of the City. In others, remainders of prior uses provide either opportunities or constraints to contemporary uses of the land. Land subdivision patterns in Brisbane have varied from one subarea to the next, depending on land

use, topography, property ownership, and zoning regulations affecting lot sizes. The following is a brief chronological history of land use in the City, followed by an overview of the City's subdivision patterns.

### **Land Use History**

Although the earliest recorded land use in the area that is now the City of Brisbane was ranching, archaeological remains indicate that this land was once a home to the Costanoan Tribe of Native Americans. The Guadalupe Valley, within which Central Brisbane, Crocker Park and the Northeast Ridge are now located, was part of the 1838 Mexican land grant known as *Rancho Canada de Guadalupe la Visitacion y Rodeo Viego*. Charles Crocker purchased most of this land grant in 1884 and called it Visitacion Ranch. In 1895, a section of the ranch was leased as a quarry, which operates to this day.

In the early 1900s, a small amount of urban development could be found in the area of Bayshore Boulevard and Geneva Avenue, in what is now the vicinity of the Northwest Bayshore subarea. The 7-Mile House, a bar and grill established in 1853 and still operating today, served travelers along Bayshore Boulevard, which was one of the main thoroughfares connecting San Francisco with points south. A gas manufacturing plant, which evolved into what is now the Pacific Gas & Electric Company's Martin Service Center and Substation, operated from 1905 to 1916 in the area of Bayshore and Geneva, now a part of Daly City. Across Bayshore Boulevard on what is now known as the Baylands subarea, the Southern Pacific Railroad maintenance and switching yard was built atop rubble from the 1906 San Francisco Earthquake that was used to fill a portion of the Bay. The use of the yard began to decline in the 1960s and was mostly idle when Southern Pacific sold the yard and surrounding land and structures in 1989 to Universal Paragon Corporation. The land had featured a number of substantial industrial structures only a few of which remain, including the Roundhouse, one of the few of its kind still standing and which is designated a historic resource on the National Register of Historic Places.

Residential development in what is now Brisbane also began to appear early in the century. The area of the Guadalupe Valley that is now Central Brisbane experienced a small amount of residential construction between 1908 and 1929. The most notable of the early residences in what was then known as the "City of Visitacion" is the Allemand Hotel, currently an apartment building at the corner of San Bruno Avenue and Mariposa Street. In 1929 the name of the settlement was changed to Brisbane. In the 1930s, during the Depression, the residential area boomed due to its affordability, with a commercial core developing along Visitacion Avenue. This residential area has continued to grow to the present and, to a limited degree, has extended into the lowest lying portions of the largely vacant Brisbane Acres.

The 1930s also saw an intensification of garbage dumping into the Bay in the portion of the Baylands subarea east of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks. Starting from the north, dumping continued southward until it was finally stopped in the 1960s at the edge of what is now the Brisbane Lagoon. The Recology complex of refuse transport and recycling facilities, located in the Beatty Subarea at the Brisbane-San Francisco border, is an active successor to this past use. Since the 1940s, a variety of uses has developed atop the oldest part of the landfill, including lumber yards and warehouse buildings.

Although Bayshore Boulevard was a major thoroughfare connecting San Francisco with points south until Highway 101 was constructed in 1954, only limited development occurred along its frontages. In the 1940s, a small amount of residential development occurred along the west side of southern Bayshore Boulevard in the subarea now known as Southwest Bayshore. In the decades that followed, some commercial uses, such as retail, service and warehousing, intermixed with the residential uses, including a mobile home park.

The 1960s saw a flurry of industrial development, which continued into the early 1980s. In 1959, construction of Crocker Park began on the grazing lands of the floor of the Guadalupe Valley and adjacent wetlands, just north of Central Brisbane; the final phase of construction in Crocker Park was completed in the early 1980s, and Crocker Park was annexed to the City in 1983. In the 1960s, VWR Scientific first occupied a large office/warehouse building on the east side of southern Bayshore Boulevard; a second office/warehouse complex was added in the Southeast Bayshore subarea in 1981. First subdivided in 1969, the Brisbane Industrial Park, consisting mostly of metal buildings for warehouse, office and manufacturing uses, was constructed along Industrial Way in what is now the westerly edge of the Baylands subarea. The late 1960s also saw the development on the Baylands of the Southern Pacific Pipelines Brisbane Terminal, located on the leveled portion of Visitacion Point, with a privately constructed extension of Tunnel Avenue including an overcrossing connecting to Bayshore Boulevard. Commonly referred to as the "Tank Farm," the facility and adjacent buildings provide fuel distribution services for the Peninsula and San Francisco International Airport.

Office and commercial development increased in the 1980s. Construction of the Brisbane Village shopping center began in 1979 at the entrance to Central Brisbane. This single structure shopping center contains approximately 20 storefronts and office spaces occupied mostly by retail businesses and professional offices. East of Highway 101 at Sierra Point, several buildings of the Sierra Point Office Park and the Brisbane Marina were constructed during the 1980s on a peninsula of engineered landfill that was closed in 1972.

In 1989, a multi-phased residential project, including open space for conserved habitat, was approved for the Northeast Ridge of San Bruno Mountain. The project includes 499 residential units and was completed in phases from the late 1990's through 2015. In 1989, the Wildlife Conservation Board, a division of the State Department of Fish and Game, purchased Owl and Buckeye Canyons as an ecological reserve. They remain essentially in their natural state. Brisbane citizens, staff and local environmental organizations worked with the Trust for Public Land to accomplish this acquisition, which added to the permanent open space established by the creation of San Bruno Mountain State and County Regional Park in the late 1970s.

### **History of Subdivision Patterns**

The following describes the history of the subdivision of land in Brisbane by subarea. Following adoption of the General Plan, zoning and subdivision regulations will be reviewed to determine if amendments should be made to conform to General Plan policy.

*Sierra Point.* The Sierra Point subarea was master planned and subdivided between 1981 and 1987, which resulted in the current configuration of typically 5 to 10 acre parcels. This pattern is consistent with the 1 acre minimum parcel size requirement which has been in effect since 1984.

*Southeast Bayshore.* The Southeast Bayshore subarea was subdivided in 1979 into two parcels, one 4 acres in size and the other 11 acres. This is consistent with the 10,000 sq. ft. minimum parcel size requirement in effect since at least 1969.

*Southwest Bayshore.* The steep hillsides of the Southwest Bayshore subarea were first sold off as typically 11,900 sq. ft. unrecorded lots in the 1930s. Each of the original lots fronted on what was then known as the Bayshore Highway, hence their name, the "Highway Lots." Subsequent lot subdivisions reduced some of these lots to areas as small as approximately 3,000 sq. ft. Regulations, which date back at least to 1969, established a 7,500 sq. ft. minimum lot size in the subarea.

*Brisbane Acres.* The Brisbane Acres subarea originated as an unrecorded subdivision in the 1930s. As the name implies, unrecorded lots were typically an acre in size. Subsequent land transfers by deed description resulted in individual ownerships, some with areas of less than 5,000 sq. ft. In 1980, regulations were adopted that set a 20,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size. Parcel maps have been recorded for some of the previously unrecorded lots to allow for development. These are in the lower Brisbane Acres areas, close to public infrastructure.

*Central Brisbane.* In 1908, the American Realty Company subdivided the area that is now Central Brisbane into small residential lots. These lots were typically 25 feet wide and 100 feet deep, but in many instances lot dimensions were adjusted to fit the subarea's bowl-like terrain. Many of the lots were subsequently developed in pairs, some as three or more lots combined, and a few as one and a half lots. The current regulations requiring 5,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size for residential districts and 2,500 sq. ft. minimum for non-residential date back at least as far as the City's original Zoning Ordinance, adopted in 1969.

*Parkside Area.* The Parkside Area is an approximately 25-acre area located between Crocker Industrial Park and Central Brisbane subareas. The Parkside Area is comprised of 11 properties developed with neighborhood commercial, retail, and office, public facilities and parks, and trade commercial uses. Vital community assets in the Parkside Area include the City's two primary entrances via Valley Drive and Old County Road, as well as the Brisbane Village Shopping Center, Community Park, Brisbane Skate Park, and public basketball courts. The Parkside Area was established by the Parkside at Brisbane Village Precise Plan, the culmination of two-year community visioning and planning process from 2015-2017 to implement the City's 2015-2022 Housing Element, which designated sites within the Parkside Area subarea for potential residential development.

*Crocker Park.* Most of the Crocker Park subarea was subdivided in three phases of the Park's development, recorded in 1959, 1965 and 1968. The subdivision of North Hill Drive followed in 1980. Subsequent parcel splits and mergers have resulted in lots ranging in size from 0.56 to 13.23 acres. Current regulations require a 10,000 sq. ft. minimum lot size.

*Northeast Ridge.* The Northeast Ridge remained unsubdivided until it was recorded as a single parcel in 1975. The vesting tentative subdivision map for the planned development approved in 1989, as subsequently modified, divided the subarea into single-family residential lots (an average of 7,400 sq. ft. each), clusters of condominiums and townhouses (totaling approximately 39 acres), and large tracts of open space.



Northwest Bayshore. The existing irregular pattern of large parcels in the Northwest Bayshore subarea can be traced back to subdivision maps recorded as early as 1915. The subarea is built out with the PG&E Martin substation and 7 Mile House properties.

Guadalupe Hills. The Guadalupe Hills subarea was part of the Northwest Bayshore subarea until 2018, at which time it was designated as a separate General Plan subarea to reflect its different character, as vacant sites, separate from the PG&E substation to the north. It shares the same early subdivision history with Northwest Bayshore.

The Baylands. The Baylands subarea is largely unsubdivided, a vestige of the once extensive holdings of the Southern Pacific Transportation Company. Major portions of these holdings located in Brisbane are now owned by Universal Paragon Corporation. The Brisbane Industrial Park portion of the Baylands was established via subdivision in 1969. Lot sizes ranged from 0.23 to 5.663 acres, although subsequent consolidations of ownership have increased the average building site size. The Industrial Park is now under the ownership of UPC and is slated for redevelopment as part of the larger Baylands specific plan. There are parcels in other ownerships scattered throughout the subarea, ranging from approximately 5,000 sq. ft. to 230,000 sq. ft. in size.

Beatty. The Beatty subarea is a haphazard collection of parcels, reflecting a varied history of ownerships. Parcel sizes are generally from 0.176 to 7.043 acres. Most of the properties within this subarea are under the ownership of Recology.

Owl and Buckeye Canons. The Owl and Buckeye Canyons subarea consists of four parcels of land sold by the owners of the Quarry to the California Department of Fish and Game in 1989.

Quarry. The Quarry subarea is divided into four parcels ranging in size from approximately 1.5 to 135 acres.

## V.2 THE GENERAL PLAN LAND USE MAP AND LAND USE DESIGNATIONS

### **The General Plan Land Use Map**

The land use map for the General Plan (Figures LU-1 and LU-2) illustrates the general location of the land use designations given to both public and private properties within the General Plan planning area. For purposes of clarity, the map has been divided into the 14 subareas described earlier in this text. The land use designations used in the map are described below.

### **Land Use Designations**

The descriptions of the General Plan land use designations that follow are broadly drafted, as befits the intent of a General Plan. Specificity of land use by district is the province of the City's Zoning Ordinance. After adoption of a General Plan, the zoning map and zoning district regulations are analyzed to determine whether changes are necessary to conform to the adopted General Plan land use designations and policies.

#### *Commercial/Retail/Office Designations*

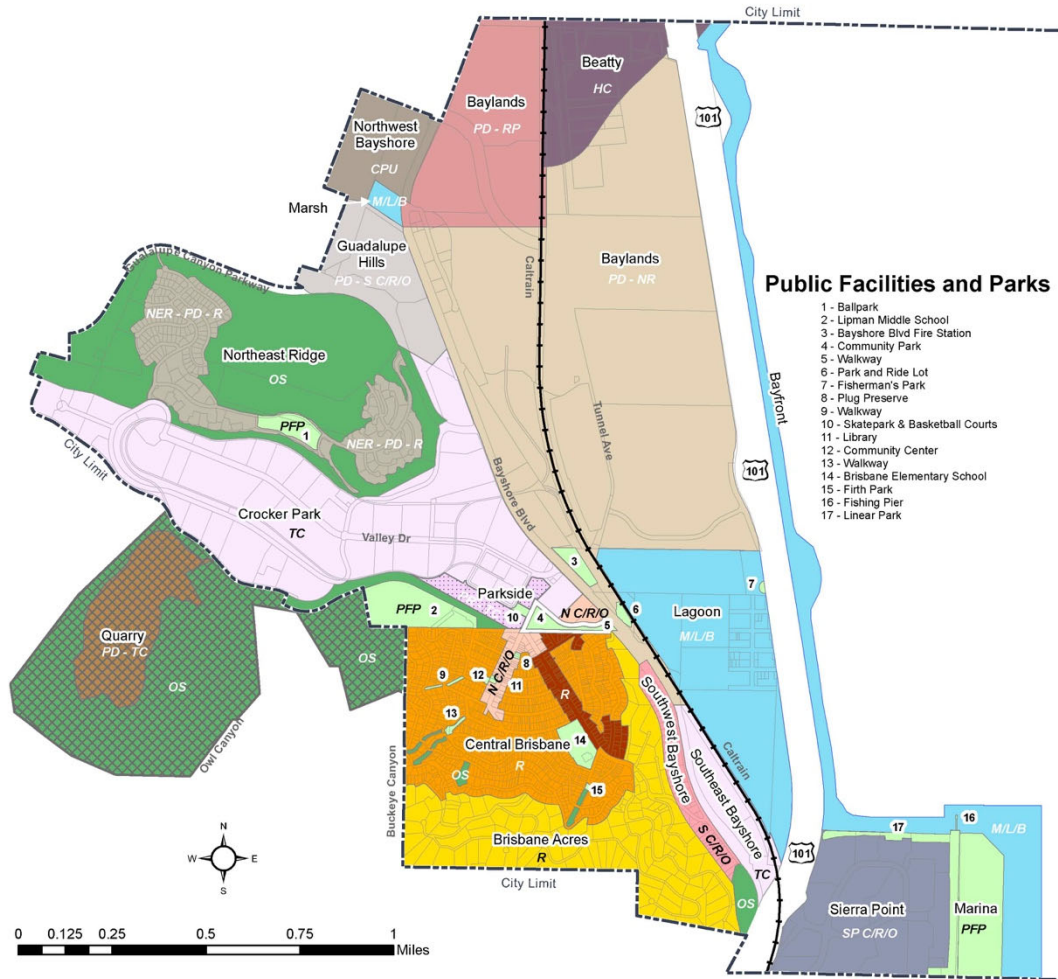
*Neighborhood Commercial/Retail/Office (NCRO)* designates a subarea devoted to a range of local retail and service uses, including shops, restaurants, medical, professional and administrative offices and other uses of the same general character. Public and semipublic facilities may be located under this designation. Residential uses may be permitted conditionally in implementing zoning districts. Portions of Central Brisbane and Parkside Area subareas are designated NCRO in the General Plan.

*Subregional/Commercial/Retail/Office(SCRO)* designates a subarea devoted to subregional retail uses, personal services, restaurants and offices. Public and semi-public facilities and educational institutions may be located under this designation. Commercial recreation, residential uses, warehouse and distribution facilities, research and development, and light industrial uses may be permitted conditionally in implementing zoning districts. The Guadalupe Hills and Southwest Bayshore subareas are designated SCRO. The Guadalupe Hills also has a Planned Development designation, that includes a Specific Plan requirement.

*Sierra Point Commercial/Retail/Office (SPCRO)* represents a subarea devoted to commercial enterprises, encompassing a wide range of uses, as outlined in the Development Agreement for Sierra Point. Such uses may include, but not be limited to, retail uses, personal services, medical, professional and administrative offices, corporate headquarters, hotels, conference centers and cultural facilities, commercial recreation, restaurants, and other uses of a commercial character. Public and semi-public facilities and educational institutions may be located under this designation.

*Heavy Commercial (HC)* provides for bulk sales, offices, meeting halls, vehicle storage and equipment maintenance. It also allows outside storage of vehicles and equipment. No materials storage, other than that associated with bulk sales and no processing of materials are permitted. Subareas designated Heavy Commercial are required to have an adopted specific plan to guide development in the area. The Beatty subarea is designated HC in the General Plan.

# Figure LU - 1: Land Use Diagram



**Residential**

- Brisbane Acres Residential (0-2 DU/Acre) *R*
- Central Brisbane Residential (2.5-14 DU/Acre) *R*
- Central Brisbane Residential (15-30 DU/Acre) *R*

**Mixed Use**

- Neighborhood Commercial/Retail/Office *N C/R/O*
- Parkside Residential - Trade Commercial (20-28 DU/Acre)\* *PR - TC*
- Subregional Commercial/Retail/Office *S C/R/O*

**Planned Development**

- Quarry Planned Development - Trade Commercial *PD - TC*
- Guadalupe Hills Planned Development - Subregional Commercial/Retail/Office *PD-S C/R/O*
- Baylands Planned Development - NonResidential *PD - NR*
- Baylands Planned Development - Residential Permitted *PD - RP*
- Northeast Ridge Planned Development - Residential\*\* *NER - PD - R*  
(Landmark: 5 DU/Acre, Viewpoint: 10 DU/Acre, Altamar: 15 DU/Acre)

**Other**

- Commercial Public Utilities *CPU*
- Public Facilities and Parks *PPF*
- Open Space *OS*
- Marsh/Lagoon/Bayfront *M/L/B*

**Commercial**

- Sierra Point Commercial/Retail/Office *SP C/R/O*
- Trade Commercial *TC*
- Heavy Commercial *HC*

- Brisbane City Limits
- Sphere of Influence Outside Brisbane City Limit

\* Parkside residential density is by Precise Plan, as an overlay district within Crocker Park.  
 \*\* Northeast Ridge residential density is as established in the Planned Development Permit  
 DU/Acre = Dwelling Units per Acre



September 5, 2019

# Figure LU - 2: Detail Central Brisbane

**Residential**

- Brisbane Acres Residential (0-2 DU/Acre) *R*
- Central Brisbane Residential (2.5-14 DU/Acre) *R*
- Central Brisbane Residential (15-30 DU/Acre) *R*

**Mixed Use**

- Neighborhood Commercial/Retail/Office *N C/R/O*
- Parkside Residential - Trade Commercial (20-28 DU/Acre)\* *PR - TC*

**Commercial**

- Trade Commercial *TC*

**Planned Development**

- Baylands Planned Development - NonResidential *PD - NR*

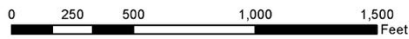
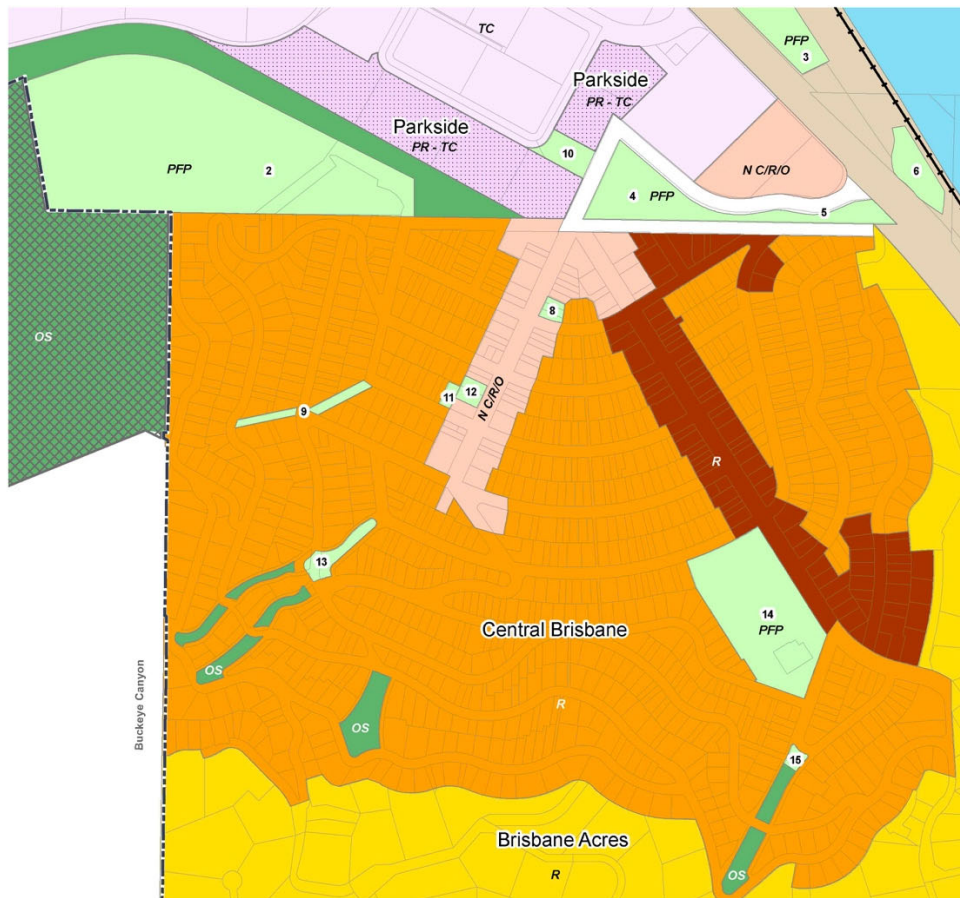
**Other**

- Public Facilities and Parks *PFP*
- Open Space *OS*
- Marsh/Lagoon/Bayfront *M/L/B*

**Public Facilities and Parks**

- 2 - Lipman Middle School
- 3 - Bayshore Blvd Fire Station
- 4 - Community Park
- 5 - Walkway
- 6 - Park and Ride Lot
- 8 - Plug Preserve
- 9 - Walkway
- 10 - Skatepark & Basketball Courts
- 11 - Library
- 12 - Community Center
- 13 - Walkway
- 14 - Brisbane Elementary School
- 15 - Firth Park

- Brisbane City Limits
- Sphere of Influence Outside Brisbane City Limit



September 9, 2019

Marsh/Lagoon/Bayfront (M/L/B) are aquatic areas designated by type.

The following subareas contain designated aquatic areas:

Northwest Bayshore: Marsh  
Baylands: Lagoon, Bayfront  
Beatty: Bayfront  
Sierra Point: Bayfront

Open Space (OS) designates properties that have been purchased, given or offered for dedication to a public agency for open space use or conservation purposes and are essentially unimproved by urban structures. The following subareas contain open space designations:

Central Brisbane: Costanos and Firth Canyons  
Northeast Ridge: Conserved Habitat  
Owl and Buckeye Canyons: Ecological Preserve  
Quarry: Conserved Habitat  
Southwest Bayshore: Remainder of the Bayshore Boulevard right-of-way

Planned Development (PD) designates subareas that are primarily vacant and that present unique development constraints. Subareas designated PD may be combined with other land use designations and/or site specific uses may be included in this Plan to guide the development of implementing zoning district regulations. Subareas designated PD require a specific plan and environmental impact report prior to any development of the property. A minimum of 25% of the surface land of any subarea designated Planned Development shall be in open space and/or open area.

There are three subareas designated PD:

Guadalupe Hills: Planned Development-Subregional Commercial/Retail/Office

This subarea was established in 2018. See the SCRO designation for more information regarding future land uses in this area.

Baylands: Planned Development

The July 2018 amendment to the General Plan approved by the voters via passage of Measure JJ in November 2018 (Case GP-1-18) modified the General Plan by defining permitted uses and development intensities for the Baylands as noted below.

The Baylands subarea provides for a transit-oriented variety of residential, employment- and revenue-generating uses; natural resource management; and public and semi-public facilities. A range of 1,800-2,200 dwelling units (the upper range of which shall not exceed all units permitted under the State density bonus or other law providing for affordable housing), up to 6.5 million square feet of new commercial development, with an additional 500,000 square feet of hotel development is permitted. Non-residential development shall be distributed both to the west and to the east of the rail line. Residential uses shall be permitted only in the northwest quadrant of the site bounded by Bayshore Boulevard on the west, the City and County of San Francisco on the north, the Caltrain rail line on the east, and the line of Main Street (extended)

on the south as shown on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. Additional standards for the future development of the Baylands and roundhouse rehabilitation are described further in the Baylands subarea section of the General Plan.

Quarry: Planned Development - Trade Commercial

The following mix of uses would be considered under the *Planned Development-Trade Commercial* designation for the Quarry subarea:

- Open Space
- Long-term Health Care Facilities
- Educational Facilities
- Commercial Recreation
- Trade Commercial
- Research and Development

Single-family housing is not included due to safety and environmental sensitivities. The need to further examine the environmental characteristics of this subarea prior to the establishment of trade commercial uses is set forth in the following policy:

**Policy LU.1 Require the highest level of environmental analysis of the Quarry subarea to disclose the characteristics of the land and its suitability to accommodate new uses.**

Public Facilities and Parks (PFP) are outdoor spaces and buildings owned or leased by public agencies, including City parks, police and fire stations, schools and libraries. This designation does not include infrastructure.

The following subareas contain Public Facilities and Parks:

- Sierra Point: Marina, Fishing Pier, Linear Park
- Central Brisbane: Brisbane Elementary School and grounds, Lipman Intermediate School and grounds, Firth Park, San Bruno Avenue Fire Station Site, Community Center, Library and Park, Bicentennial and other Walkways, Plug Preserve
- Parkside: Community Park, skate park, basketball courts
- Northeast Ridge: School/ Park Site
- Baylands: Bayshore Boulevard Fire Station, Park and Ride Lot, Fisherman's Park

Residential (R) includes single- and multi-family areas and planned residential developments.

The subareas designated residential and the range of residential densities in the General Plan are:

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Brisbane Acres:   | 0 - 2 units per acre                                    |
| Central Brisbane: | 2 1/2 - 14 units per acre and<br>15 - 30 units per acre |
| Northeast Ridge:  | 6.23 units per acre                                     |

As discussed throughout this section there are several other subareas not formally designated residential which allow for residential uses. The Baylands subarea allows for a range of 1,800-2,200 residential units in the northwesterly corner of the subarea. The Parkside Residential and Trade Commercial (PRTC) subarea allows for a minimum of 228 residential units. Residential uses are also permitted in subareas designated NCRO and SCRO.

Commercial/Public Utilities (C/P-U) represents a mix of commercial and public utility uses. It includes uses such as utility substation facilities and associated warehouse, maintenance and office uses as well as private commercial uses.

Trade Commercial (TC) represents a mix of commercial uses including warehouses, distribution facilities, offices, retail uses, restaurants, commercial recreation, personal services, as well as light industrial, research and development, and uses of a similar character. Public and semi-public facilities and educational institutions may be located under this designation. Repair and maintenance services, such as auto body repair shops, may be conditionally permitted in the implementing zoning districts. In such districts, certain individual or groups of uses may predominate, thus distinguishing the districts one from the other. In the General Plan, Crocker Park and Southeast Bayshore are designated TC. Also see Parkside Residential and Trade Commercial designations.

Parkside Residential and Trade Commercial (PRTC) includes single-family and multi-family residential developments and trade commercial uses, as allowed under the Trade Commercial land use designation. For the Parkside Area subarea, the densities applied will result in a minimum of 228 dwelling units. Residential development in the Parkside Area is subject to compliance with the development standards and design guidelines established by the Parkside at Brisbane Village Precise Plan, adopted by the City Council in 2017.

The range of residential density for the Parkside Residential and Trade Commercial designation is 20-28 units per acre.

### **V.3 DENSITY AND INTENSITY STANDARDS**

The Government Code requires that a General Plan include an indication of density and intensity of use for the land use designations in the Plan. The language of the Code reads:

GC 65302(a): The land use element shall include a statement of the standards of population density and building intensity recommended *for* the various districts and other territory covered by the plan.

These standards represent overall policy objectives that are implemented through the zoning district regulations. General Plan standards represent broad ranges, whereas zoning regulations establish specific development standards, such as height limits, setbacks, coverage and site area, that must fall within the General Plan range. After adoption of a General Plan, the zoning districts are reviewed and amended, as necessary, to bring them into consistency and best reflect the policy direction of the Plan.

## **Population Density**

The populations that can be expected in an area on a predictable, daily basis for the land use designations in this Plan are represented in Table 1. For the residential designations in the General Plan, population is given in terms of number of residents and for nonresidential designations, by number of employees. The residential density is based on the number of housing units per acre and the average household size identified in the 1990 Census.<sup>(1)</sup> For non-residential land use designations, the number of employees per 1,000 square feet of floor area is used. These numbers represent common standards employed for economic analysis.<sup>(2)</sup> Because the General Plan land use designations contain a range of uses, employee population density is expressed in ranges.

## **Building Intensity**

The range of building intensity for the various residential land use designations in the General Plan is listed in Table 1. The intensity is expressed in terms of units per acre.

Building intensity for non-residential designations is expressed in a floor area ratio (FAR) formula. The formula relates the square footage within a building to the acreage upon which it sits. A floor area ratio is a very general indicator which must be further defined in zoning district regulations before any development can occur.

The Baylands, Quarry and Guadalupe Hills Subareas are designated Planned Development because these subareas require extensive site investigation and planning before the most beneficial development patterns can be determined. The policies in Chapter XII require, for each of these subareas, a specific plan and environmental impact report before any development can occur. Until these studies are completed and new information evaluated that can be used to refine the FAR standards, the FARs given in Table 1 represent standards that are comparable to those of subareas with similar uses and environmental constraints.

Specific plans for the Baylands shall distinguish between the areas north and south of the Bayshore Basin drainage channel as shown in Table 1 and further described below:

**Policy LU.2: Development south of the Bayshore Basin drainage channel shall maintain a low profile, permitting low or mid-rise buildings, not to exceed six stories in height, in order to preserve the existing views of San Francisco and San Francisco Bay as seen from Central Brisbane, and to maximize the amount of landscape and open space or open area in this portion of the subarea.**

It should be noted that the intent of the FARs given for the Baylands in Table 1 is to accommodate diversity in the height and intensity of structures in order to encourage interesting, flexible and variable development. In no event shall the FARs shown in Table 1 be interpreted as permitting the maximum intensities to be established throughout the subarea. The City will expect specific plans to emphasize intensities well below those figures. See Program BL.4.b for further direction addressing the design of buildings and building groups in the Baylands.



**TABLE 1  
GENERAL PLAN: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND DENSITY/INTENSITY BY SUBAREA**

SUBAREA	LAND USE DESIGNATION	POPULATION DENSITY	NUMBER OF UNITS/ MAXIMUM FLOOR AREA RATIO	MINIMUM OPEN SPACE/ OPEN AREA
1. Sierra Point	Sierra Point Commercial/Retail/Office	1.66 - 3.22 E/1,000 1.65 per hotel room	4.8 FAR	Development Agreement
	Bayfront	0	0	100%
2. Southeast Bayshore	Trade Commercial	1.23 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.0 FAR	Per Zoning Requirements
3. Southwest Bayshore	Subregional Commercial/Retail/Office	1.66 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.8 FAR	Per Zoning Requirements
	Open Space	0	0	0
4. Brisbane Acres	Residential	0 - 4.48 ppa	0 - 2 units/acre	40% per HCP + per Zoning Requirements
5. Central Brisbane	Residential	5.6 - 31.36 ppa	2 1/2 - 14 units/acre	Per Zoning Requirements
		33.6 - 67.2 ppa	15 - 30 units/acre	Per Zoning Requirements
	Neighborhood Commercial/ Retail/Office	1.66 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.4 FAR	Per Zoning Requirements
	Open Space	0	0	100%

**TABLE 1: GENERAL PLAN: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND DENSITY/INTENSITY BY SUBAREA**  
**Page 2**

6. Parkside Area	Parkside Residential and Trade Commercial, Trade Commercial, Neighborhood Commercial/Retail/Office, Public Facilities and Parks	44.8 – 62.72 ppa 1.23 – 3.22 E/1,000	20 - 28 units/acre 2.0- 2.4 FAR	Per Zoning Requirements
7. Owl and Buckeye Canyons	Open Space	0	0	100%
8. Quarry	Planned Development - Trade Commercial	1.23 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.0 FAR	25% minimum
	Open Space	0	0	100%
9. Crocker Park	Trade Commercial	1.23 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.0 FAR	Per Zoning Requirements
10. Guadalupe Hills	Planned Development - Subregional Commercial Retail / Office	1.66 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.8 FAR	Per Specific Plan ,25% minimum
	Marsh	0	0	100%
	Open Space	0	0	100%
11. Northeast Ridge	Residential	11.2 – 33.6 ppa	5 - 15 units/acre*	Per Development Plans
	Open Space	0	0	100%
12. Northwest Bayshore	Commercial/Public Utilities	1.66 - 3.22 E/1,000	2.8 FAR	Per Zoning Requirements

**TABLE 1: GENERAL PLAN: LAND USE DESIGNATIONS AND DENSITY/INTENSITY BY SUBAREA**

Page 3

11. Baylands	Planned Development -	4,032-4,928 residents 1.23 - 3.22 E/1,000	1,800-2,200 dwelling units Increase of up to 6.5 million square feet of non-residential building area with an additional 500,000 square feet of hotel development south of channel** 0-2.4 FARnorth of channel** 0-4.8 FAR	25% minimum
	Bayfront	0	0	100%
	Lagoon	0	0	100%
12. Beatty	Heavy Commercial	0 - 1.23 E/1,000	0 - 1.0 FAR	Per Specific Plan
	Bayfront	0	0	100%

ppa = persons per gross acre

E/1,000 = employees per 1,000 s.f. of building floor area

\* 125 single family, and 160 townhouses approved and built.

\*\* See Policy LU.2.

\*\*\* Minimum open space/open area in Crocker Park is per zoning requirements, except the Technology Park north of Guadalupe Canyon Parkway is also part of the San Bruno Mountain Habitat Conservation Plan (HCP) and future site modifications are to be evaluated for consistency with the HCP.

## V.4 LAND USE POLICIES

*Question: What do you like most about living in Brisbane:*

*Respondent: "I like the "touch of country in the City" atmosphere. I like the naturalness of the canyons in which we live--seeing the beauty of the Mountain at all hours...The quietness of Brisbane, its peace, are beautiful. The community is close, vital and neighborly. Care and concern about the type of development, building codes and quality of life is important ... Let's uphold a strong standard, high quality of life."*

*General Plan Issues Questionnaire (GP-5)*

*The combination of land uses, topography, natural features, subdivision patterns, streets, buildings, landscape, open areas and open spaces makes up Brisbane's physical character. The following pages contain policies and programs pertaining to both the mix of land uses and the physical character of the community. Policies are grouped under six headings: General Principles, Bay and Mountain Setting, Nature and Character of Development, Open Space and Open Areas, Streets, and Subdivision Patterns.*

### **General Principles**

***Policy LU.3 Establish a mix of land uses that best serves the needs of the community.***

*Program LU.3.a: When evaluating land uses, consider whether a use would result in adverse impacts on existing and proposed land uses nearby, and whether those impacts can be mitigated.*

***Policy LU.4 Integrate physical, social, environmental and financial elements of the community for the benefit of current and future residents.***

***Policy LU.5 Establish a mix of uses with a diversified economic base to maintain and increase tax revenues and contribute to the City's ability to provide services.***

***Policy LU.6 Adopt development standards which protect and enhance the quality of life in Brisbane.***

*Program LU.6a: When drafting development standards, consider preserving a sense of openness in the design of structures and sites and the access to sky and sunlight for both new construction and renovation projects.*

**Policy LU.7 Enhance communications and information sharing with adjacent jurisdictions at early stages of project development in order to address issues of mutual concern.**

**Bay and Mountain Setting**

**Policy LU.8 Acknowledge the mountain setting and the proximity to the Bay as central factors in forming the physical character of the City.**

*Program LU.8.a: In making land use decisions, consider the proximity of open space on San Bruno Mountain and public views of and access to the Bay as issues to be addressed.*

**Policy LU.9 Preserve the ridgelines and hilltops in their open state.**

*Program LU.9.a: Prohibit land use changes that would result in development that would break the natural ridgeline.*

*Program LU.9.b: Adopt hillside development standards that protect against ridgeline development through regulation of the siting of structures, location of access, landscape requirements and other pertinent factors.*

**Policy LU.10 Respect the topography of the Mountain in design and construction.**

*Program LU.10.a: In conjunction with land use development applications, encourage options that minimize grading and transformation of the landform and fit comfortably with the topography.*

**Policy LU.11 In the context of respecting private property rights, make every effort to preserve and enhance public views of the Mountain and the Bay.**

*Program LU.11.a: Identify and map vistas and view corridors of community-wide value to be preserved and enhanced.*

*Program LU.11.b: Consider amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to provide for site plan review to assure that identified vistas and public view corridors remain accessible for public enjoyment. The review should evaluate building placement, height and bulk.*

*Program LU.11.c: In reevaluating the tree protection ordinance and landscaping requirements, consider the trade-off between desirability of foliage versus the preservation of views and access to sunlight.*

## **Nature and Character of Development**

The diversity of structures in Brisbane is central to the existing physical character of the City. It is a reflection of a City that developed lot by lot, of many different hands building to meet individual needs over the years. It is in the nature of cities that structures are built, changed, demolished and rebuilt as the years go by, and that demographic changes, economic factors, safety standards and personal preference affect the size, scale and appearance of development, as well as building codes and zoning standards.

The following policies emphasize Brisbane's desire to retain and continue to encourage diversity and individual expression as changes occur in the built environment, while encouraging quality construction and the upgrading and on-going maintenance of existing structures.

### **Policy LU.12 Retain diversity of development and individual expression in residential and commercial development, especially in Central Brisbane.**

*Program LU.12.a: Review the R and C-2 District regulations to ascertain if amendments would help preserve the diversity of existing development.*

*Program LU.12.b: Consider amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit issuance of a building permit for a single family dwelling on a lot of record when the design is essentially the same as that on any immediately adjacent lot.*

### **Policy LU.13 Respect Brisbane's vernacular architectural heritage.**

### **Policy LU.14 Provide clear performance standards in the Municipal Code for the physical character of all land use developments on private property.**

*Program LU.14.a: Consider amendments to the Zoning Ordinance which contain clear and defined standards to protect creativity and diversity in design while addressing issues of height, scale, mass and articulation.*

*Program LU.14.b: Review existing height limits in existing land use districts to determine whether current regulations result in structures appropriate in height and scale to the physical character of the City.*

*Program LU.14.c: Review the residential parking requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to determine their effect on the height, mass and scale of structures and grading implications and whether amendments to the Code should be considered.*

*Program LU.14.d Establish height limits for new zoning districts, taking into consideration the geology and topography of the area, as well as impacts to adjacent uses.*

*Program LU.14.e: Establish clear and defined performance standards in the Zoning Ordinance for buildings and signs visible from the hillsides of Central Brisbane. Standards should address light and glare, the treatment of roofs and the screening of mechanical equipment.*

*Program LU.14.f: Consider amendments to the Zoning Ordinance to establish standards for protecting the character of the existing residential Central Brisbane subarea, including attention to scale, juxtapositions, views, natural topography and ecological protection.*

*Program LU.14.g: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to prohibit tall smokestacks and industrial towers.*

*Program LU.14.h: Amend the Zoning Ordinance to require that large parking lots be broken up by landscaped areas and parkway strips.*

**Policy LU.15 Encourage the maintenance and upgrading of structures and sites that have played important roles in the City's history.**

*Program LU.15.a: Provide courtesy inspections of historic structures and sites to advise owners of needed corrections and repairs.*

*Program LU.15.b: Provide information to owners of historic structures regarding State tax incentives for rehabilitation.*

*Program LU.15.c: Seek official designation of historical structures and sites and pursue all means of ensuring their permanent preservation.*

**Policy LU.16 Encourage the maintenance and upgrading of residential and nonresidential structures to improve safety and appearance.**

*Program LU.16.a: Prevent blight and deterioration by providing public information and enforcing health and safety codes.*

*Program LU.16.b: Seek funding sources, such as low-interest loans and grants for rehabilitation of existing structures, and encourage property owners to take advantage of such programs.*

The physical character of the community is an essential part of the "glue" that holds the community together. Knowing neighbors and merchants, meeting residents as a part of daily business, and attending community events at regular locations all contribute to the sense of community and all are directly affected by the arrangement of the physical environment.

**Policy LU.17 Encourage interaction and involvement among neighbors on a day-to-day basis and foster a sense of security in the community through the design and location of private development and public improvements.**

*Program LU.17.a: Establish the Central Brisbane subarea as the "town center" and the hub of civic activities.*

*Program LU.17.b: As outer areas develop, assure connections and compatibility with the existing community.*

**Policy LU.18 Locate and design commercial recreational facilities and services so as to encourage use by a broad spectrum of Brisbane residents and businesses.**

*Program LU.18.a: Consider access for vehicles, bicycles and pedestrians in conjunction with the siting of commercial services and recreational facilities.*

*Program LU.18.b: Require all commercial services and public facilities to be accessible to persons with disabilities in accordance with State and Federal regulations.*

**Policy LU.19 Provide centrally located public facilities for public services and community events so as to maximize use by Brisbane residents and businesses.**

*Program LU.19.a: As a part of the City's Capital Improvement Planning, consider the need for and appropriate location of public facilities, such as a City Hall, Community Center, Recreation Center and Police Station.*

*Program LU.19.b: Improve the Old County Road site as a central gathering point for community events.*

*Program LU.19.c: Continue to maintain and upgrade the Community Center.*

*Program LU.19.d: In coordination with the School District, continue shared community use of District facilities*

*Program LU.19.e: Determine the best civic use for the Old Fire Station site on San Bruno Avenue.*

**Open Areas**

The developed community consists of a pattern of built structures and open areas. Open areas are defined below:

Open areas are parcels of land or portions thereof, primarily in private ownership, that serve to soften the impacts of urban development and otherwise provide primarily green areas and a feeling of "openness" to the development pattern. Open areas include, but are not limited to, setbacks and easements that are landscaped or characterized by native vegetation, gardens and landscaped vegetation. Open areas might also include golf courses, private parks and recreation areas within private developments. An open area may consist of a combination of hardscape and



landscape, typical of plazas, sculpture gardens and gathering places. Streets, sidewalks, parking lots and similar improvements, although not covered by structures, do not qualify as open areas.

The policies in this section address only these open areas. (For the definition of Open Space see page 111 and for policies on Open Space and Aquatic Areas, refer to Chapter VII.) Table 2 provides examples of the various types of open areas that could be provided in accordance with General Plan policy. To the extent that the development pattern is governed by code requirements that establish parameters for design and placement of improvements, the provision of open areas stems directly from City regulations. Most requirements for open areas will be formulated as part of the zoning regulations. It should be noted that in this chapter, the policy for subareas designated Planned Development establishes a minimum of 25% of the surface land, not including aquatic areas, to be preserved as either open space or open areas.

The following policies and programs speak to the provision of open areas in Brisbane's development pattern and the intent to preserve a sense of openness and avoid the feeling of increasing density.

**Policy LU.20 The establishment of open areas within private developments shall be utilized as a means of preserving unique environmental features on the site or avoiding the appearance of excessive bulk or concentration of structures.**

**Policy LU.21 Preserve open areas with biological value and/or significant topographic characteristics at the perimeter of the City that maintain Brisbane as separate and distinct from nearby communities.**

**Policy LU.22 Retain sufficient open areas between structures to meet safety requirements, protect privacy and provide opportunities for landscaping.**

*Program LU.22.a: Review the setback, lot coverage and landscape requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to assure adequate open areas in the development pattern.*

*Program LU.22.b: Adopt new zoning regulations, as necessary, with specific qualifying requirements for open areas and square footage and for percentage minimum standards for all development districts.*

*Program LU.22.c: In all multi-structure development proposals, consider the pattern of open areas as an integral part of the development concept.*

**TABLE 2**

**Typical Open Areas**

beach	open natural areas
berry farms	outdoor employee break area
bird sanctuary	parcourse
bocci ball courts	parkway strips
botanical gardens	parks
community garden	petting zoos
firebreaks	picnic grounds
fish ponds	playgrounds
gardens	playing fields
golf course	plazas
grassy amphitheaters	sculpture gardens
horse corrals and open arenas	tea gardens
horseshoe courts	topiary
landscaped areas outside the setbacks	tot lots
landscaped creeks and streams	tree farms
landscaped paths, trails	unimproved steep slopes
landscaped patios	wading pools
landscaped setbacks	water elements
landscaped swimming pools	water fountains
large landscaped medians	wetland areas
native plant exhibition areas	wildlife areas
nursery yard	

**Policy LU.23 Retain sufficient distances between development and designated open space and natural areas to enhance and respect the amenity and value of the resource.**

*Program LU.23.a: Establish minimum setback requirements from the Brisbane Lagoon, Levinson Marsh, and other designated aquatic areas consistent with good planning and conservation practices in consultation with the California Department of Fish and Game.*

**Policy LU.24 Combine the benefits of open areas with the establishment of safety buffers and conservation areas.**

*Program LU.24.a: Consider a setback requirement to achieve separation from areas of wildland fire hazard.*

*Program LU.24.b: Consider hillside development standards that retain steep slopes as open areas.*

**Policy LU.25 Respect the historic pattern of open areas in Central Brisbane and retain this character in conjunction with the rehabilitation of existing structures when consistent with good planning and safety practices.**

*Program LU.25.a: Review the Zoning Ordinance for opportunities to retain certain parking and setback nonconformities that contribute to the historic pattern of open areas in Central Brisbane.*

*Program LU.25.b: Review the parking and setback requirements in the Zoning Ordinance to ascertain how the requirements affect the pattern of open areas and whether amendments to the Code could provide more open areas and landscape along the street right-of-way.*

*Program LU.25.c: Underground utilities in conjunction with all new development.*

*Program LU.25.d: If economically feasible, underground utilities in conjunction with street reconstruction.*

**Policy LU.26 Keep open areas and opportunities for landscaping along arterial and collector streets by establishing setbacks from the right-of-way.**

*Program LU.26.a: Examine district regulations to ascertain whether amendments to the Code are necessary to provide adequate setbacks to establish open areas along the right-of-way.*

**Streets**

Streets serve to bridge the various parts of the community. They are important both in their function and in their physical expression. In Brisbane, residential streets have a unique character based on their relationship to the topography and their historical development. Likewise, some streets serving non-residential areas still reflect their origins as early highways and haul roads.

In cities, with the passage of years, streets require repair and reconstruction as well as modification to meet current safety standards. As vacant lands develop, new streets may be constructed. The following policies address the desired physical character of both new and existing streets in Brisbane (see the chapters on Transportation and Circulation, and Community Health and Safety for additional policies on streets):

**Policy LU.27 In conjunction with safety improvements to existing streets, retain the historic character of the City to the greatest extent feasible.**

*Program LU.27.a: If safety standards are met, retain and enhance unique features such as rock escarpments, retaining walls, "gateways" (such as the entry to Crocker Park) and historic, aged trees.*

**Policy LU.28 Design new streets to be attractive and comfortable for pedestrians and bicyclists, and to safely accommodate vehicular traffic. Street configuration, landscape and signage should all be considered as they contribute to community character.**

*Program LU.28.a: Require landscaping along all major arterial streets.*

*Program LU.28.b: Construct landscaped medians where appropriate in arterial streets.*

*Program LU.28.c: Use drought resistant, water-conserving non-invasive plant materials that reflect local character.*

*Program LU.28.d: Continue to implement a street tree planting and management program and improve it as appropriate.*

*Program LU.28.e: Improve the program for street and directional signs*

*Program LU.28.f: Prohibit new commercial billboard sites and seek to remove those currently in place.*

*Program LU.28.g: Provide standards in the Municipal Code to assure that abutting properties have adequate separation from travelways and protection from noise and other traffic impacts*

*Program LU.28.h: Consider funding methods, such as landscape assessment districts, to install and maintain improvements within rights-of-way.*

*Program LU.28.i: Work with appropriate State and County agencies, private organizations, service clubs and property owners to maintain an attractive appearance of major thoroughfares*

*Program LU.28.j: Encourage environmental groups, local service clubs, individuals and local businesses to "adopt a street" to support litter removal and encourage volunteer beautification projects along streets and remaining rights-of-way*

*Program LU.28.k: Discourage wind channelization when approving new streets.*

### **Subdivision Pattern**

**Policy LU.29 Establish subdivision standards that acknowledge the constraints of topography and the ability to serve parcels with infrastructure to City standards.**

*Program LU.29.a: Develop a list with supporting documentation of these constraints, including fiscal, geophysical, ecological, etc.*

**Policy LU.30 On an ongoing basis, bring unrecorded subdivisions into compliance with the Subdivision Map Act and City standards.**

*Program LU.30.a: Require that unrecorded lots be surveyed and a parcel map recorded before permitting new improvements to be constructed or existing improvements intensified on the property.*

## **FOOTNOTES**

1. See Housing Element and background reports GP-2 and GP-3 for further detail.
2. See background report EC-2 for more information on employee density factors.