

#### 4.0 OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

The Open Space and Recreation Plan establishes a community-wide system of open space lands and recreation facilities which are important to the Specific Plan's goal of preserving the unique natural resources of the project site and surrounding vicinity. In this regard, the Specific Plan contains special design features to enhance public access to usable open space/recreation lands and contribute to a high quality living environment for community residents. The design objectives of the Highlands Open Space and Recreation Plan include the following:

- o Protection of the visual quality and aesthetic value of prominent ridgelines and hillside areas;
- o Preservation of environmental resources;
- o Accommodating the network of existing and planned recreational trails across the property;
- o Providing a variety of recreational opportunities, both passive and active;
- o Creating a community with distinct character and unique identity; and
- o Providing for the protection and preservation of open space lands deemed usable for outdoor recreational purposes.

The Open Space and Recreation Plan, as such, includes the following major elements:

- o Open Space System;
- o Parks; and
- o Riding and Hiking Trails.

#### 4.1 OPEN SPACE SYSTEM

Open space preservation is a major element of the Highlands Specific Plan. As shown on Exhibit 21, open space comprises approximately 292 acres, or 36 percent of the site. In contrast, the existing General Plan provides for approximately 204 acres of open space. The open space provided by the Specific Plan, as such, represents an approximately 43 percent theoretical increase over the existing General Plan.




The proposed open space system is oriented towards the protection of watershed, native vegetation, wildlife habitat and aesthetic values. In this regard, the open space system will serve several important functions including:

- o Protection of the Weir Canyon viewshed;
- o Protection of Anaheim Hills Planned Community views;
- o Retention of the Deer Canyon open space corridor;
- o Preservation of prominent ridgelines and hillside areas; and
- o Protection of important biological resources.

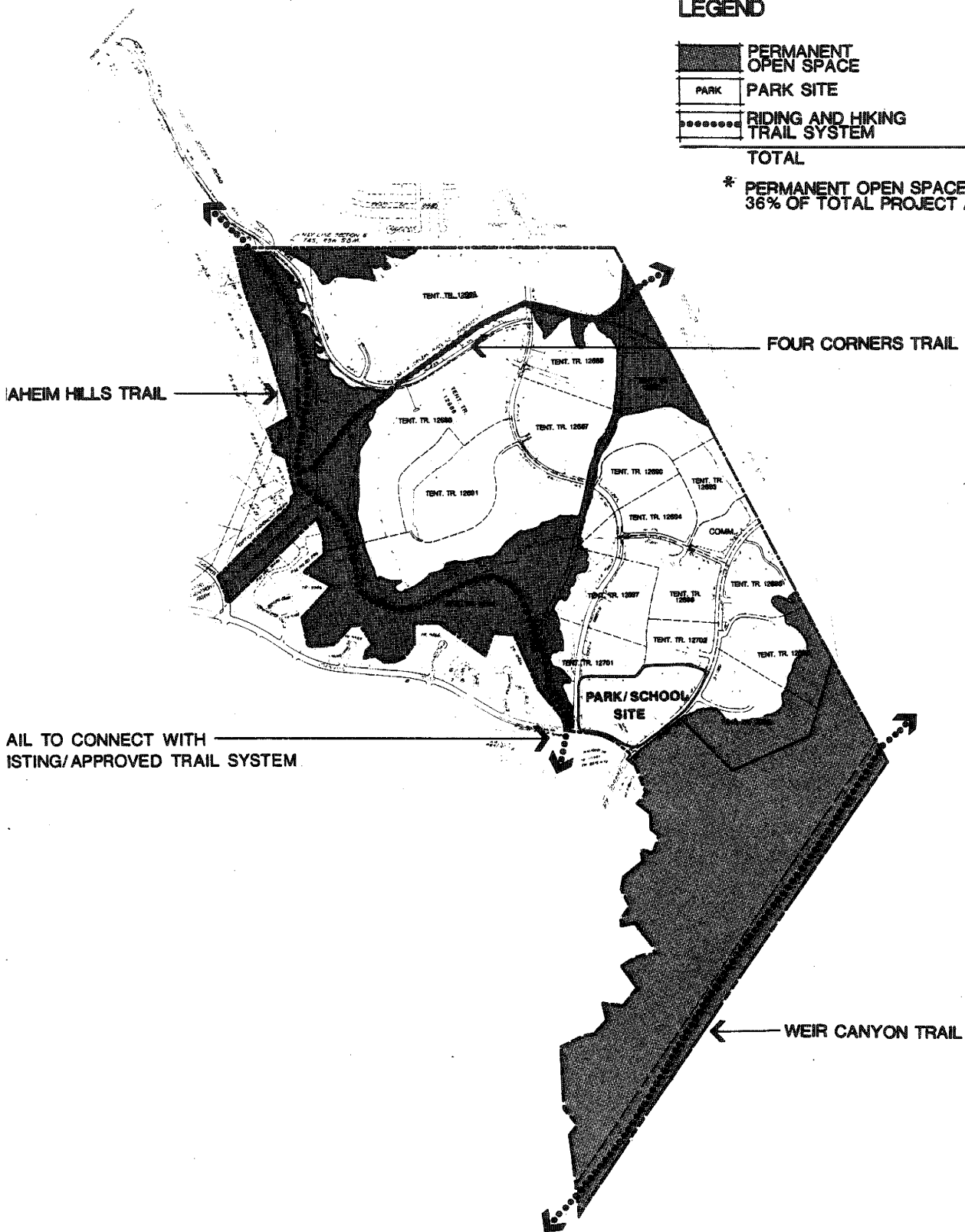
The open space acreage includes the Deer Canyon corridor, the prominent ridgeline within Planning Areas II and III, and portions of Areas IX and X. In addition to these areas, additional common open space will be provided in conjunction with community slopes and the attached housing residential areas.

With regards to open space preservation, the Specific Plan gives special consideration to the Weir Canyon viewshed and Deer Canyon corridor as described in more detail below.

**LEGEND**

	<u>ACRES</u>
 PERMANENT OPEN SPACE	292.0
 PARK SITE	5.0
 RIDING AND HIKING TRAIL SYSTEM	—
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>297.0*</b>

\* PERMANENT OPEN SPACE CONSTITUTES 36% OF TOTAL PROJECT AREA.



# OPEN SPACE & RECREATION

## The Highlands at Anaheim Hills

## Weir Canyon Viewshed

The southern portions of the site are visible from Weir Canyon. In this regard, the ridgeline in Planning Areas II and III is located within the park viewshed boundary. More specifically, this ridgeline area comprises a portion of the County's designated Park Parcel G, which is recommended for public dedication in the County's Weir Canyon Park/Road Study.

As noted above, the Specific Plan preserves the prominent ridgeline within Planning Areas II and III in open space. As such, the Highlands project maintains the integrity of the Weir Canyon viewshed and implements the goals and objectives of the Park/Road Study in the following ways:

- . Preserves prominent ridgelines and other natural features visible from within the park boundaries;
- . Maintains a continuous open space interface with the park and provides fee dedication of adjacent land to the County of Orange;
- . Implements the County's "view-protected crest" ridgeline preservation concept by applying backcut grading techniques within Planning Area III; and
- . Provides drainage control and oak tree preservation/management, where applicable, at the park boundary interface.

Retention of the on-site natural ridgeline and the corresponding preservation of the Weir Canyon viewshed is attributed to the developer's response to County concerns. The project applicant has agreed to delete development from the ridgeline which, according to the current General Plan, is designated for residential land uses. Furthermore, the developer has agreed to

a land exchange with the County of Orange ensuring preservation of the ridgeline area in perpetuity (see Section 3.6 for further details).

#### **Deer Canyon Open Space Corridor**

Deer Canyon is located along the western margins of Planning Areas IX and X. This designated open space corridor is an important biological, aesthetic and recreational resource area of the community.

The Specific Plan preserves the Deer Canyon open space corridor to protect the wildlife habitat, aesthetic, land use and recreational values of this community resource area. The corridor will provide a public open space amenity with provisions for trails and passive recreational opportunities. This open space corridor will be further enhanced with the proposed retention of the natural channel, provision of trail rest stops, picnic areas and native vegetation enhancement plantings (see Section 5.0 for additional Enhancement Plan details).

#### **Open Space Management Guidelines**

To ensure the preservation and protection of the site's open space resources, the following management guidelines are provided in accordance with standards recommended by the County of Orange. These guidelines relate primarily to activities within Deer Canyon (i.e., rest stops, picnic areas, and channel grooming) and include the following:

- o Grading, storage of heavy equipment and/or building materials should not occur within 25 feet from the drip line of any individual oak, or within 50 feet of any oak woodland.

- o During grading and construction activities, individual oaks or oak woodland areas should be temporarily fenced off, without interfering with wildlife circulation.
- o Surface runoff from irrigation systems, adjacent impermeable surfaces, fill areas and construction areas should be directed away from oak tree resources, and/or should not collect or pond within the drip line of any oak tree.
- o No fill or hard surfaces should be placed within the drip line of any oak tree, so as to minimize changes in local heat budget.
- o All fuel modification requirements should be prohibited within 25 feet of the drip line of individual oaks, and within 50 feet of oak woodland.
- o Pruning of oak trees within development areas, should be kept to a minimum of 5 feet from the ground to prevent disease within tree wands.
- o Oak trees located within natural open space should not be pruned.
- o Soil sterilizers for weed control should be prohibited in and around oak tree areas.
- o Grading and structural development should not occur within 25 feet from the trunk of any oak tree.
- o Placement of fill and storage of building materials and heavy equipment should not occur within 15 feet from any trunk.

- o Alteration of the natural drainage shall be permitted as necessary to provide erosion and runoff control.

#### 4.2 PARKS

The Highlands Specific Plan provides for a 5-acre level public park site consistent with the 1980 land use approval. In this regard, during the 1980 General Plan Amendment process, City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission agreed to accept a minimum 5-acre flat park site due to topographic considerations. This park site is located off of Canyon Rim Road adjacent to the elementary school site. As such, the Specific Plan proposes joint use of school and park facilities to better meet the recreational and educational needs of the surrounding community. In conjunction with dedication for public use, the developer proposes to rough grade the site to City specifications (5% or less slope) for future park improvements. The remainder of the Specific Plan's parkland dedication requirements will be met with the payment of in-lieu fees pursuant to the conditions of the 1980 land use approval.

The park site will provide for the immediate passive and active recreation needs of the community and serve as a focal point for recreational activities for the surrounding neighborhoods. Neighborhood recreational opportunities will also be offered through private recreational facilities provided in the higher density attached housing areas, thereby, increasing the total amount of recreational opportunities.

#### 4.3 RIDING AND HIKING TRAILS

The Specific Plan will implement a network of public riding and hiking trails across the site consistent with City and County Master Plans. This trail system will provide opportunities for equestrians and pedestrians to travel and recreate safely, and increase public access to usable open space and recreational

lands. The features of the proposed County/City trail system (see Exhibit 21) include:

- o Extension of the regional Anaheim Hills Trail link through Deer Canyon;
- o Implementation of the City's planned Four Corners Trail link between the Anaheim Hills and Weir Canyon trail systems; and
- o The regional Weir Canyon Trail along the southern boundary of the site.

Enhancement of the riding and hiking trail system will be provided with the proposed incorporation of rest stops and picnic benches within Deer Canyon and landscaping treatments along the off-site storm drain and roadway corridor.