

WELCOME TO
**ROLLING HILLS
ESTATES**



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Introduction



Introduction

The Conservation Element considers natural and cultural resources within the City's jurisdiction. This element serves as a management guide for the use of water, land, and earth resources; protection of native plant and animal life; preservation of cultural resources; maintenance of healthy air quality; and preservation of aesthetic and scenic resources within the jurisdictional area.

Purpose

The purpose of the Conservation Element is to preserve and enhance the many natural and cultural resources that contribute to the distinct setting found in the City of Rolling Hills Estates. In recognizing that the earth's resources are limited and often nonrenewable, the Conservation Element plans for their proper management and preservation. Significant resources within the jurisdictional area include:

- Natural resources: water, air, topography, and biology/biota
- Cultural resources: historic places, archeological sites, and paleontological deposits
- Aesthetic resources: viewsheds, scenic resources, and visual character and quality

Relationship to Other General Plan Elements

Policies in the Conservation Element are designed to protect and manage natural and cultural resources. The Conservation Element is most closely related to the Open Space and Recreation Element, as there is a significant overlap between natural resource preservation and the provision of open space and recreational facilities. Areas designated as open space are usually established due to identified natural resources that warrant preservation. However, the Conservation Element expands further beyond the preservation of natural biological resources for recreational purposes and considers conservation more comprehensively. This element also includes the conservation of natural landforms and watercourses (regardless of recreational use), cultural resources, viewsheds, and air quality. In comparison, the Open Space and Recreation Element focuses on the preservation of open space for other purposes and includes considerations for public parks, trails, and the active and passive recreational needs of the community.

Concurrently, the Land Use Element establishes a land use pattern that considers natural and cultural resources and designates parcels to preserve these resources. The Conservation Element informs the Land Use Element by identifying environmental conditions (such as biological resources, topography, viewsheds, minerals, and other resources) that should be avoided or accommodated by the land use pattern. The goals and policies found within this chapter (such as biological resources, topography, and viewsheds or cultural resources) guide in making land use decisions.

To a lesser extent, specific policies within the Conservation Element relate to the Safety Element. Natural environments are considered concurrently with related wildfire risk and fire protection regulations. Public safety agencies may become involved in enforcing fuel modification standards to reduce this risk. Additionally, the Conservation Element overlaps with the Noise Element. Excessive noise may diminish the enjoyment of open space or negatively impact sensitive habitats.

Chapter Organization

This Conservation Element chapter comprises four sections:

Introduction summarizes the general intent of Conservation Element as well as its relationship to other General Plan Elements.

Existing Conditions documents conservation related conditions in the City.

Goals, Policies and Implementation Measures section identifies natural and cultural conservation-related goals and policies.

Scenic Corridors Criteria section identifies various corridors that are classified as scenic corridors and provides a framework for crafting development regulations and guidelines.



Existing Conditions



Existing Conditions

Hydrology, Flooding and Water Quality

Watersheds

The City of Rolling Hills Estates is located within the Santa Monica Bay Watershed and the Machado Lake and Los Angeles Harbor subwatersheds of the Dominguez Watershed. The City is landlocked, containing no harbors within its boundaries. The 385-square-mile Santa Monica Bay Watershed extends along the crest of the Santa Monica Mountains from the Ventura-Los Angeles County line on the west to the Los Angeles River Watershed on the east. South of the City of Santa Monica, the Santa Monica Bay Watershed, becomes a narrow strip bordered by the Pacific Ocean to the west and the Dominguez Channel Watershed to the east. This strip extends to the tip of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. Runoff within the Santa Monica Bay Watershed ultimately flows to Santa Monica Bay.

The Dominguez Watershed drains an area of approximately 133 square miles in southwestern Los Angeles County.^[1] Stormwater runoff within the Machado Lake subwatershed and Los Angeles Harbor subwatershed drain into Machado Lake and the Los Angeles Harbor, respectively.

Surface Waters

Stormwater runoff is conveyed to downstream surface waters by a flood control system owned and/or operated by the Los Angeles County Flood Control District and the Los Angeles County

¹ Los Angeles County Department of Public Works. Dominguez Watershed. <http://ladpw.org/wmd/watershed/do/>. Accessed September 2017.

Department of Public Works. As shown in **Figure 5-1**, the main surface water bodies within the City include Agua Amarga Canyon Creek, Agua Magna Canyon Creek, Sepulveda Canyon, Agua Negra Canyon, Fern Creek, Bent Springs Canyon, George F. Canyon, and Blackwater Canyon.

Groundwater Basins

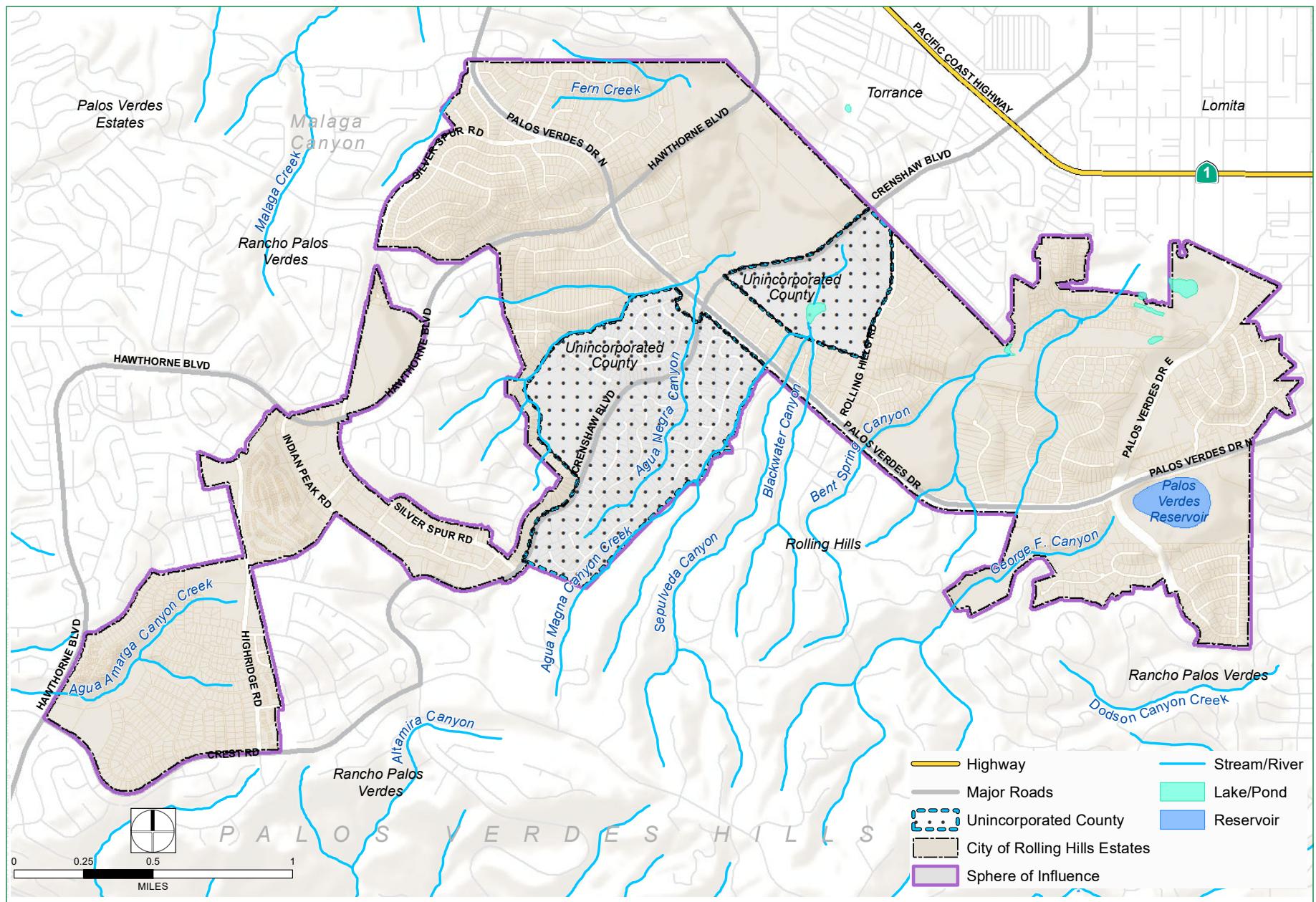
As shown in **Figure 5-2**, the majority of the Planning Area is located on a consolidated rock formation where there are no groundwater resources.^[2] However, approximately 160 acres of the northeastern portion of the City is within the West Coast Subbasin of the Coastal Plan of Los Angeles Groundwater Basin. The 142-square-mile West Coast Subbasin is bound on the north by the Ballona Escarpment, an abandoned erosional channel from the Los Angeles River, on the east by the Newport-Inglewood fault zone, and on the south and west by the Pacific Ocean and consolidated rocks of the Palos Verdes Hills. In general, groundwater flow is southwest from the Central Coastal Plain toward the ocean.^[3] Groundwater levels within the northwestern portion of the City are between approximately 20 to 30 feet below sea level.

Biological Resources

The City of Rolling Hills Estates is primarily developed with suburban uses arranged within and atop natural hills and interlaced with canyon and other open space areas. The most common wildlife species occurring within the Planning Area include

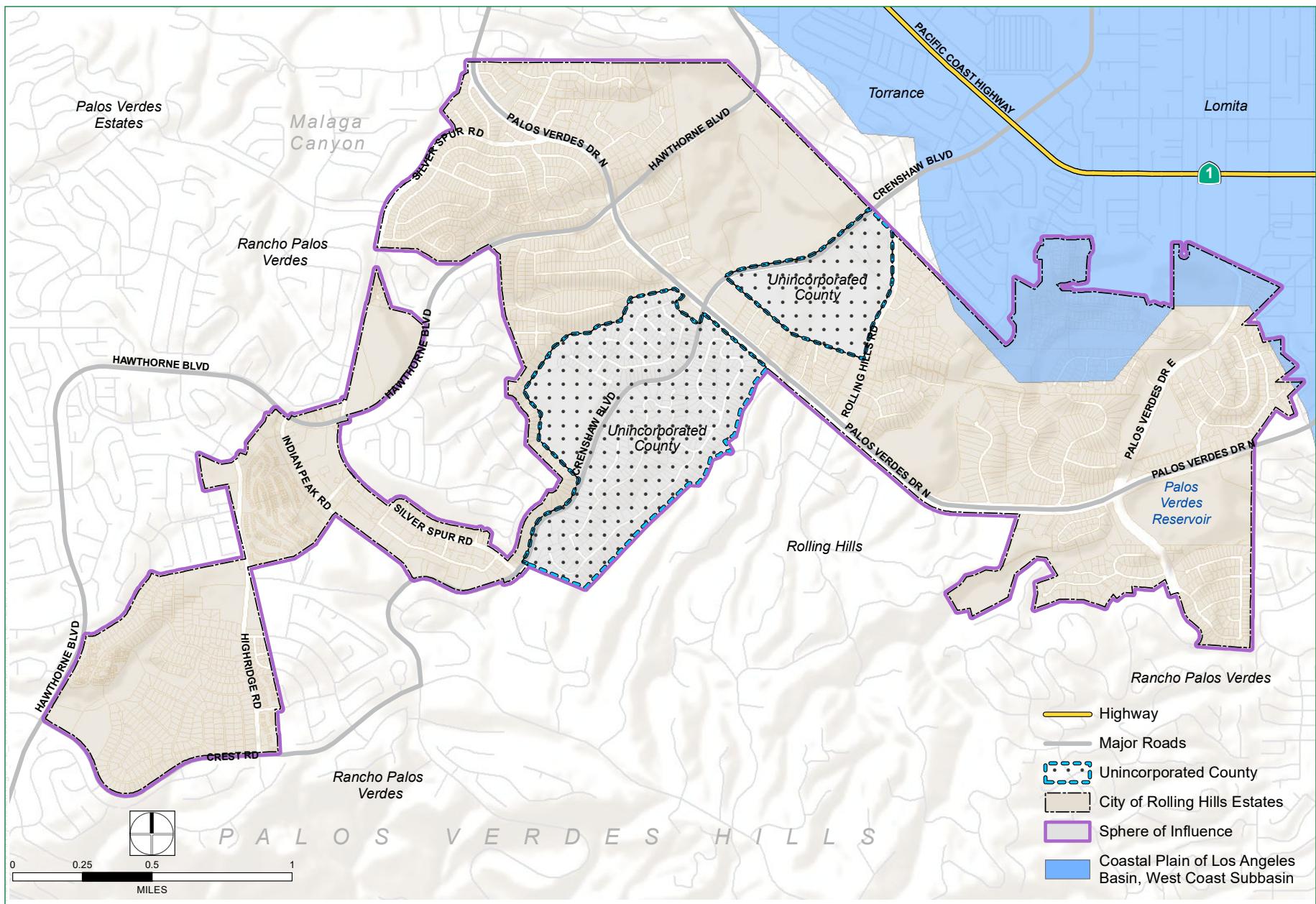
² State of California, Department of Water Resources. Bulletin 104: Planned Utilization of the Ground Water Basins of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County (June 1961).

³ Department of Water Resources. 2016. Bulletin 118. Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County Groundwater Basin, West Coast Subbasin.

Figure 5-1 Surface Waters

Source: City of Rolling Hills Estates, 2017; Los Angeles County GIS Data, 2017

Figure 5-2 Groundwater Basins



Source: City of Rolling Hills Estates, 2017; Los Angeles County GIS Data, 2017

mourning dove, spotted dove, house finch or linnet, hummingbirds, striped skunk, cottontail rabbit, jack rabbit, opossum, pocket gopher, grey fox, red fox, coyote, frog, California king snake, foothill alligator lizard, California slender salamander, and western fence lizard. The City does not contain fisheries due to the lack of perennial water bodies within the City.

Special Status Species

Special-status species include plants and animals that, because of their acknowledged rarity or vulnerability to various causes of population decline, are recognized in some fashion by federal, state, or other agencies as a deserving special consideration. The Habitat Conservation Division (HCD) of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) maintains the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDB). The CNDDB is used to gather and disseminate data on the status and locations of rare and endangered plants, animals, and vegetation types.^[4] Along with CNDDB, the United States Fish and Wildlife Services (USFWS) maintain their own database for species occurrence. A list of CNDDB and USFWS occurrences are identified in [Table 5-1](#) and identified in [Figure 5-3](#).

As of 2016, the CNDDB and USFWS list five species occurrences within the Planning Area, as depicted on [Figure 5-3](#). These species include two plants (aphanisma and mesa horkelia), two bird species (coastal California gnatcatcher and least Bell's vireo), and the Palos Verdes blue butterfly. The aphanisma and the mesa horkelia have occurred in the same area and overlap one another along the southwestern portion of the City. Additionally, the coastal California gnatcatcher has occurred in the southwestern portion of the City

with a small portion overlapping the occurrences of the aphanisma and mesa horkelia. The least Bell's vireo has occurred between Crenshaw Boulevard and Rolling Hills Road north of North Palos Verdes Drive in the South Coast Botanic Gardens in the City's SOI. The fifth and final occurrence is the Palos Verdes blue butterfly. The Palos Verdes blue butterfly has been observed north of Palos Verdes Drive North and east of Rolling Hills Road in the Linden H. Chandler Preserve.

This does not constitute an exhaustive list of the special-status species that may occur in the Planning Area but rather refers only to those species identified in the CNDDB and the USFWS. More detailed surveys would be necessary as part of subsequent, project-specific CEQA review as development in the Planning Area occurs over time.

Critical Habitat

Critical habitat is the specific area within the geographic area occupied by the species at the time it was listed that contains the physical or biological features that are essential to the conservation of endangered and threatened species, and that may need special management or protection.^[5] According to the Federal Registry for Critical Habitat, as of December 2007, critical habitat for the coastal California gnatcatcher is located within the Planning Area, as identified in [Figure 5-4](#). The coastal California gnatcatcher critical habitat is generally located throughout the western portion of the City and outside the City's boundaries. A small section of coastal California gnatcatcher critical habitat is identified north of Chaparral Lane in the southeast corner of the City (see [Figure 5-4](#)). The

⁴ The California Natural Diversity Database: A Natural Heritage Program for Rare and Species and Vegetation, Roxanne Bittman, October 2001.

⁵ U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Critical Habitat, March 2017.

Table 5-1 Species Occurrence in Rolling Hills Estates

Scientific Name	Common Name	Federal Listing	State Listing
Invertebrates			
<i>Glauopsyche lygdamus palosverdesensis</i>	Palos Verdes blue butterfly	Endangered	None
Birds			
<i>Polioptila californica californica</i>	Coastal California gnatcatcher	Threatened	None
<i>Vireo bellii pusillus</i>	Least Bell's vireo	Endangered	Endangered
Plants			
<i>Horkelia cuneata ssp. puberula</i>	Mesa horkelia	None	None
<i>Aphanisma blitoides</i>	Aphanisma	None	None

Source: U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Environmental Conservation Online System, CDFW, CNDBB

coastal California gnatcatcher critical habitat is generally located throughout the western portion of the City and outside the City's boundaries. Surrounding cities that have coastal California gnatcatcher critical habitat include Rolling Hills and Rancho Palos Verdes.

Approximately 0.1 miles west of the City's boundary is the Palos Verdes blue butterfly critical habitat, located west of Hawthorne Boulevard in the Hesse Community Park in the City of Rancho Palos Verdes.

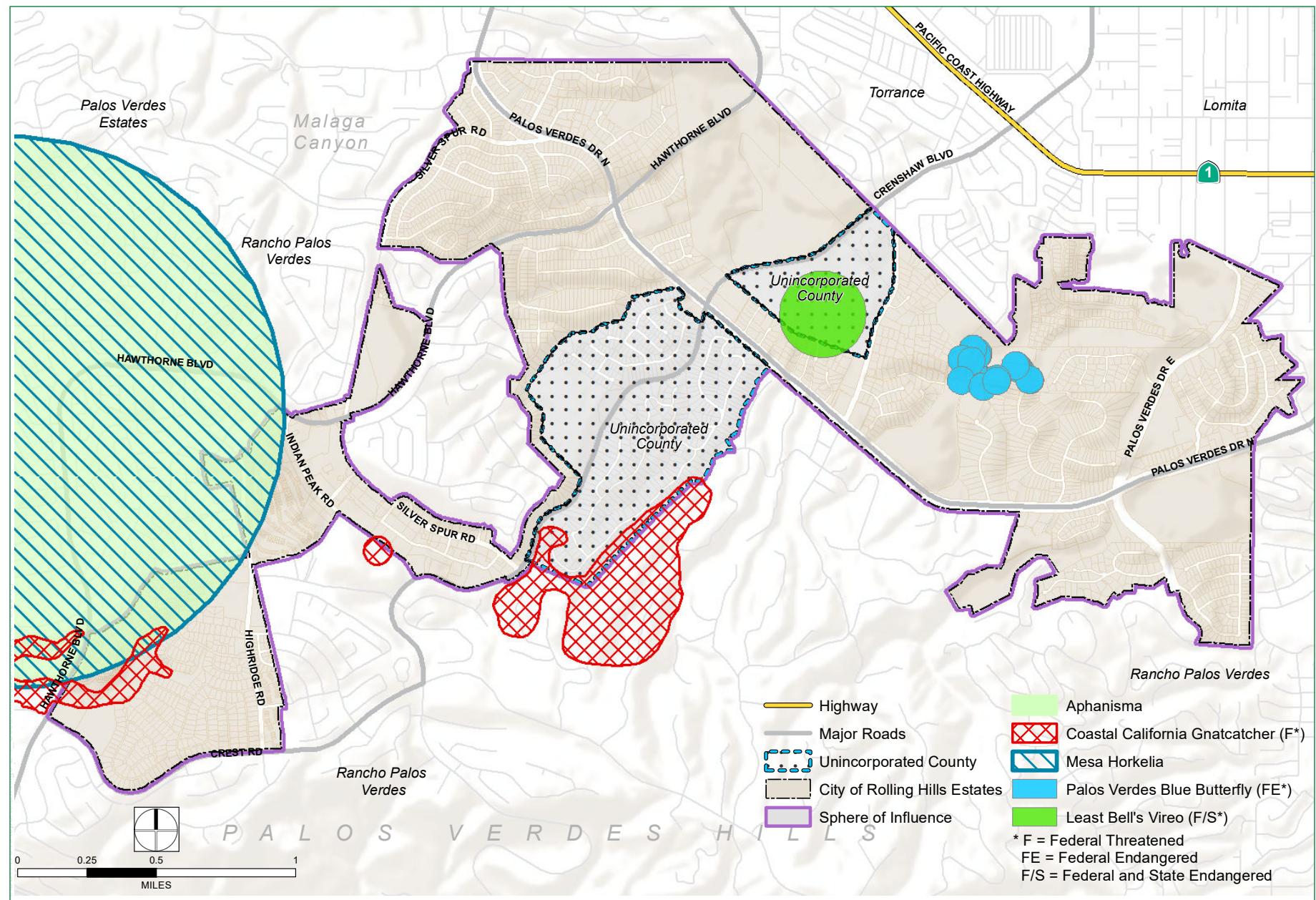
Vegetation

The City of Rolling Hills Estates is located in the Palos Verdes Peninsula sub-region. According to the U.S. Department of

Agriculture, Forest Service, 2002-2010, the vegetation communities within the Planning Area include annual grassland, barren, coastal oak woodland, coastal scrub, mixed chaparral, and urban development. The majority of the City is considered urban, with total coverage of 2,245.48 acres or approximately 82 percent of the City. See [Table 5-2](#) for a list of vegetation communities within the City and [Figure 5-5](#) for locations of such communities within the Planning Area.

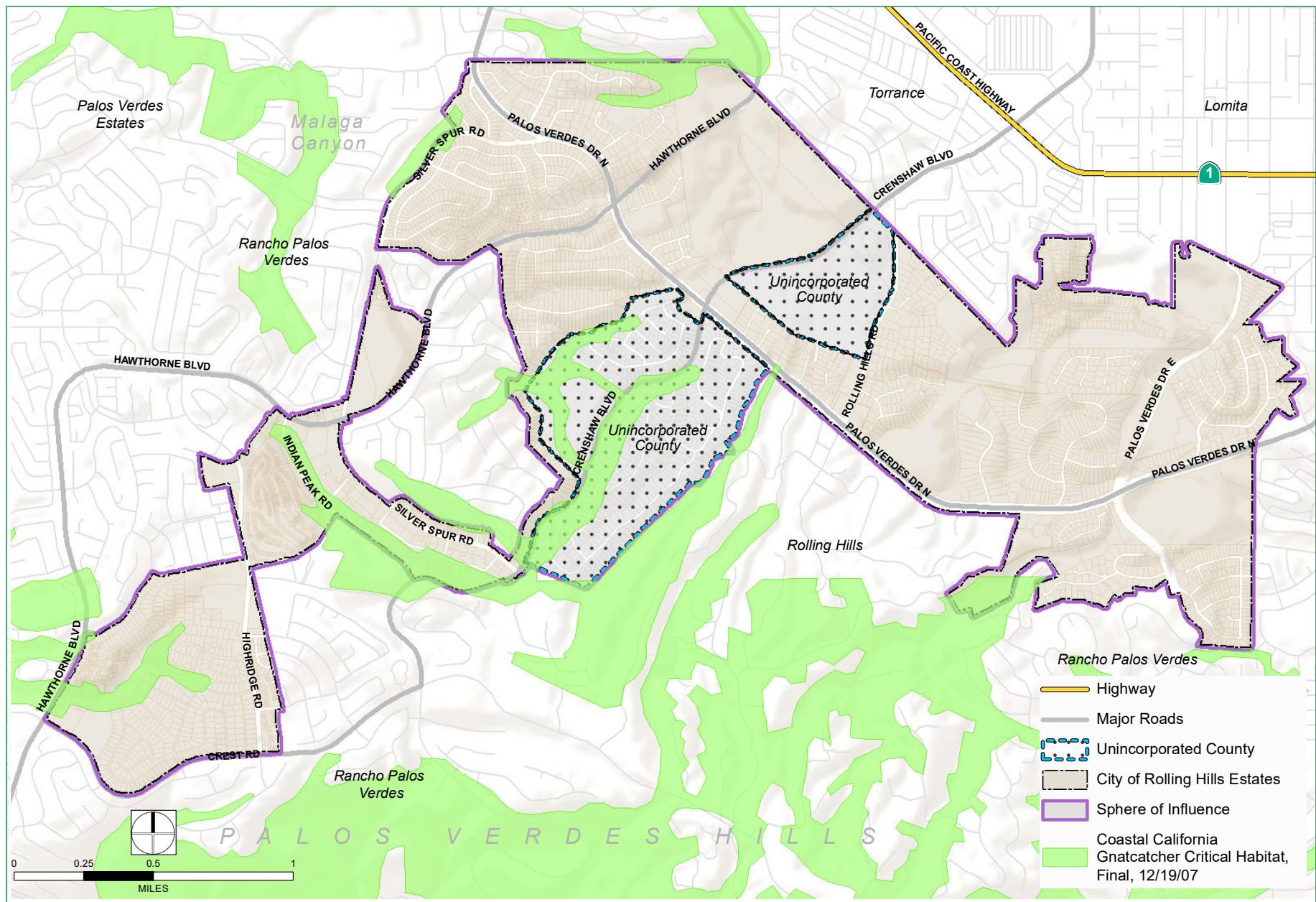
Annual Grasslands. Annual grassland habitats are open grasslands comprising of primarily annual plant species. Annual grassland habitat has been described as Valley Grassland, Valley and Foothill Grasslands, California Prairie, Annual Grassland Series, and Annual Grass-Forb series. Species composition is greatly influenced by seasonal and annual fluctuations in weather patterns.

Figure 5-3 Species Occurrences



Source: City of Rolling Hills Estates, 2017; Los Angeles County GIS Data, 2017; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Environmental Conservation Online System, CDFW, CNDB

Figure 5-4 Critical Habitat



Source: City of Rolling Hills Estates, 2017; Los Angeles County GIS Data, 2017GOICounty GIS; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Environmental Conservation Online System, CDFW, CNDB

Annual plants grow slowly during winter months and more rapidly during the spring season. Annual grassland habitat (shown on **Figure 5-5**) is found just above or surrounding Valley Foothill Riparian, Alkali Desert Scrub, Fresh Emergent Wetland, Pasture, and all agricultural habitat types, and below Valley Oak Woodland, Blue Oak Woodland, Blue Oak-Foothill Pine, Chamise-Redshank, and Mixed Chaparral habitats. Annual grasslands also border Coast Oak Woodland, and Coastal Scrub.^[6]

Many species of wildlife use annual grasslands for foraging, but some species require special habitat features such as cliffs, caves, ponds, or habitats with woody plants for breeding, resting, and escape cover. Animals found in this habitat include the common garter snake, western fence lizard, western rattlesnake, California ground squirrel, and coyote.

Barren. Barren is defined by the absence of vegetation with less than 2 percent total vegetation cover by herbaceous, desert, or non-wildland species and less than 10 percent cover by tree or shrub. Barren include lands include rocky outcroppings, open sandy beaches, vertical river banks, and canyon walls. Urban settings covered in pavement and buildings may be classified as barren as long as vegetation does not reach the percentage cover threshold.^[7]

Coastal Oak Woodland. Coastal oak woodland consists of deciduous and evergreen hardwoods, with a height of 15 to 70 feet. In mesic

6 Los Angeles Stormwater Program. Santa Monica Bay Watershed. <http://www.laastormwater.org/about-us/about-watersheds/santa-monica-bay/>. Accessed September 2017.

7 State of California, Department of Water Resources. Bulletin 104: Planned Utilization of the Ground Water Basins of the Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County (June 1961).12 Department of Water Resources. 2016. Bulletin 118. Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County Groundwater Basin, West Coast Subbasin.

Table 5-2 Vegetation Communities

Vegetation Type	Acres	Percent
Annual Grassland	212.3	7.7%
Barren	68.2	2.5%
Coastal Oak Woodland	38.6	1.4%
Coastal Scrub	88.5	3.2%
Mixed Chaparral	89.9	3.3%
Urban	2,245.5	81.9%
Total	2,742.9	100.0%

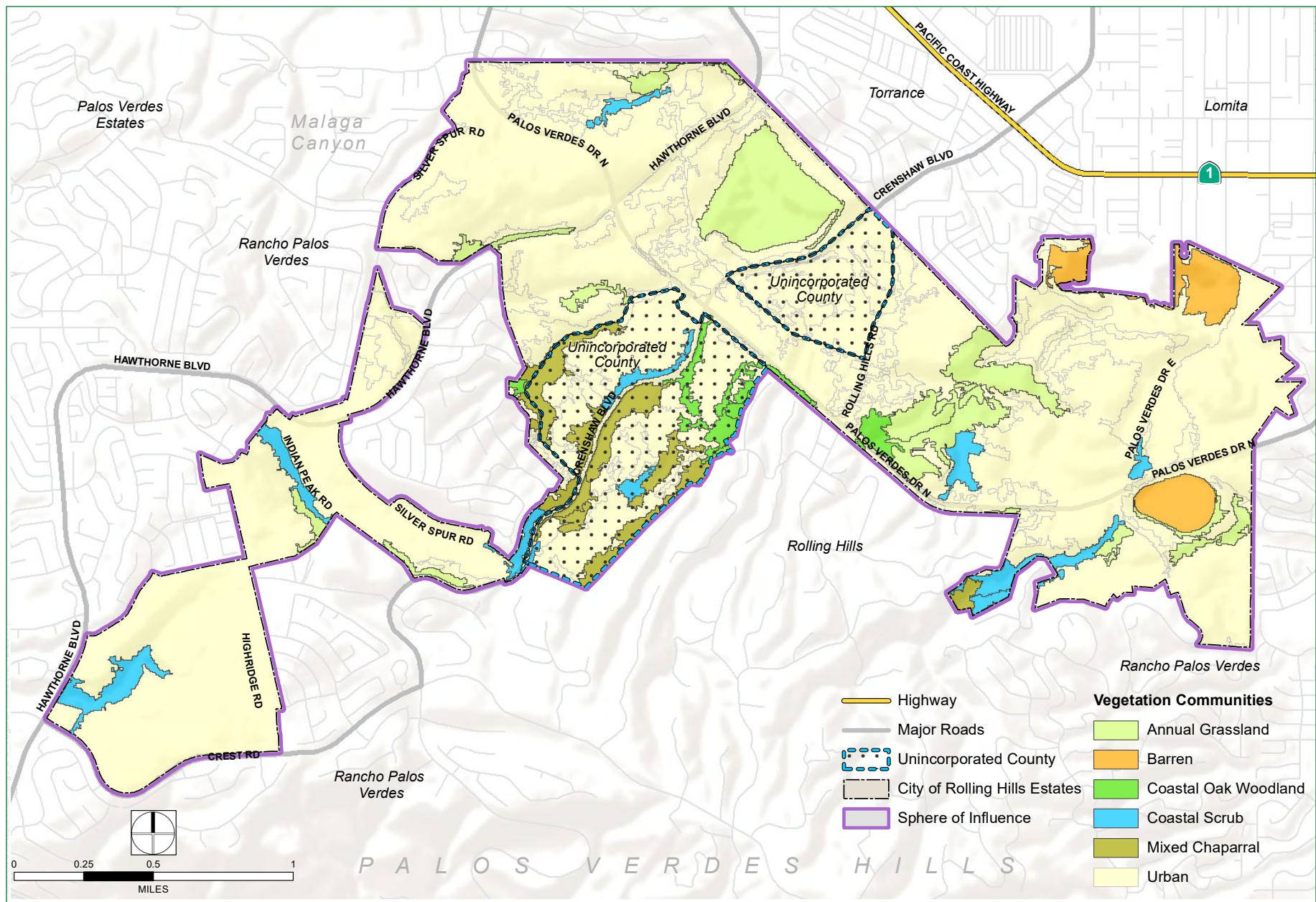
Source: LSA Associates, Inc. GIS data, September 2017.

sites,^[8] the trees are dense and form a closed canopy while in dryer areas, they are widely spaced. At least 60 species of mammals may use oaks in some way, and 110 species of birds observed during the breeding season in California habitats where oaks form a significant part of the canopy.

Coastal Scrub. Coastal scrub is typified by low to moderate-sized shrubs with mesophytic leaves, flexible branches, semi-woody stems, and a shallow root system. These can range up to 7 feet tall with canopy cover usually around 100 percent.

Mixed Chaparral. Mixed chaparral is a structurally homogeneous brushland type dominated by shrubs with thick, stiff, heavily cutinized evergreen leaves. Shrub height and crown cover vary

8 Department of Water Resources. 2016. Bulletin 118. Coastal Plain of Los Angeles County Groundwater Basin, West Coast Subbasin.

Figure 5-5 Vegetation Communities

Source: City of Rolling Hills Estates, 2017; Los Angeles County GIS Data, 2017; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Services, Environmental Conservation Online System, CDFW, CNDBB

considerably due to the age of last burn, soil, and precipitation. Canopy height ranges from 3 to 13 feet and occasionally 19 feet. Mixed chaparral is a floristically rich type of habitat that supports approximately 240 different species of woody plants.

Urban. The urban vegetation varies, with five types of the vegetative structure defined: tree grove, street strip, shade tree/lawn, lawn, and shrub cover. Shade trees and lawns are typical of residential areas and reminiscent of natural savannas. Lawns are structurally the most uniform vegetative units of the California urban habitat. Wildlife includes California quails, wrentits, black-tailed deer, ringtail, black-tailed jackrabbit, gopher snake, and western fence lizard.

Wetlands

According to the National Wetlands Inventory of 2004, there are five different types of wetlands throughout the City, including freshwater emergent wetland, freshwater forested/shrub wetland, freshwater pond, lake, and riverine, as identified on [Figure 5-6](#).

These wetlands and their location throughout the Planning Area are described below:

Freshwater Emergent Wetland. The freshwater emergent wetland is characterized by erect, rooted herbaceous hydrophytes.^[9] All freshwater emergent wetlands are frequently flooded to the point that the roots of the vegetation prosper in an anaerobic environment.^[10] Freshwater emergent wetland habitats occur on virtually all exposures of slopes provided a basin or depression is saturated or at least periodically flooded. However, they are most

common on the level to gently rolling topography. Area identified as freshwater emergent wetland is a small portion within the SOI in the South Coast Botanic Garden, and an area north of the Palos Verdes Reservoir.

Freshwater Forest/Shrub Wetland. Freshwater forest/shrub wetlands are generally located in the central portion of the City, between canyons. A much wider freshwater forest/shrub wetland is located north and east of the Palos Verdes Reservoir, traveling under the intersection of North Palos Verdes Drive and East Palos Verdes Drive. This freshwater forest/shrub wetland gets directed north of Sweetgrass Lane, turning into a riverine, then back to a freshwater forest/shrub wetland.

Freshwater Pond. A freshwater pond is a body of standing water, either natural or artificial, and is usually smaller than a lake. A total of five freshwater ponds are located north of the Palos Verdes Reservoir, which vary in size. These ponds are primarily located in the Rolling Hills Country Club golf course. Additionally, a pond is located in the South Coast Botanic Garden within the City's sphere of influence.

Lake. A lake is an area of variable size that is filled with water, localized in a basin that is surrounded by land and apart from any river or other outlet that serves to feed or drain the lake. There is only one lake located on the eastern portion of the Planning Area, the Palos Verdes Reservoir. The Palos Verdes Reservoir is located south of Palos Verdes Drive North and east of Palos Verdes Drive East. While the Palos Verdes Reservoir is classified as a lake by the USFWS National Wetlands Inventory, the reservoir is a geomembrane-lined, potable water reservoir with a floating cover and does not provide the biological or recreational values that would be provided by a naturally occurring or manmade lake.

⁹ A plant which grows only in or on water.

¹⁰ Relating to, involving, or requiring an absence of free oxygen.

Riverine. A riverine area is a large natural stream of water flowing in a channel to the sea, a lake, or another such stream. Riverine areas located throughout the Planning Area include an area southwest of the City; east of Hawthorne Boulevard and north of Crest Road; south of Hawthorne Boulevard and west and south of Palos Verdes Drive North; and west of Palos Verdes Drive East. All of these riverine areas are located between ridges.

Geology and Soils

The Planning Area is located at the northern end of the Peninsular Range geomorphic province, a 900-mile northwest-southeast trending structural block that extends from the tip of Baja California to the Transverse Ranges and includes the Los Angeles Basin.

^[11]The total width of the province is approximately 225 miles, with a maximum landbound width of 65 miles.^[12] It contains extensive pre-Cretaceous (> 65 million years ago) igneous and metamorphic rock covered by limited exposures of post-Cretaceous sedimentary deposits.

Specifically, the Planning Area is located on the Palos Verdes Peninsula, an uplifted tectonic fault block of seafloor sediments and volcanics rising from sea level along the west and south faces, up to approximately 1,470 feet above mean sea level (AMSL) along the crest of the Palos Verdes Hills, and down to approximately 100 feet AMSL along the floor of the Los Angeles Basin in the vicinity of the Torrance Airport. The Peninsula encompasses over 22,000 acres, of which the City accounts for approximately 2,378 acres. The City ranges in elevation from 300 feet AMSL in the canyons and gullies located throughout the City to approximately 1,200 feet

AMSL at the southwestern portion of the City along the northern slopes of the Palos Verdes Hills.

Lava flows erupted upon or within the ocean sediments during the early phases of deposition of the Palos Verdes Peninsula. These sediments and volcanics are considered part of the Monterey Formation. In the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the Monterey Formation has been divided into three units: the Altamira Shale, the Valmonte Diatomite, and the Malaga Mudstone.^[13] These deposits lend themselves in varying degrees to debris and mudflows, settlement, expansive soils, land sliding, and/or susceptibility to erosion.

The Planning Area does not contain significant mineral resources. In the northeast corner of the City, the Chandler Quarry operated for sand and gravel extraction from the '1920s to until the '1970s. The site then operated as an inert landfill until the site was reclaimed for residential and commercial recreation (golf) uses.

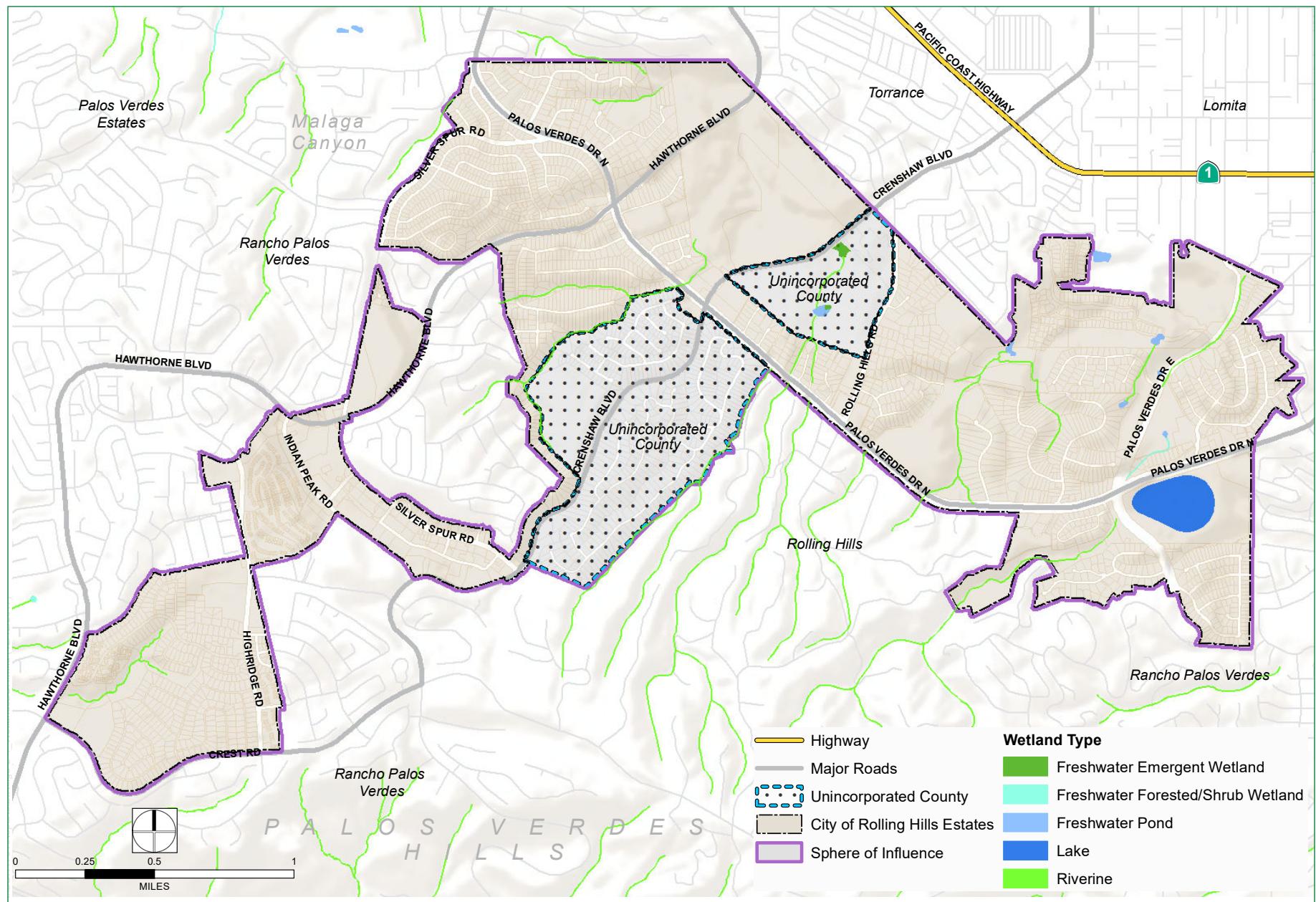
Cultural and Historical Resources

According to an inventory search conducted in August 2017 at the South Central Coastal Information Center (SCCIC) located at California State University, Fullerton, Rolling Hills Estates contains several cultural resources, including historic-era resources and important Native American archaeological resources. The inventory included all recorded historical and Native American archaeological resources, as well as known cultural resource survey and excavation reports within the city limits and its Sphere of Influence (SOI). Records searched include the California Office of Historic Preservation's Historic Property Directory (HPD), which includes resources listed in the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP),

11 Geology of California. R.M. Norris and R.W. Webb. John Wiley and Sons, Inc., Santa Barbara. 1976.

12 Geology: Field Guide to Southern California. R.P. Sharp. Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 2nd Edition. 1976.

13 Ibid.

Figure 5-6 Wetlands

Source: City of Rolling Hills Estates, 2017; Los Angeles County GIS Data, 2017

California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), California Historical Landmarks, and California Points of Historical Interest databases.

Historic Resources

Data on file at the SCCIC indicate there is one historic-era resources listed by the HPD within the Planning Area. Palos Verdes Reservoir, constructed in 1939, is located at the south east corner of Palos Verdes Drive North and Palos Verdes Drive East. This facility is not listed in the NRHP or CRHR or deemed eligible for future listing. One historic-era property at 608 Silver Spur Road has been determined not eligible for listing in the NRHP as a result of Section 106 project review, but it has not been evaluated for listing on the CRHR or local listing. There are three properties with local historic significance but are not listed in either SCCIC, NRHP or CRHR. These properties are recognized as landmarks in the community and included in the Landmark Overlay Zone. These include:

- Kelly's Korner/General Store site (26947 Rolling Hills Road)
- Peninsula Heritage School (26944 Rolling Hills Road)
- Empty Saddle Club (39 Empty Saddle Rolling Hills Road)

A review of historical literature and maps indicate that the Planning Area has seen a long development history dating back through the Mexican period and into the American period. The Rancho de Los Palos Verdes land grant of 1846 commenced as a cattle ranch on the Palos Verdes Peninsula,^[14] and agricultural activities

¹⁴ Ogden Hoffman. Reports of Land Cases Determined in the United States District Court for the Northern District of California. Numa Hubert, San Francisco. 1862.

Kelly's Korner



Source: Daily Breeze, <http://blogs.dailybreeze.com/history/page/34/>

Peninsula Heritage School



Source: Peninsula Heritage School, <https://www.peninsulaheritage.org/>

ensued through the 1950s and 1960s.^[15] Rolling Hills Estates was incorporated on September 18, 1957, and boasts a rural character that provides a link to the historic-era development of the Palos Verdes Peninsula.^[16]

Archaeological Resources

Rolling Hills Estates is located within the traditional homeland of the Gabrieliño (Tongva) Native Americans. The Tongva language is derived from the Takic family, part of the Uto-Aztecán linguistic stock.^[17] According to the SCCIC inventory review, Rolling Hills Estates and its SOI contain eleven recorded Native American archaeological sites. These sites are evidence of Native American habitation on the Palos Verdes Peninsula in antiquity and range in type from permanent village/campsites to temporary surface artifact scatters. Only one of the archaeological sites (P-33-000277) has been recommended not eligible for the NRHP, CRHR, or local designation through survey evaluation; the remaining known archaeological sites have not been formally evaluated.

The territory of the Tongva included portions of Los Angeles, Orange, and San Bernardino Counties during ethno-historic times, and it also extended inland into northwestern Riverside County.^[18] Tongva territory encompassed an extremely diverse environment in antiquity that included coastal beaches, lagoons, marshes, inland river valleys, foothills, and mountains.^[19]

15 Nationwide Environmental Title Research, LLC. Aerial Photograph of the Rancho Palos Verdes Land Grant. 1952 and 1963. <https://historicaerials.com/viewer>. Accessed September 2017.

16 City Facts and Figures. City of Rolling Hills Estates, California. <http://ci.rolling-hills-estates.ca.us/community/city-info>. Accessed September 2017.

17 Alfred L. Kroeber. Handbook of the Indians of California. Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 78. Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC.

18 Robert F. Heizer. The Indians of Los Angeles County. Hugo Reid's Letters of 1852. Southwest Museum Papers 21. Los Angeles, California. 1968.

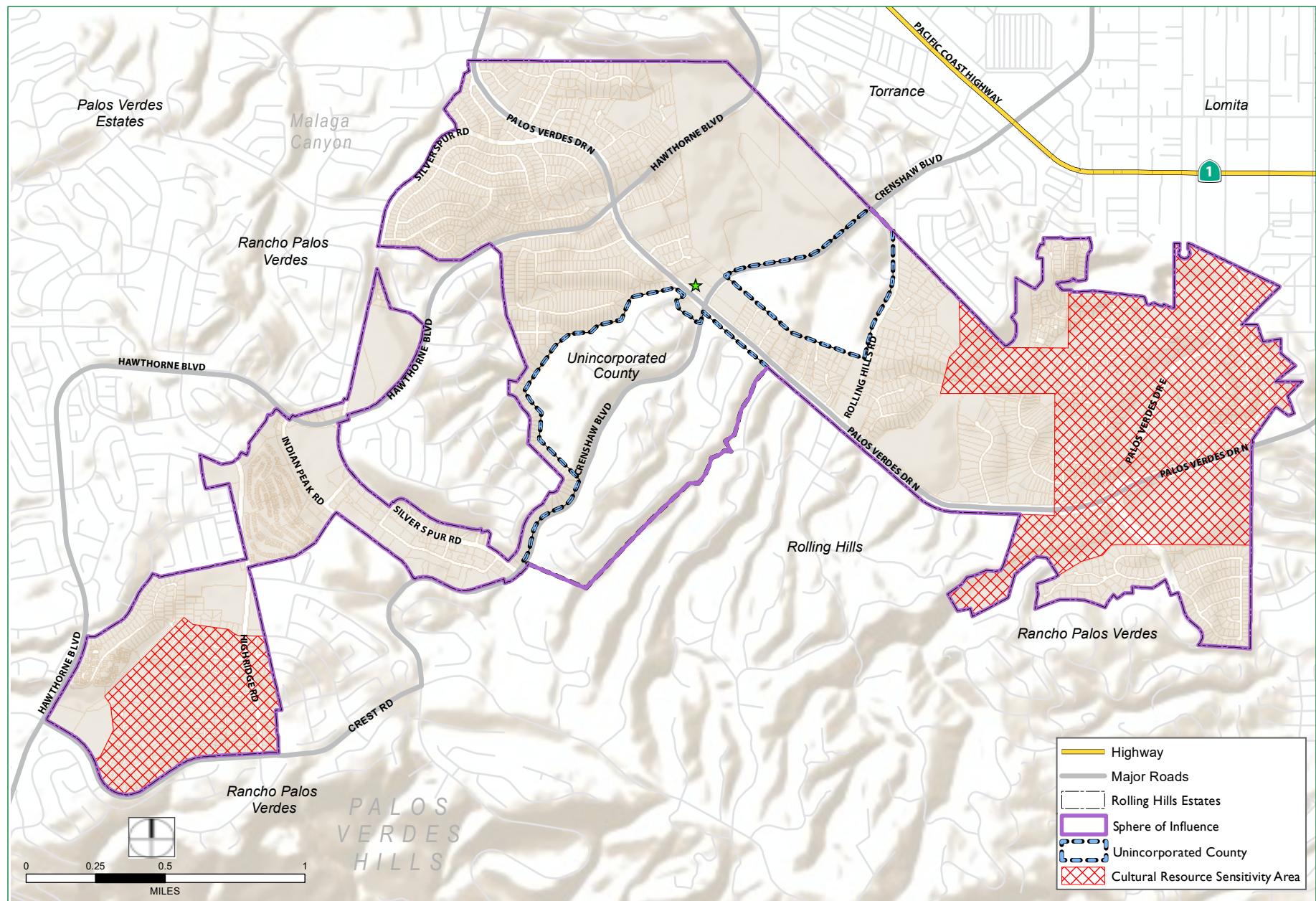
19 Lowell John Bean and Charles R. Smith. Gabrieliño. In *Handbook of North American Indians*, Volume 8, California. Pp. 538-549. Edited by Robert F. Heizer. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 1978.

The Tongva caught and collected seasonally available food resources and led a semi-sedentary lifestyle, living in permanent communities along inland watercourses and coastal estuaries. Individuals from these villages took advantage of the varied resources available. Seasonally, as foods became available, smaller groups moved to temporary camps to collect plant foods such as acorns, buckwheat, chía, berries, and fruits, and to conduct communal rabbit and deer hunts. Seasonal camps were established along the coast and near bays and estuaries to gather shellfish and hunt waterfowl.^[20]

Based on an evaluation of the environmental setting and features associated with known sites, Native American archaeological resources in this part of the region have been found near sources of water, including perennial and intermittent streams and springs, on midslope terraces and elevated knolls above the flood plain, and near ecotones and other productive environments. The Planning Area contains several perennial and intermittent streams, midslope terraces, and ecotones. Given the similarity of these environmental factors, coupled with the number of known habitation sites, there is a high likelihood that unrecorded Native American archaeological sites exist within the Planning Area.

Unlike historic resources, locations of Native American archaeological sites are restricted by the federal Archaeological Resources Protection Act in order to prevent looting, vandalism, and destruction of these finite resources. As a result, their specific locations are not provided; however, a Cultural Resource Sensitivity Area is depicted to portray general cultural sensitivity within the Planning Area (see **Figure 5-7**).

20 Travis D. Hudson. Proto-Gabrieliño Patterns of Territorial Organization in Southern Coastal California. *Pacific Coast Archaeological Society Quarterly* 7(2):49-76. 1971.

Figure 5-7 Cultural Resource Sensitivity Area





Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures

Goals, Policies, and Implementation Measures

Natural Environment



Goal 5.1

Conserve the natural environment and the rolling topography of the City.



Policy 5.1.1

Maintain the natural canyons and hillside areas for passive open space and/or for incorporation into the Citywide trails system.

IM 5.1.1.1

Implement the General Plan land use policy, which indicates the location and extent of future land uses in the area.

Policy 5.1.2

Preserve natural landforms by discouraging the excessive grading of slopes in areas of the City that contain canyons, and native vegetation.

IM 5.1.2.1

Ensure development conforms to grading requirements in the Municipal Code, and California Building Code.

IM 5.1.2.2

Review existing hillside and grading ordinances to ensure development and alteration of slopes greater than 2 to 1 is discouraged.

Policy 5.1.3

Maintain the existing land preserved for conservation and identify land for additional land conservation.

IM 5.1.3.1

Host an annual standing meeting with the Palos Verdes Land Conservancy to discuss maintenance and preservation and identification of new properties for conservation.

Policy 5.1.4

Ensure site planning that conserves natural resources, including natural landforms and viewsheds.

- | | |
|------------|---|
| IM 5.1.4.1 | Develop a process for a pre-development meeting with applicants to discuss site planning and conservation goals for larger developments. |
| IM 5.1.4.2 | Develop a developer's handbook of best practices for site planning to conserve natural resources and make it available on the city website. |

Plant and Animal Life



- | | |
|-----------------|--|
| Goal 5.2 | Preserve native plant and animal life and their habitats. |
|-----------------|--|



- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Policy 5.2.1 | Preserve existing vegetation in open space corridors in its natural state while being sensitive to fire protection policies. |
| IM 5.2.1.1 | Work with the Los Angeles County Fire Department to establish buffer zones and defensible space in areas of high wildfire risk. |
| IM 5.2.1.2 | Establish a maintenance plan to ensure buffer zones and defensible space continue to serve the intended purpose. |
| Policy 5.2.2 | Encourage the re-establishment of appropriate native plants by requiring developments to prepare landscape plans that promote the preservation, protection, and enhancement of vegetation, wildlife, and natural habitats |
| IM 5.2.2.1 | Review and amend existing development standards to adhere to the state's Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance; promote the use of native vegetation and maintenance of existing habitats. |
| Policy 5.2.3 | Encourage the use of native, drought-tolerant plant species for landscaping to save water, minimize erosion, and to provide habitats for wildlife while being sensitive to the wildfire hazard. |
| IM 5.2.3.1 | Develop an approved native plant species list for purposes of landscaping. |
| IM 5.2.3.2 | Establish an incentive program to encourage landscaping with minimal irrigation requirements on private property. |

IM 5.2.3.3	Publish and distribute information outlining how drought-tolerant landscaping and drip irrigation can save water and be aesthetically pleasing.
IM 5.2.3.4	Consider a demonstration garden at City Hall or another park site to illustrate how drought-tolerant vegetation can be used for landscaping.
IM 5.2.3.5	Use approved native plant species list for any new landscaping projects or major renovation on city properties.
IM 5.2.3.6	Develop incentives/support programs to help remove invasive plant species.
Policy 5.2.4	Prioritize restoration of habitats for sensitive and/or endangered species.
IM 5.2.4.1	Consult with local environmental organizations to participate in the restoration of native habitat areas in canyons or other public open space areas and encourage private open space land to do likewise.
IM 5.2.4.2	Inventory publicly owned or controlled land as candidate sites for restoration.
Policy 5.2.5	Establish an Urban Forestry program to maintain a resilient and healthy tree canopy in the City.
IM 5.2.5.1	Develop an urban forestry program manual focusing on subjects such as citywide tree management, tree planting and replacement of hazardous trees, tree preservation, and approved tree list.
IM 5.2.5.2	Update ordinances to reflect recommendations by Urban Forestry Program manual.

Preserve Resources



Goal 5.3

Promote the preservation of cultural, historical, and natural resources.



Policy 5.3.1

Ensure the protection of sites of paleontological, archaeological, historical, and culturally valuable significance.

IM 5.3.1.1

Identify key sites of paleontological, archaeological, historical, and cultural significance, and regulate land uses through zoning tools.

IM 5.3.1.2

Coordinate with local historic preservation organizations for review of development projects within the cultural resource sensitivity area and include local tribes on distribution lists for CEQA notices for development projects within the cultural resource sensitivity area.

IM 5.3.1.3	Appropriate measures are to be taken to ensure that the artifacts discovered in the course of construction are properly recorded and salvaged.	IM 5.3.4.2	Establish a local historic designation program based on the Context Statement to enable property owners to participate in the program voluntarily.
Policy 5.3.2	Encourage and support local, high-quality projects and programs devoted to the visual and performing arts, the sciences, the humanities, and educational programs related to these topics.	IM 5.3.4.3	Identify neighborhoods and buildings that will be more than 50 years old by 2040 and prioritize the properties for historic designation based on its historic architectural value.
IM 5.3.2.1	Cooperate with local organizations to promote and advertise special events and activities in the City's newsletter and public access cable.	IM 5.3.4.4	Provide education to property owners on the benefits of preserving the historic character of neighborhoods/properties.
Policy 5.3.3	Seek funding sources to develop a nature/environmental center at the George F. Canyon open space/nature preserve.	IM 5.3.4.5	Update the City's landmark protection ordinance to include guidelines for designating and protecting historic properties.
IM 5.3.3.1	Identify long-term funding sources for the operation and maintenance of George F. Canyon Open Space in coordination with the Pepper Tree Foundation.	Policy 5.3.5	Support public education programs related to site development and conservation of resources.
IM 5.3.3.2	Encourage a cooperative effort with neighboring jurisdictions to extend the formal preservation of George F. Canyon into Rolling Hills and Rancho Palos Verdes Canyon.	IM 5.3.5.1	Develop a developer's handbook that outlines City and County codes applicable to site planning and the conservation of resources.
IM 5.3.3.3	Consider earmarking funding for the center in the City's five-year Capital Improvement Program.	IM 5.3.5.2	Distribute information related to environmental concerns regarding air quality, water resources, land, and other ecological resources through various mediums (e.g., the City's website, social media, newsletters, flyers, brochures, interactive booths at community gatherings) to educate and inform residents as feasible.
Policy 5.3.4	Preserve historic neighborhoods and buildings to retain the community's cultural and architectural heritage.	IM 5.3.5.3	Encourage the use of high-efficiency irrigation technology and recycled site water to reduce the use of potable water for irrigation.
IM 5.3.4.1	Prepare a Context Statement to identify the types of resources that could be historically important in Rolling Hills Estates.		

IM 5.3.5.4	Identify key properties that would benefit from high-efficiency irrigation (including parks, golf courses, schools, etc.) and develop a process (including potential incentives) for landowners to modernize irrigation tools.
IM 5.3.5.5	Continue to disseminate information on the distribution of rain barrels by the West Basin Municipal Water District.
IM 5.3.5.6	Develop an ordinance requiring larger new developments to use high-efficiency irrigation technology and recycled site water for irrigation of landscaped areas.

Air and Water Quality



Goal 5.4 **Maintain and strive to improve air and water quality.**

Policy 5.4.1	Cooperate with the South Coast Air Quality Management District (SCAQMD) and surrounding cities to develop standards for the enforcement of regulations specific to Rolling Hills Estates.
IM 5.4.1.1	Monitor standards and regulations implemented by SCAQMD and coordinate with adjacent jurisdictions to track air quality violations within the City and the larger Peninsula.
Policy 5.4.2	Coordinate with regional agencies to ensure that motor vehicles comply with all standards for air pollution control.
IM 5.4.2.1	Advertise the SCQAMD's program that involves reporting polluting vehicles to that agency via the City's website.
Policy 5.4.3	Require that all future developments connect to public sewers to prevent contamination and pollution of the local groundwater.
IM 5.4.3.1	During the site plan review, ensure proper sewer connections are made.
Policy 5.4.4	Develop and update the recycling program to include types of common household hazardous waste.
IM 5.4.4.1	Implement the City's Source Reduction and Recycling Element and Household Hazardous Waste Elements to comply with state regulations such as Assembly Bill 939.
IM 5.4.4.2	Periodically update the City's Source Reduction and Recycling Element and Household Hazardous Waste Elements.

IM 5.4.4.3	Designate an environmental coordinator to implement and monitor the recycling program.
Policy 5.4.5	Participate in management programs established by Los Angeles County for water conservation, liquid and solid waste management, and flood control.
IM 5.4.5.1	A designated environmental coordinator/city staff will regularly attend meetings organized by the County in relation to water conservation, waste management, and flood control.
IM 5.4.5.2	The City staff/environmental coordinator will ensure that appropriate mitigation measures are identified during the environmental review process.
Policy 5.4.6	Encourage low impact development and other innovative technologies for stormwater management.
IM 5.4.6.1	Require low impact development plans and stormwater pollution prevention plans for new developments and major renovation projects, unless and until future regulatory requirements supersede such plans.
IM 5.4.6.2	Discuss low impact development requirements during the pre-development meeting with applicants.

Aesthetic Quality

Goal 5.5	Promote and preserve the aesthetic quality of the community and scenic roadways.
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Policy 5.5.1	Preserve the character and viewsheds of designated scenic corridors, and prioritize consideration for the visibility of scenery, major landform, vegetation, structures, and panoramas.
IM 5.5.1.1	Establish guidelines for development along scenic corridors that enable viewshed preservation based on the framework established in the Scenic Corridors section.
Policy 5.5.2	Preserve and beautify the existing rural roadway geometry and designated scenic corridors.
IM 5.5.2.1	Maintain local scenic designation and explore opportunities to designate additional roadways based on criteria listed under the Scenic Corridors section.
IM 5.5.2.2	Review existing ordinances and regulations to ensure the guidelines related to preservation and beautification of roadways are reflected.
Policy 5.5.3	Develop a plan for undergrounding existing utility poles and require new development to place utilities underground unless infeasible, to maintain viewsheds, and reduce hazards.
IM 5.5.3.1	Identify and pursue funding opportunities for placing utilities underground.
IM 5.5.3.2	Map existing aboveground utility poles and prioritize undergrounding efforts through a multi-year, phased approach in coordination with applicable utilities.





Scenic Corridors Criteria

Scenic Corridors Criteria

The scenic corridor designation applies to the corridors in the City that contain significant aesthetic and visual resources, and that provides a sense of openness for the community. Proposals for new development need to be evaluated to ensure that significant views along these corridors will be preserved. **Figure 5-8** shows the corridors that have been designated as Scenic Corridors. These include Palos Verdes Drive North, Rolling Hills Road, Palos Verdes Drive East, Hawthorne Boulevard, and Silver Spur Road.

The criteria used in designating Scenic Corridors in the City are:

- Areas that characterize the rural or urban form of the City of Rolling Hills Estates
- Significant places or sites of interest
- Outstanding topographic features or unique natural features
- Urban design and architecture that is unique to the City of Rolling Hills Estates
- Important viewsheds where preservation is warranted

The framework below provides an outline for crafting guidelines used to shape the quality and character of the City's built environment.

Public Realm

The design of the public realm and its relationship with the surrounding development plays a large part in establishing the unique identity of the scenic corridor. The public realm includes the streets, sidewalks, and public spaces such as plaza, trails, open spaces, and other gathering spaces accessible to the public. Public realm guidelines

will establish street character and creation of vibrant places by integrating placemaking elements in fluid spaces between public and private realms such as plazas, outdoor dining areas, and other gathering areas. Public realm considerations that should be included in guidelines include:

- Street design – street markings, lane widths, street curvatures, crossings, stormwater drainage, utility placement
- Sidewalk treatment and integration of American with Disability Act (ADA) accessibility
- Integration and buffering of multi-use paths, and equestrian trails along scenic corridors
- Provision of bike facilities, including bike lanes, share the road signs, bike racks, etc.
- Perimeter Conditions – Relationship of fencing to the street edge, fencing design, character, and materials
- Medians and sidewalk buffer – character, width, landscaping
- Placemaking elements – Art, plaza spaces, sidewalk treatment, lighting, water elements
- Wayfinding elements – Interactive and static signage, integrating signage in sidewalks and art
- Gateways and Signs – the unique design of gateway elements, transportation signage, scenic corridor markers, city entry markers
- Street furniture and accessories and their relationship to proposed architectural styles and cultural heritage of the area

Landscaping

Landscaping should be considered an essential part of scenic corridors, and the diversity of vegetation within and along the Scenic Corridor contributes to the uniqueness of the corridor. Landscaping can provide wildlife habitat, a sense of open space, and a buffer between land uses. It can also help blend into the surrounding natural area, thereby allowing for the continuity of open space and vistas. Guidelines may address existing planting, native and non-invasive vegetation, the density of vegetation, the relationship between existing and new vegetation, irrigation, and low impact development techniques.

Natural Habitats and Historically Significant Areas

Sensitive areas, such as nature preserves, tracks of native vegetation, canyons and washes, and areas of known historical significance, which serve an important purpose, should be preserved to the greatest extent possible.

Architectural Character/Identity

Each scenic roadway is unique in its land use mix and architectural character. This uniqueness should be identified and built upon to guide future development. Architectural guidelines should provide style choices to generate an image of a place that is built over time and refrain from mono-tecturing of a place. The guidelines should respect the history and culture of a place but also allow for

innovation and furthering of new styles that give a unique identity to a place. The guidelines may address:

- Allowable architectural styles
- Articulation and pedestrian sensitive design elements
- Sustainability in building design
- Materials and colors
- Relationship of the front façade and skyline to the street edge
- Placement of mechanical equipment and unsightly utilities

Building Massing and Height

Building massing and height are two significant factors in determining the impact a building will have on its surrounding environment. Guidelines may address:

- Permitted maximum building height
- Site size, geometry, topography, and configuration in relation to adjacent corridors and building placement
- Use of view pockets in building design that protects viewsheds while not sacrificing the total built area permissible by zoning
- Dividing a large form into several linked smaller forms to minimize visual impact
- Overshadowing effect on neighboring properties
- Use of roof form to create visual interest