

# DAVIS OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION AND MANAGEMENT PLAN

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## Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan Goal Summary

This summary includes all the goals from the Acquisition and Management Plan (AMP). These goals direct the City's actions in acquiring and managing open space resources. Each of the goals are supported by policies and procedures that guide implementation of the plan. This summary is provided to allow for ease of use and reference.

### Acquisition Goals

- GOAL: **Protect the maximum feasible area of important strategically located open space within the Davis Planning Area. Importance is determined by the extent to which parcels help meet other goals.**
- GOAL: **Acquire open space within each of the following acquisition categories: Urban Fringe, Community Separator, Agriculture, Biological and Natural Resources, and Scenic Resources.**
- GOAL: **Provide decision-makers with an objective open space property evaluation system.**
- GOAL: **Adopt an open, consistent, and objective decision making process for all open space acquisitions by the City.**

### Management Goal

- GOAL: **Provide management of open space lands and resources that are owned or otherwise protected by the City in a manner consistent with the identified reason(s) why the site was originally acquired.**

### Budget Goal

- GOAL: **Develop an open space program budget.**

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## SECTION I

### INTRODUCTION and BACKGROUND

#### 1.1 Introduction

Like most communities in the Great Central Valley, the history and character of Davis is tightly interwoven with the surrounding landscape. The original human inhabitants of the Davis area, the Patwin tribe, chose to live along the banks of Putah Creek since it provided for the necessities of their existence. Later, settlers chose this area because cultivation of the rich alluvial soils provided sustenance and income. The railways followed to transport agricultural goods to the population centers of northern California. Soon after, the University of California selected this area for its farm campus due in part to the quality of the soils and the existing transportation infrastructure. This abbreviated history shows that the City of Davis is truly a product of its surroundings.

Today these surroundings continue to play an important role in defining the character of Davis. The open farms and remaining wild areas around the city help create a sense of place and contribute to the vitality of Davis. Since 1958 the Davis General Plan has included open space and agricultural protection policies that recognize this important link. Civic leaders have understood for many years that these open spaces strengthen the connection between citizens and their community by helping to define a limit to the area that they perceive as their home. Among the benefits derived from enhancing this connection is that citizens who closely identify with a place or social group are more likely to be involved in activities that build community. In addition, these open space areas contribute to the vitality of Davis by sustaining the regional ecosystem, supporting the local economy, providing

opportunities for outdoor recreation and learning, and offering visual relief from urban landscapes. The overall objective of this plan is to support the City's sustained efforts to maintain and enhance the rural and urban mosaic that contributes to the high quality of life in Davis.

#### 1.2 Background

The City of Davis Open Space Program was established twelve years ago to implement long standing policies that called for the protection of the farmlands and wild areas that surround the community. Initially, efforts focused on defining how the program would function, setting initial priorities for open space acquisitions, and identifying potential funding sources. This initial stage of the program included several significant milestones:

- Acceptance of the first easement by the City (1988)
- Acquisition of the South Fork Preserve (1993)
- Adoption of the Farmland Protection Ordinance (1995)
- Establishment of the Open Space Commission (1996)
- Completion of the Open Space Implementation Financing Plan (1998)

Between 1988 and 1998 the city and its partners protected over 2,400 acres of prime farmland and sensitive habitat areas by combining impact fees from new development with state grants to purchase lands and conservation easements. Though the City was able to attain some of its open space objectives with this funding strategy, it became clear that a stable funding source was needed for the city to reach its long term open space protection and management goals.

Beginning in 1999, the program entered a new phase that focused on the task of establishing a stable local funding source for land acquisitions and management. After a year and a half of preparation, the City Council placed Measure O on the November 2000 ballot. Needing a super majority, the measure passed with over 70% of the vote. The new tax measure provides \$17.5 million dollars over the next 30 years for open space acquisitions and management.

As part of the debate that led up to the passage of Measure O, the Davis City Council decided that a more formal approach to open space acquisition and management planning was needed. Prior to the election, the Council outlined a process that would generate a plan to guide future open space program decisions. Acting on this direction, the Open Space Commission and staff began a year-long public process to refine city open space priorities and establish a framework plan to guide future acquisition and management decisions.

With the adoption of the Davis Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan (AMP), the Open Space Program is well positioned to carry out the community's open space protection goals. With adoption of this plan, the Open Space Program includes the following elements:

- General Plan goals and policies that lend long-standing support for the program.
- An established track record of successful acquisitions (over 2,400 acres currently protected).

- An acquisition and management plan that clearly identifies acquisition priorities, management goals, and establishes processes for carrying out program goals.
- Implementation tools (Farmland Protection Ordinance) and a stable funding source that can be used to leverage state, federal, and private grant funds.
- Strong support from the Community (community surveys and the vote on the tax measure).

### **1.3 Purpose**

The City of Davis General Plan includes many interrelated open space protection and stewardship goals. The Open Space Acquisition and Management Plan (AMP) provides a framework for how these community goals can be achieved. The purpose of the plan is to provide clear direction for staff, advisory bodies, and decision-makers as open space protection and management choices are being considered. The framework laid out in this plan is intended to:

- Set general goals and policies that will direct the City's effort to protect and effectively manage open space lands and resources.
- Provide the basis for informed open space land and resource acquisition decisions.
- Provide direction for land and resource management decisions.
- Provide organizational guidelines for the open space program budget.

- Establish a framework for a consistent, objective, and open decision-making process.
- Provide a basis for evaluating the City's progress toward reaching the open space protection goals established in the General Plan.

The AMP provides the context within which open space protection and management decisions will be made. The guidance provided by this plan is intended to be used in conjunction with other more site-specific selection and management tools such as property evaluation criteria and site-specific management plans.

#### **1.4 Organization**

The AMP is organized to provide a clear understanding of the types of open space lands and resources that are considered important to the community. The plan includes general goals and specific policies that direct the City's efforts to identify, acquire, and effectively manage threatened open space lands and resources. General priorities are identified to guide and support the open space protection decision making process. Focused policies and implementation measures are included to direct the actions and activities that are necessary to carry out the plan. In order to minimize speculative influences on land values and disturbance of rural landowners, the plan does not identify specific parcels for acquisition.

The plan addresses five main issue areas: (1) Acquisitions, (2) Land and Resource Management, (3) Program Budget, (4) Acquisition Administration, and (5) Plan Implementation. Program goals and supporting policies are established to

provide guidance in each issue area. Each goal is followed by a short narrative outlining the rationale behind the goal.

Pursuant to AMP goals, two additional plan components will be developed to provide specific guidance on property evaluation and resource management. The first supporting component is a property and resource evaluation tool that utilizes the City's Geographic Information System (GIS) to rank the conservation value of open space properties and resources. This tool will allow the City to easily reference and apply a variety of land and resource information that is related to a particular property, including agricultural, natural resource, habitat, and open space features. Also, general information related to the physical characteristics of a parcel such as size, land use, proximity to protected land, and distance from the city and roads can be quickly obtained. Together, these measurable attributes will help the city evaluate which lands should be acquired when offered by a willing seller.

The second supporting component is a focused set of land and resource management guidelines for the various types of open spaces that the City is likely to acquire. In conjunction with site specific management plans, these policies will enable the City to effectively manage lands and resources once they are acquired. This tiered approach will allow the City to revise and adjust management strategies as properties with unique characteristics are acquired and information is gathered that reveals possible alternatives to existing management practices.

#### **1.5 Relationship to other plans**

Davis General Plan - The AMP is consistent with the open space protection and stewardship goals established in the recently updated 2001 Davis General Plan. Through the Open Space chapter and the Community Resource Conservation section, the General Plan

provides clear direction for the creation of an open space planning and management document. The AMP is considered an implementation tool for these General Plan chapters. A reference list of the relevant sections of the General Plan are included as appendix 1.

Measure J and the Pass through Agreement - The AMP is designed to work with existing land use controls to implement General Plan open space protection goals. Currently, Measure J and the City/County Pass Through Agreement allow voters and elected officials in Davis to have a direct voice in land use decisions that occur outside the city limits. Measure J and the Pass Through Agreement provide temporary land use controls with each scheduled to expire in the next 10-12 years. The easements and fee-title purchases that result from implementation of the AMP provide permanent protection for lands that are highly valued by the community. These land use tools, taken together, allow the city to plan for the short and long-term protection of important strategically located open space lands in the Davis area.

Yolo County General Plan – The Board of Supervisors adopted the most recent Yolo County General Plan on July 17, 1983. While there have been some policy changes since that time (land use policies specific to the Knight’s Landing development were updated in 1990), there have been no comprehensive revisions of the Plan since its adoption. County policy and practice is of critical importance to future expansion and maintenance of the agricultural setting with limited urbanized areas in the land outside the city. The County's goals of agricultural preservation and contiguous urban development are generally consistent with Davis policies.

The County General Plan contains 42 goals. The goals which relate to the Davis open space protection efforts are as follows:

- Protect prime and other agricultural land from urban development.
- Create urban open spaces, greenbelts and scenic highways.
- Discourage urban sprawl.
- Continue to improve existing urban uses and place new urban uses in existing planned urban areas.
- Conserve natural resources.

Solano County General Plan - The Solano County General Plan was adopted by the Solano Board of Supervisors in 1980. Generally the Solano County General Plan conforms with the Davis General Plan policies. Solano County's General Plan contains policies regarding preserving agricultural land and encouraging urban development within existing communities.

Solano County’s Proposition A was adopted by the voters in the mid-1980's and stated that no urban development can occur outside city spheres of influence. The principles contained in Proposition A were renewed by Solano County’s voters in 1995 with the passage of a measure called the Orderly Growth Initiative. The initiative works similarly to Proposition A and is valid through 2010.

Most of the land in Solano County within the Davis Planning Area is designated for intensive agriculture except for the land at the Pedrick Road interchange which is designated for highway commercial. Putah Creek is designated in the Park and Recreation Element as a recreation resource area.

State Law – State law defines “open space land” as “any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to

an open space use...” Open space uses are broadly defined to include areas used for the preservation of natural resources, the managed production of resources, outdoor recreation, and public health and safety.

The Davis General plan meets the requirements that each county and city prepare an Open Space Element that addresses how preservation of open space lands will be implemented. The AMP is the implementation tool for Davis’ open space land preservation goals.

Environmental Regulations – Adoption of the AMP, individual acquisitions, and other open space protection activities must conform to the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), where applicable. Projects that involve Federal agency participation or funding may require compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

### **1.6 Program Funding**

A combination of funding sources will be utilized to implement the open space protection activities described in the AMP. Measure O, passed by 70% of the Davis voters in 2000, is the primary local funding source for implementation of the AMP goals. This measure will generate approximately \$17.5 million dollars over the next thirty years to be used exclusively for open space acquisitions and management. Measure O funds, in combination with development impact fees, provides a stable local funding source that will allow the City to compete effectively for state and federal open space protection grants. In addition to the local tax measure, the City has committed discretionary capitol improvement funding for the protection of open space.

## **SECTION II ACQUISITIONS**

### **2.1 Introduction**

Program goals and policies in each section of the plan establish the context for open space acquisition, management, and administration decisions. Taken together, these goals and policies serve to implement the General Plan open space protection and stewardship goals.

### **2.2 Acquisitions**

The City carries out its open space protection goals by setting policy and acquiring conservation easements and ownership of land from willing sellers. The City is committed to an approach that maximizes preservation of threatened open space lands and resources. An effective, direct, and equitable method of assuring important resources endure is to purchase protection (easements and fee-title) at a fair market price from willing sellers. The following goals and policies direct the City’s efforts to protect locally and regionally important open space lands and resources.

#### Guiding Principles

Two fundamental principles guide all acquisitions by the City:

- ❖ Acquire open space from willing sellers only. [In rare instances it may be advantageous for a property owner to request condemnation of property by the City. Condemnation will not be used by the City to acquire open space unless requested by the landowner.]
- ❖ Lands or resources must be located within the Davis Planning Area Boundary to qualify for acquisition or management by the City.

1. **GOAL:** Protect the maximum feasible area of important strategically located open space within the Davis Planning Area. Importance is determined by the extent to which parcels help meet other goals.

The City seeks to protect the greatest amount of high quality open space land and resources as possible within its funding constraints. Though the community's willingness to support open space protection through self taxation is remarkable, it is clear that protection of all undeveloped lands and sensitive resources in the Davis area is not possible. In order to maximize the effectiveness of available funding, the City will utilize the most cost effective open space protection tools (conservation easements) and seek to acquire open space that serves to buffer other lands from threat of conversion.

**POLICIES and PRACTICES:**

- Acquire and hold the least interest in a property necessary to carry out the City's General Plan goals for open space protection.
- Utilize conservation easements as the primary method of open space protection. Conservation easements shall be held in perpetuity.
- Acquire and hold fee-title to properties where protection of unique resources , restoration, or public access are desired.
- Protect open space lands and resources that are threatened by urban development or a significant change in land use. Risk of loss can be indicated by direct action (non-renewal of a Williamson Act

Contract, land use change, etc.) or indirect action (land use policy change, transportation corridor improvements, etc.).

- Acquire lands that facilitate the protection of other open space lands in the same area through interruption of sprawl, establishing linkages, buffering, and aggregation of protected open space lands.
- Acquire lands that have existing significant wildlife habitat or potentially restorable significant wildlife habitat.
- Consider the relative scarcity of the land type or resource being conserved when analyzing acquisition options.
- Balance efforts to restore natural resources with efforts to maintain agricultural production in the planning area.
- Factors such as the urgency or advantage of a particular sale, market conditions, and risk of loss without City participation may be considered in acquisition decisions.
- Consider potential management goals for an open space parcel during the acquisition phase to ensure that the parcel is considered in the context of surrounding land uses and that adequate funding is available to achieve conservation objectives.
- Continue to develop partnerships with conservation organizations, farm groups, and public agencies to facilitate the acquisition of open space lands and resources.



2. **GOAL:** Acquire open space within each of the following acquisition categories: Urban Fringe, Community Separator, Agriculture, Biological and Natural Resources, and Scenic Resources.

Acquisition categories identify the various types of open space lands and resources identified by the City for protection. The categories help organize the City's acquisition priorities by identifying the land and resource values that are desirable to the community. In addition, the categories form the basis for the establishment of an objective, science based property and resource evaluation system.

- *Urban Fringe:* Use protected open space to help define the urban limits of Davis and provide an adequate buffer between urban and rural land uses.
- *Urban Separator:* Establish Urban Separators between Davis and neighboring cities to preserve the unique character of each community.
- *Agriculture:* Protect prime agricultural lands and sustainable farming practices (e.g., organic agriculture) to maintain the long-term viability of agriculture in the Davis Planning Area.
- *Biological and Natural Resources:* Protect important wildlife habitat, sensitive species, and other significant natural resources through open space acquisitions.
- *Scenic Resources:* Protect views of significant landmarks and community gateways.

**POLICIES and PRACTICES:**

- Seek open space lands that overlap multiple acquisition categories.
- Attract willing sellers by identifying mutually beneficial land management opportunities.
- Ensure through the evaluation and planning phase that lands are acquired under one of these categories.

3. **GOAL:** Provide decision-makers with an objective open space property evaluation system.

Decision-makers, advisory bodies, and staff would benefit from a tool that compiles information and allows for an objective analysis of the conservation value of properties. This information will enable the City to make consistent, defensible decisions regarding open space protection.

**POLICIES and PRACTICES:**

- Develop a science-based land and resource evaluation system utilizing the City's geographic information system (GIS). Examples of map layers may include agricultural resources, biological resources, land use, protected open space lands, urban areas, and roads.
- Use the best information available for open space planning and decision-making, subject to budget and time constraints. Update data as necessary to maintain relevance.

The following list illustrates the types of factors that the City may consider in the decision to acquire an open space property or easement (see Plan Implementation Section 6.6 for a more complete list of Selection Guidance Factors).

- Strategic location of the proposed acquisition (protection of land is key to protecting other open space land in the same area).
- Project size and what effect it may have on whether the land type or resource can be maintained over time.
- Viability of agricultural use in the long-term.
- Connectivity to intact or relatively intact natural area(s).
- Adjacency to protected lands.

### SECTION III

#### LAND and RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

##### 3.1 Land and Resource Management

The long-term success of the Davis Open Space Program will be determined by both the quality of open spaces protected and how they are managed. To this end, successful implementation of this plan requires effective management of all City protected open space (easements and fee-title). Effective management involves protecting resources and sustaining them in perpetuity. The following goals and policies serve to implement General Plan goals calling for the protection and stewardship of open space lands and resources within the Davis Planning Area.

1. **GOAL:** Provide management of open space lands and resources that are owned or otherwise protected by the City in a manner consistent with the identified reason(s) why the site was originally acquired.

Management policies listed below provide direction for City in its effort to maintain (and in some cases enhance) the resources present on its open space lands. Sub-categories are intended to provide both programmatic direction (*Land and Resource Planning*) and focused direction that applies to specific land types or issues.

#### POLICIES and PRACTICES:

##### *Land and Resource Planning*

- Adopt a land and resource management planning process to provide general direction for open space management.
- Employ a systems approach in managing open space land and resources. A systems approach includes consideration of how a site functions within the context of surrounding land uses as well as how the various components of a site function together.
- Develop baseline inventories for City open space lands and resources (e.g. property size, resources present when acquired, current use).
- Adopt management plans for City open space lands and resources that address site specific management needs and changing conditions.
- Budget for management planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Carry out monitoring of easement compliance and condition of the resources intended to be protected.

- Conduct periodic reviews of management actions and results, and amend policies and plans as necessary. During periodic review consider and respond to public comments on land and resource management actions and results. Maintain a file of public comments on each open space property acquired by the City.

#### *Restoration*

- Restore degraded or deteriorating areas where appropriate and as funding allows.
- Use native plant species occurring within the bio-region (lower Sacramento Valley) for restoration projects.
- Protect and enhance habitat for special status plant and animal species where appropriate.
- Discourage the spread of invasive non-native species whenever control is feasible.
- Utilize integrated pest management (IPM) practices in all open space management plans and actions, while prioritizing non-chemical means for management.
- Protect and enhance surface and ground water quality through open space management practices.

#### *Public Access*

- Allow public access only where it is consistent with the resource protection goals for a site.

- Where public access is appropriate, minimize evidence of human use and impacts through site design, use regulations, and visitor education.
- Coordinate with local landowners and farmers to minimize the occurrence of trespass and related impacts on private lands.

#### *Agriculture*

- Manage City owned agricultural lands in a sustainable manner that balances protection of natural systems with the viability of agricultural production on the site.
- Lease revenues should be primarily applied to the management cost of the agricultural and restoration activities onsite.
- Reincorporate excess lease revenue into the Open Space Program budget.

#### *Historic Resources*

- Identify and retain historic structures, artifacts, and archaeological sites through open space management practices. Seek appropriate partners for maintenance, management, and/or disposition of such resources.

#### *Research*

- Coordinate and cooperate with institutions, agencies, organizations, and individuals that are conducting resource-related research.
- Integrate research results and findings into site management plans as appropriate.

*Education*

- Provide interpretive facilities and materials on all publicly accessible City owned open space lands.
- Coordinate with local schools, the Science Center, and organizations to provide opportunities for environmental education on City open space lands.

**SECTION IV BUDGET**

**4.1 Annual Program Budget**

The primary purpose of the open space program budget is to plan for expenditure of funds and set spending priorities. The budget also provides an opportunity to gauge the effectiveness of land and resource management strategies and to initiate appropriate action if expected results do not occur. The program budget will consist of Measure O revenues, Capitol Improvement Program funds, agricultural mitigation funds, and state and federal grants. The program budget will be augmented by the City's General Fund.

1. **GOAL:** Develop an open space program budget.

The Open Space Program has a dedicated funding source (Measure O revenues) for the first time. In order to effectively allocate and track expenditures, a program budget is necessary.

**POLICIES and PRACTICES:**

- Adopt an annual open space program budget that describes the priorities for the coming year and allocates funds accordingly. The Open Space

Commission will review the draft program budget and make recommendations to the City Council.

- Utilize the budget process to conduct a review of land and resource management actions and results, and amend policies and implementation measures as appropriate.
- Create an open space program budget section in the City's annual budget.
- Utilize partnerships with other governmental agencies, organizations, and volunteers to reduce land and resource management costs.
- Ensure that Measure O funds are spent in accordance with the language of the Measure and the City Council Resolution (Resolution No. 00-145, Series 2000) describing the guidelines for expenditure.
- Accept verbal and written public input on the proposed annual budget and priorities at the Open Space Commission annual Open Space Program budget meeting.
- Consistent with the public expectation at the time of the passage of Measure O, establish an initial (first 2 years) ratio of at least 80% of the Measure O revenues toward acquisition and 20% for administration and planning. Maintain City funding for the Open Space Program at a level at least equal to that prior to passage of Measure O.
- Consider utilizing contractual services for large-scale restoration projects when economically advantageous.

## SECTION V ACQUISITION ADMINISTRATION

### 5.1 Acquisition Administration

This goal establishes the framework for a consistent, objective, and open acquisition process. The implementation of this process will enable staff, advisory bodies, and decision-makers to clearly understand their respective roles in a typical open space transaction. Providing an open process with opportunities for public participation helps garner community support for both the individual transaction and the program as a whole.

1. **GOAL:** Adopt an open, consistent, and objective decision making process for all open space acquisitions by the City.

An acquisition process outline is included in the implementation section of the AMP and is intended guide the City in a typical open space acquisition. Though there are numerous intermediate steps and each acquisition is unique, the outline lists the critical decision points and opportunities for public input.

## SECTION VI PLAN IMPLEMENTATION

### 6.1 Plan Implementation

The City will utilize both analytical and procedural tools to implement the goals and policies of the AMP. The analytical tools will enable the City to evaluate the conservation potential of open space properties based on objective information. The procedural tools provide a process framework that directs how acquisition and funding decisions will be made. In addition, the City will utilize several other implementation tools and

strategies outlined below to assist in the implementation of the AMP goals.

#### 6.1.1 Analytical Tools

Land and Resource Information. The City will collect land and resource information from existing sources to create a database of the various factors that contribute to the open space value of land within the Davis Planning Area. This data will be assembled into map layers that can be used with the City's Geographic Information System (GIS). The GIS will allow City staff and the Open Space Commission to overlay these maps and provide easy reference to a variety of land and resource information, including agricultural, natural resource, habitat, and open space features. Also, general information related to the physical characteristics of a parcel such as size, land use, proximity to protected land, and distance from the city and roads can be quickly obtained. This science-based tool will allow City staff, the Open Space Commission, and the City Council to efficiently and objectively evaluate the various factors that contribute to the open space value of a particular parcel. This tool also allows the City to establish a consistent, objective rationale for prioritizing and making open space protection decisions. In addition, the GIS can also play a part in managing open space properties and resources by creating a single source for information on the City's land and resource protection projects.

Scarcity Factor. Another analytical tool can assist in quantifying the relative sensitivity of an open space land type or resource to development influences. This tool can be employed to help determine whether a particular parcel or resource should receive a high priority for protection by the City. This tool measures the relative scarcity of the land type or resource by looking at factors such as whether it is in general decline in the Davis area, how much is already protected as open space, if the land supports sensitive

species, and whether its protection contributes significantly to the protection of other high priority open space lands or resources. Each of these general factors can be quantified with the results incorporated into a GIS map layer that provides a more complete understanding of the conservation potential of a particular parcel.

Timing: Collect resource data and construct GIS based evaluation tool within six months of adoption of the AMP.

### 6.1.2 Procedural Tools

Procedural implementation tools allow the City to act in an efficient and consistent manner on open space opportunities that the analytical tools described above help identify. Two procedures will be established to facilitate the protection of open space by the City: (1) an acquisitions process and (2) an annual project goals and budget setting process. These procedures help define the roles of staff, advisory bodies, and decision makers in acting on open space protection opportunities and the expenditure of open space funds.

Acquisitions procedure. The following outline is intended guide the City in a typical open space acquisition. Though there are numerous intermediate steps and each acquisition is unique, the outline lists the critical decision points and opportunities for public input. A typical acquisition process includes the following general steps:

- Identification of parcels that meet the goals and acquisition categories described in the plan.
- Contact with a property owner(s) or agents who may be interested in the program.

- Submission of a letter of interest by a landowner requesting a property evaluation and site visit by staff.
- Completion of a preliminary property evaluation by staff including: project description, initial analysis of consistency with program goals and budget priorities, and investigation of available outside funding sources for the project.
- Presentation of preliminary property evaluation to the Open Space Commission for recommendation on appropriate next steps (appraisal, negotiation, or rejection). Public input opportunity.
- Direction from City Council on next steps.

If direction is given to proceed, the following steps are necessary:

- Appraisal preparation, environmental site assessment, title reports, and collection of other pertinent documents and information.
- CEQA analysis.
- Negotiations on terms and easement language if necessary. May include closed session meetings with the City Council on terms of the acquisition.
- Staff report to Open Space Commission for recommended action on transaction. Public input opportunity.
- Staff report to City Council action on the transaction and release of funding. Public input opportunity.

The acquisition process outline provides an overview of a typical open space transaction. However, the City Council may modify the process in exceptional cases (subject to legal requirements) where there is a high risk of loss without accelerated action by the City.

Timing: Adopt resolution outlining acquisitions process within two months of adoption of the AMP.

Annual project goals and budget setting. In order to assure that open space funds are allocated consistent with the legal requirements of Measure O and with the goals and objectives of this plan, the City will enact the following Open Space Program budget process:

- Early in the calendar year (February), the Open Space Commission will hold a public hearing on the City's Open Space Program budget. The report to the Commission will provide summaries of the year to date activities and expenditures and projections for the following fiscal year. Fiscal reporting will include all aspects of the program budget, including acquisitions and management of open space lands and resources.
- The Open Space Program annual budget report and Commission recommendations will be forwarded to the Finance and Economics Commission for review and comment.
- The Commission will provide the City Council with recommendations regarding allocation of resources for the following fiscal year. This recommendation will be incorporated into the general budget reports presented to the City Council during the City's annual budget setting process in late spring/early summer.

Timing: Adopt resolution outlining annual project goals and budget setting process within two months of adoption of the AMP.

## **6.2 Land and Resource Management Planning**

The policies of the plan call for adoption of a land and resource management planning process in order to support the general guidelines established in the AMP. The primary focus of this supplemental planning process will be the development of site specific management plans that are consistent with the AMP.

Timing: Develop and adopt a Land and Resource Management Planning Process within nine months of the adoption of the AMP.

## **6.3 Conservation Partnerships**

The City will continue to work closely with local conservation organizations to implement its open space protection goals. Close collaboration with these organizations and identification of common objectives has allowed the City to achieve the level of success it has in protecting open space. The City will sustain its efforts to identify projects that maintain and enhance these important relationships. In addition, the City will look to develop partnerships with regional and national conservation organizations that share its objectives. Memberships in organizations, lobbying state and federal representatives, and participation in regional open space discussions are a few of the actions the City can take to build partnerships with regional and national organizations.

## **6.4 Science and Research**

Scientific research and academic field studies on City open space lands can assist the City in achieving the goals outlined in the AMP. The intent is to create a collaborative relationship with researchers that will produce information that will allow the City to increase its knowledge of the resources under its stewardship and provide the basis for sound planning and management decisions. Research can provide additional benefits such as the collection of source information for the City's open space interpretive programs.

Research and field studies will be actively encouraged where they are consistent with the goals and policies of the AMP.

### **6.5 Education and Interpretation**

Education is a key factor in building strong public support for the City's Open Space Program. Appropriate and well-managed public access on City open space lands provides opportunities for citizens to learn about the natural and cultural history of the Davis area and the Central Valley. Increasing public knowledge and appreciation of agricultural and natural systems will improve support for their conservation. The City will work closely with school districts, local conservation organizations (e.g.: Yolo Basin Foundation), and outside agencies to develop open space related educational materials and firsthand learning experiences.

### **6.6 Selection Guidance Factors**

As described above, the City will employ a number of tools to evaluate and select projects. The foundation for these tools are the goals and policies established in this plan. Though not a comprehensive list, the following examples of factors that may be considered during the acquisition decision process illustrate under what circumstances the City may act to protect open space. Consistency with one or all these factors is not necessarily required for the City to choose to proceed (or not proceed) with a project.

Factors:

- Strategic location of the proposed acquisition (protection of land is key to protecting other open space land in the same area).
- Project size and what effect it may have on whether the land type or resource can be maintained over time.

- Viability of agricultural use in the long-term.
- Connectivity to intact or relatively intact natural area(s).
- Adjacency to protected lands.
- Ecological value (unique habitat, species diversity, protection of listed species or species in local decline, etc.).
- High risk of loss of exceptional open space resource(s) without participation by the City.
- Outstanding scenic values (views of significant local or regional landmarks, community gateways, etc.).
- High recreational value that is consistent with the City's open space protection goals and provides opportunities for unmet recreational needs (e.g. wildlife viewing, hiking, etc.).
- Landowner commitment to perpetuation of conservation values (sustainable farming practices, voluntary protection of sensitive natural resources, etc.).
- Land or conservation easement can be acquired with reasonable effort in relation to its cost.
- Landowner insists on provisions in an easement, which would diminish the property's conservation values.
- City effort required to enforce and/or monitor an easement.
- Potential impacts of adjacent properties on the conservation value of the protected land or resource.
- Consideration of destructive trespass, dumping, or other activities that may have a negative impact on conservation values.
- Title issues, boundary disputes, or pending legal actions associated with the land or easement.

These factors are not intended to limit the discussion of the positive or negative attributes of a proposed acquisition by the City. Instead, they should be used to assist in the analysis of whether a particular parcel or resource should be protected by the City. These factors



should not be considered static and should be modified to address changing conditions and unique circumstances.