

STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE

MEETING STARTING SHORTLY – WELCOME!



STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE

Presenter:
Jeremy Dennis, Good City Company

March 5, 2024

www.cityofpaloalto.org

PURPOSE/OVERVIEW OF LISTENING SESSION



- Hear from you on the proposed update
 - Concerns
 - Questions
 - Comments
- Hear updates from consultant on next steps in update
 - Timeline
 - Other ways to engage

GOOD CITY COMPANY



Jeremy Dennis



Nicholas Hamilton

March 5, 2024

www.cityofpaloalto.org

DELIVERABLES/ENGAGEMENT



- Existing Conditions Report
- Draft Ordinance
- Internal Partners – City Staff
- External Partners
- Community Input

CURRENT STREAM PROTECTION ORDINANCE



18.40.140 Stream Corridor Protection



(a) Purpose

The purpose of the water resources protection measures specified below is to provide site planning and development standards designed to preserve riparian resources, protect improvements from damage potential stream flooding and bank erosion, and minimize storm water pollution. The further intent of the regulations and guidelines is to consider these factors in site planning early in the review process.

(b) Water Resources Protection for Streamside Properties

(1) Streamside Review Area Defined

"Streamside review area" means all properties abutting a stream or located within 50 feet from the top of a stream bank, except those properties separated from the stream by a public street.

(2) Applicability of Streamside Review Area Requirements and Guidelines

For parcels within the streamside review area, the following types of developments are subject to these requirements and guidelines listed in subsections (3) and (4) below.

- (a) Development in all zones except the R-1, R-2 and RMD districts;
- (b) Development in the R-1, R-2, or RMD zones requiring discretionary review, including but not limited to:
 - (i) Individual review for a new two-story home
 - (ii) Individual review for a new second story on an existing house, where an expansion or change in the building footprint results

CURRENT STREAM PROTECTION ORDINANCE, continued



- 50 foot from top of bank in Streamside Review Area
 - Only applies to certain residential zoning districts
 - Includes some exceptions/variance opportunities
- Limits most construction/activity within Review Area
- Some limits to lighting, irrigation systems, color of materials, and grading
- Plants allowed governed by Water District guidance

COUNCIL PRIORITIES FOR 2024



- Climate Change & Natural Environment selected
- Others are Community Health, Safety, Wellness & Belonging; Economic Development & Transition; and Housing for Social & Economic Balance.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE



- A general/comprehensive plan is each local government's blueprint for meeting the community's long-term vision for the future. The General/Comprehensive Plan Guidelines serve as a resource to help jurisdictions draft and update their general plans. Technical advisory documents provide supplemental information about general plan topics in response to local needs around the state or changes in State law – Governor's Office of Planning and Research
- Contains many mandated "elements" or chapters
- Must be updated regularly
- Contains Goals, Policies and Programs

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE



PALO ALTO COMPREHENSIVE PLAN
NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ELEMENT
CREEKS AND RIPARIAN AREAS

GOAL N-3 Conservation of both natural and channelized creeks and riparian areas as open space amenities, natural habitat areas and elements of community design.

Policy N-3.1 All creeks are valuable resources for natural habitats, connectivity, community design, and flood control, and need different conservation and enhancement strategies. Recognize the different characteristics along creeks in Palo Alto, including natural creek segments in the city's open space and rural areas, primarily west of Foothill Expressway; creek segments in developed areas that retain some natural characteristics; and creek segments that have been channelized. Pursue opportunities to enhance riparian setbacks along urban and rural creeks as properties are improved or redeveloped.

Policy N-3.2 Prevent the further channelization and degradation of Palo Alto's creeks.

CREEK SETBACKS

Policy N-3.3 Protect the city's creeks from the impacts of future buildings, structures, impervious surfaces and ornamental landscaping and preserve their function as habitat connectivity corridors by establishing a range of setback requirements that account for existing creek conditions, land use characteristics, property ownership and flood control potential.



Program N3.3.1 Update the Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance to explore 150 feet as the desired stream setback along natural creeks in open space and rural areas west of Foothill Expressway. This 150-foot setback would prohibit the siting of buildings and other structures, impervious surfaces, outdoor activity areas and ornamental landscaped areas within 150 feet of the top of a creek bank. Allow passive or intermittent outdoor activities and pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle pathways along natural creeks where there are adequate setbacks to protect the natural riparian environment. Within the setback area, provide a border of native riparian vegetation at least 30 feet along the creek bank.

The update to the Stream Protection Ordinance should establish:

- Design recommendations for development or redevelopment of sites within the setback, consistent with basic creek habitat objectives and significant net improvements

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE



CREEKS AND RIPARIAN AREAS

GOAL N-3 Conservation of both natural and channelized creeks and riparian areas as open space amenities, natural habitat areas and elements of community design.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE, continued



Policy N-3.3 and Programs N3.3.1 – N3.3.3

POLICY N-3.3

Protect the city's creeks from the impacts of future buildings, structures, impervious surfaces and ornamental landscaping and preserve their function as habitat connectivity corridors by establishing a range of setback requirements that account for existing creek conditions, land use characteristics, property ownership and flood control potential.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE, continued



Policy N-3.3 and Programs N3.3.1 – N3.3.3

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The update to the Stream Protection Ordinance should establish: Design recommendations for development or redevelopment of sites within the setback, consistent with basic creek habitat objectives and significant net improvements in the condition of the creek; Conditions under which single-family property and existing development are exempt from the 150-foot setback; Appropriate setbacks and creek conservation measures for undeveloped parcels.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN STREAM CORRIDOR PROTECTION ORDINANCE UPDATE, continued



Policy N-3.3 and Programs N3.3.1 – N3.3.3

Program N3.3.2 stakeholder involvement to establish appropriate setback requirements that reflect the varying natural and channelized conditions along creeks east of Foothill Expressway. Ensure that opportunities to provide an enhanced riparian setback along urban creeks as properties are redeveloped or improved are included in this evaluation.

Program N3.3.3 For all creeks, update the Stream Corridor Protection Ordinance to minimize impacts on wildlife by: Limiting the development of recreational trails to one side of natural riparian corridors; Requiring careful design of lighting surrounding natural riparian corridors to maximize the distance between nighttime lighting and riparian corridors and direct lighting away from the riparian corridor.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE- CONTEXT



CONTEXT

Policy N-3.1 All creeks are valuable resources for natural habitats, connectivity, community design, and flood control, and need different conservation and enhancement strategies. Recognize the different characteristics along creeks in Palo Alto, including natural creek segments in the city's open space and rural areas, primarily west of Foothill Expressway; creek segments in developed areas that retain some natural characteristics; and creek segments that have been channelized. Pursue opportunities to enhance riparian setbacks along urban and rural creeks as properties are improved or redeveloped.

Policy N-3.2 Prevent the further channelization and degradation of Palo Alto's creeks.

COMPREHENSIVE PLAN UPDATE – CONTEXT



CONTEXT

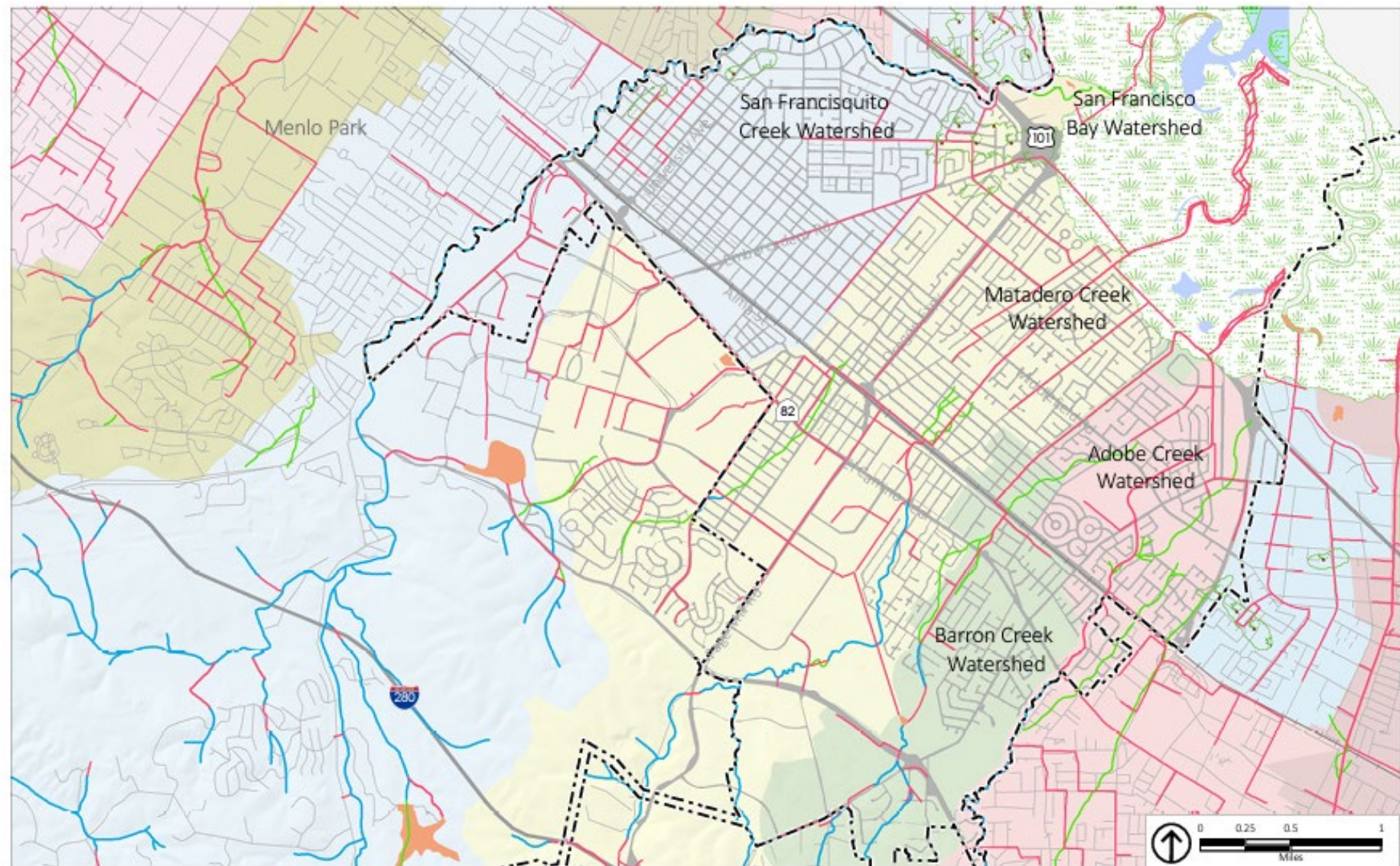
Policy N-3.2 Prevent the further channelization and degradation of Palo Alto's creeks.

Policies N-3.4 – N-3.8 Management and Enhancement ideas



Source: City of Palo Alto, 2015; ESRI, 2016; MapInfo, 2016.

MAP L-1
PALO ALTO AERIAL VIEW

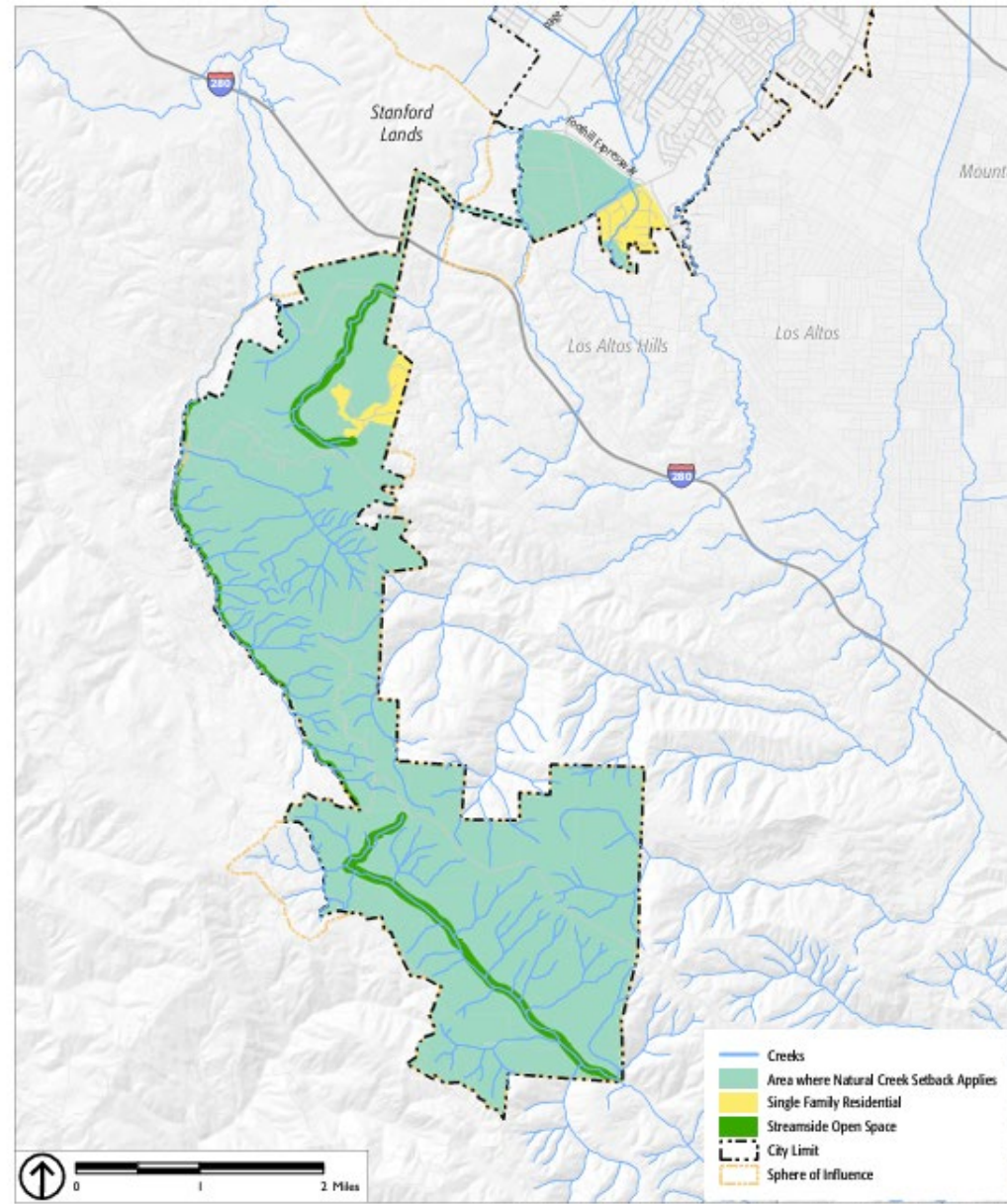


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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|
| Creeks | Historical creeks | Tidal marsh, now water | City Limit |
| Underground culverts & storm drains | Tidal marsh, circa 1850 | Freshwater marsh, modern | Artificial bodies of water |
| Engineered channels | Flood control channels | Willow groves, circa 1850 | Bay or slough |

Source: Janet M. Sowers, William Lettis & Associates, Inc., and the San Francisco Estuary; PlaceWorks, 2015.

MAP N-3

CREEKS AND WATERSHEDS



Source: ESRI, 2010; Tiger Lines, 2010; USGS, 2010; NHD, 2013; City of Palo Alto, 2016; PlaceWorks, 2016.

MAP N-4

AREA WHERE NATURAL CREEK SETBACK APPLIES

WHAT'S NEXT

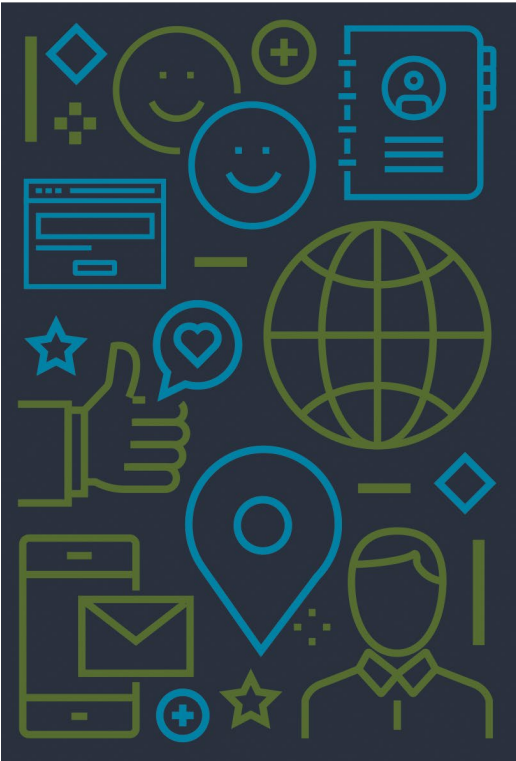


Meetings:

- **April 2024 – Architectural Review Board -- informational item only**
- **No earlier than April 2024 – Planning and Transportation Commission – review of draft ordinance**
- **No earlier than June 2024 – City Council**



CONTACT US



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<https://bit.ly/CreekProtectionOrdinance>

Your Comments and Questions



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