
[EXTERNAL MAIL]RE: City of Fullerton News & Press Releases Update - Public Comment for Open Space and Conservation Elements Update

From Angela Lindstrom [REDACTED]
Date Fri 3/20/2026 11:18 PM
To Yan Gao <Yan.Gao@cityoffullerton.com>
Cc Chris Schaefer <Chris.Schaefer@cityoffullerton.com>

 1 attachment (386 KB)
FullertonOpenSpaceElementUpdate_CommentLetter_FCH_2026-03-20_FINAL.pdf;

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Hi Yan,
Thank you for the opportunity to comment on this important update. I've attached a comment letter on behalf of the Friends of Coyote Hills. I look forward to the next step in this planning process. Please do not hesitate to reach out with comments or questions.



**ANGELA
LINDSTROM**
Board President

FRIENDS OF COYOTE HILLS
[REDACTED]

Saving West Coyote Hills as a park and nature preserve for now and future generations

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Friends of Coyote Hills

March 20, 2026

Yan Gao, Senior Planner

Community & Economic Development Department

City of Fullerton

yan.gao@cityoffullerton.com

Re: Public Comments on the Draft Open Space and Conservation Element (2026 Update)

Dear Senior Planner Gao and Members of the Planning Team,

Friends of Coyote Hills is a community-based nonprofit organization whose mission is the permanent protection, conservation, and public access of West Coyote Hills — Fullerton's largest remaining open space and one of the last significant undeveloped natural areas in urban Orange County. We write in strong support of the City's effort to update its Open Space and Conservation Element and commend the Planning Department for undertaking this meaningful work. We have carefully reviewed the Draft Element and offer the following comments in the spirit of constructive partnership. Our goal, like the City's, is a greener, healthier, and more resilient Fullerton — and we believe this update, strengthened by the recommendations below, can be a landmark policy document in service of that vision.

I. Establish Specific, Measurable Policies Across All Three Elements

We note that this document ambitiously integrates three General Plan Elements — Open Space, Conservation, and Environmental Justice — into a single plan. This integration is an opportunity, but it also raises the stakes for precision. Policies and implementing actions that are vague or subjective are difficult to enforce and susceptible to inconsistent interpretation over time. We strongly recommend that the City adopt a SMART framework (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) for all policies, as exemplified by the City of Los Angeles's General Plan element language.

Update 0. Text added to clarify.

The Open Space and Conservation Element is one element, and the Environmental Justice Element is a separate element currently being developed by the City. Section 1.3, *Planning Process*, notes that the two Elements were designed to complement one another. Additional language is added to make this very clear to the reader.

As a concrete example, Policy P1.3 states the City shall “preserve areas of open space that are identified to be sufficient to meet the long-range needs of the City.” The word “sufficient” is highly subjective and provides no measurable standard against which implementation can be assessed. We encourage the City to replace language of this kind with quantifiable targets and defined criteria wherever possible throughout the document.

The Open Space and Conservation Element includes a detailed Action Plan with more quantifiable targets and defined criteria. While the Element itself is a long-term policy document focused on establishing goals and policies, an internal City document Action Plan is intended to identify specific targets, allow for performance tracking, and support ongoing adjustments and updates over time as conditions evolve year over year.

II. Elevate the Role of Watershed Health Throughout the Plan

The relationship between watershed health and the plan’s core themes — habitat conservation, climate resilience, re-wilding, and community wellbeing — is substantially underrepresented in the Draft Element. This is a missed opportunity. Currently, watershed references appear almost exclusively through a lens for safety.

Goal P1.4 and Policy P3.3, for example, frame watershed management solely in terms of limiting fire and erosion hazards. While those are legitimate concerns, the ecological, hydrological, and community health dimensions of watershed stewardship deserve equal prominence.

Fullerton’s current General Plan, Section D: The Fullerton Natural Environment, includes a Water section. The purpose of the Water Element is to ensure that the City has adequate water resource capacity and water quality to meet future growth needs, and it addresses water resources and natural watershed systems. While this Element does touch on watershed considerations, the primary discussion of this information is covered in other General Plan elements. The team does agree with the recommendation and can incorporate additional clarifying language into the policies.

We recommend the following specific enhancements:

- Add narrative and policy language explicitly connecting watershed health to habitat quality, wildlife corridors, groundwater recharge, water quality, and climate resilience.

Update 0.5. Text added to note this and refer to the Water Element for more detail.

- Policy P3.2 (Waterways Preservation) names Tri City Lake, Bastanchury Greenbelt Creek, and Laguna Lake, but refers generically to “the City’s public creeks.” We recommend naming the specific creek corridors targeted by this policy, as has been done for the lakes, to ensure accountability and clarity of intent. Additionally, include a watershed map to identify the location of waterways as potential areas to preserve and restore.

Update 1. Text added to include the names of the creeks, lakes and watershed into the P3.2 policy.

- Incorporate green infrastructure and low-impact development standards that mimic natural hydrology, reduce impervious surface runoff, and support

groundwater recharge as explicit watershed policy tools.

Update 3. Language added to P6.6.

- Strengthen coordination language with the Orange County Water District, Orange County Flood Control District, and neighboring jurisdictions to manage shared watershed resources in an ecologically consistent manner.

Update 4. Language added to P1.4

III. Strategic Alignment: Creating a Policy Flywheel for Funding and Partnerships

The plan's goals are more achievable if they are strategically aligned with regional, state, federal, and private sector values that can unlock partnerships and funding streams beyond the City's own budget. This is not a call to add new obligations, but to frame existing goals in ways that generate mutual wins across a wide range of stakeholders.

We recommend the following strategic directions:

- Opportunity Zone alignment: The Environmental Justice metrics in this plan closely overlap with the criteria used to designate federal Opportunity Zones, which are tied to disadvantaged communities. The City should explore whether green infrastructure and conservation investments within or near OZ-designated

areas can attract private capital that advances plan goals. This directly supports P2.1 Funding Strategy.

This is referenced in the Environmental Justice Element; 'Impacted Communities' designation is used with data from CalEnviroScreen.

Utility company partnerships: Vegetation planting and maintenance along utility corridors represent a cost-sharing opportunity. Utility companies often fund vegetation management for right-of-way safety; the City can align these efforts with habitat and canopy goals.

The City has an internal Action Plan document that is intended to identify specific targets.

- These strategies align well with Goal 7 (community and regional partner engagement) and P2.1 (Funding Strategy Support) and should be explicitly referenced in those sections.

IV. Green Infrastructure Overlay Zones and Distributed Green Infrastructure

We recommend the City explore establishing green infrastructure overlay zones that operate in conjunction with traditional zoning to expand green space and enhance habitat in urban areas. This would directly support Section 2.5 (Wildlife Connectivity and Re-Wilding Opportunities) and could catalyze meaningful habitat expansion without requiring land acquisition.

Equally important is the opportunity for distributed green infrastructure — voluntary, property-owner-led action — which can be encouraged at low or no cost to the City. This approach is particularly valuable for softening “urban edges” around sensitive habitats and parks. Native vegetation typically requires less water and maintenance than conventional landscaping, creating direct cost advantages for participating property owners and businesses.

We recommend the plan include:

- Education, awareness, and recognition programs to encourage distributed green infrastructure participation by residents and businesses;

Update 5. Language added to P6.4

- How-to collateral and demonstration sites to help community members implement native landscaping on their own properties;

Update 6. Language added to P5.7

- Partnership opportunities for business sponsorship and collaboration with nonprofits such as the California Native Plant Society and local educational institutions;

Update 7. Language added to P5.1

- Policies P5.8 (Resilient Landscaping) and P5.9 (Ecologically Beneficial Features) are currently limited to public properties. Given that open space represents only about 10% of Fullerton’s land area, restricting these policies to public land

excludes roughly 90% of the city. Extending these policies to private properties — with appropriate incentives — would significantly amplify the City’s conservation ROI.

Update 8. Language added to multiple policies

V. Specific Policy and Mapping Corrections

We have identified several factual and technical issues in the Draft Element that we respectfully request be corrected:

West Coyote Hills Acreage and Mapping (Section 2.1, Exhibit 2-1)

- Exhibit 2-1 labels the West Coyote Hills area as “potential acquisition.” The City acquired approximately 26.5 acres on the east side of the property in 2021; that area should not be labeled as “potential acquisition.”

Update 9. Name updated to “city property”.

- Section 2.1 states there are 1,383 acres of public open space, representing 10% of the City’s acreage. If this figure includes the remaining 483 acres of West Coyote Hills designated as “potential acquisition,” the narrative should clearly distinguish current public open space from potential future acquisitions. Without the 483 potential acres, existing open space would be reduced by approximately 35% — a material distinction that readers deserve to understand. We recommend Table 2-1 separate these two categories clearly.

Update 10. Table 2-1 Updated.

Section 2.3.2 states Fullerton ranks healthier than 82.4% of California cities in park access. If this figure incorporates the potential 483-acre acquisition, it should be restated to reflect current accessible open space, with the higher figure noted as a potential future outcome contingent on acquisition.

Update 10.5. The 82.4% is incorporated within this assumption. Text updated.

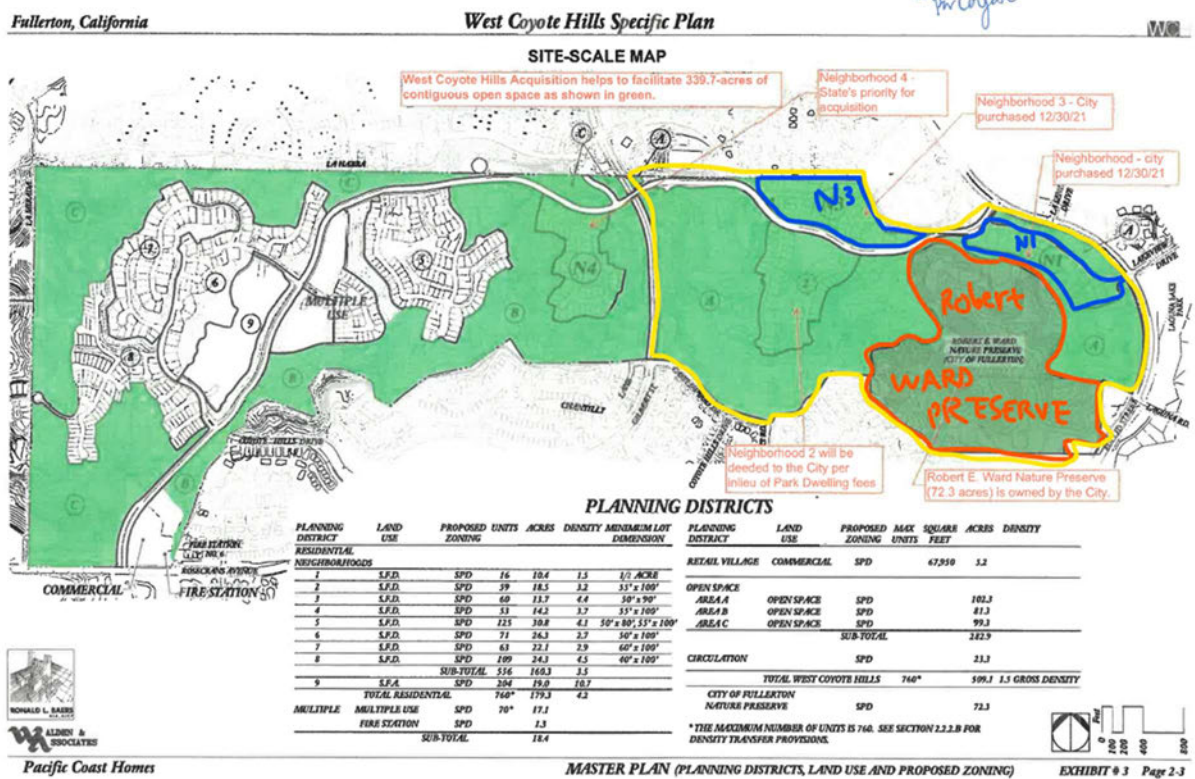
West Coyote Hills Acquisition History (Section 2.2)

- The current text states: “By December 2021, the City finalized acquisition of the eastern half, approximately 218 contiguous acres, creating the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve.” This requires correction on two points: (1) the 2021 acquisition was approximately 26.5 acres across two parcels, not 218 acres; and (2) the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve (72.3 acres) has been City-owned since the 1970s — it was not created by the 2021 acquisition. The 218 contiguous acres refers to the combined extent of habitat made possible by the 2021 acquisition in conjunction with the Ward Preserve and adjacent privately held land subject to density-shift restrictions established through the “Path Forward” process following the 2012 Measure W referendum which was sponsored by the Friends of Coyote Hills.

Update 11. Corrected Version, revise text:

- By December 2021, the City finalized the acquisition of approximately 26.5 acres across two parcels. This acquisition built upon the existing 72.3-acre Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve—acquired by the City in the 1970s—and, together with adjacent privately held land subject to density-shift restrictions established through the “Path Forward” process following the 2012 Measure W referendum (sponsored by the Friends of Coyote Hills), created a contiguous expanse of protected habitat totaling approximately 218 acres.

Update 12



- Blue area: N1+N3, 26.5 acres City Property-acquired in 2021
- Red Area – Robert E Ward Preserve . 72.3 acres, City Property- acquired in 1970s
- Yellow Area- Entire 218 acres of contiguous habitat area -the area besides the blue and red areas are currently owned by Chevron-PCH

Trail Mapping (Exhibit 2-2)

- The West Coyote Hills trail is shown spanning the full east-west extent of the site as currently open. Only the eastern portion is open to the public; the western portion has not yet been constructed. The map should be corrected to reflect current conditions.

Update 13. Trails are to be depicted separately for West Coyote Hills and East Additionally, Per the City's website, the Robert E. Ward Preserve is located within the East Coyote Hills area. Accordingly, trail details for this preserve shall be

incorporated into the East Coyote Hills section at a finer level of detail.



- The orange color shading used to differentiate Regional Trail from Backbone Trail in Exhibit 2-2 is very difficult to distinguish. We recommend using more visually distinct colors or patterns for these two trail classifications.

Update 13.5. Colors updated.

VI. Additional Policy Recommendations

- P1.5 High Quality Maintenance: In addition to investing in maintenance staff and equipment, we recommend adopting a design principle of low-maintenance and durable amenities to reduce long-term operational costs.

Update 14. Language added.

- P1.10 Open Space Amenities: We recommend clarifying that open spaces with sensitive habitats intended for passive recreation may not warrant the same level of amenities as urban parks, and that amenity decisions should be guided by habitat sensitivity assessments.

Update 15. Language added.

- P3.4 Comprehensive Tree Management: This policy should specify a preference for native trees, particularly since it appears under the goal of protecting natural systems and restoring native biodiversity. There is also a potential conflict with P3.10 (Invasive Control and Fire Smart Stewardship), as species such as Eucalyptus are neither native nor fire-safe due to their volatile oils.

Update 16. Language added.

- P6.4 Green Infrastructure: In addition to rooftop gardens, we recommend the plan explicitly reference rooftop and elevated parks as a future strategy. As Fullerton becomes more built out, innovative approaches such as deck parks over infrastructure (e.g., Salesforce Park in San Francisco, the High Line in New York, and Klyde Warren Park in Dallas) may offer meaningful open space opportunities.

Update 17. Language added.

- Trail and Park Wayfinding — Digital as Well as Physical: The plan identifies a goal of improving signage to help residents discover and access Fullerton’s trails and open spaces. We strongly support this goal and encourage the City to think beyond traditional physical signage toward a broader digital wayfinding strategy. As an increasing share of residents — particularly younger generations — navigate via smartphones, integrating Fullerton’s trails and parks into widely used platforms such as Google Maps, Apple Maps, AllTrails, and Strava can dramatically expand public awareness at minimal cost. The City should also consider a QR-code-enabled interpretive signage program that connects visitors to trail maps, habitat information, and conservation resources in real time. A dedicated and well-maintained City parks and trails web page and mobile-friendly map would further complement physical improvements. These digital tools are cost-effective, scalable, and well-suited to reaching residents who may not yet know what open space assets exist in their own neighborhoods.

Update 18. Language added.

- Section 2.7.2 / P5.10 Urban Heat Islands and Urban Canopy: We encourage the plan to recognize a broader suite of urban heat island mitigation strategies alongside tree canopy, including cool roofs, green roofs, light-colored building and pavement surfaces, and permeable pavement. Research indicates that light-colored exterior surfaces can reduce afternoon urban temperatures meaningfully, making this a low-cost and rapidly deployable complement to longer-term canopy investments.

Update 19. Language added.

- Section 2.5 / P2.2 Wildlife Connectivity and West Coyote Hills: We applaud Goal P2.2’s commitment to pursuing conservation and public access in Coyote Hills and other high-value ecological areas. As Exhibits 2-5 and 2-6 make clear, West Coyote Hills is central to any viable re-wilding and wildlife corridor strategy for the region. Its protection and acquisition should remain a stated priority.

VII. Document Organization and Clarity

We recommend the following improvements to enhance the document’s usability and accessibility for a general audience:

- Add a glossary defining key technical terms such as “active transportation,” “bioswale,” “rain garden,” “natural landscapes,” and “green infrastructure.”

Defining how these terms are used specifically within this plan — not just generically — will reduce interpretive ambiguity. For example, the statement on page 10 referencing “green infrastructure and preserving natural landscapes near sensitive receptors” raises questions about whether “natural landscapes” refers to manicured lawns or native vegetation, and whether parks are themselves considered green infrastructure.

Update 21. Various text additions.

- Section 1.4 (Relationship to Other Documents) references several prior plans including The Fullerton Plan, the Community Forest Management Plan 2023, and the Emergency Operations Plan. The document should clarify the hierarchy of these documents — specifically, whether this Element supersedes them in the event of future conflicts.

Update 22. Language added.

Friends of Coyote Hills appreciates the City’s commitment to community engagement throughout this process. The Draft Open Space and Conservation Element reflects genuine ambition for Fullerton’s environmental future, and we are encouraged by the direction it sets. We offer these comments as a committed partner and look forward to working collaboratively with City staff, the Planning Commission, and the City Council as this document is refined and adopted. Please do not hesitate to contact us with any questions.

Respectfully submitted,

Angela Lindstrom, Board President

Friends of Coyote Hills



[EXTERNAL MAIL]Open Space Survey

From Andrew [REDACTED]
Date Tue 3/10/2026 1:42 PM
To Yan Gao <Yan.Gao@cityoffullerton.com>

You don't often get email from andrew.fullerton12@gmail.com. [Learn why this is important](#)

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Hello,

I would like to provide input on Fullerton's open space study. Please protect all open space and expand open space in District 4/5. If we lose open space there is no way we can get it back.

My recommendation is for the city to improve connectivity within the city to allow people access to our open space through safe walking, biking, and other active transportation.

Thank you
Andrew

The City agrees—protection and expansion of open space, as available, and access to open space are both addressed in Section 2.3, Access to Open Space, and in Chapter 3, Goals and Policies.

[EXTERNAL MAIL]Draft Open Space and Conservation Element

From Jane Reifer [REDACTED]
Date Fri 3/20/2026 1:46 PM
To Yan Gao <Yan.Gao@cityoffullerton.com>

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Open Space and Conservation Element Public Review Draft.docx;

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Attached are my comments on the Draft Open Space and Conservation Element. Will there be an associated EIR Update?

Many thanks,

Jane Reifer

Attached are my comments on the Draft Open Space and Conservation Element. Will there be an associated EIR Update?

The proposed approach for this Element is to pursue Categorical Exemption Section 15061(b)(3), Common Sense Exemption. The Michael Baker team has historically utilized this exemption for General Plan Element updates that do not propose land use changes that would significantly or negatively impact the environment, including any changes to land use.

The team will prepare a draft Notice of Exemption outlining the project description and applicability of Categorical Exemption Section 15061(b)(3). The Notice of Exemption will be submitted to City staff electronically to the City Clerk upon Open Space Element adoption.

Additional Note: Filing NOE is not a mandatory statute under CEQA but it is highly recommended. Filing this shortens the limitation for legal challenges (35 days), failing to open it to 180 days.

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Open Space and Conservation Element Public Review Draft.

Prioritizing Conservation in the Open Space and Conservation Element

Please consider listing the Habitat Conservation Areas first in the list of Open Space Inventory on p. 11 of the document and also in the map and list on p. 12. This will emphasize them over parks which seems appropriate for an Open Space and Conservation document. Parks and Recreation should definitely be highlighted in this Element, but it already has its own separate Element, unless this is to change. Could there be clarification as to whether that Element will be removed?

The order will be maintained, following a similar approach and organizational structure used in the 2012 Element. See Chapter 1, Section 1.1 (Purpose and Background) for a description of how Parks and Recreation is addressed as a separate element but remains an important component of the Open Space and Conservation Element.

Pollinators

As part of the conservation objective, please include a small section on pollinators, including the West Coyote Hills area that allows the public an incredibly unique opportunity to see the native ground-nesting bees.

Policy-level document, this type of detail is not included.

Arroyos, Canyons and Creeks

Please document canyons and creeks in the Element. These are an often-overlooked part of our open space and wildlife corridors and without documentation, may continue to be overlooked. A simple map and an explanation of vernal streams would be sufficient.

Data not available/provided by the city.

Conservation / Threatened and Sensitive Species

I assume that new biological surveys will be conducted as part of this Element. I hope these can document changes and any loss of previous biological resources, and that they can set the record straight on huge discrepancies in past local surveys.

Inventory lists from previous surveys at West Coyote Hills, for example, were never combined into one comprehensive list, so appropriate impacts and mitigations may have been left out due to this. *Rhus integrifolia* / Lemonadeberry is one of several, which can be noted by comparing the survey lists.

In addition, there are several native species appearing onsite currently, that surveys seem to have been left out completely, including:

Viola pedunculata

Camissonia micrantha

Phacelia distans

Salix exigua

Bloomeria crocia

Allium praecox

An Open Space and Conservation Element is a policy-level General Plan document intended to provide an overview and general goals for conservation, management, and enhancement of open space and natural resources. Its purpose is to inventory broad resource categories, identify conservation priorities, and establish goals, policies, and implementation actions. So, this will not include site-specific environmental investigations or project-level technical studies. These studies can be studied at a different time as a separate project or as a long term action item.

I am most concerned about *Calochortus weedii* var. *intermedius*, the Intermediate Mariposa Lily, of which I believe only 9 were originally found in the WCH project area and, to my knowledge, no further surveys have been done since. These are the only ones ever known to have existed in the Fullerton-Buena Park-Anaheim area and are exceedingly rare here, and it is the subject of a stated environmental impact.

The following is from the: Addendum No. 1 to Final Environmental Impact Report SCH No. 1997051056 WEST COYOTE HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN VESTING TENTATIVE TRACT MAP 17609 September 15, 2015:

Impact 4.12-5 Impacts to the intermediate mariposa lily, a CNPS List 1B (i.e., plants that are rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere) special status species, may occur as a result of activities associated with project implementation (i.e., grading and development).

There is also the potential that **burrowing owls** find WCH suitable habitat (Interestingly, I understand that local naturalists have several photos of a burrowing owl at West Coyote Hills):

Impact 4.12-6 Although no burrowing owls were observed on the site, portions of the site have been cleared of vegetation that may make it potentially suitable for this special status species in the future. As a result, project implementation could result in the loss of potential habitat for the burrowing owl.

Of course, there are also concerns about the California gnatcatcher, coastal cactus wren, and other documented birds of special concern that should be noted in this Element.

Update 1. Text to include reference to species in text only.

Trees

Can the policies include a requirement to document existing trees on development plans that are decided by INRAC and the Planning Commission? I've been told several times that this could happen, but it hasn't, so projects are routinely approved with no thought to existing heritage trees. Also, can the City create a policy that it won't staple or nail public notices to trees?

The City has established policies that require applicants to apply for approval prior to removing any tree.

A Lost Natural Resource in the 5th District

Please include a small reference to the former Kimberly-Clark 10-acre orange, pecan and unusually rare avocado grove along Carbon Creek that served for over 100 years as habitat for native mammals and birds. While it was removed, without appropriate study, for a new development, there should be some documentation of its loss, especially since its District 5 location is long assumed to be devoid of natural communities. (The project was approved during Covid when Planning Commission meetings did not allow in-person OR even virtual public comments despite members of the public on hand to document.)

The analysis is limited to existing open space to ensure that no previously lost spaces are overlooked and that the focus is not limited to a single open space. A more comprehensive evaluation can be undertaken as part of a future Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Grace Ministries Open Space Triangle

Since District 4 has very few open space resources, can there be a mention of the triangular open space on W. Commonwealth? I understand that there are restrictions on removing the trees, so this should be noted.

The analysis is limited to existing open space to ensure that no previously lost spaces are overlooked and that the focus is not limited to a single open space. A more comprehensive evaluation can be undertaken as part of a future Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Hunt Center (Historic Hunt Headquarters and Public Library)

Although mostly privately owned, the Hunt Center is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and its landscaping was specifically part of its designation. This means that the City has jurisdiction over its preservation and can oversee and prevent the recurring insensitive heritage tree damage. It might also be listed in the inventory.

Places within the National Register of Historic Places would be best fit in The Fullerton Community – Arts and Culture Element.

Equitable Access / Trail Transit

The City could make round trip bus passes (Trail Transit?) available for the Euclid bus route (OCTA Route 37). available for people to visit West Coyote Hills. These could be available at no cost or by donation so people without cars could access nature, and people who did not want to park could leave their cars downhill and arrive by bus. This could be done along State College (Route 57) and Brea Blvd. (Route 143) as well, for the Fullerton Arboretum and East Coyote Hills. Lots of walking, but most hikers wouldn't mind.

Bus routes and transportation are not specifically discussed in this Element and are instead addressed in The Fullerton Built Environment – Mobility section. Additional language can be included to note that future public transportation and access are encouraged. Access specific to individual parks would be more appropriately addressed through a future Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Update 2: Text added.

Thank you again for the opportunity to comment,

Jane Reifer

From: Howell, Peter [REDACTED]
Sent: Tuesday, March 24, 2026 2:55 PM
To: Sunayana Thomas <Sunayana.Thomas@cityoffullerton.com>; Chris Schaefer <Chris.Schaefer@cityoffullerton.com>
Subject: [EXTERNAL MAIL]FW: City of Fullerton Draft Open Space and Conservation Element Update - Statement on West Coyote Hills

Hi Sue and Chris,

I'm passing along the below comments I received from Pacific Coast Homes' attorney re the City's Draft Open Space and Conservation Element. Based on my understanding/recollection, I believe her points are valid. Happy to discuss as necessary. Thanks!

[Peter J. Howell](#)

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

RUTAN
RUTAN & TUCKER, LLP

From: Wright, Stacey C. [REDACTED]
Sent: Monday, March 23, 2026 9:34 AM
To: Howell, Peter [REDACTED]
Subject: City of Fullerton Draft Open Space and Conservation Element Update - Statement on West Coyote Hills

Hi Peter,

I wanted to reach out to you regarding the City of Fullerton's draft Open Space and Conservation Element update ("Draft"). There are a few statements concerning West Coyote Hills that might cause confusion. Since you have the most project history, I thought it might be helpful for you to discuss with the City or provide guidance. Please let me know what you think. See

<https://www.cityoffullerton.com/government/departments/community-and-economic-development/planning-zoning/environmental-justice-open-space-element>.

See page 13 of the Draft:

"In 2012, Fullerton voters approved Measure W, rejecting earlier development plans. Despite this, Chevron-Pacific Coast Homes secured a tract map that dedicated over 220 acres to open space and allowed the City to purchase additional parcels, with Fullerton prevailing in litigation in 2018. By December 2021, **the City finalized acquisition of the eastern half, approximately 218 contiguous acres, creating the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve**, where public trails opened in May 2023." (Emphasis added.)

While I think this description tells part of the story (for example, Measure W affected only the Development Agreement and not any other project approvals and the City and PCH prevailed in the legal challenge to the VTTM), my concern is the statement in bold is inaccurate. The City acquired the areas formerly identified generally as Neighborhood 1 and Neighborhood 3 (approximately 34 acres), but the remainder of the Eastern Property is owned by Pacific Coast Homes. As you already know, the Robert E. Ward Preserve was

created decades ago when PCH dedicated and/or transferred approximately 72.3 acres to the City as part of the earlier planning process and is adjacent to the 510-acre total site.

A clarification of the highlighted language such as the following might be helpful: “the City acquired the areas designated for development of Neighborhoods 1 and 3 on the approved Vesting Tentative Tract Map, eliminating the approved residential development on the Eastern Property, which is adjacent to the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve (previously transferred to the City).”

Please let me know if you would like to discuss or if you would prefer that we send a message directly to the City.

Thank you,

Stacey

Stacey C. Wright | [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]



Adjusted the draft element's relative language to reflect the comment.

West Coyote Hills Potential Acquisition

West Coyote Hills is a 510-acre natural open space in northwest Fullerton, featuring coastal sage scrub habitats that support threatened species such as the California gnatcatcher and cactus wren. For decades, the site has been at the center of debate between development proposals, planning up to 760 homes on 179 acres, and conservation efforts focused on preserving continuous habitat. In 2012, Fullerton voters approved Measure W, rejecting earlier development plans. Despite this, Chevron-Pacific Coast Homes secured a tract map that dedicated over 220 acres to open space and allowed the City to purchase additional parcels, with Fullerton prevailing in litigation in 2018. By December 2021, the City acquired the areas designated for development of Neighborhoods 1 and 3 on the approved Vesting Tentative Tract Map, eliminating the approved residential development on the Eastern Property, which is adjacent to the Robert E. Ward Nature Preserve (previously transferred to the City), where public trails opened in May 2023.

Efforts continue to secure and conserve the remaining western portion (approximately 292 acres). In March 2024, collaborative grant funding from state agencies, including the Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, San Gabriel and Lower Los Angeles Rivers and Mountains Conservancy, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, supported “Phase II” acquisitions to expand preserved habitat, with goals of climate resilience, flood protection, and wildfire buffering. Pending future federal funding, development on the remaining land may still occur.

Preserving this land offers significant regional benefits, including the rare opportunity to protect open space in one of California’s most urbanized regions. It provides much-needed parkland, creates new recreational opportunities, serves as an educational resource for nearby schools and universities, and expands critical habitat for the federally protected California gnatcatcher, advancing biodiversity and conservation goals. The Open Space and Conservation Element reflects West Coyote Hills in its current state as a habitat conservation area while acknowledging the potential for future development. During the community engagement process, many respondents frequently mentioned West Coyote Hills, emphasizing its ecological importance and opposition to development.

[EXTERNAL MAIL]Open Space Element Comments

From Kent Morris [REDACTED]
Date Fri 3/6/2026 12:43 PM
To Yan Gao <Yan.Gao@cityoffullerton.com>

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YAN—

We need MORE open space and MORE trees to counter the effects of climate change and pollution, with particular attention to wildlife habitat...

The City agrees-these points are consistent with several of the draft policies currently under consideration, including Policy OS-3.7 (habitat preservation) and Policy OS-6.4 (climate- responsive green infrastructure).