

City of Novato

Streetscape Master Plan



April 1992

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CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF NOVATO

RESOLUTION 116-91

A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL APPROVING
THE STREETScape MASTER PLAN AND
IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

WHEREAS, the City has prepared a STREETScape MASTER PLAN which includes guidelines to govern interpretation of the Zoning Ordinance and Development Standards Ordinance; and

WHEREAS, the Design Review Committee, Planning Commission and City Council have held noticed public hearings to receive comments on the master plan; and

WHEREAS, the City Council finds that this master plan is exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) which determines that this project will not have a significant effect on the environment, pursuant to Sections 15301, Existing Facilities, 15304, Minor Alterations to Land, and 15308, Protection of the Environment;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the City Council does hereby adopt the Streetscape Master Plan prepared by David Gates & Associates dated October 15, 1991, and recommended implementation actions (Attachment "A") prepared by staff, subject to the following:

1. The City Council directs staff to prepare an action plan to prepare the municipal code amendments, new policies, and General Plan amendments developed in the Streetscape Master Plan text.
2. A project using the cash deposit from Redwood Crossing shall be implemented prior to June 5, 1994. The project should construct streetscaping improvements to Redwood Boulevard at Escallonia Drive based on the Streetscape Master Plan.
3. Copies of the Streetscape Master Plan shall be made available to all governmental and responsible agencies upon adoption of the master plan.

* * * * *

I HEREBY CERTIFY that the foregoing resolution was duly and regularly adopted by the City Council of the City of Novato, Marin County, California, at a meeting hereof, held on the 15th day of October, 1991, by the following vote, to wit:

AYES: Councilmembers FISHWICK, MEYERS, MOORE, MURRAY, GRAY

NOES: Councilmembers NONE

ABSTAIN: Councilmembers NONE

ABSENT: Councilmembers NONE

Shirley Gremmes
City Clerk of the City of Novato

Approved as to form:

Malby J. J.
Asst. City Attorney of the City of Novato

Acknowledgments

1991 City Council

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**Theory of
Community Form**

a

Introduction

Why Do We Need a Streetscape Master Plan?

Novato is a special place with a developed sense of identity and community. The community places high priority on the quality of its environment. One important consideration related to the quality of Novato is the appearance of the roadside landscape. Street trees, sidewalks, bus shelters, sound walls – these are familiar parts of the roadside environment for most Novato residents. They are components of the typical roadside hodgepodge in which many uncoordinated elements appear. How can these and the other elements of the roadside landscape, or "streetscape," convey a sense of "Novato?"

Often planning for the roadside landscape on a city-wide basis is the missing link in the community planning process. By developing a Streetscape Plan for the careful arrangement and planning of these familiar elements, one can enhance the character and quality of all aspects of the environment. This Streetscape Master Plan was developed to achieve this end. The premise of this Plan has been to establish a quality, distinct image for Novato, as seen from its street corridors. The process has involved setting goals, analyzing existing conditions, and translating information into specific actions.

This Plan focuses on the elements of the streetscape: the planting, the sidewalks, the walls, and so on. It identifies what is important about Novato, as a place. Having identified the essential elements of Novato's roadside landscape, it offers streetscape design recommendations that the City and private developers will follow, insuring that the future development of Novato's streets can preserve the ambience, convey a sense of quality, and contribute to the City's livability.

Purpose of the Plan

The City of Novato believes that an attractive street environment will attract quality businesses that, in turn, will provide good jobs for residents and generate tax dollars. The purpose of this Plan is to provide and improve the street atmosphere for citizens and visitors walking, biking, or driving through the City of Novato. A Master Plan is the logical starting point to provide an orderly consistent format for streetscape development within the City.

This Plan is intended to improve and fortify Novato's small town yet contemporary visual image, and recognize natural, unique plant features. The Plan is meant to be a general guide, as well as define specific landscaping criteria appropriate to Novato's streets.

The Streetscape Master Plan is a written and graphic summary of streetscape policies and design criteria. This Master Plan will facilitate understanding of Novato's identity, and guide incorporation of appropriate roadside improvements. This Plan will be the basis for further streetscape development and improvements along the main arterials in Novato, including phased public improvements and beautification programs. When City and private projects include street and frontage improvements, the guidelines for the particular street contained in this Master Plan will be consulted. Over time major streets will achieve a continuity in design and appearance; the vehicular and pedestrian experience will be pleasurable and familiar.

As a general guide, the Plan discusses the elements of the visual design environment involved in streetscape beautification and then presents broad design concepts and policies aimed at accomplishing the goals stated here and in the City's General Plan. The Plan discusses beautification opportunities for several situations: downtown streets, suburban streets, country roads, entries, natural intrusions, and intersections.

In defining specific landscaping criteria, the Plan provides design guidance for the selection of street trees and streetscape materials. It presents a framework for future studies and directs incremental change towards an aesthetic that is compatible with the character of the major streets and land uses.

Although this Master Plan highlights particular sections of roadway, its' general design policies and concepts are intended to apply to all the major streets considered by the Plan. The general character and tone of each prototype are what's important; concepts will need to be modified and adapted to fit each specific situation.

The Planning Process

Novato has never had a city-wide plan to bring consistency and beauty to its important streets. Despite this fact, the City has installed landscaped medians on San Marin Drive, portions of Redwood Boulevard (Old Highway 101), and some of Sunset Parkway, Ignacio Boulevard and Alameda del Prado.

In 1988, the Design Review Committee considered a small section of Redwood Boulevard frontage and median, when a new office project was under review. The Committee noted that Redwood Boulevard has an important influence on the appearance of Novato and needed a systematic plan to create a visual identity. Staff presented their concern to the City Council, who authorized establishment of an Ad Hoc Committee composed of City Council members, Planning Commissioners, Design Review Committee members, and Community Development Department Staff. Their purpose was to assist in the development of this city-wide streetscape Master Plan.

After selecting David L. Gates & Associates to prepare the Plan, this Committee held a series of public workshops. These workshops began with a brief look at the existing character of Novato's roadside landscape, in order to understand what

makes Novato special. City Staff then worked with the Consultant and Committee in preparing goals, criteria, and recommendations over the course of the project.

The process of developing the Streetscape Master Plan has involved an extensive public input process. Five public workshops were held and focused on both general and specific qualities about Novato to be included on the Master Plan. At each public workshop large maps and renderings were displayed and workshop participants were encouraged to voice their opinions and comments.

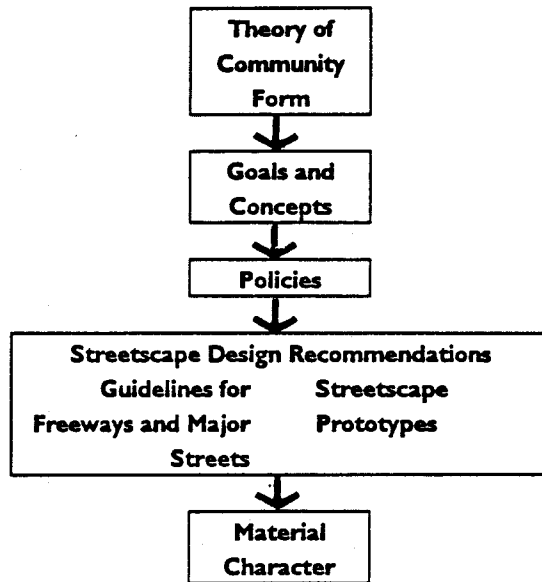
Organization of the Streetscape Master Plan

The organization of the Streetscape Master Plan includes:

1. *An overall Master Plan* that identifies major city entries, major streets, major and minor intersections, and natural intrusions.
2. *Streetscape design recommendations* that include:
 - a. *Streetscape design guidelines* for freeway and major streets in Novato.
 - b. *Streetscape prototypes* that show examples of streetscape character and landscaping appropriate for a series of prototypical conditions.
 - c. a *Material Character* section that describes the intended image and character of streetscape elements such as special paving, walls, fences, street lighting, and street trees.

How to Use the Master Plan

Part of the charm of Novato is the juxtaposition of the natural setting against the eclectic cultural setting. Every site is individual and distinct, yet part of a greater whole.



This Master Plan seeks to achieve a high level of design quality in the streetscape, while still preserving the charming sense of individuality of each site and the eclectic visual mixture of the whole.

For this reason, the Master Plan does not present a set of rigorous standards and requirements. Instead, a series of flexible guidelines is presented, contained in the *Guidelines for Freeways and Major Streets*, the *Streetscape Prototypes*, and the *Streetscape Material Character* section. The street guidelines and prototypes serve as the "recipe" and the materials section serves as the "ingredients." These three sections make up the complete guidelines for a specific situation.

b

**Components of
the Roadside
Landscape**

Because Novato is seen primarily from the automobile, this Plan focuses on the elements of the view from the road. The building blocks of this view from the road, the streets, entries, natural intrusions, and intersections, are the simplest design components, the fundamental elements of any visual experience. By manipulating these elements, and by arranging them in various ways, visual impressions can be created that are appropriate for Novato.

The discussion below relates to the following diagram, which is a conceptual illustration of the components and how they might be treated in Novato. Each of these components needs to be recognized and made identifiable through an appropriate streetscape treatment. For example, an entry is an area of first impression, and is an important place to create a major visual statement about the character and image of the city.

Streets

As Jane Jacobs has written in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*, "Think of a city, and what comes to mind? Its streets. If a city's streets look interesting, the city looks interesting; if they look dull, the city looks dull." Together, the streets are the rule by which a traveler measures a city. The street corridors introduce motorists to the community's physical reality.

To communicate the City's overall pattern and logic, it is helpful to create a hierarchy of visual importance, emphasizing those streets that form the backbones of the City. Major streets, uppermost in the hierarchy, are to be identified by types of planting and materials of a quality and character appropriate to Novato's important roadways. Similarly, lightly traveled collectors or other streets are to be identified with more varied planting.

In the diagram on page 7, the following types of streets are shown:

Freeway Edge (1.)

CONDITIONS:

Linear, undifferentiated
Back of residences, commercial
Source of impression of Novato for most non-residents
Sound walls needed to screen noise

CONCEPTS:

Create distinct character along freeway
Special planting and sound wall design, working with Cal
Trans
Frame views to special city features
Emphasize native plants
Low maintenance
Spring bulbs

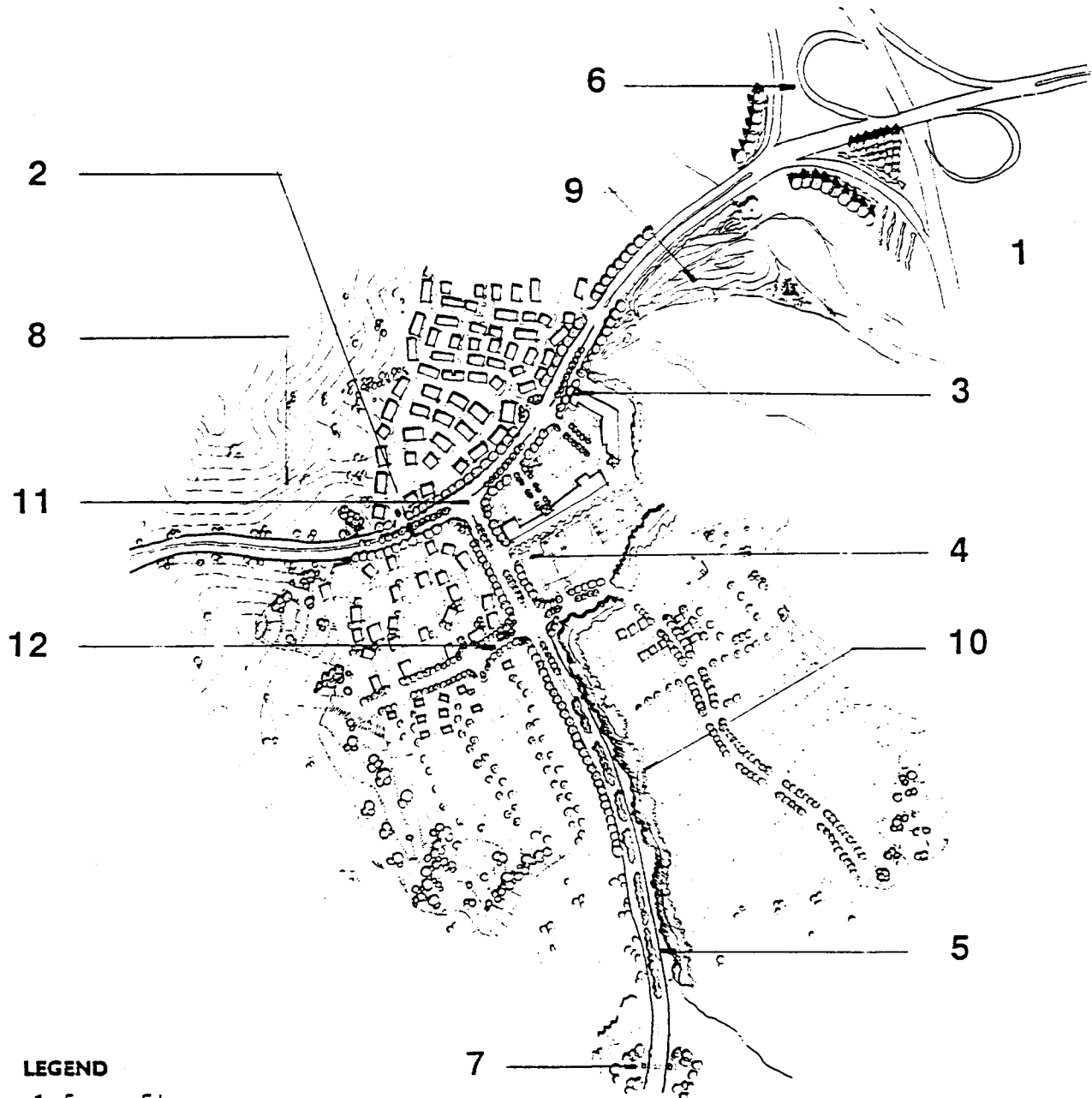
Suburban Road at Residential Interface (2.)

CONDITIONS:

Residential areas adjacent to suburban street
Sound walls or fences
Utility poles
Pedestrian Use

CONCEPTS:

Screening fence for homeowner privacy
Plant in regular patterns with large sized trees
Berming
Clean suburban appearance
Evergreen backdrop trees, with small flowering trees
clumps in front
"Meadow" grass, rather than lawn
Provide sidewalk, bus stops, bike paths



LEGEND

- 1 Freeway Edge
- 2 Suburban Road at Residential Interface
- 3 Suburban Road at Commercial Interface
- 4 Suburban Road at Civic Institutional Interface
- 5 Country Road
- 6 Freeway City On/Off Ramp
- 7 Rural City Entry
- 8 Oak Knoll Intrusion
- 9 Marsh Intrusion
- 10 Creek Intrusion
- 11 Major Intersection
- 12 Minor Intersection

HYPOTHETICAL COMPONENTS OF THE CITY

Suburban Road at Commercial Interface (3.)

CONDITIONS:

Visual clutter
Signing visibility
Views of parking lots
On-street parking
Pedestrians

CONCEPTS:

Allow views to commercial uses
Screen views of cars in parking lots
Large planting to reduce scale of wide roads
Richer design details - quality paving, site furniture, signing
Reduce on-street parking
Provide sidewalk, bus stops, bike paths

Suburban Road at Civic / Institutional Interface (4.)

CONDITIONS:

School or other focus of neighborhood
High intensity of activity
Pedestrians

CONCEPTS:

Integrate planting of facility with street
Break regular street planting
Design should read "public" - open and inviting
Allow views into facility
Provide bike parking, bus stops

Country Road (5.)

CONDITIONS:

Spread out development
Picturesque "ranch" appearance
Soft shoulder, no curb or sidewalk

CONCEPTS:

Plant loose massing of indigenous plants
Use open three rail fence to define street edge
Retain existing vegetation
Plant occasional additional shade trees
Allow views from the street to natural features e.g. hills
Provide multi-purpose paths (bike / walk)

Entries

As the initial points of public visibility and access, Novato's entries strongly influence the City's image. Like the front door of a house, they dramatically announce the character of what lies beyond, and denote the boundary between the inside and the outside. They mark the boundary between the City and the countryside.

In the diagram on page 7, the following types of entries are shown:

Freeway City On-Off Ramp (6.)

CONDITIONS:

Point of entrance to Novato from the freeway
First impression
High Image zone
Elevated point with overview of City

CONCEPTS:

Large scale planting appropriate to viewing at auto speeds
Plantings have an image unique to Novato
Focus on unique aspect of Novato, e.g. mountains, marsh

Rural City Entry (7.)

CONDITIONS:

Natural setting
Entry to city from rural areas
Equestrians, pedestrians

CONCEPTS:

Signing integrated with entry feature
Entry feature reflects rural or ranch character
In scale with size of road and amount of traffic
Accommodate equestrian and pedestrian users
Provide unpaved multi-purpose path

Natural Intrusions

Open spaces at the roadway edge, in this plan called intrusions, are an opportunity to provide interest and meaning in the streetscape by reflecting the natural, indigenous character of the surrounding countryside.

The dominant natural features of the Novato setting, including the marsh areas, the oak-covered hills, and the meandering creek corridors, are integral to the community's image. Where these natural features edge the roadway, the formal streetscape pattern should be interrupted to allow the presence of the creek, the marsh, or open knolls to dominate the streetscape character.

In the diagram on page 7, the following types of natural intrusions are shown:

Oak Knoll Intrusion (8.)

CONDITIONS:

Open space adjacent to suburban road, or vacant land
Wildlife presence
Steep slopes, erosive soils

CONCEPTS:

Break regimented geometric planting pattern
Allow visual access to open space
Irregular massing of oaks
Hydroseed for erosion control
Low maintenance

Marsh Intrusion (9.)

CONDITIONS:

Unique place in Novato
Natural appearance adjacent freeway
Wildlife presence

CONCEPTS:

Retain elevated views of marsh from the auto
Break street planting pattern
Use indigenous plant materials
with value to wildlife
Keep people out

Creek Intrusion (10.)

CONDITIONS:

Unique feature
Existing vegetation
Wildlife habitat
Opportunity to link community
Flood Control accessibility

CONCEPTS:

Increase awareness of creeks from roadway
Special design of bridge crossings
Preserve vegetation and wildlife habitat
Create use spaces and trails along creeks
Discourage people from entering

Intersections

An intersection is a point where two streets meet. The resulting high degree of visibility for the street area may be useful in clarifying the street system. Sometimes intersections are bewildering because all of them appear to be identical in importance. The design of the intersection can help eliminate the confusion by making a visual distinction between the different types of streets. For instance, the intersection of two major streets could receive a design treatment different from two collector streets.

In the diagram on page 7, the following types of intersections are shown:

Major Intersection (11.)

CONDITIONS:

Meeting point of two major streets
Important sight lines for drivers

CONCEPTS:

Define importance with walls and special planting
Vary design to respond to type of land use and scale of streets
Special signage for uses and activities
Provide sidewalk, bus stops, bike paths

Minor Intersection (12.)

CONDITIONS:

Identity signing
Residential identity

CONCEPTS:

Individual identity for neighborhood can be communicated
Landscaping should reflect overall city identity e.g. no palm trees
Sufficient setback and planting to create spatial definition

C

Understanding the Special Ambience

The Novato image is a charming eclectic mix of styles, dominated by the visual strength of the landscape setting. The mature oak groves, the prominent land forms of Mt. Burdell, Big Rock Ridge, and Little Mountain, and the multitude of creeks which wind through the City, visually unite the variety of architectural forms and land uses into a single understandable community. However, as the City grows and develops, the built environment may begin to visually overpower the natural setting. Roads widen, mature trees are removed, and views of Mt. Burdell are lost behind new office buildings. The special ambience that is typical to Novato may be lost to suburban growth.

To convey Novato's small town yet contemporary character in the City's visual environment, streetscape beautification efforts must balance both the enduring visual ambience with the need for continuing growth. The following section surveys Novato's ambience in order to discover what makes Novato special.

Novato's Landscape Patterns

The City of Novato is located at the northern perimeter of Marin County, 30 miles north of San Francisco. Novato is a 28 square mile community with a population of approximately 48,000. The topographic pattern of ridges and valleys has helped to concentrate development and control the urban sprawl common to many Bay Area communities. These hills and open spaces, studded with oak and bay trees, give Novato a rural, small town feeling which residents cherish.



Design guidelines are most appropriate if they are influenced by the unique existing features that distinguish one community from another. Novato is fortunate to have many special physical features. These distinguishing qualities can include street corridors as well as the character of developed land uses. The following is a survey of these items:

Physical Features

Many natural hillsides and knolls have been preserved as open space; they are an important part of the Novato visual character. The western edge of the City is defined by picturesque mountains and hillsides, which are predominantly covered by oak woodlands and other natural plant systems that are relatively undisturbed. Spectacular views of Mt. Burdell, Little Mountain / Doe Hill, Pinhiero Ridge, and Big Rock Ridge provide a scenic backdrop to the Highway 101 Corridor.

A low, flat, marshy area characterizes the lands east of Highway 101. The most memorable marshes are located at Scottsdale Pond adjacent to the Rowland Boulevard overpass. Marshlands continue to the east where they are bisected by Highway 37 as they advance towards San Pablo Bay.

Novato has numerous creeks that traverse the valley floors and carry runoff from the surrounding mountains to the Petaluma River and San Pablo Bay. Native evergreen oaks and bays thrive in the moist creek corridors.

The valley floor is bisected by Novato Boulevard and other major arterials. Development has already occurred throughout most of this zone. The existing streetscape is characterized by a variety of street plantings, varied landscape setbacks and a lack of visual continuity from one parcel to the next.

The undeveloped remnants of the valley floor are dominated by creeks or grasslands occasionally punctuated by oaks. Many parcels are large enough lots to accommodate horses, orchards, or vineyards. These open areas have helped to strengthen Novato's image of a small town with a rural atmosphere.

These existing natural features all provide an opportunity for interest and meaning in the streetscape design.

Land Use

Developed land uses play a significant role in defining the appropriate design treatment of the streetscape edge. Different land uses require different street edge treatments. For example, a residential street has privacy and noise control needs that do not apply to a commercial frontage road; a street in the historic downtown should have a pedestrian character that does not apply to a suburban commercial development in a new area, and so on.

The City of Novato is composed of numerous land use types. The predominant land use is residential, a great portion of which is single family homes. Residences with larger lots dominate the outskirts of the City.

Another significant portion of Novato includes open space, which the City has preserved and protected. Some of these open space preserves include:

- Mt. Burdell, 1447 acres of grassland, savanna and oak woodlands; stands of redwood groves in canyons and on ridge lines,
- Deer Island, 135 acres of oak savanna with 360 degree views.

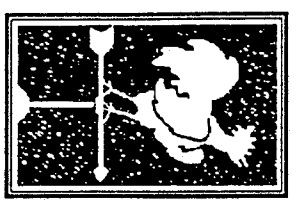
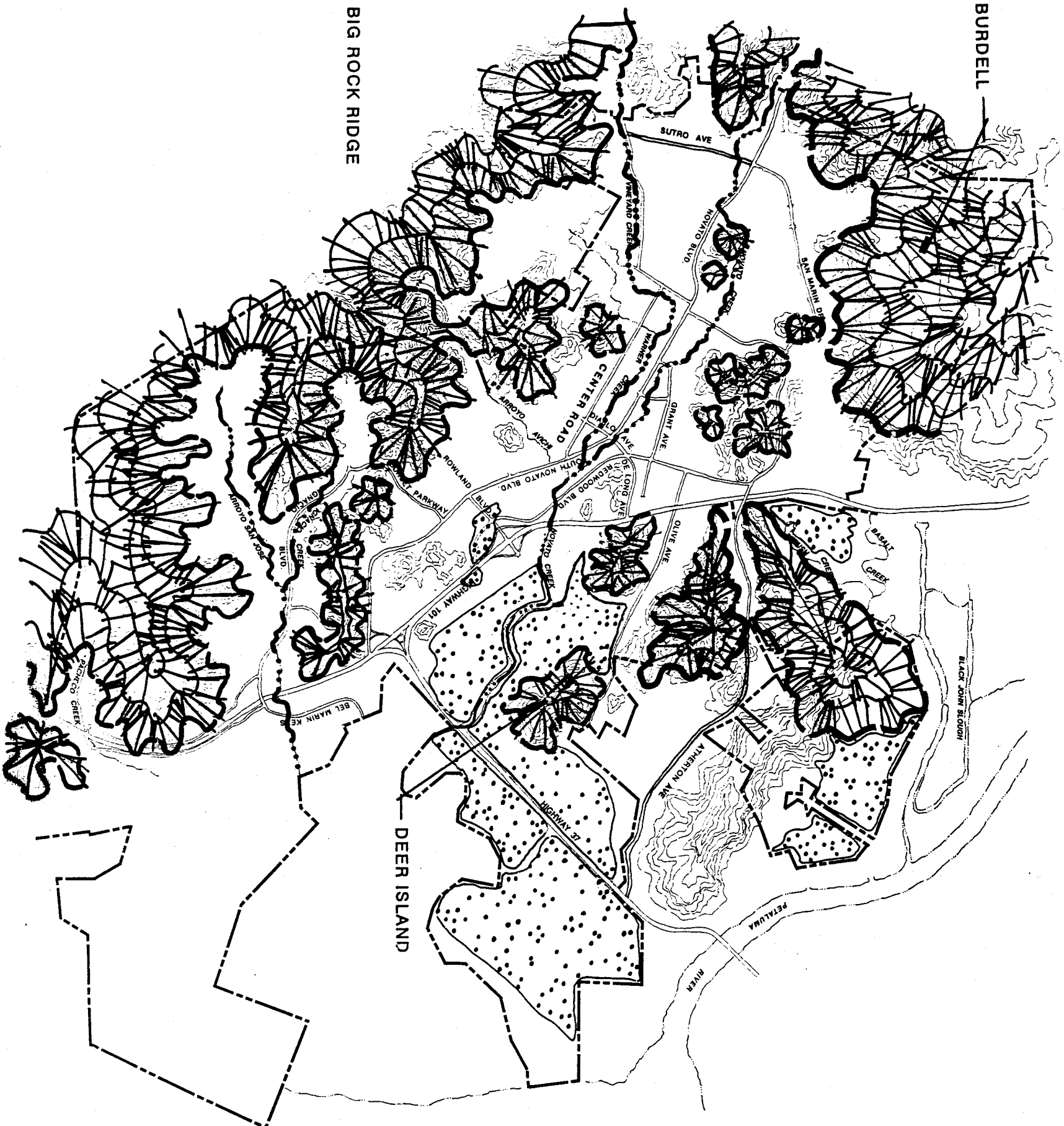
The majority of Novato's commercial / industrial areas parallel the freeway and Redwood Boulevard. This includes the new shopping center, Vintage Oaks. A mixed-use village and campus office community is being planned for the site of the former Hamilton Air Force Base. Other significant commercial / industrial land uses include Bel Marin Keys Industrial Park, San Marin Business Park, and North Novato / Gness Field.

A special commercial zone lies within the Historic Downtown, which is more pedestrian in scale than other commercial areas of the City.




MT. BURDELL

BIG ROCK RIDGE

DEER ISLAND


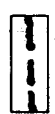

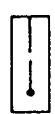


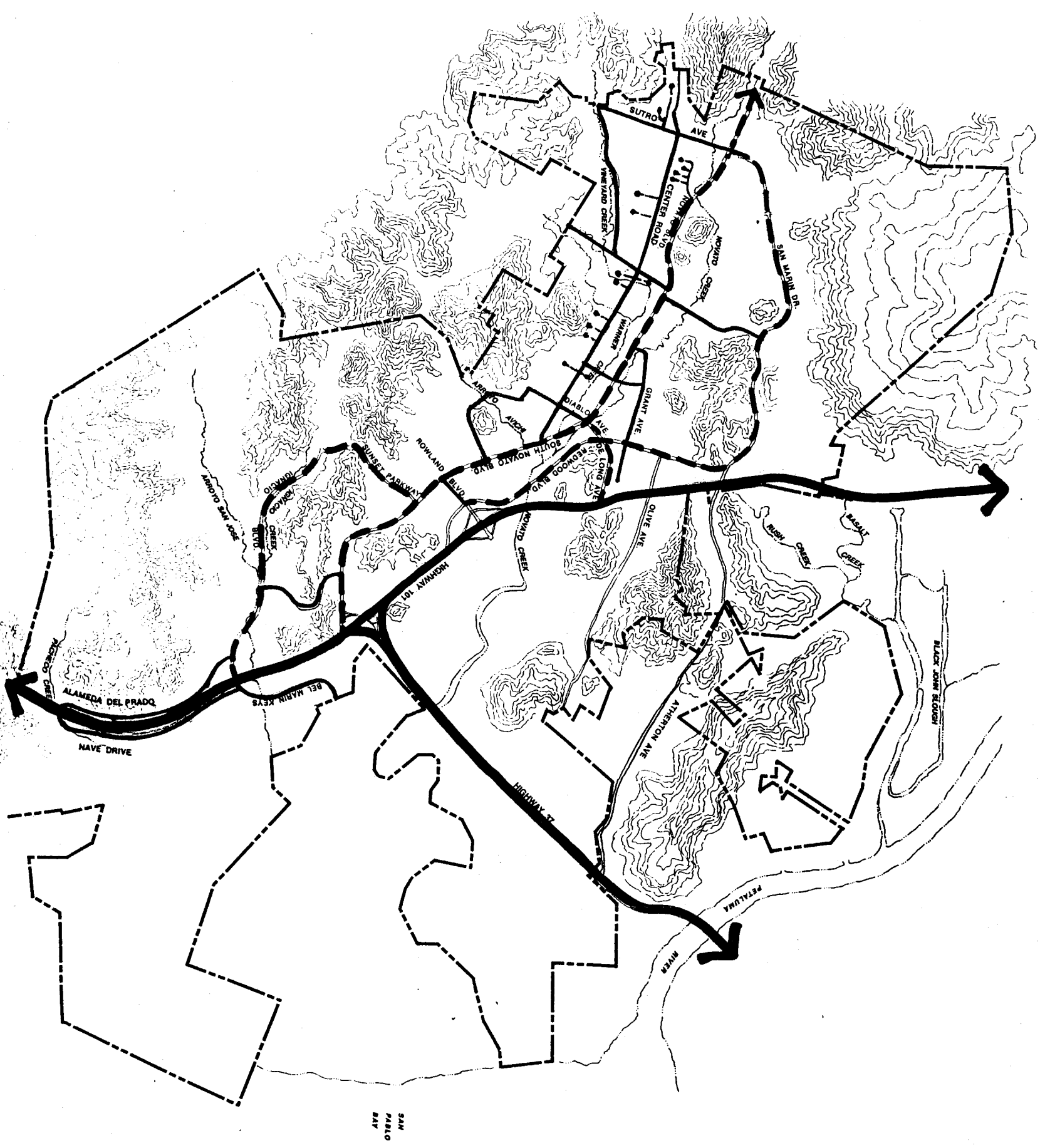
LEGEND

-  Knolls / Mountains
-  Creeks
-  Marshes



LEGEND

-  Freeways
-  Major Streets
-  Collectors
-  Other Streets



IMPORTANT STREET CORRIDORS

Street Corridors

Each street corridor needs to be distinct yet at the same time provide Novato with an identifiable visual character. The streets that were selected for study are either heavily used major thoroughfares, or visually important to the streetscape fabric of Novato. Technical methods of defining the street hierarchy, such as ADT, were not used. The accompanying diagram depicts the streets that have been considered in this Plan.

Freeways

Novato is bisected in the north/south direction by Highway 101 and to the east by Highway 37. Both highways provide the passerby with a strong visual impression of Novato: the hill-sides, woodlands and marshlands; its rural and suburban character.

Rowland Boulevard is a major point of access to a residential and a developing commercial area. The Vintage Oaks Shopping Center will be located in this area. DeLong Boulevard is the key city entry because it is linked directly to City Hall and Novato's Historic Downtown.

Major Streets

Some of the most heavily traveled streets, referred to as major streets in the diagram, are Redwood Boulevard, Novato Boulevard, Ignacio Boulevard, Rowland Boulevard, Sunset Parkway, San Marin Drive, Bel Marin Keys Blvd., and DeLong Boulevard.

Redwood Boulevard was originally State Highway 101 until completion of the Novato bypass freeway in 1974. The City gained Federal Urban Aid funding for a joint Cal Trans / City of Novato project that provided the increased parking, bus shelters, and landscaping that we see today. Several large office complexes were recently built along Redwood Boulevard.

San Marin Drive has already received a significant amount of landscaping along the street prior

to the development of this Plan. This street and the other major streets are the primary focus of this Master Plan.

Collectors

Many busy streets pass through predominantly residential areas. These streets are referred to categorized as collectors in this Plan. Examples are: Simmons Lane and Center Avenue. These streets are quite numerous, and have not been considered in this Plan.

While not considered a major street, Grant Avenue is considered to be an important part of the special ambience of Novato. The equivalent of "Main Street," with the traditional downtown mix of shops, restaurants and professional services, it is Novato's primary walking street. Grant Avenue is lined with 30 year old Liquidambar trees, which are not a suitable "downtown" tree because their roots can cause lifting of sidewalks.

Other Streets

Other streets in Novato include the quiet residential streets that typify the suburban setting. These smaller roads carry residents to their homes and are lined with landscaped front yards. In specially planned districts, specific landscape regulations may govern the design of the streetscape. Guidelines for these streets have not been included within this Master Plan.



2

Streetscape Goals, Concepts & Policies

a

Goals and Concepts for the Roadside Landscape

For the majority of the people in our auto-dominated society, the view from the road is the primary impression of a community. Consequently the Streetscape Master Plan controls a critical component of the visual character of the city. This Plan was developed by first recognizing those features that are unique and essential to the Novato character and then framing a Streetscape Master Plan that protects, enhances, and re-creates that atmosphere.

The preceding chapter identifies Novato's main physical characteristics. Taking into account these essential elements of the City's character, and the potential for change, the Plan offers a conceptual framework in the form of goals, concepts, and policies.

Goals are very broad, often immeasurable statements of purpose. The goals presented here are statements of a vision and philosophy for the future image of the City. Concepts are broad design recommendations that define how to achieve the goals. Policies are specific statements guiding action and implying clear commitment.

Goals

Many of the urban design goals set forth in the General Plan for Novato are linked intricately with the design and appearance of the streetscape. The primary goals of this Plan are to:

- Create a visual image that is unique to Novato; a recognizable entity of edges, entries, centers and places.
- Reinforce a small town, yet contemporary image for Novato.
- Remedy the visual and spatial deficiencies of the roadside corridor.

Concepts

The Plan proposes to achieve these goals through the expression of five design concepts. These concepts have provided a frame for evaluating the existing environment and should provide a guide to the design of new development. Street designs that support these concepts generally "feel right" and fit within the fabric of the City. The special streetscape ambience for Novato can be understood as the expression of the following concepts:

1. Highlighting the streetscape hierarchy,
2. Making the natural systems apparent and visible from the street corridor,
3. Emphasizing important city entries and street intersections,
4. Recognizing and drawing from the existing street character,
5. Juxtaposing rural against urban landscapes.

1. Highlight Hierarchy

When learning or living in a new area, one begins to establish a cognitive road map. Certain elements along streets will stand out, and help to form a map of the roads in the memory.

Trees are probably the most common element found along streets. The size and placement of the trees, whether formal or informal, will help to define the level of importance a particular road may hold in a city or neighborhood. Due to limited resources, certain amenities such as sidewalks and large scale street lighting will be limited to major streets. The amenities then work as a marker that helps to define the level of use of that street.

2. Emphasize Entries

Upon entering a city, one should be greeted with special features that reflect the ambience of the city. Novato has chosen to highlight its existing country image by selecting treatments such as low stone walls, rustic three-rail fences, and native plants. Street intersections should also

convey the special ambience. Special paving, trellises and accent trees are among the landscape treatments used to create such an effect.

3. Recognizing Existing Street Character

The treatment the streetscape receives will depend on the surrounding land uses of the area; a different approach will be taken for each area. For example, a residential area requires more privacy than a commercial area, therefore, plant material may be arranged so that the residences are screened. A commercial area will want to encourage patronage, which requires different treatment. To provide roadway visibility to a shopping district, a formal approach to planting and the use of geometric forms and patterns is more appropriate.

4. Emphasize Natural Systems

Novato has many topographic and vegetative systems that contribute to the overall character that the community wants to retain and enhance. These existing features, including oak trees, knolls, creeks and marshes can be integrated into the designed street landscape. A sense of the natural systems can be achieved, for example, by adding informal groupings of oaks to a group of existing old oak trees along side of the street to reflect the larger, regional landscape, and communicate an appearance of spaciousness along the roadside.



5. Juxtaposition

Just as a work of art increases in drama and meaning by a careful tension between its parts,

Novato's landscape derives much of its power from the juxtaposition of opposites. The Fireman's Fund complex, for example, representing the height of corporate refinement and order, is set at the base of the Mount Burdell Open Space Preserve, an example of the dramatic tension between rural and urban landscapes that is prevalent in Novato.



The rural and urban landscape images reflect upon each other, making each more powerful and providing opportunities for a more diverse landscape experience. Rather than averaging out the differences to an even suburban monotone, the harmonious juxtaposition of contrasting landscape elements reflects an acceptance of visual diversity, allows for a variety of uses, and creates a city of heightened power and drama.

b

The Master Plan

Visual Design Units

The Master Plan must both reflect the character of the community and provide a frame-work to join the segments of the streetscape into a unified system. Preparing a streetscape design plan requires a method for identifying and organizing the predominant elements of Novato's visual environment. The first step in this process was to define a physical structure by dividing the City streetscape system into several logical, memorable "visual design units." The existing pattern of man-made and natural forms found throughout Novato provide a basis for these delineations.

These design units imply a landscape palette for each of the major streets in the Streetscape Design Guidelines. However, the criteria used to define the visual units can be generalized and applied to all the streets in Novato.

Highway Corridor Unit

Because of the speed of travel and the width of the road, Highway 101 is unique within the Novato streetscape system. The freeway is imposed upon, rather than integrated into the community character. The highway through Novato is only one segment of a much larger corridor. Consequently, the landscape palette for Highway 101 through Novato must be distinct from other Cal Trans plantings. The planting massing and forms must be simple and dramatic to be in scale with the high speed travel. Long duration views of the dominant land forms should be retained.

Downtown Visual Unit

The Downtown area is the core of the Novato community and is a special place within the streetscape system. Formal patterns, emphatic forms, and richer detailing in the streetscape can communicate the nature of the Downtown. The juxtaposition between this more formal treatment and the natural vegetation and topography also found in this area will also create a unique and exciting visual impression in the center of the community.

Natural Influence Unit

In the natural areas of the community, the environment is the dominant visual element. The landscape palette for streets in this unit is derived from the character of the environmental setting. Along Ignacio Boulevard, for example, the creek character pervades the landscape character. Along the northern limits of Novato Boulevard, the patterns of the adjacent orchards extend into the streetscape. At the Rowland off-ramp, the marsh character is the prevalent design theme. On San Marin Drive and at the northern community rural entry along the base of Mr. Burdell, the oak woodland is an integral part of the streetscape. Thus, the streetscape system enhances community awareness of these special resources.

Cultural Influence Unit

In these areas, the dominant visual impression is derived from man-made elements – neighborhoods of homes, shopping complexes, and existing street tree plantings. The streetscape design must be harmonious with the patterns and character that have already been established. The green spine of the streetscape can serve to blend the different forms and styles into a memorable landscaped street.

The Master Plan

The Novato Streetscape Master Plan is based on a series of components linked together into a cohesive system. Each component derives its character from the ambience of Novato. The components of the streetscape fall into distinct categories, either **man-made places** or **natural places**, those where the natural environment dominates.

Manmade Places

Streets

Freeway Edge

Within the Novato street hierarchy, the freeway carries the most traffic. Because of the high visibility, the freeway edge landscaping is critical to the community image. At a higher speed of travel, less detail is observable and the overall visual impact becomes more important. Thus, the freeway edge treatment should be dramatic, simple and harmonious with the Novato image.

Downtown Road

Downtown roads, which travel through the commercial segments of the community, are the second most traveled roads. These streets, frequently edged by parking areas, office buildings and shopping centers, must be made visually coherent, using a formal unifying landscape treatment.

Suburban Roads

These roads travel through the commercial and residential portions of the community and provide the links between the neighborhoods. The built form dominates the landscape. They are the informal green corridors that can reinforce the small town image of Novato.

Country Roads

These roads, which occur in the more rural areas of the community, are distinctive pieces of the Novato image because they preserve the informal, country road character.

Other Streets

These numerous smaller streets carry residents around their neighborhoods; they are lined with landscaped front yards. In specially planned districts, specific landscape regulations may govern the design of the streetscape. These streets are not shown on the accompanying diagram, and guidelines for them are not included within this Master Plan.

Entries

An important step in developing a distinct community identity is to define the edges. Freeway and non-freeway community entries need to be identified with a special landscape treatment that is in character with the scale of the road.

Freeway City Entries

Whether the motorist is passing through or lingering in Novato, there should be an awareness from the freeway that one has entered the Novato community. The "gateways" along 101 and Highway 37 define the city edges. By emphasizing the existing land forms at these gateways and initiating a distinctive landscape treatment along the freeway edge, the Novato community can be distinguished from its neighbors.

Freeway On-Off Ramps

With the freeway as the major circulation conduit through Novato, the on-off ramps become the major points of entry to the community. Within the interchanges and in transition between highway and local City streets, there is

an opportunity to create a dramatic first impression.

Rural Entries

Motorists entering Novato from the east and west enter the community along country roads, such as Novato Boulevard and Atherton Avenue. Recognizing these rural entries with a special landscape treatment can help to clarify the edges of the Novato community, and convey a welcoming image in these more rural settings.

Intersections

Major Intersections

Major intersections occur where those streets that are heavily traveled intersect and where a more refined pedestrian scale of design can be established. Intersections become an important component of the streetscape because the motorist pauses and can look around. This is also the area where the pedestrian and the motorist cross paths. Thus, the details that are not visible at travel speeds along the roadway will be important at the intersections.

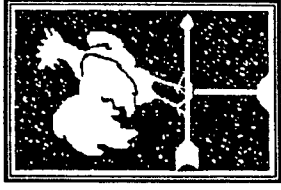
Minor Intersections

A minor intersection occurs when a secondary road meets a major street. Although a minor intersection may not require a design response as dramatic as a major intersection, it is still an important component of the streetscape hierarchy and city image.












Natural Places

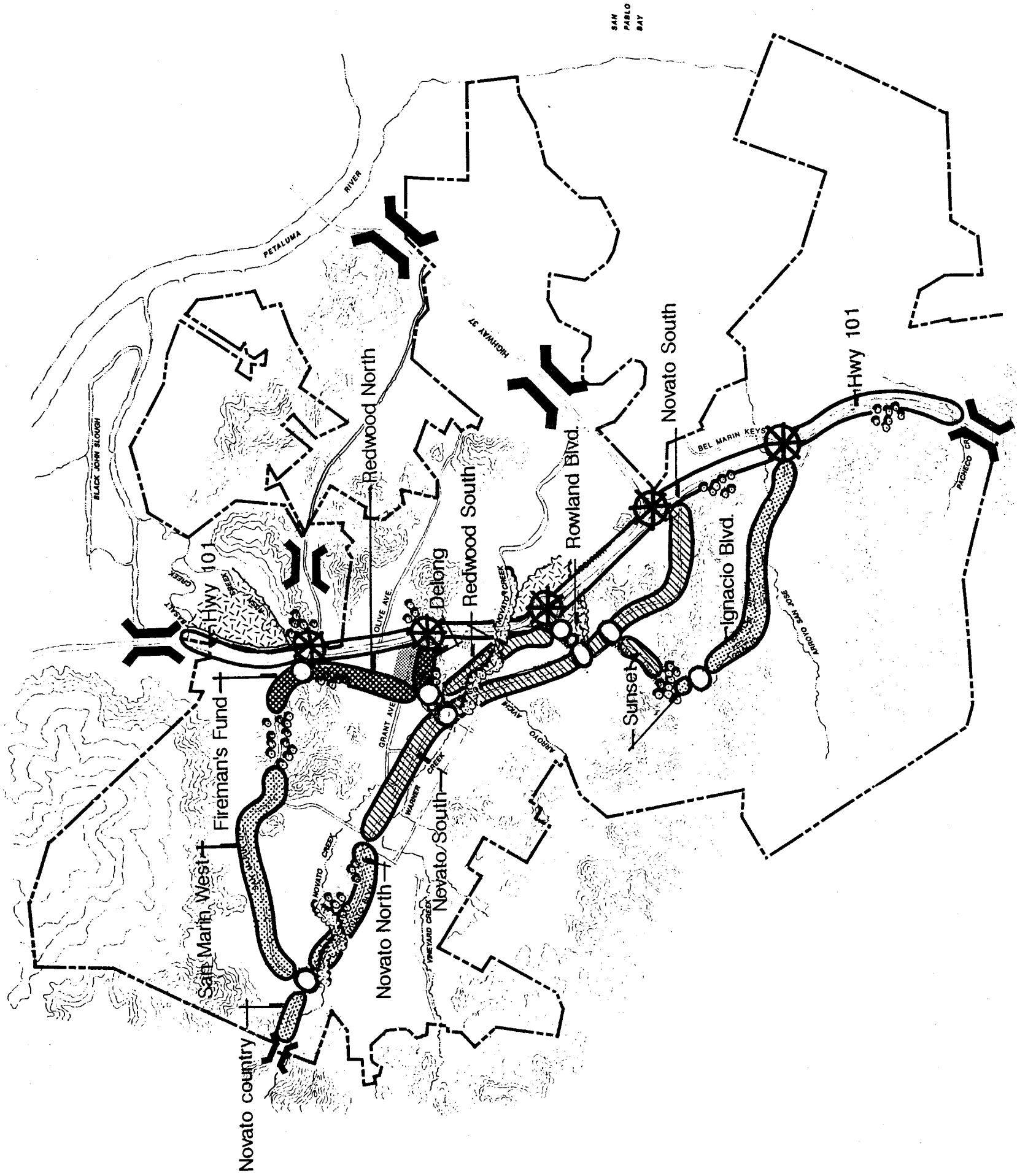
Oak Knoll, Creek and Marsh Intrusions

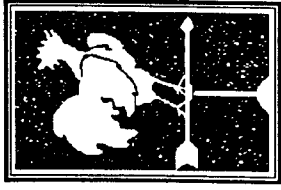
Where the road system directly interfaces with open space knolls, crosses a creek, or passes along a marsh area, the Streetscape Plan draws the essence of each of these natural landscapes into the streetscape system, so that the motorist appears to move through and is made aware of these unique resources.





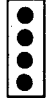










LEGEND

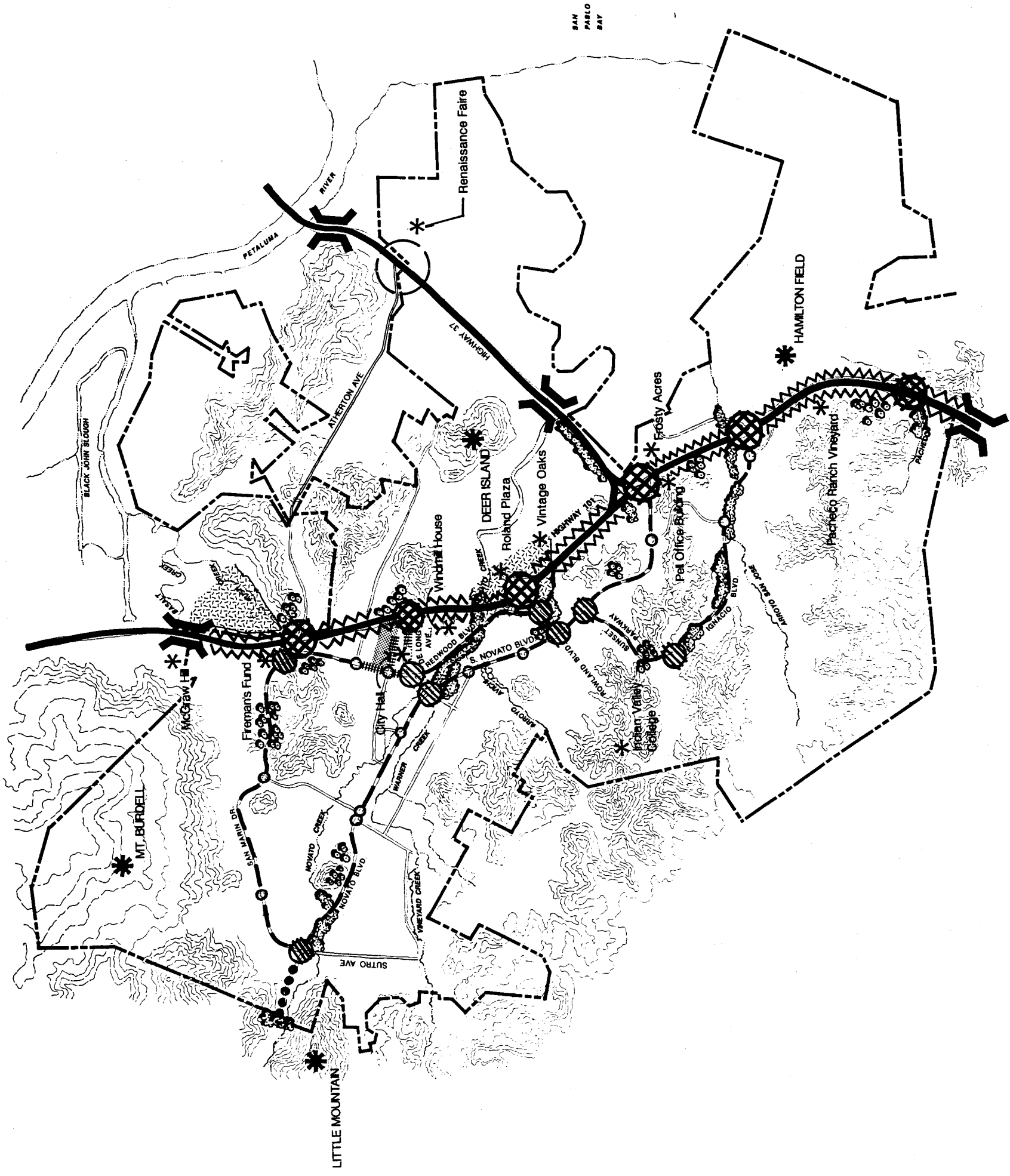
-  Highway Corridor Unit
-  Downtown Visual Unit
-  Natural Influence Unit
-  Cultural Influence Unit
-  Old Town
-  Freeway City Entry
-  Freeway On/Off Ramp
-  Major Intersection
-  Oak/Knoll Intrusion
-  Creek Intrusion
-  Marsh Intrusion





LEGEND

-  Freeway Edge
-  Downtown Road
-  Suburban Road
-  Country Road
-  Freeway City Entry
-  Freeway On/Off Ramp
-  Rural City Entry
-  Major Intersection
-  Minor Intersection
-  Oak /Knoll Intrusion
-  Creek Intrusion
-  Marsh Intrusion
-  Old Town



Master Plan Policies

The following policies provide a means of expressing and supporting the essential landscape concepts identified in the previous chapter. Each policy supports at least one of the concepts, most support several of them.

1. Freeways

The freeway edge itself can provide strong impressions of Novato's small town, yet contemporary image. Distinctive treatment of the freeway edge will notify travelers that they are within the Novato.

Guiding Policies

- 1a. Create a distinct image of Novato visible from Highway 101.
- 1b. Create a landscape character that is appropriate for the scale of a freeway corridor; an image that makes a strong visual statement to autos traveling at high speeds.
- 1c. Visually unify the Highway 101 corridor by drawing upon three landscape types that reflect Novato's cultural and environmental character:
 - oak meadows
 - riparian intrusions
 - poplar hedge rows
- 1d. Preserve and enhance the historical and natural remnants adjacent to the freeways.

2. Major Streets

Novato's major streets fall into three categories.

- Downtown streets, which provide a pedestrian and shopping experience,
- Suburban roads, which connect together individual neighborhoods and districts,
- Country roads, which link the community to the rural areas at the perimeter.

Greatly increased street edge planting will transform all major streets into green corridors ap-

appropriate to a small town image. These lush edges will make the streets both more aesthetically pleasing and more visually identifiable as thoroughfares. Additionally, this edge planting will reduce the scale of the streets by reducing the motorist's visual horizon. Median planting will further the visual impression. Distinctive vegetation that responds to the intrinsic neighborhood character will be planted along major street corridors.

Guiding Policies

- 2a. Acknowledge the natural character of Novato by planting streets with an oak-dominated palette.
- 2b. Respond to the land use conditions that exist within the City. Recognize the unique character of the different uses along the corridor and adapt the streetscape design to reflect these differences.
- 2c. Preserve and enhance the historical and natural remnants adjacent to major streets.
- 2d. Develop a unified appearance with landscaped street edges and medians along all major streets, by increasing planting in a manner appropriate to the small town image and intrinsic neighborhood character.
- 2e. Integrate, infill and supplement broad canopy trees along both sides of the right-of-way of suburban residential streets. Consistent planting will establish a balanced street border, providing an appropriately shady, residential image and cause the street to feel more intimate.
- 2f. Bury overhead utilities where possible on major streets. Overhead utilities constitute a visual distraction that detracts from high visual quality. Underground installation of utilities will unclutter these already complicated streetscapes.

- 2g. Coordinate street furniture decisions along major streets to achieve a visual unity in terms of style and location.
- 2h. Plant shrubs and vines along all privacy and sound walls. Blank sound walls can detract from an otherwise high quality residential image.
 - 2i. Reinforce the downtown character of Grant Avenue and Redwood Boulevard to emphasize their role as the center of the City.
 - 2j. Create a rich pedestrian scale environment at the downtown core.
 - 2k. Reflect the public nature of the civic land uses, parks and schools in the design of the streetscape to increase community awareness of these resources.
 - 2l. Reflect the civic character of the City Hall area along DeLong Avenue.
 - 2m. When possible, adapt existing planted areas along streets to conform to proposed Streetscape Master Plan.

3. Entries

Four locations act as visual gateways to Novato, as shown in the Master Plan Diagram. Six freeway on-off ramps also act as physical City entrances, and two rural city entries provides secondary access. These twelve locations in Novato would benefit from distinctive entry landscaping.

The freeway on-off ramps can provide strong impressions of Novato's small town, yet contemporary image. Distinctive treatment of the interchanges will notify travelers that they are approaching the city. Rural city entries will announce the city as clearly but not so dramatically as the freeway on-off ramps.

Guiding Policies

- 3a. Enhance city entry image as viewed from the road.
- 3b. Establish an identifiable entry statement for the city.
- 3c. Plant generous amounts of vegetation. Green lushness creates a high quality image, indicating attention to visual impression.
- 3d. Take advantage of established vegetation at entries by making existing trees a part of the streetscape palette.
- 3e. Distinguish major entries from rural entries with a more intensive level of landscape treatment.
- 3f. Enhance landscape quality at the entries from Highway 101 freeway corridor, along off ramps and throughout freeway interchanges by planting large-scale vegetation and tall, vertical trees at interchanges. Large scale landscaping will offset the vastness of interchanges, and vertical trees will contrast dramatically with the surrounding vegetation.

4. Natural Intrusions

Novato is fortunate to have natural areas with hillside and native species juxtaposed against developed areas. These special natural intrusions, shown in the Master Plan Diagram, will be integrated into the designed street landscape.

Guiding Policies

- 4a. Reflect the indigenous and historic character found in Novato's valleys within the streetscape, using plants such as Bays, Maples, and Buckeyes.
- 4b. Enhance the significance of creek corridors and their natural vegetative patterns, making them identifiable from the road.

- 4c. Emphasize and enhance marshlands, making them a greater part of Novato's visual image.

5. Intersections

Just as landscaping dramatizes Novato's entryways and makes major streets more intimate, it also visually expresses the importance of the City's intersections.

Eight well-traveled intersections, as shown in the Master Plan Diagram, are obvious locations for reasserting Novato's image in an informal, small town manner.

At all these locations, planting will create a backdrop effect just as at City entrances. Lawn or ground cover planting combined with small-scale flowering trees will provide an informal impression. A low stone wall, three-rail fence, or trellis will be used to further define intersections.

Guiding Policies

- 5a. Apply informal treatment to all four corners of an intersection. Visually pleasing symmetry will result from attention to all four corners.
- 5b. Plant intersection corners with specimen oaks or small-scale flowering trees. Low maintenance, subdued vegetation is appropriate for Novato.
- 5c. Install street furniture where appropriate. Street furniture will provide pedestrian comfort.
- 5d. Recognize any natural features or existing landmarks with historic or visual interest that enhance city image and first impression.
- 5e. Carefully consider driver sight lines when locating trees and shrubs at intersections.

- 5f. Draw upon neighborhood, district, or commercial identity in the design of the street.
- 5g. Locate a trellis, three-rail fence, or low stone wall at high-priority intersections, depending on the character and image of the streets.

6. Old Town

The historic core of the Novato community is the Grant Avenue Old Town Area and the City Hall complex. This four block cluster of small shops is an example of the nostalgic "main street" character and is a charming alternative to the typical suburban mall in a sea of parking. The friendly, eclectic mixture of architectural styles reflects the diversity found in Novato. It is also an aging downtown. Although the Old Town is near the DeLong freeway ramp, a major city entry, it is not very visible from the major circulation corridors. This lack of visibility coupled with the deteriorating streetscape character has been detrimental to the economic viability of the area.

In order to protect this special resource, the Old Town must be re-integrated into the growing Novato urban fabric and upgraded to current expectations, while still preserving its historic essence.

Guiding Policies

- 6a. Prepare an Old Town beautification plan in coordination with downtown merchants and property owners.
- 6b. Increase awareness of the downtown core from major circulation corridors.
- 6c. Study the old town area as well as the overall downtown "golden triangle" area to insure provision of adequate parking within a reasonable walking distance and to encourage pedestrian linkages to other adjacent commercial development.

- 6d. Develop a streetscape system that encourages pedestrian traffic. Create small plaza areas for seating.
- 6e. Emphasize the historic character of the area in the selection of streetscape furnishings and in the selection of plant materials.
- 6f. Encourage rehabilitation of individual shops and buildings through a city investment in improvement to the streetscape design.
- 6g. Rehabilitate the existing streetscape by replacing broken sidewalks and damaged site furniture.
- 6h. Strengthen links to the civic center complex.
- 6i. Explore opportunities to utilize railroad station area to provide amenities that benefit the downtown area.
- 6j. Develop an Old Town signing program, which includes entry signing options.



3

Streetscape Design Guidelines and Prototypes

The following pages offer a collection of guidelines, examples, and standards that apply to Novato's streets. The recommendations range from large-scale treatments to unify an entire street, to simple suggestions for pathway design.

To determine which design guidelines are applicable to a specific street segment, consult each of the following sections:

- a. Freeways and Major Streets
- b. Streetscape Prototypes
- c. Streetscape Material Character

Each of these sections is concerned with a different level of design detail.

In the *Guidelines for Freeway and Major Streets*, specific recommendations address the individual character of each street and its role in the roadway system. These recommendations establish a consistent overall image or theme for each individual street. Additionally, the guidelines divide each street into zones of similar character and land use, to correspond with one of the streetscape prototype categories. After determining the general guidelines for a particular street, one would then identify which streetscape prototype to use.

The *Streetscape Prototypes* are a response to the diverse visual differences among the land uses which occur along the street. Where a residential use might seek privacy and protection from the street, a commercial business depends on visibility from the roadway system. Although the street should be designed as a unified whole, each type of use calls for a special response. The prototypes accommodate and support this diversity.

Within each prototype, existing site features will necessitate a slightly different design treatment. A sound wall may be required in some residential areas for sound control. Special intersections may have trellises or low rock walls. The *Streetscape Materials Character* section discusses the specific design of each of these site elements.



a

Guidelines for Freeways and Major Streets

Highway 101










Views from Highway 101 are a critical component of Novato's image for the thousands of passers-by each day. While landscaping along the freeway edge is generally controlled by Cal Trans, an opportunity exists to influence the appearance through the Adopt-a-Freeway program, and by guiding the landscaping installed on private property. With much of the eastern freeway edge undergoing redevelopment – Vintage Oaks Shopping Center, Golden Gate Business Park and Hamilton Field are examples – the City has the potential of controlling the visual appearance of the Highway 101 edge.

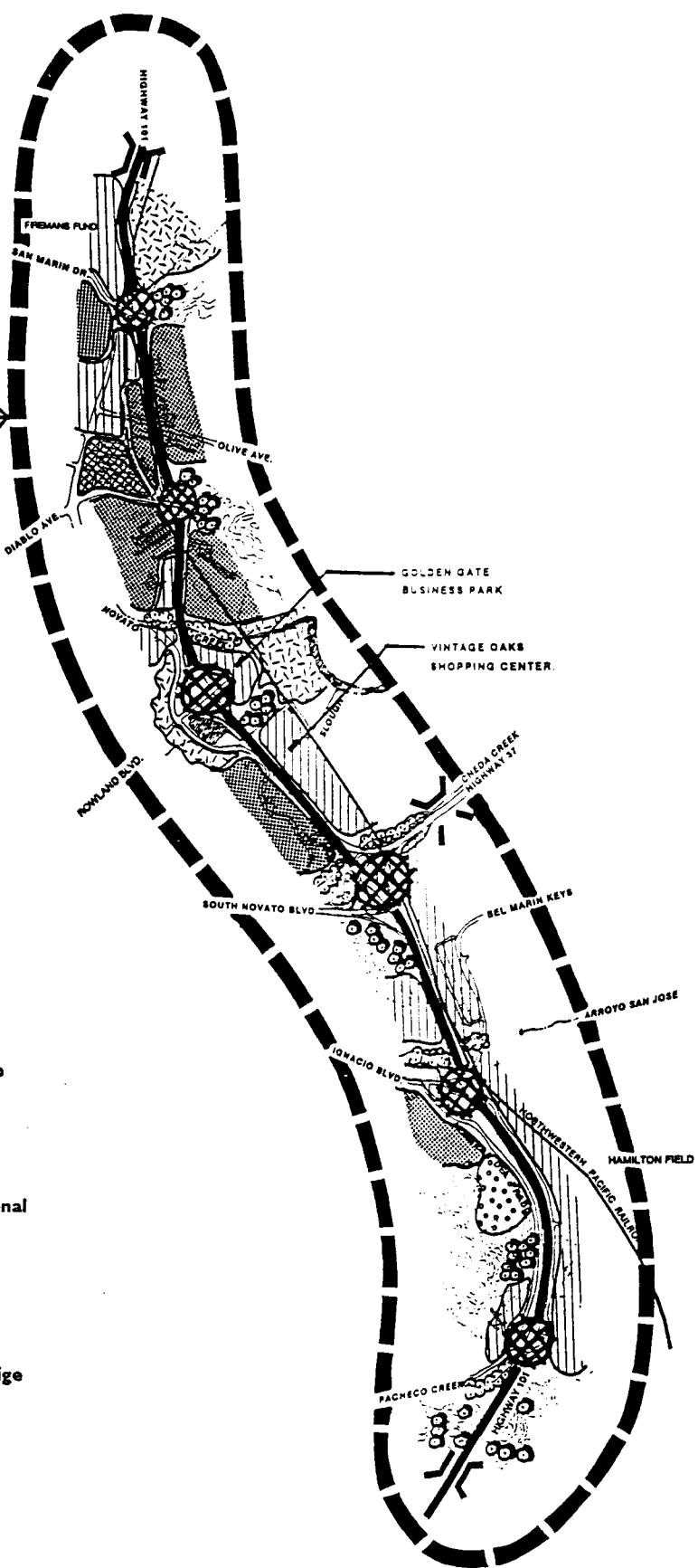
General Guidelines

- Pursue the Adopt-a-Freeway program at freeway on-off ramps. Refer to the implementation section for further discussion.
- Develop a strategy for increasing awareness of downtown from Highway 101, particularly at the DeLong exit.
- Avoid planting eucalyptus, acacias, pines, liquidambers and palms, in favor of an oak dominated indigenous plant palette. Select large plant materials that relate to the vast scale of the freeway and plant them in significant masses. Plant as shown on freeway edge and freeway on-off ramp prototypes, using Lombardy Poplar hedgerows at interchanges and Oaks at knoll intrusions.
- Encourage property owners with frontage along Highway 101 to pursue with Cal Trans the responsibility for landscaping within the Cal Trans right-of-way.
- Continue to work with Cal Trans in designing and locating residential sound walls along the freeway edge to ensure consideration of City image and aesthetics. Work with Cal Trans to improve planting of vacant or under-planted landscape areas and to improve landscape maintenance.

HIGHWAY 101

LEGEND

-  Freeway City Entry
-  Freeway On / Off Ramp
-  Downtown
-  Commercial / Institutional Freeway Edge
-  Orchard Street Edge
-  Residential Freeway Edge
-  Creek Intrusion
-  Oak / Knoll Intrusion
-  Marsh Intrusion



Redwood Boulevard

Redwood Boulevard is Novato's major commercial spine, the most important street in the city in terms of image. The street's history as the Old Redwood Highway, once the major north/south route up the Northern California coast, has reinforced this importance. Continuing to plant redwood trees as an accent along the street would reinforce the street's history. The Boulevard reflects a cross section of the City's landscape types, ranging from the rural marshes and knolls, to the urbanity of downtown. Highlighting this juxtaposition of contrasting images and character can make Redwood Boulevard memorable.

The cork oaks and tulip trees at the northern end of Redwood Boulevard serve to scale down the wide street. This plan intends to continue this landscaping in a manner that responds to the visibility needs of merchant displays and signing. Significant opportunities for median and street edge planting exist at the southern end of Redwood. The strong pattern of tulip trees, and redwood trees will be continued, to add to the sense of unity along Redwood Boulevard. The strong creek and marsh influences also suggest that use of a tree with a lush, leafy, green image, such as the Italian Alder.

General Guidelines

- Establish a unified, high-quality commercial character for the street, building upon existing vegetation. Refer to the Suburban Commercial prototypes for further concepts.
- Carefully arrange trees to preserve motorist views to merchant displays and signing.
- Landscape all medians.
- Plant significant groupings of large trees to scale the wide street.



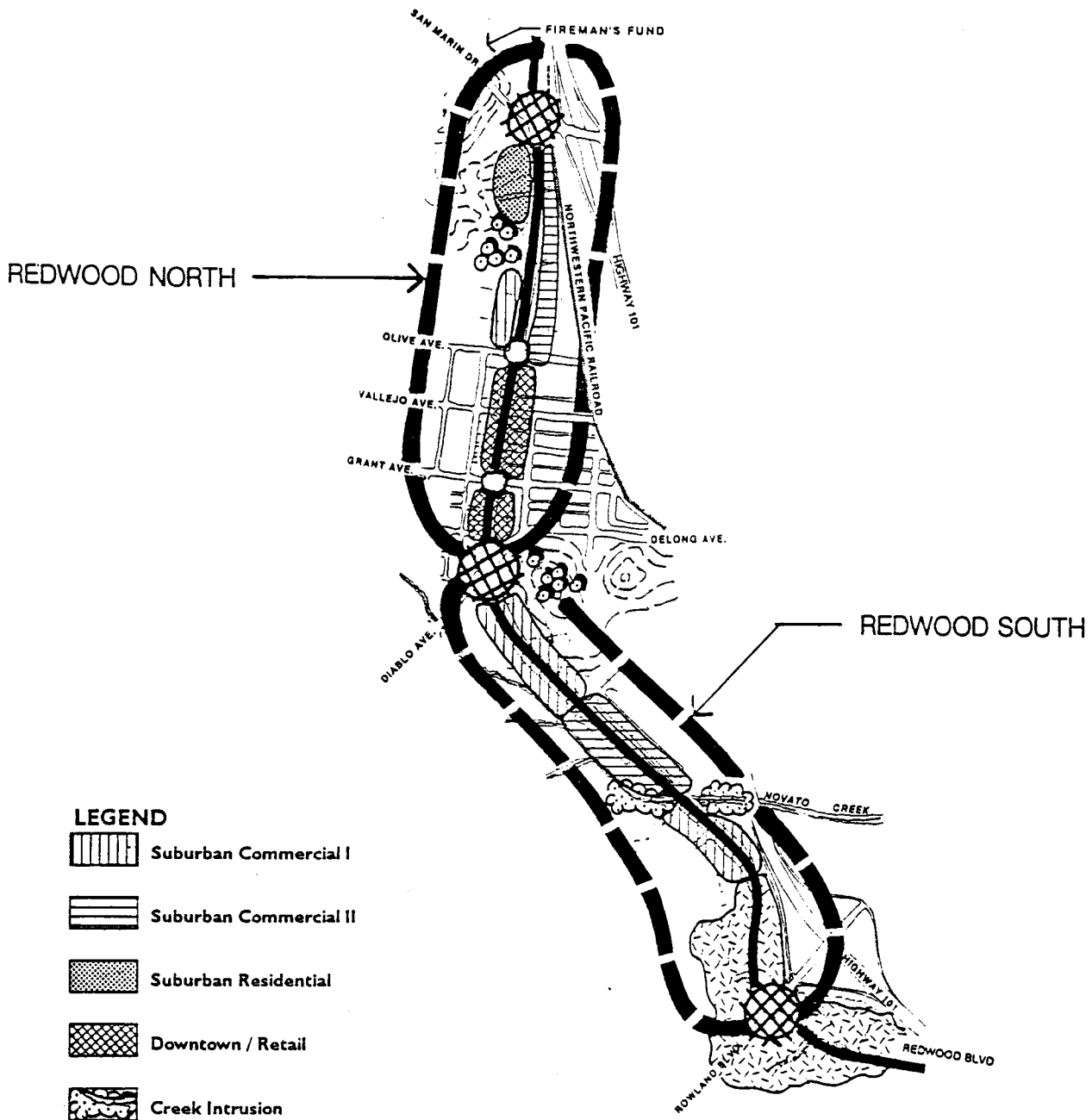
Specific Guidelines

Redwood Boulevard / San Marin Drive Intersection










- Existing conditions at this intersection that should influence the future design and the selection of materials include the adjacent freeway on-off ramp and the hedgerows of Lombardy poplars at Fireman's Fund.
- Intersection Accent Tree: Lombardy Poplar (*Populus nigra italica*), in a single row.

Redwood Boulevard North Zone

- Design the streetscape edge between De-Long and Olive to reinforce the small scale, pedestrian and friendly image of the downtown. This Plan recommends additional study of this area.
- Street Edge Tree: Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), arranged per the appropriate prototype.
- Median Tree: Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*), randomly spaced.
- Plant street trees at the oak knoll intrusion as shown in the appropriate prototype.



LEGEND

-  Suburban Commercial I
-  Suburban Commercial II
-  Suburban Residential
-  Downtown / Retail
-  Creek Intrusion
-  Oak / Knoll Intrusion
-  Marsh Intrusion
-  Major Intersection
-  Minor Intersection



REDWOOD BOULEVARD

Redwood Boulevard / DeLong Avenue

Intersection

- Treat the Redwood Boulevard / DeLong Avenue intersection as a high-priority major intersection, giving it the special consideration that is fitting for the center of the city.
- The primary planting consideration should be scaling the vastness of the intersection.
- Plant all leftover triangular median spaces with a formal bosque of small upright flowering trees.
- Use the low stone wall at corners for a civic commercial look.
- Treat intersection with special intersection paving.
- Intersection Edge Accent Tree: Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*), massed informally on all four corners to echo existing vegetation.
- Intersection Median Accent Tree: Columnar Flowering Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Capital' or 'Chanticleer'), in formal bosque.

Redwood Boulevard South Zone

- Strongly respond to the presence of Scottsdale Pond and the marsh area with the design of the streetscape. Refer to the marsh intrusion prototype for design concepts.
- Street Edge Tree: Italian Alder (*Alnus cordata*), in close masses of 3-5 trees, with gaps of 80-100 feet between masses.
- Median Tree: Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), with random clumps of Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) at widely spaced intervals.
- Intersection Accent Tree: Redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*)

Redwood Boulevard / Rowland Boulevard

Intersection

- Reflect the dominant marsh influence of Scottsdale Pond in further plantings.
- Treat the intersection in a natural, wild looking manner.
- Proximity to freeway will necessitate a similar treatment
- Intersection Accent Tree: Balm of Gilead (*Populus candicans*), on three corners.
- Allow views to the water from the street at the Scottsdale Pond corner, rather than blocking it with trees. Plant this corner with perennial Fountain Grass (*Pennisetum alopecuroides*) or other ornamental grasses to achieve a natural, wild look.
- Walls or trellises are not recommended.
- Locate San Francisco Cobble in median noses.
- Use special paving in the intersection.

Novato Boulevard

Novato Boulevard is the City's major residential spine; the second most important street in the hierarchy in terms of image. The street is currently characterized by a hodgepodge of tree species, disorganized on-street commuter parking, signage and utilities. The City is currently planning the widening of the boulevard to meet traffic demands. This widening will provide an opportunity to improve the roadway image.

Visible from Novato Boulevard are many of the elements that define the City's overall character:

- The views of wooded knolls and open space, such as little mountains and Mt. Burdell;
- The green "backbone" of Novato Creek;
- Orchards and vineyards;
- The rustic three-rail fences.



Specific Guidelines

Novato Country Zone

To the north of the San Marin Drive / Sutro Avenue intersection, Novato Boulevard narrows. The existing grand bays and oaks envelop the street, providing a natural canopy of vegetation as one enters the City from rural, outlying areas.

- Street edge planting should permit views into the future O'Hair Park.

- Use a hedge or three-rail fence rather than a solid wall, if street edge barrier is desired.
- Establish a "country" look and image in the streetscape, to effectuate a transition to the rural areas outside the City limits.
- Provide an expansive landscape setback between the street curb and any building.
- Street Edge Tree: Oaks (*Quercus agrifolia* and *lobata*) and Bays (*Umbellularia californica*) informally massed to match the existing trees.

Novato Boulevard / San Marin Drive

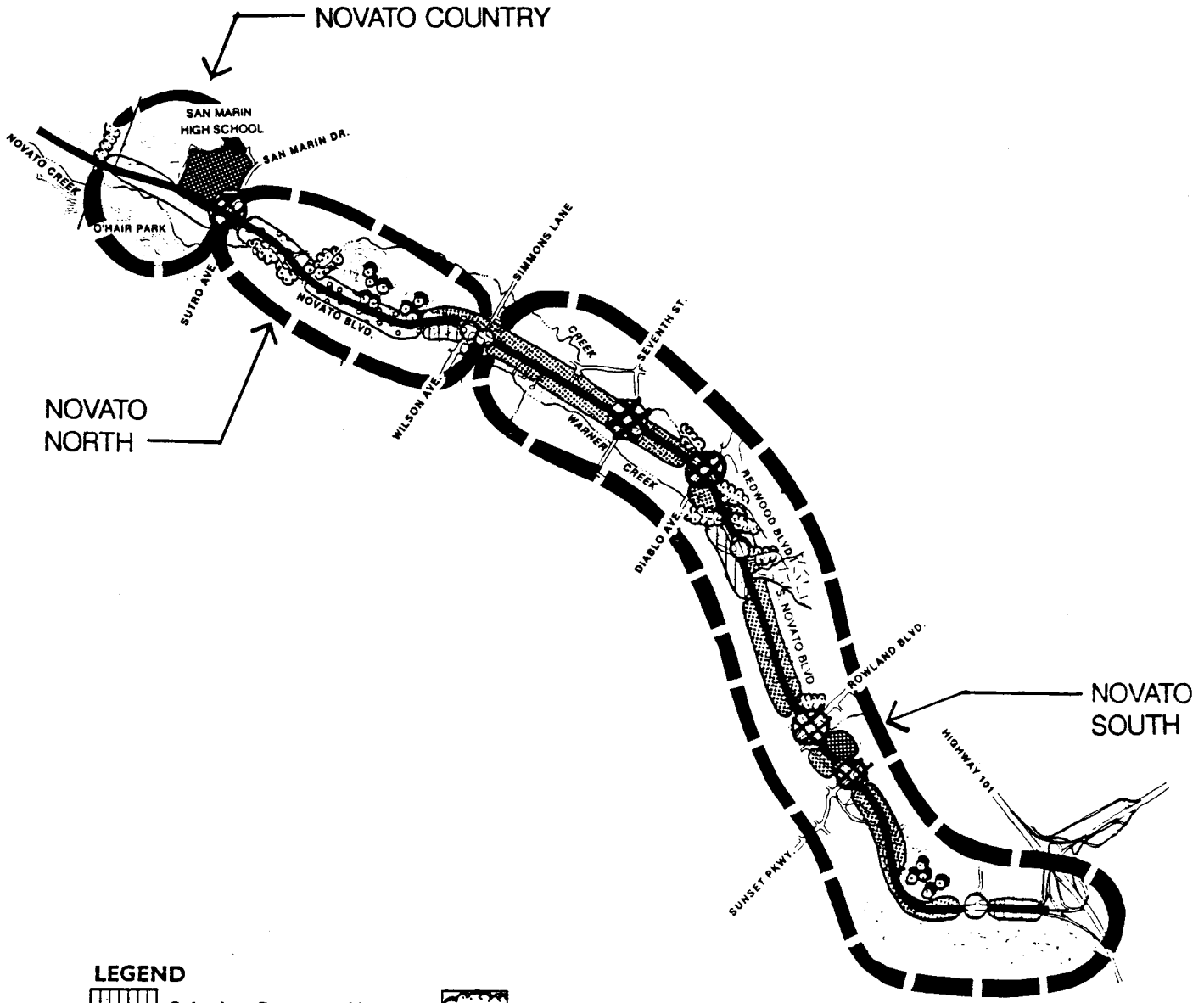
Intersection

This intersection provides an opportunity to integrate the orchard, "equestrian" character of the Vineyard / Indian Valley neighborhoods with the character of Novato Boulevard.

- Continue the "country" image established in the northernmost section of the street.
- Use a three-rail fence to define the intersection, rather than a wall or trellis.
- Incorporate park and high school identity signing into the design of the intersection.
- Intersection Accent Tree: Plant an orchard "remnant" consisting of a tight 5-8 tree bosque of Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*) on each corner.

Novato North Zone

The creek and oak knoll character strongly influence this section of Novato Boulevard. This section also provides an opportunity to integrate the orchard character of the Indian Valley and Vineyard neighborhoods into the streetscape.



LEGEND

- | | | | |
|---|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------|
|  | Suburban Commercial I |  | Creek Intrusion |
|  | Suburban Residential |  | Oak / Knoll Intrusion |
|  | Orchard Street Edge |  | Marsh Intrusion |
|  | Country Road |  | Major Intersection |
|  | Suburban Civic and Institutional |  | Minor Intersection |

NOVATO BOULEVARD





- Establish a unified character for the zone, reminiscent of the historic orchards.
- Landscape the wide areas between the creek and street curb wherever possible.
- Street Edge and Median Tree: Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*) in grid as shown in the Orchard Prototype.

Novato South Zone

- Establish a unified residential parkway character for the street, building upon existing vegetation to create a lush canopy. Refer to the Suburban Residential Prototypes for further concepts.
- Arrange planting and street materials to maximize residential privacy and sound attenuation.
- Landscape all existing medians, and create additional medians where possible.
- Respond to the presence of creeks and oak knolls in the design of the streetscape, as shown in the Creek and Oak/Knoll Prototypes.
- Utilize a visually consistent privacy wall along the length of the street where a sound barrier wall is needed.

- Underground overhead utility wires as much as possible.
- Soften existing privacy walls with shrub planting at the base and clinging vines.
- Street Edge Tree: Flowering Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Red Spire')
- Median Tree: Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*)
- Median Accent Tree: Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*)

Novato Boulevard / Seventh Street Intersection

This intersection is one end of the path to Old Town Novato. Building and parking setbacks limit opportunities to create a special intersection treatment. Existing landscaping at newer developments provides vegetative relief, but treatment is not consistent from corner to corner.

- Plant small flowering trees and consistent perennial plants on all four corners. Reflect the commercial, ceremonial character
- Intersection accent tree: *Crataegus phaenopyrum* (Washington Thorn) in a formal, geometric pattern.

Novato Boulevard / Diablo Avenue Intersection

Highlighting the lush, natural character of Novato Creek can make this important intersection more special.

- Use a low rock wall to define the intersection at corners.
- Prune or remove tall creek understory plants to allow greater visibility of the creek.
- Place washed river cobble (Noiya Cobble) in median noses, as at creek intrusions.

- Intersection Accent Tree: Italian Alder (*Alnus cordata*) informally massed.

Novato Boulevard / Rowland Boulevard

Intersection

This intersection, while limited to a narrow right-of-way, can also convey a unified residential character.

- Use a low rock wall to define the street corners on the eastern, commercial side of the intersection.
- Use a trellis element to define the corners on the western residential side of the street.
- Intersection Accent Tree: Single specimen sized Valley Oak (*Quercus lobata*) from a 36 inch box.

Novato Boulevard / Sunset Parkway

Intersection

This intersection has already been planted with substantial vegetation; however, it would benefit from the introduction of a small flowering tree.

- Use a trellis element to define the street corners.
- Intersection Accent Tree: Washington Thorn (*Crataegus phaenopyrum*), in a single arc.

San Marin Drive

San Marin Drive is predominantly a suburban residential street, its northern edge bordering Mt. Burdell. Views of Novato's rolling hills and oak woodlands are visible from the street. An existing median and street edge contain dense plantings of pin oaks, pines, poplars, and Liquidambar. A significant oak knoll intrusion separates Fireman's Fund from the residential area.

Although a pattern already exists along San Marin Drive, its proximity to the oak woodlands of Mt. Burdell is not emphasized. The existing suburban character of the street does not appear to "fit" with the surroundings.

Oak woodland plant species should be introduced at every available opportunity even if only in the median in order to strengthen the relationship with the open space backdrop.

Specific Guidelines







San Marin Drive West Zone

- Street Edge Tree: Scarlet Oak (*Quercus coccinea*), randomly spaced.
- Median Tree: Chinese Pistache (*Pistacia chinensis*), in a double triangulated row.
- Median Accent Tree: Coast Live Oak and Valley Oak (*Quercus agrifolia* and *lobata*), in randomly spaced single species masses

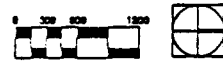
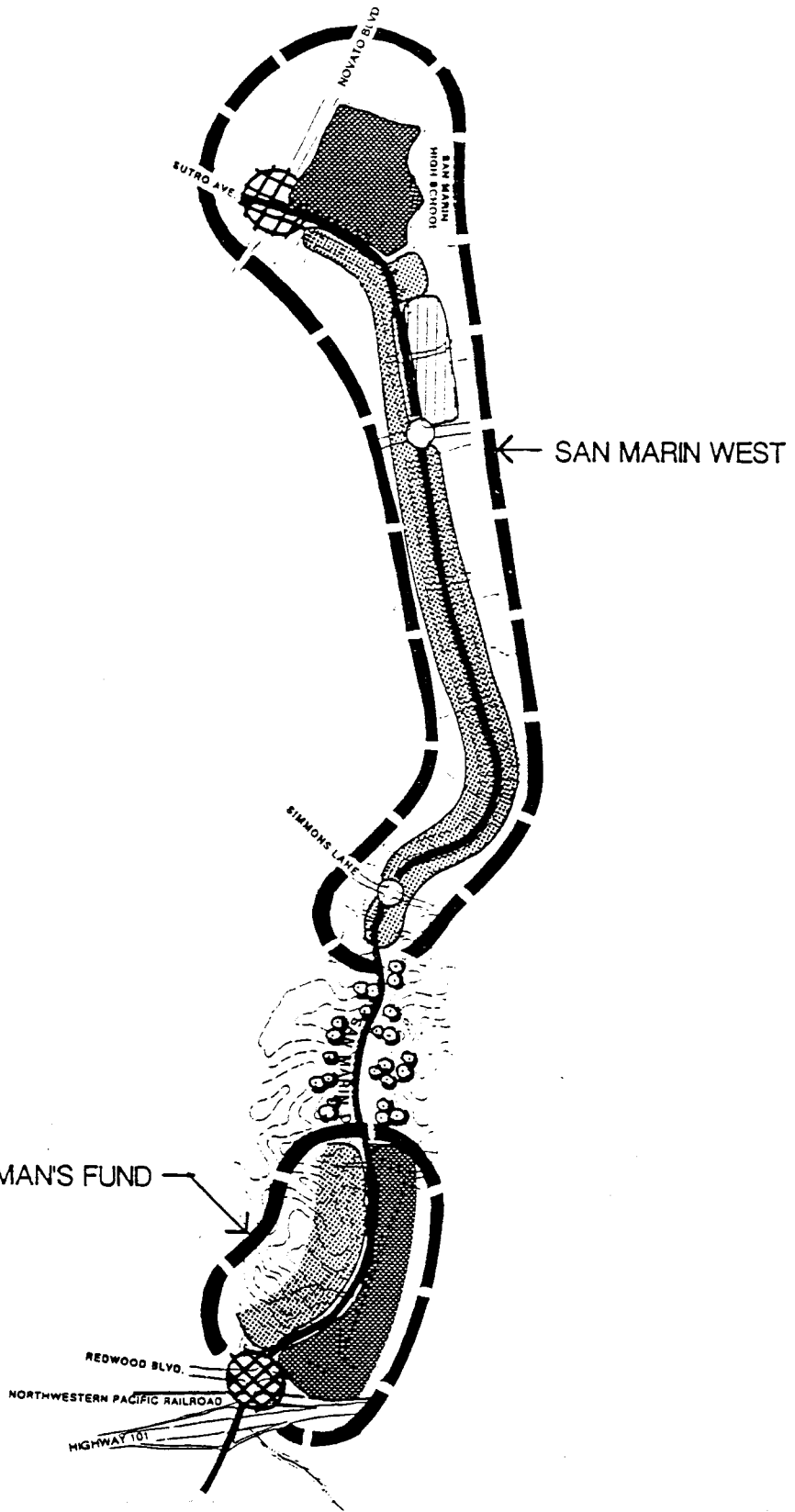
Fireman's Fund Zone

- Street Edge Tree: Tulip Tree (*Liriodendron tulipifera*), arranged per the appropriate prototype.
- Median Tree: Cork Oak (*Quercus suber*), randomly spaced, with gaps to allow views.

LEGEND

-  Suburban Commercial I
-  Suburban Civic and Institutional
-  Suburban Residential
-  Oak / Knoll Intrusion
-  Major Intersection
-  Minor Intersection

SAN MARIN DRIVE



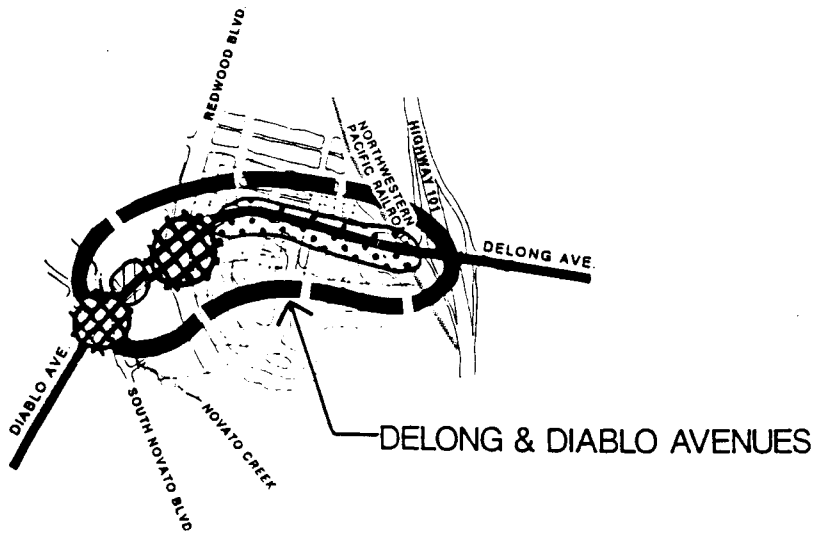
DeLong and Diablo Avenues

DeLong and Diablo Avenues serve an important role in the City, functioning as the links to the Downtown and the City Hall areas from the free-way and residential areas.

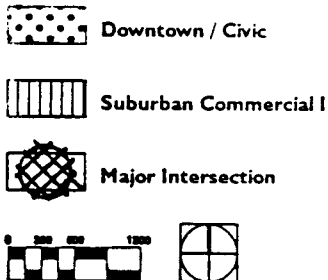


General Guidelines

- Establish a unified, refined downtown and civic character for the street.
- Continue use of San Francisco cobble in median noses.
- Street Edge Tree: Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus Fastigiata*), in formal rows.
- Median Tree: Upright Flowering Pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Capital' or 'Chanticleer'), double triangulated.



LEGEND



DELONG AND DIABLO AVENUES





Rowland Boulevard

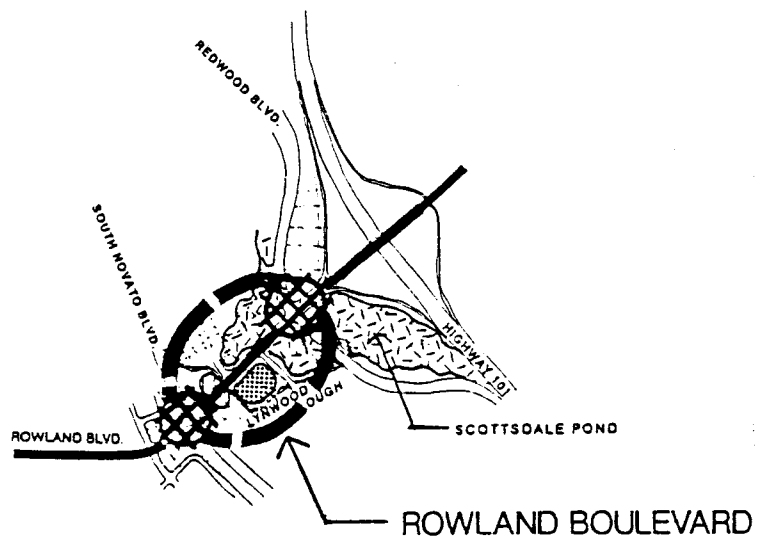
Rowland Boulevard passes by Scottsdale Pond and the marshes before traveling west through an existing suburban area and small new commercial area. Both of the major intersections on Rowland Blvd. need special emphasis and imagery, and the stretch of road linking them requires a strong streetscape pattern that would provide continuity from one to the other.

General Guidelines

- Emphasize views of Scottsdale Pond by framing and highlighting with tree massing.
- Create a visual transition to the marsh area, as shown in the marsh intrusion prototype.
- Create a sense of arrival from the freeway.
- Plant the wide existing median with trees and shrubs.
- Street Edge and Median Tree: Italian Alder (*Alnus cordata*), massed informally

LEGEND

-  Suburban Commercial I
-  Suburban Residential
-  Marsh Intrusion
-  Major Intersection



ROWLAND BOULEVARD



Sunset Parkway

Sunset Parkway winds up over a steep knoll vegetated with oaks, and continues along San Jose Junior High School to the intersection with Ignacio Boulevard. Planting along the street is mature and well maintained. However, the oak knoll should be strengthened as a gateway to the Ignacio Valley.

General Guidelines

- A row of established Ash trees lines the Novato Boulevard end of Sunset parkway. Respond to this pattern with the addition of a visually similar species.
- Selectively prune or remove existing trees that do not strengthen the visual pattern.
- Highlight the topographic "saddle" with the introduction of an oak/knoll intrusion.
- Allow visibility of the Junior High School from the street, while also creating a visual transition to the oak woodland.



Specific Guidelines

Sunset Parkway Zone

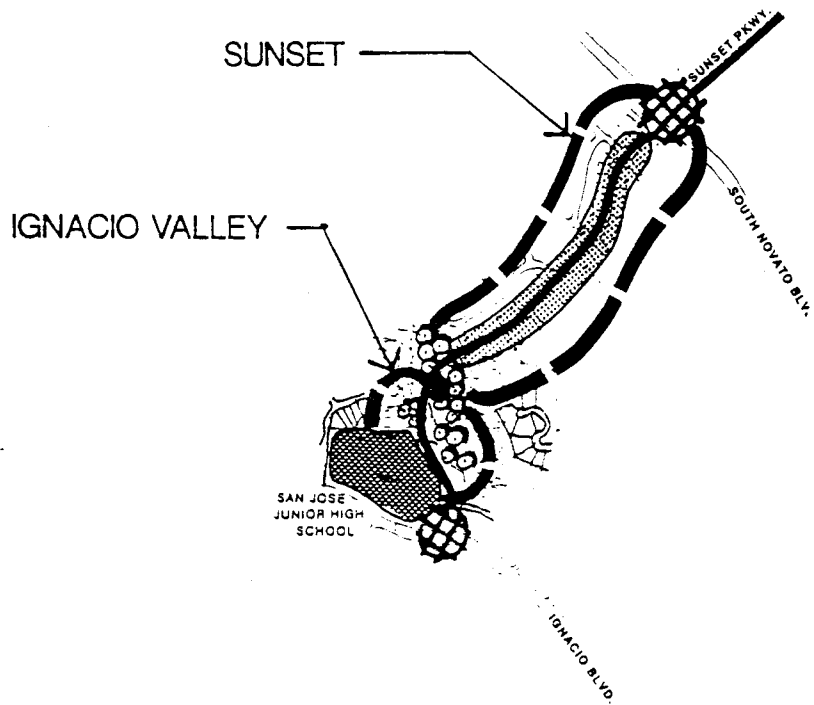
- Street Edge Tree: Raywood Ash (*Fraxinus oxycarpa* 'Raywood'), in a single row.

Ignacio Valley Zone

- Street Edge Tree: Coast Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), informally massed.


Sunset Parkway / Ignacio Boulevard Intersection

- Treat the Sunset Parkway / Ignacio Boulevard intersection as a lower-priority major intersection, giving it a unified, yet informal character that reflects its location at the entry to the Ignacio Valley.
- The landscape design should reflect the strong natural influences present in the adjacent hills and creeks.
- Allow views of the Junior High from the intersection for legibility.
- Intersection Accent Tree: Specimen sized Valley Oaks (*Quercus lobata*) from a 36 inch box, grouped as conditions allow.



LEGEND

 Suburban Residential

 Suburban Civic
and Institutional

 Oak / Knoll Intrusion

 Major Intersection

SUNSET PARKWAY

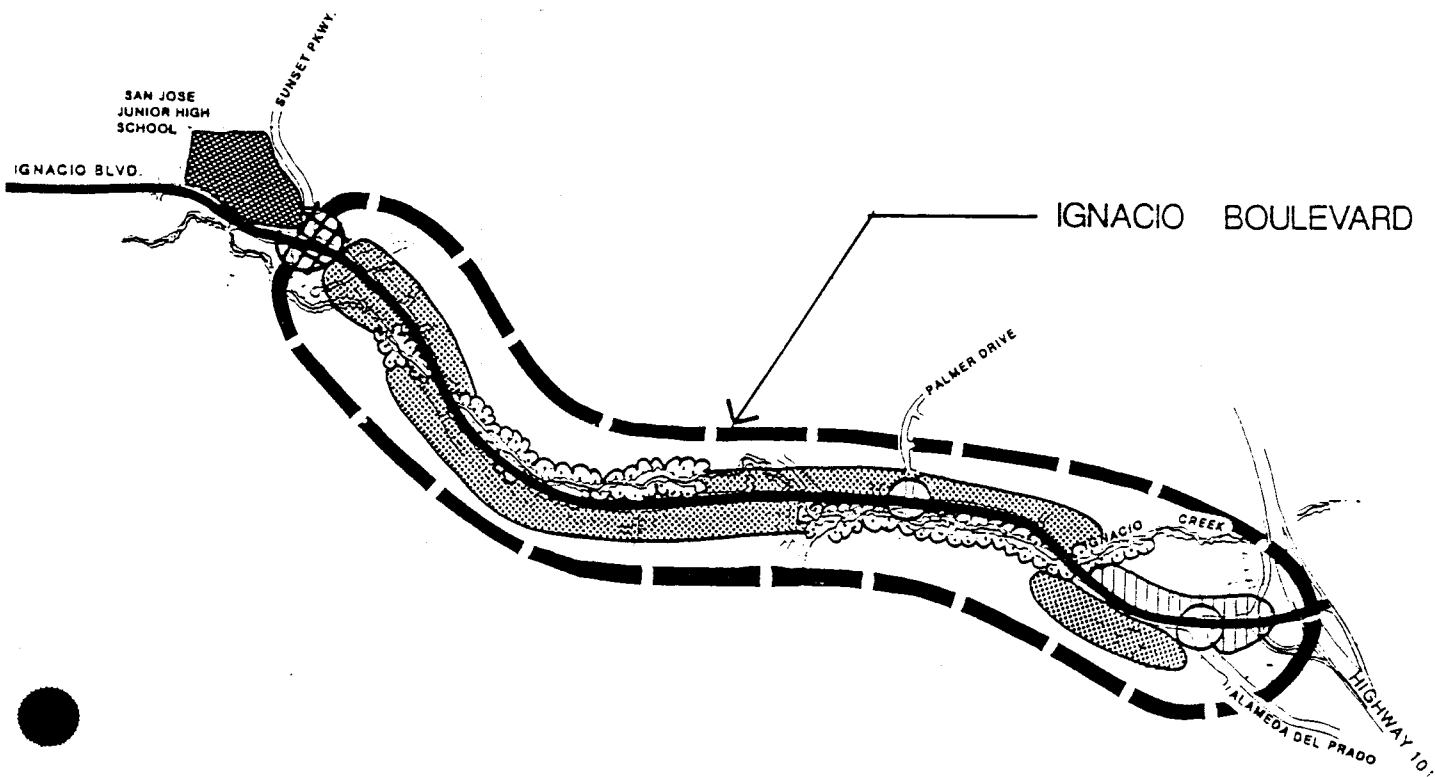


Ignacio Boulevard







Ignacio Boulevard passes through a residential area on its way to the narrow Ignacio Valley and Big Rock Ridge. Ignacio Boulevard parallels Ignacio Creek, which provides a significant backdrop of lush riparian vegetation. The existing street pattern is for the most part a well-defined row of mature London Plane trees.

General Guidelines

- Continue the existing street tree pattern.
- Further define the ground plane by improving street edge shrub and ground cover planting.
- Respond to Ignacio Creek by introducing riparian plant species along the street, as shown in the creek intrusion prototype.
- Street Edge Tree: London Plane (*Platanus acerifolia* 'Youngblood') in a single row to match the existing trees.



LEGEND

-  Suburban Commercial I
-  Suburban Civic and Institutional
-  Suburban Residential
-  Creek Intrusion
-  Major Intersection
-  Minor Intersection

IGNACIO BOULEVARD



b

Streetscape Prototypes

The following pages offer a collection of prototypes applicable to Novato's major streets, entries and intersections. These prototypes will serve to support the desirable small town, yet contemporary character. Not every prototype will be perfectly suited for every situation, but each situation can draw from the techniques and concepts illustrated to enhance the overall City image. Project designers, and City Planning, Engineering, and Maintenance Department Staff will determine the specific techniques and concepts that are appropriate for a given situation.

Streets

Suburban Civic and Institutional

Guidelines:

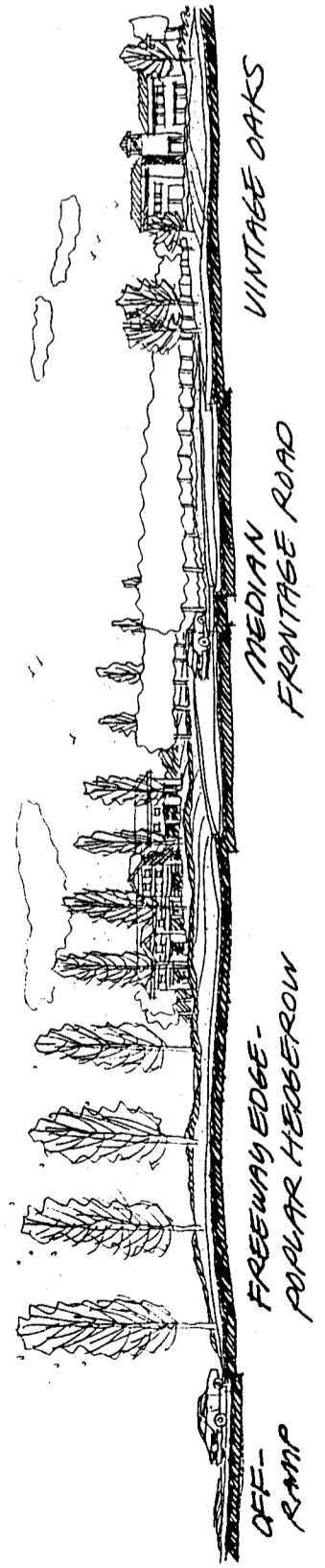
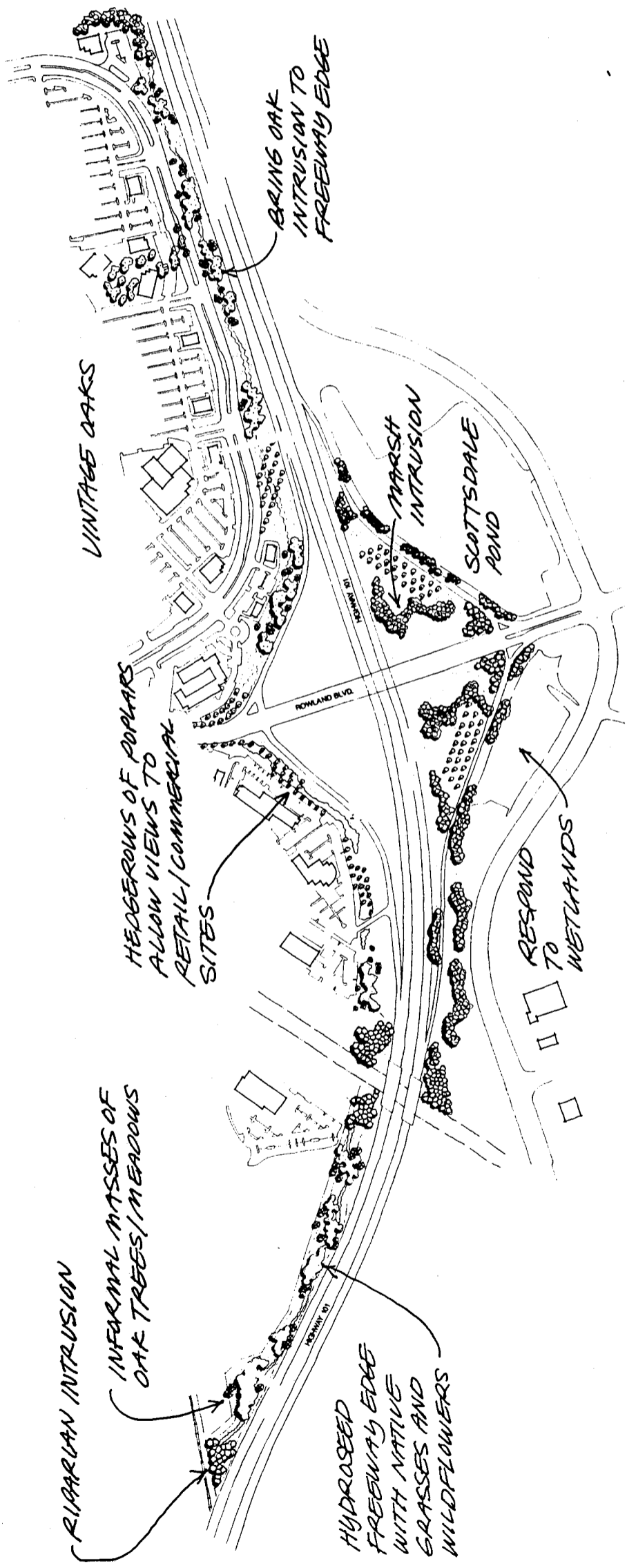
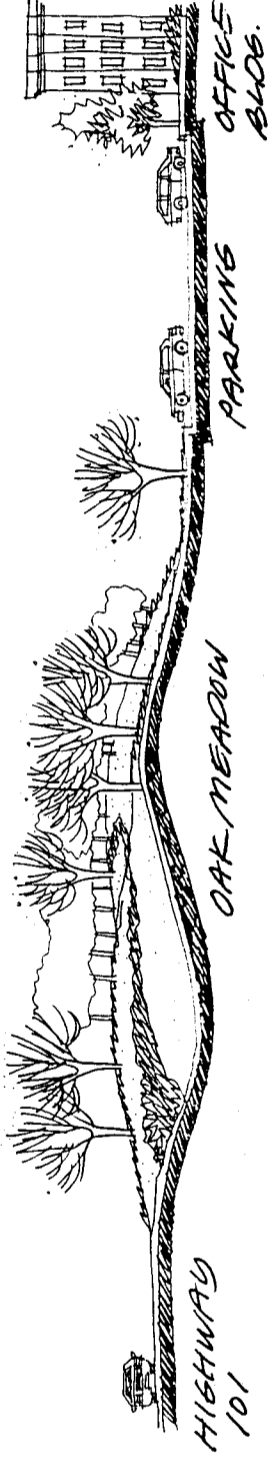
- Interrupt continuous streetscape planting to allow views in and to create an open "public" image.
- Design access driveways as "ceremonial" entries with formal patterns of planting and site elements.
- Patterns of tree plantings and paving should reflect architectural forms and extend facility image to the streetscape.
- Wherever possible, incorporate streetscape furniture, monoliths, walls and paving into the design of the public face of the facility.

Freeway Edge

One major concept of the Streetscape Master Plan is to reflect Novato's historical and indigenous character within the roadside landscape. This prototype explores ways in which the Highway 101 corridor can be designed to respond to this concept, by re-introducing oak meadows or planting riparian plant species to highlight creek corridors. The prototype also considers the importance of commercial visibility along the freeway corridor, allowing for open hedgerows of poplars that allow passers-by a view into the commercial establishments.

Guidelines:

- Residential sound wall designs should take into consideration the overall freeway edge character, avoiding the creation of a "tunnel" experience and avoiding blocking freeway views to Mt. Burdell and the surrounding ridges.
- Plant masses of oaks near oak intrusions.
- Berm and sculpt topography; create "meadows" that are hydroseeded with native grasses and wildflowers.
- Plant long, sinuous masses of native shrubs.
- Highlight creek crossings and wetland areas by planting large masses of water-related tree species.
- Create long geometric grids of "hedgerows" that have a strong freeway presence but allow view corridors for retail and commercial areas.
- Refer to the Plant List in the Implementation section for preferred trees.



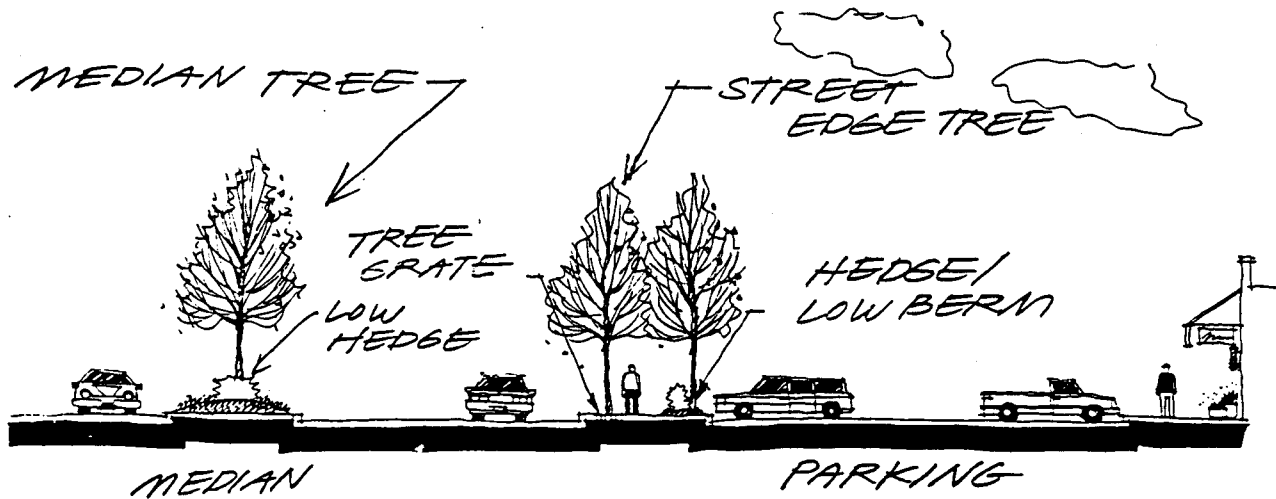
Suburban Commercial I

The objective of this streetscape prototype is to enhance the commercial roadside environment, while also responding to the specific needs of merchants, most importantly, preserving visibility and screening parking. The two commercial prototypes differ because of their specific landscape constraints. The Commercial I prototype has a narrow setback and therefore less room to plant, whereas the Commercial II scheme has a wide setback that includes a frontage road and a greater opportunity for landscaping. Both prototypes unify the streetscape edge with street trees, but allow for visibility of signage and displays.

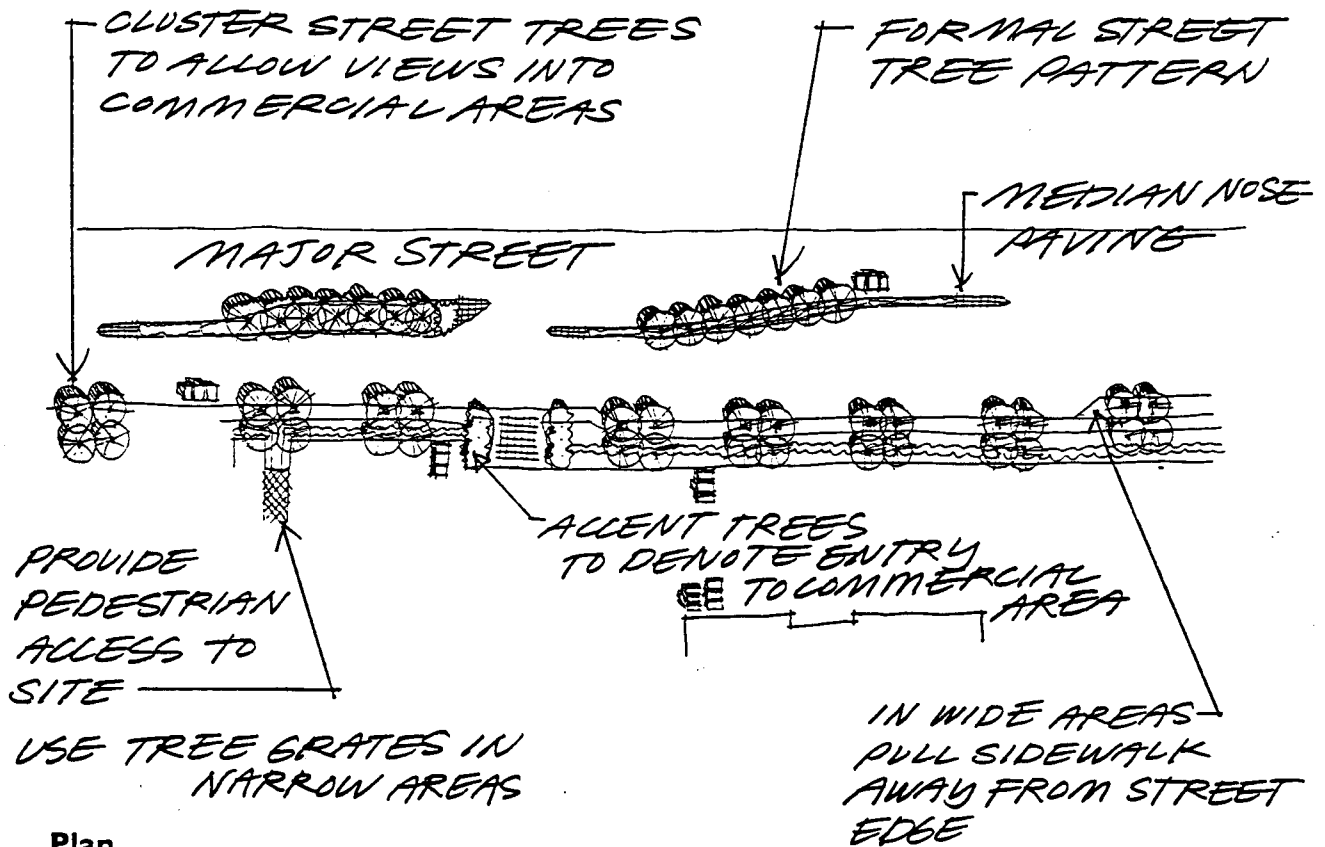


Guidelines:

- Plant a formal pattern of street trees; space clusters to allow views into retail uses.
- Screen views of parking with berms and shrubs.
- Where possible, provide for pedestrian access into retail areas.
- Plant a formal street tree pattern in the median; in wider medians, carry the tree pattern along the street edge across to unify the streetscape.
- Plant accent trees and shrubs at entries into commercial / retail areas.
- Provide benches and other street furniture.



Section



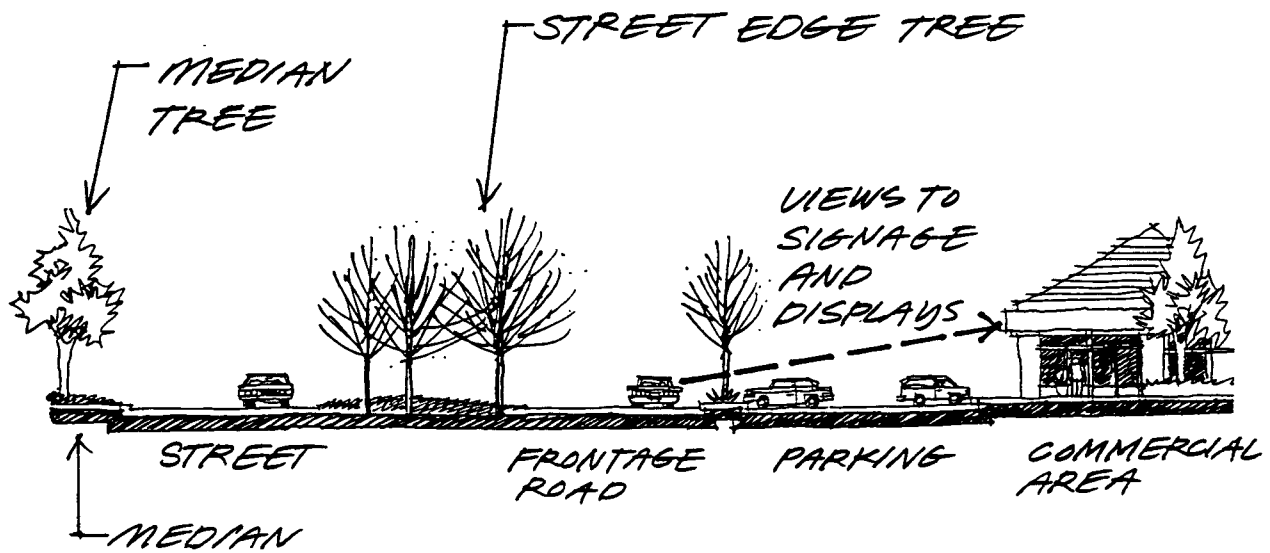
Plan

SUBURBAN COMMERCIAL I

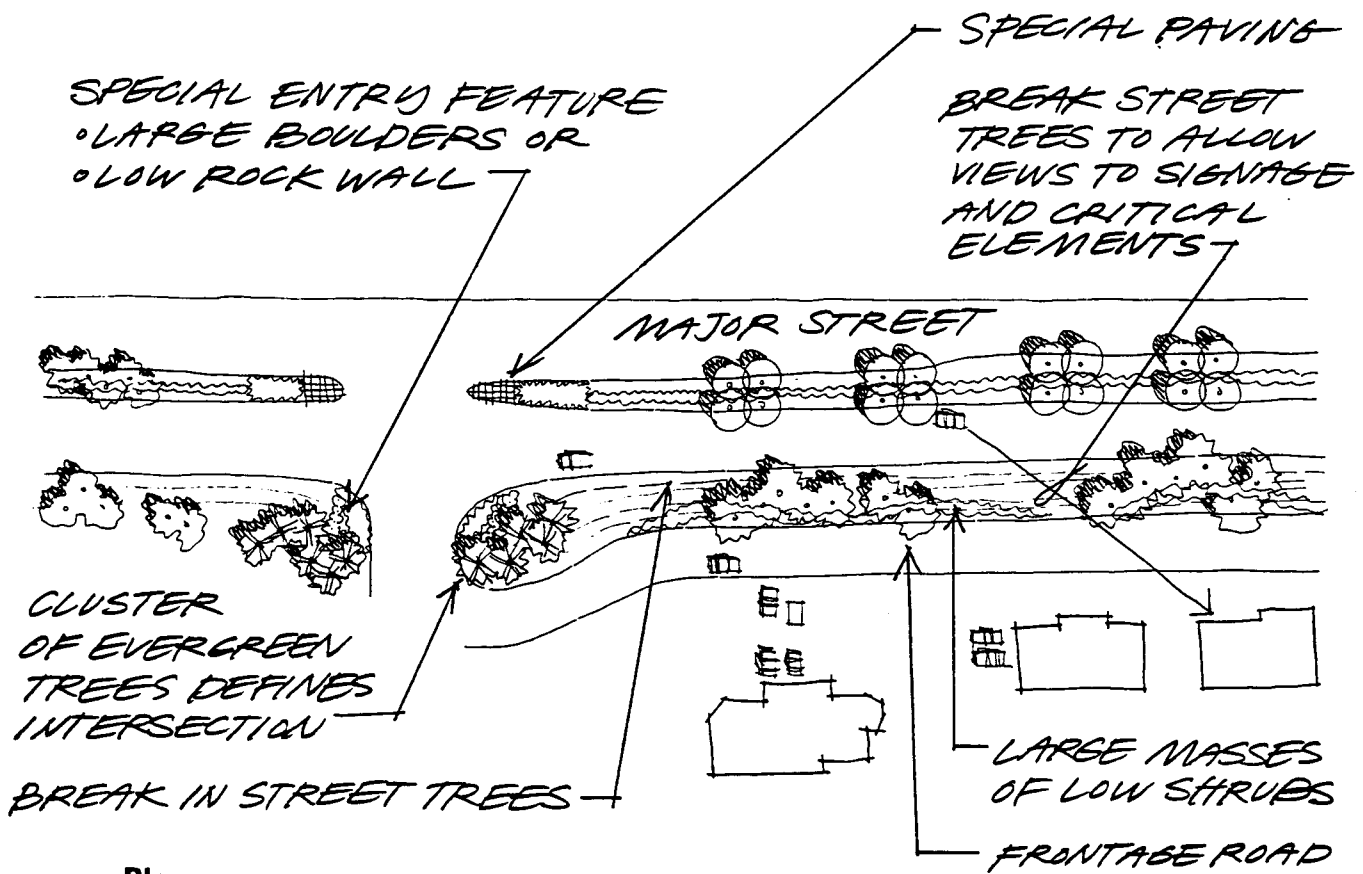
Suburban Commercial II

Guidelines:

- Strengthen the streetscape pattern with the repetitive planting of a single tree species in the median.
- Plant masses of evergreen trees to define intersections or screen unattractive visible areas, i.e., parking lots.
- Plant informal masses of deciduous trees; cluster to allow views of buildings and signage.
- Plant informal, continuous masses of shrubs to enhance edges of roadway. Shrub species should be a maximum of 3 feet high to allow for views into the site.



Section



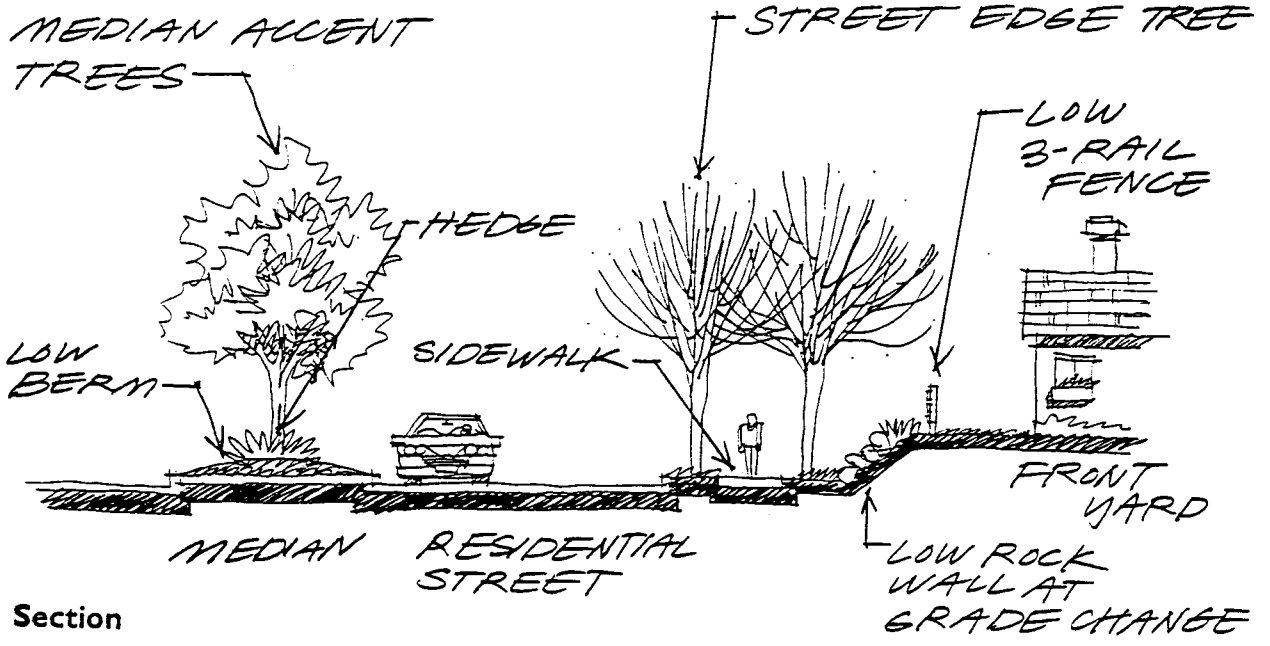
Plan

Suburban Residential

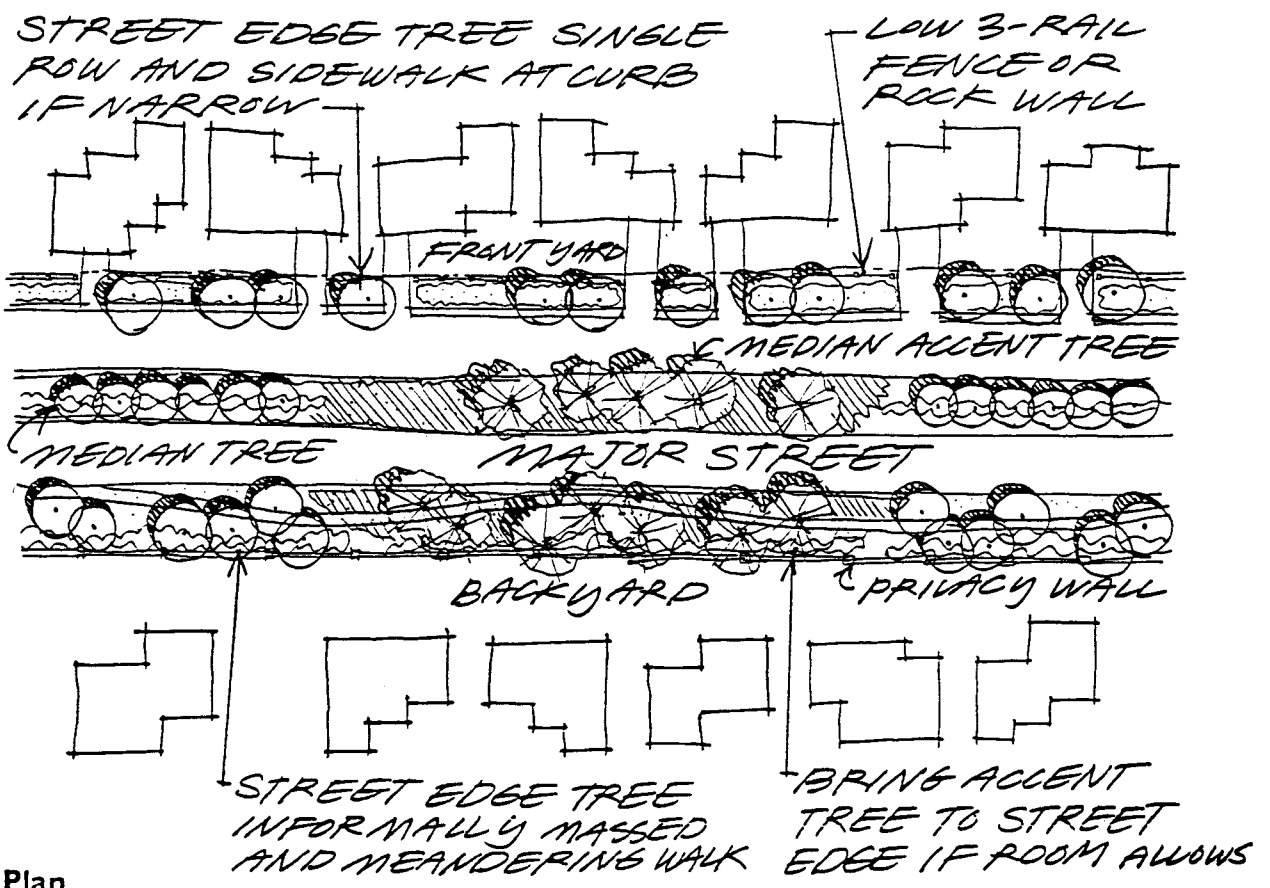
The intent of this prototype is to respond to the privacy needs of residential uses within the streetscape. Informal masses of trees, shrubs, and ground cover create a visual unity for the streetscape with their repetitive use. Particular attention is paid to buffering residences from the noise and views, using masses of evergreen trees, berms, and a privacy wall.

Guidelines:

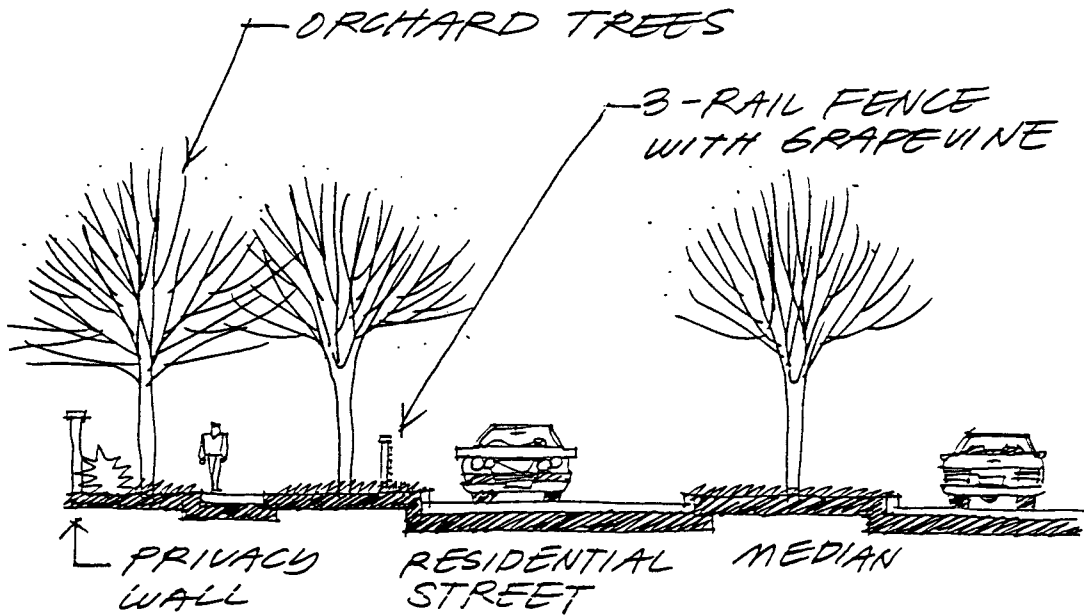
- Unify the streetscape with the repetitive use of several different tree species planted in long, continuous masses.
- Plant informal masses of single species (deciduous and evergreen) to reflect a natural, country character.
- Wherever possible, screen and buffer residences with large masses of evergreen trees
- Berm and "sculpt" topography along street for visual interest.
- Plant pockets of small-scale flowering trees.
- Use informal shrub masses to soften wall.
- Incorporate meadows of drought tolerant ornamental grasses and ground cover.
- Single species of median tree in formal close single or double triangulated rows to strengthen streetscape pattern.
- Provide bike paths per City Master Plan.



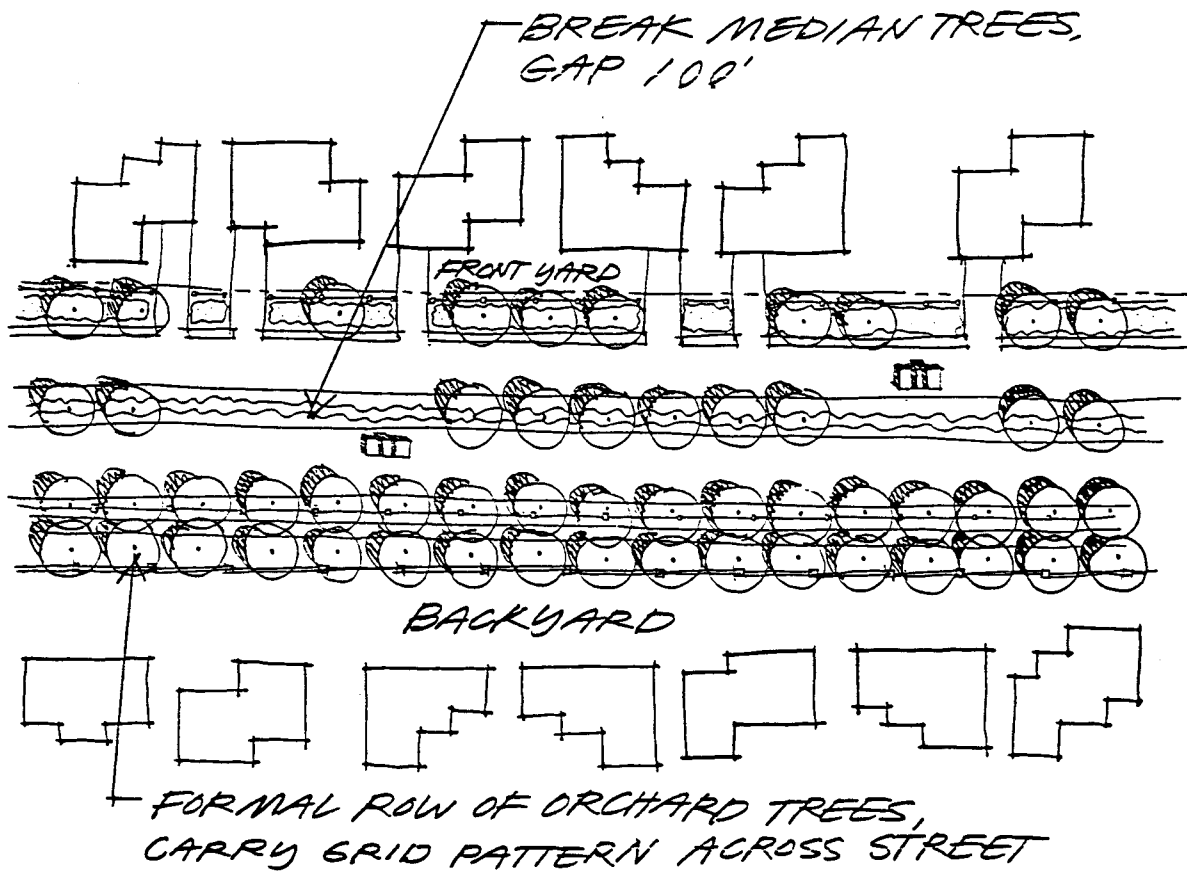
Section



Plan



Section



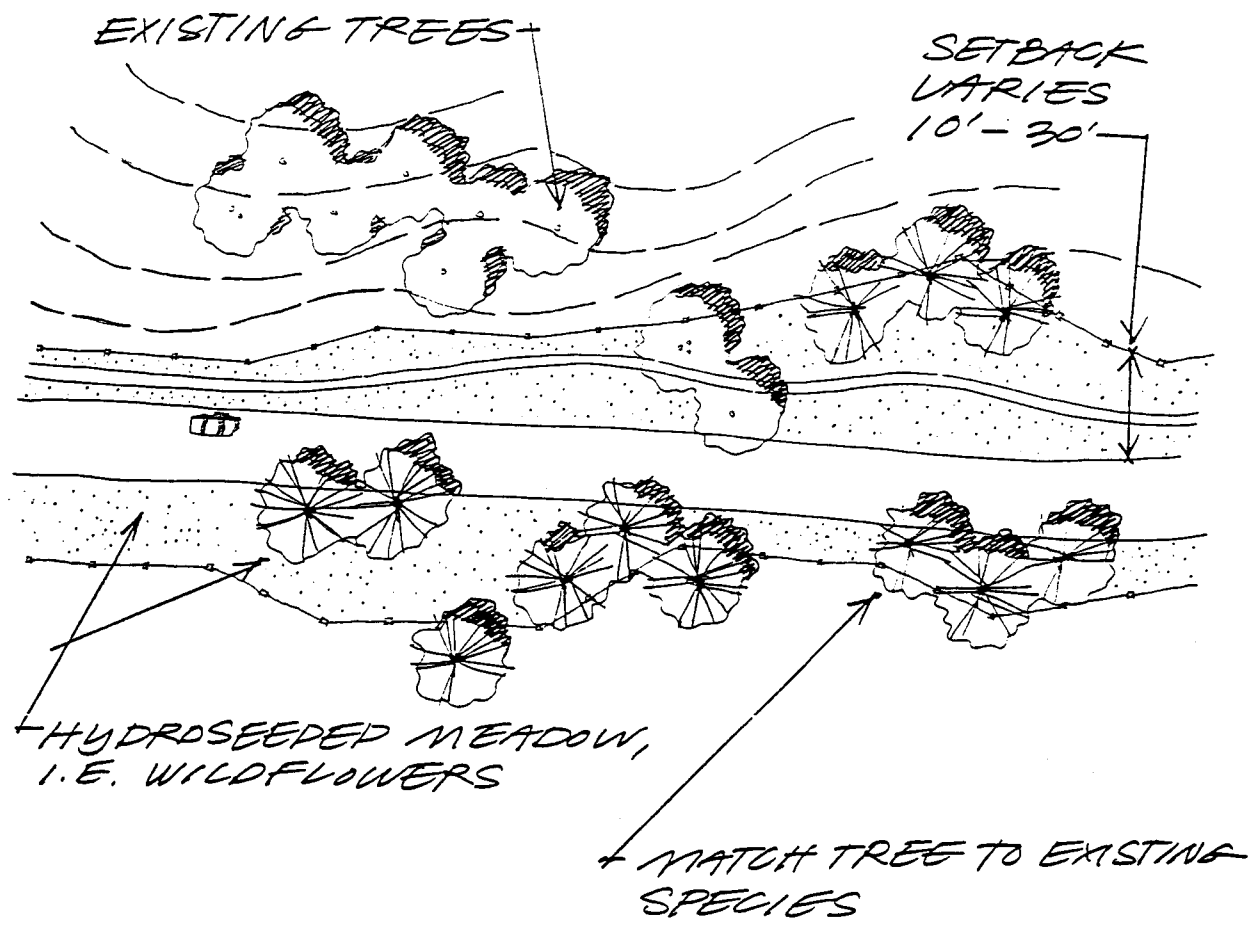
Plan

Country Road

Guidelines:

- Plant native plant materials appropriate to the location of the environmental zone. (i.e., oaks in oak woodland areas, riparian species at creek intrusions.)
- Meander or setback fence line as much as possible, to allow views into countryside.
- Plant random, informal masses of shrubs and trees.
- Hydroseed where appropriate.
- Locate a meandering informal walkway along one side of the street, as appropriate.
- Use drip irrigation to establish shrubs and trees, otherwise leave un-irrigated.

- WHERE FENCE IS DESIRED
USE 3-RAIL FENCE
- IN REAR YARDS INCREASE
SCREEN PLANTING RATHER
THAN USING A SOLID FENCE



Plan

COUNTRY ROAD

Entries

Freeway City Entry

As the freeways pass through Marin County, they bisect numerous towns and cities, blending their differences into a homogenous blur. Yet there are distinct points at which a traveler along the freeway enters the Novato sphere; the preceding chapters have identified these points. At these points, there exists the opportunity for Novato to distinguish itself from its neighbors.

When driving along Highway 101, the freeway passes between oak-studded knolls, which form natural gateways to the Novato basin. The elevated nature of the freeway at these points allows orienting views of the unique natural components of the city, including Hamilton Field, Big Rock Ridge, and Mount Burdell. Along Highway 37, the motorist on the freeway gains panoramic views of the marshy area along the edge of the Bay and Petaluma River. Careful landscape treatment can make these natural attributes more apparent to the motorist, and utilized to convey a sense of the character of Novato.

Guidelines:

- Pursue additional study of the entries to Novato along the freeway, to develop a further expression of the character of the community.
- Plant large masses of native trees at the entry gateway, as appropriate to the natural setting and the speed of travel.
- Continue freeway edge treatment, by planting long, sinuous masses of native shrubs.
- Hydroseed the ground plane with annual wildflowers.
- Pursue the "Adopt-a-Freeway" program as a way of implementing designs.

Freeway On / Off Ramp

This prototype is an example of a freeway off-ramp and how the addition of more planting can enhance its image. This treatment echoes the planting shown in the Freeway Edge Prototype.

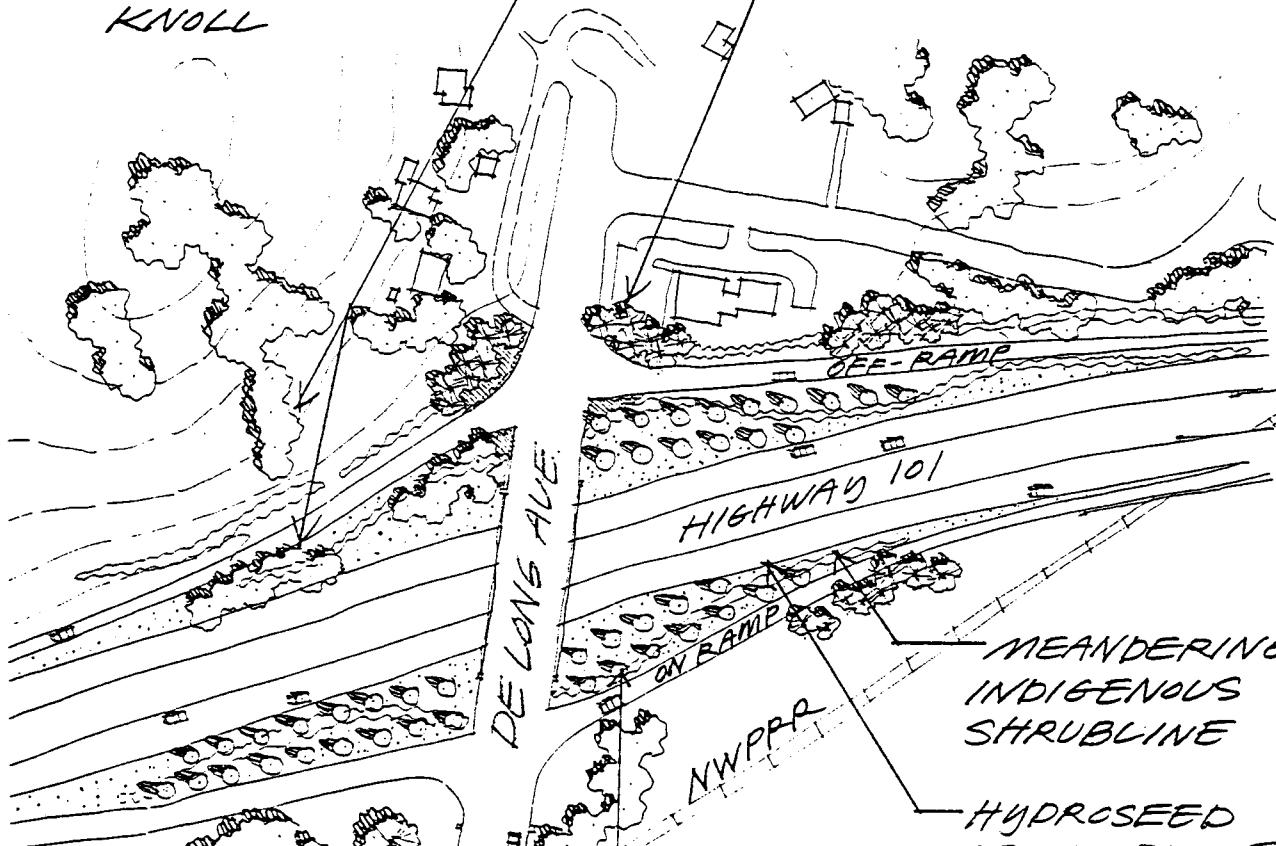
Guidelines:

- Accent freeway interchanges with formal hedgerows of poplars.
- Plant large masses of trees appropriate to the natural setting, for example, willows at marsh areas at the Rowland Boulevard freeway on-off ramp, and masses of oaks at the De Long exit.
- Continue freeway edge treatment and plant long, sinuous masses of native shrubs.
- Hydroseed the ground plane with annual wildflowers.
- Pursue the "Adopt-a-Freeway" program.
- Plant freeway overpass structures with clinging vines to soften the monolithic concrete structure.

CARRY OAK INTRUSION
ONTO FREEWAY EDGE

UNIFY INTERCHANGE
WITH ADDITIONAL
ACCENT TREES

WOODED
KNOLL



MEANDERING
INDIGENOUS
SHRUBLINE

HYDROSEED
GROUNDPLANE
WITH ANNUAL
WILDFLOWERS

COLUMNAR, FREEWAY SCALE
TREE: LOMBARDY POPLAR

ADD MASSES
OF OAKS
AROUND
EXISTING TREE

EXISTING OAK

Plan

FREEWAY ON/OFF RAMP

Rural City Entry

The objective of this prototype is to help to clarify the edges of the Novato community, and convey a welcoming image in the rural settings that typify the non-freeway entries to the city.

Guidelines:

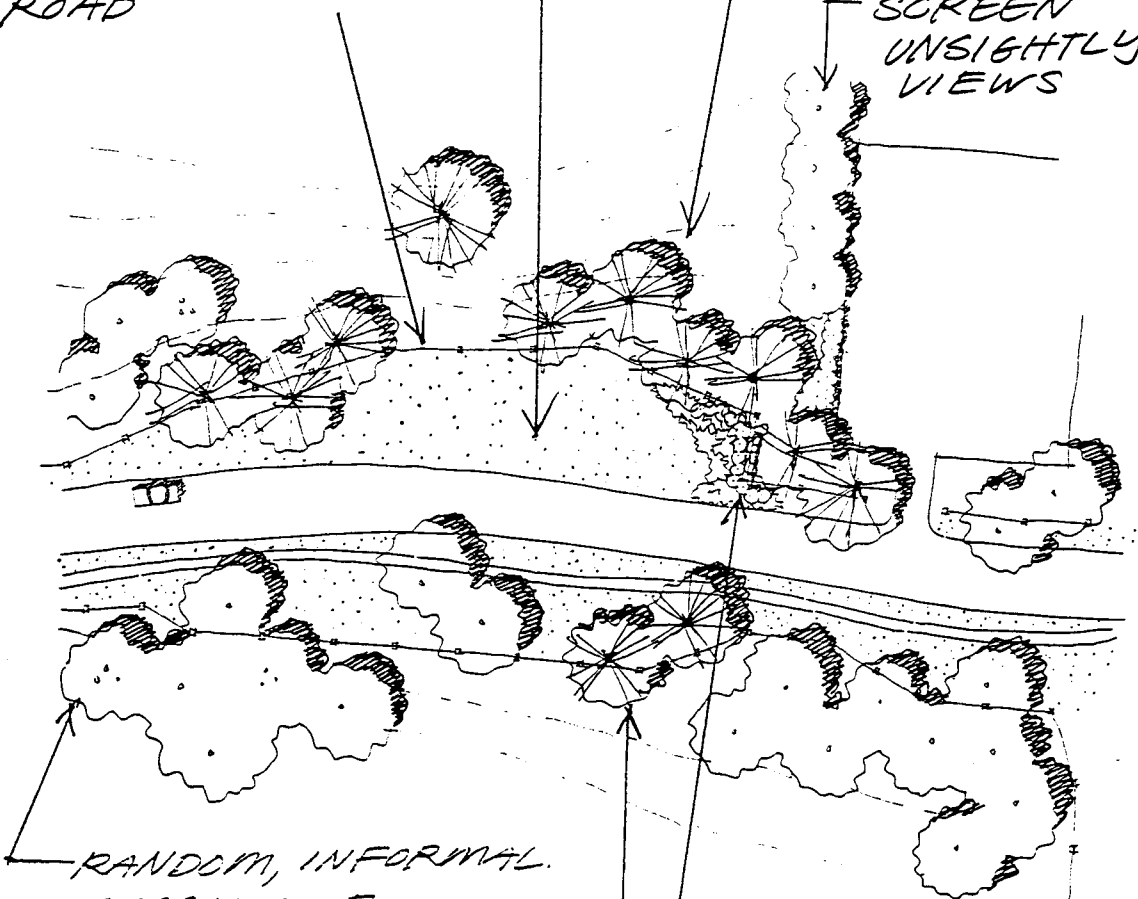
- Plant a gateway of natural vegetation to enhance entry image.
- Avoid formal or rigid planting configurations, and use species with an informal appearance.
- Add tree species that are native to the location, rather than introducing a different type of tree.
- Hydroseed open meadows with informal annual wildflowers.
- Use a three-rail fence where fencing is desired.
- Provide entry signage to convey a sense of welcome.

HYDROSEED MEADOW
WITH NATIVE GRASSES
AND WILDFLOWERS

"GATEWAY" OF
VEGETATION
ADD TO EXISTING
TREE MASSES

3-RAIL FENCE
PULL BACK FROM
ROAD

SCREEN
UNSIGTHLY
VIEWS



RANDOM, INFORMAL
MASSING OF
VEGETATION, SAME
SPECIES AS EXISTING

ENTRY SIGNAGE
AND SPECIAL PLANTING
(NATIVE, INFORMAL)

TAKE ADVANTAGE OF
EXISTING VEGETATION
OR NATURAL INTRUSION

Plan

RURAL CITY ENTRY

Natural Intrusions

Creek Intrusion

Guidelines:

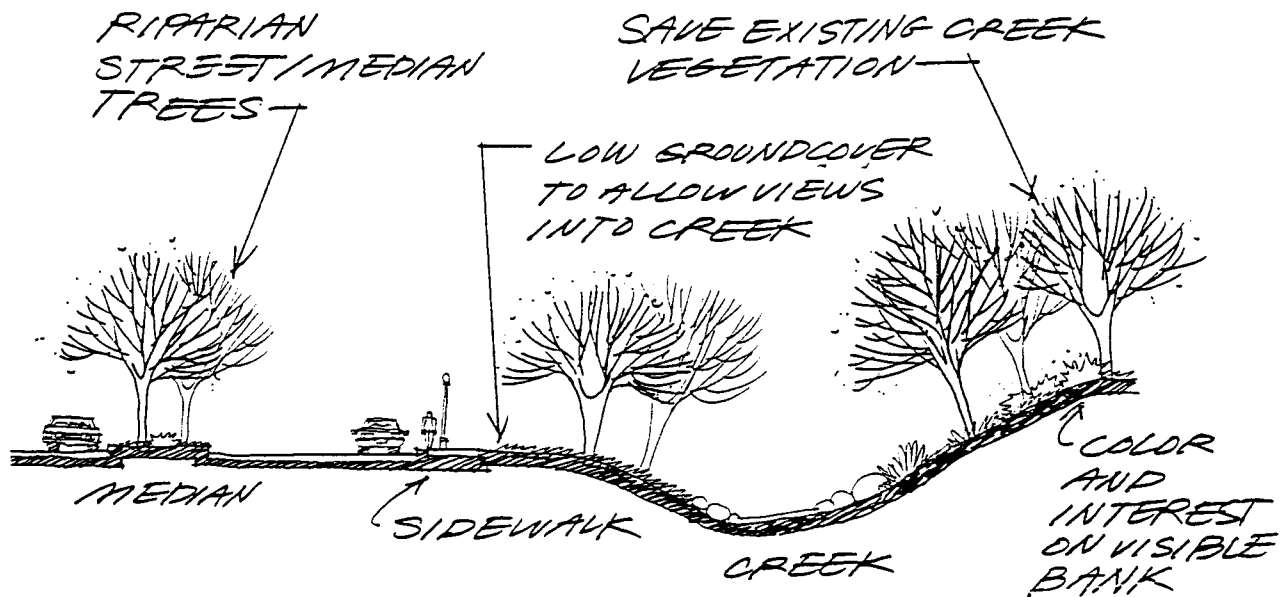
- Break street tree pattern adjacent to creeks.
- Plant informal masses of riparian trees adjacent to street and in median.
- Cluster trees to allow views into creek areas or thin out existing vegetation to allow views into creek area.
- Plant riparian species in random informal masses to integrate with existing vegetation.
- Pave median noses with washed river cobble.

Preferred Trees

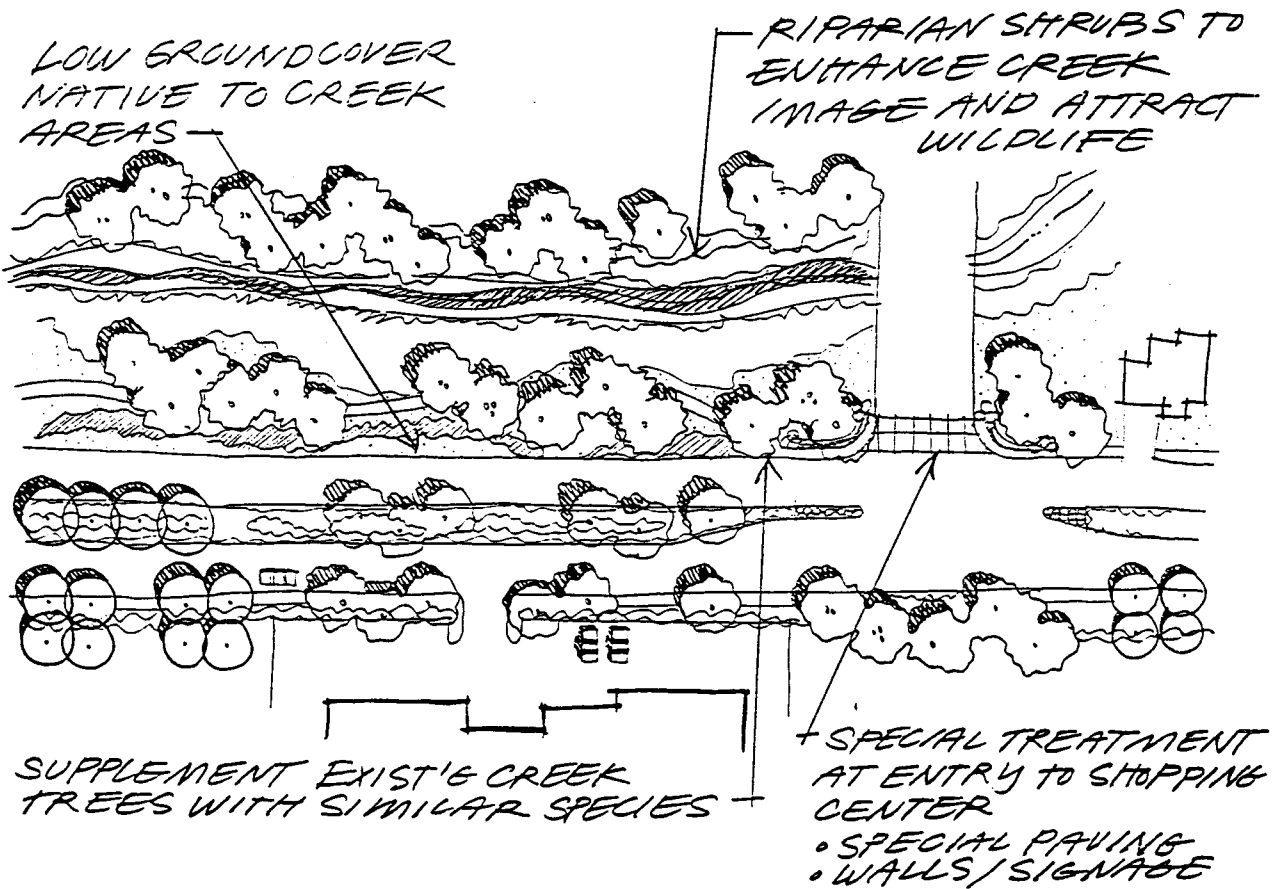
Acer macrophyllum (Big Leaf Maple)
Aesculus californica (California Buckeye)
Alnus rhombifolia (White Alder)
Umbellularia californica (California Bay)

Preferred Shrubs

Spiraea species (Spiraea)
Ribes sanguineum (Pink Winter Current)
Ribes viburnifolium (Evergreen Current)
Acer circinatum (Vine Maple)
Cercis occidentalis (Western Redbud)
Symphoricarpus albus (Common Snow Berry)



Section



Plan

CREEK INTRUSION

Oak / Knoll Intrusion

The intent of this prototype is to preserve and enhance the oak woodlands that visually "intrude" on the street; thus making them a strong part of the image perceived from the road.

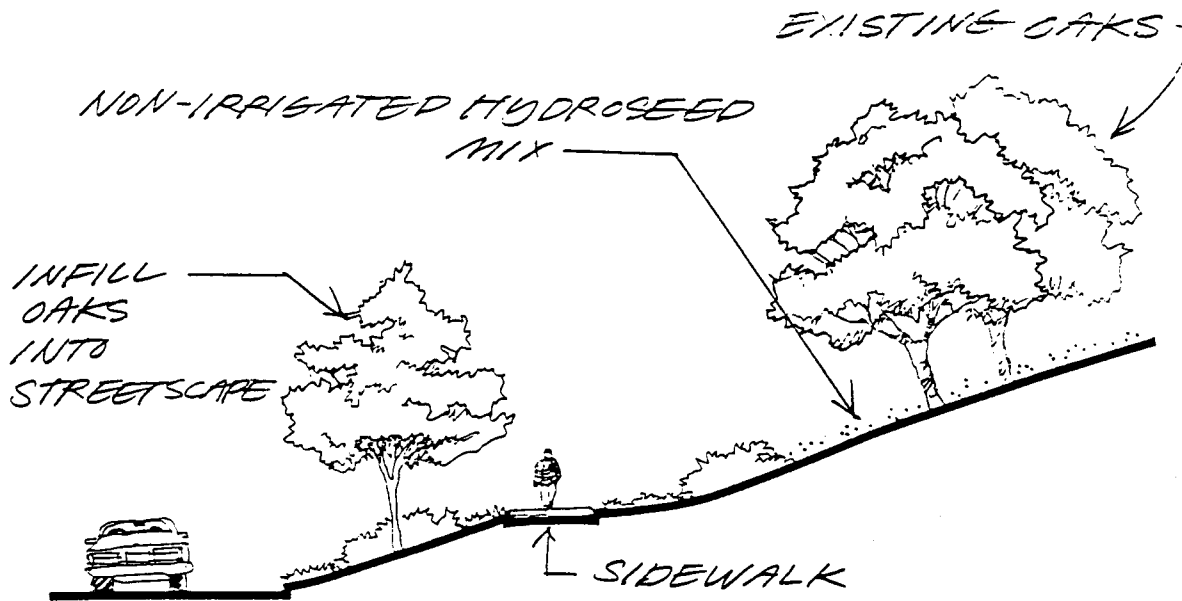
Guidelines:

- In areas of existing oak woodlands, extend clusters of oaks across the street to emphasize oak woodland presence.
- Retain existing oak trees where possible and supplement these areas with new oak clusters.
- Plant oak trees in medians adjacent oak intrusions.

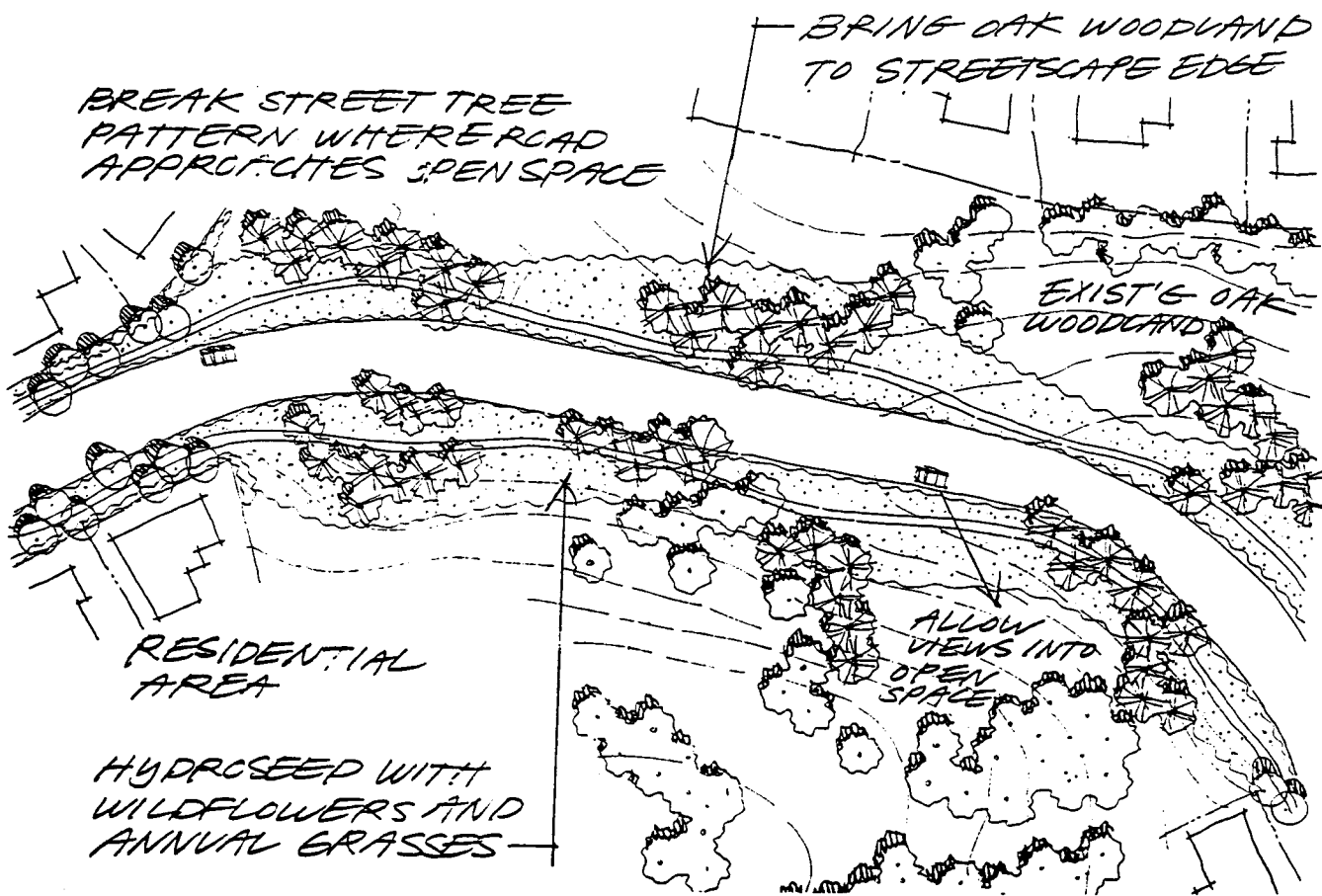
Preferred Trees

Quercus agrifolia (Coast Live Oak)

Quercus lobata (Valley Oak)



Section



Plan

OAK / KNOLL INTRUSION

Marsh Intrusion

The marsh intrusion prototype shows a situation in which natural wetlands "intrude" on the roadside environment. Additional landscaping is provided to increase wildlife habitat, and to control public access to these environmentally sensitive areas.

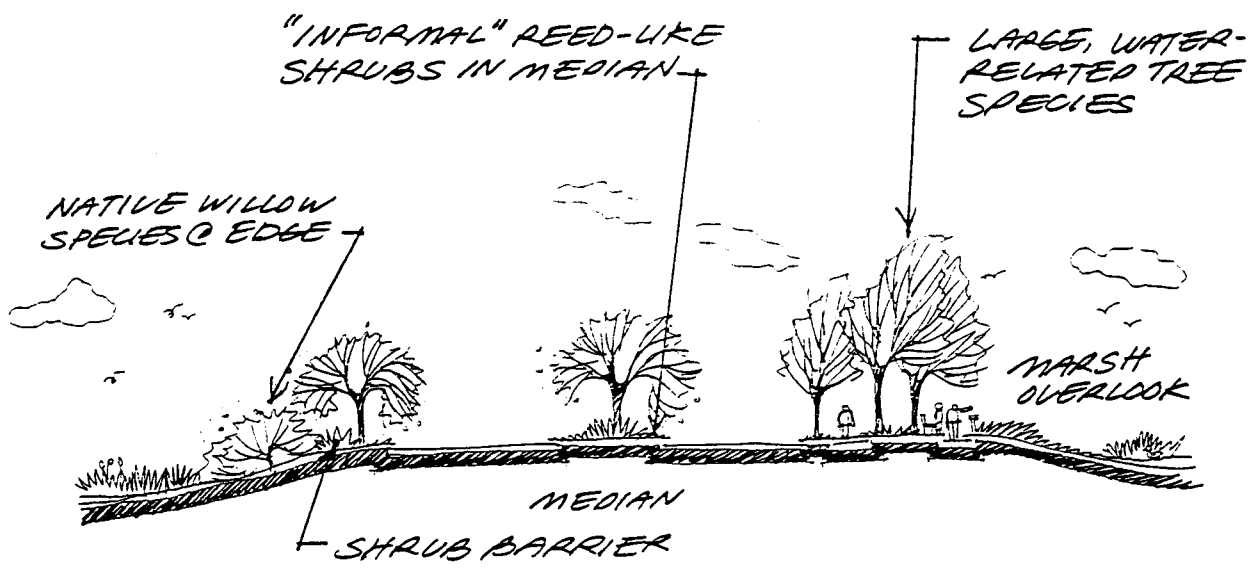
Guidelines:

- Provide overlook areas that do not intrude into sensitive marsh areas.
- Plant random, informal masses of tree species that relate to marsh environment.
- Plant shrubs between marsh and sidewalk to discourage pedestrian intrusion into marsh.
- Medians should also have informal character; plant informal masses of "reed-like" character shrubs, i.e., ornamental fountain grass, etc.

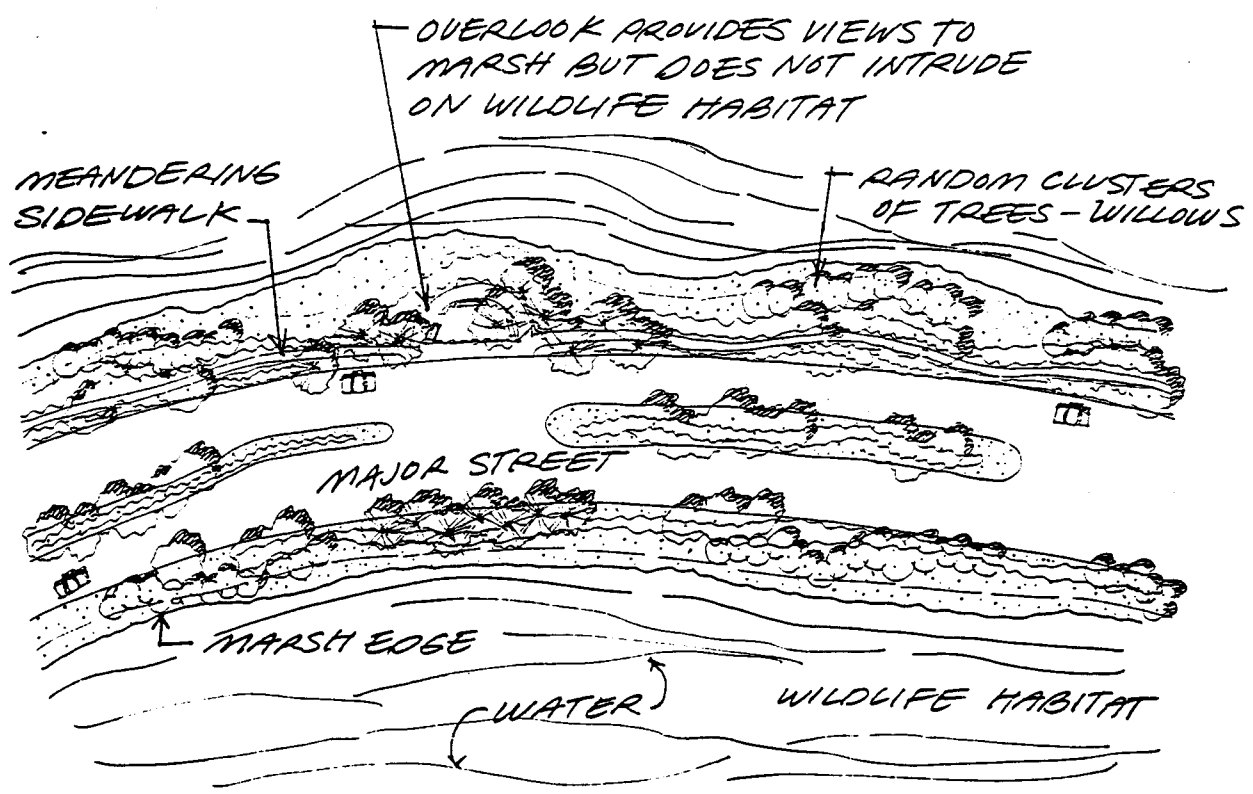
Preferred Trees

Populus 'Candicans'

Salix species



Section



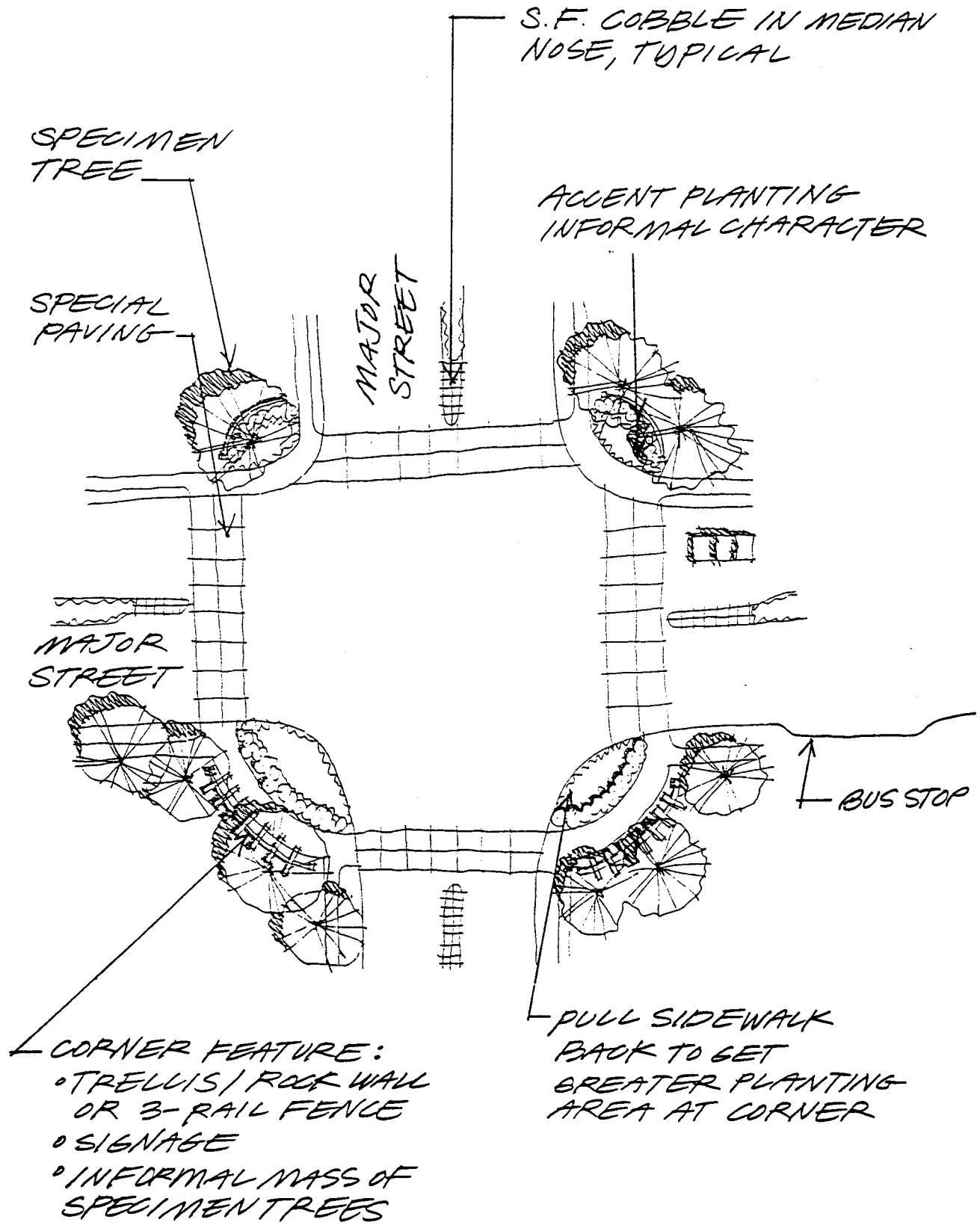
Plan

Intersections

Major Intersection

Guidelines:

- Plant specimen trees as focal elements and bring in "intrusions."
- Break street tree pattern, change tree species (accent or focal).
- Locate special walls where appropriate.
- Colorful accent planting
- Signage
- Special paving
- Preserve sight lines



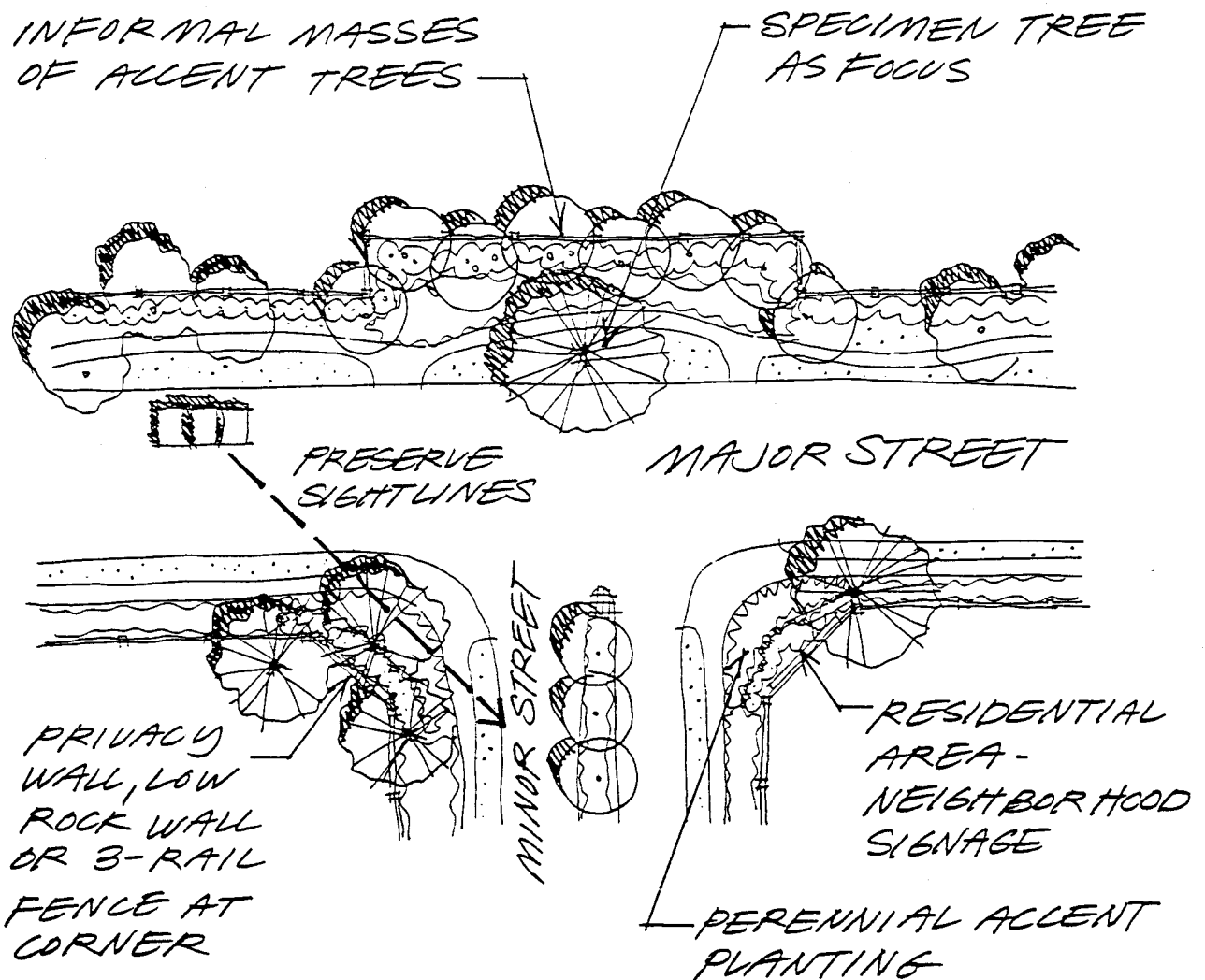
Plan

MAJOR INTERSECTION

Minor Intersection

Guidelines:

- Specimen trees or groups of accent trees.
- Fences, walls, trellises.
- Accent planting.
- Neighborhood signage.



Plan

MINOR INTERSECTION

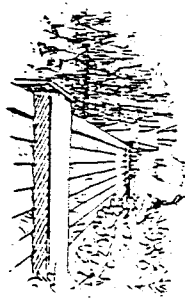
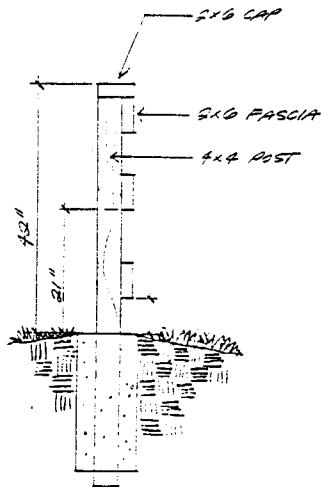
C

Streetscape Material Character

The following selections represent a set of materials and street furniture that, when used consistently throughout the City of Novato, will provide a unified and distinctive image for the community.

The palette of materials was selected to project an image consistent with the agrarian roots of the Novato community. Consequently, the emphasis is placed on natural colors and forms that are harmonious with the environment.

Material Palette



Three-Rail Fence

To create a visual separation instead of a barrier, use a three-rail fence to distinguish properties from the right-of-way along the street. The three-rail fence is a low, attractive wood fence that reflects the country, rural atmosphere of Novato. Light-toned stain can achieve the desired appearance without excessive maintenance. Where site conditions warrant use of metal railing, the members should be sized and painted to match wood fence character.

Privacy Wall

Where the need for sonic or privacy control requires the use of a solid barrier, the preference is to utilize permanent materials such as concrete precast walls or masonry block walls, to project a residential or rural appearance. An example would be a precast wall with a clapboard or grape stake finish. The treatment of a wall should be consistent along a particular street.

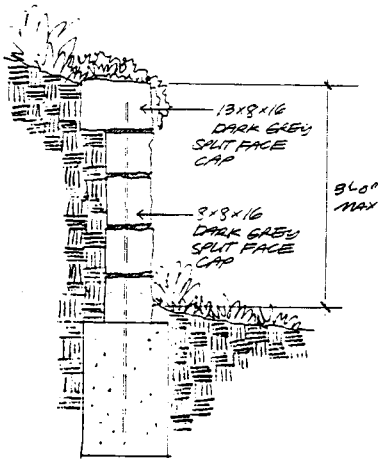
Simple columns should be spaced equally along the street frontage at intervals appropriate for the structural integrity of the wall (approximately 12 to 14 feet on center). Periodic special or decorative columns (approximately 75 feet apart) with a brick or stone facing can add interest.

Walls and concrete columns should be of a light color to avoid staining from irrigation over spray. Repainting of painted walls will be necessary to retain a consistent quality appearance.



Stone Wall

To add visual interest at major intersections, use a low, rustic stone wall. The wall, made of Sonoma stone, granite, or cultured stone that resembles granite, will be used in conjunction with low plantings, thus creating a natural informal effect.



Low Retaining Wall

Where streetscape grades warrant the use of a retaining wall, use a dark gray split-face concrete block with over size cap. Retaining walls should be limited to three feet in height in streetscape area.

Street Lighting

The consistent use of a simply stylized street light standard along the parkway will provide a visual continuity as well as night safety. It will unify streetscape and emphasize special destinations along parkway.

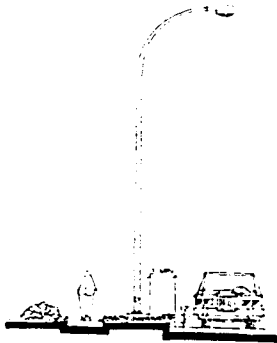
Locate lighting standards in an alternating pattern along the road edge to provide a uniform level of light along the road. Use cut-off devices to prevent light spill-over into residential areas.

Streetscape Light Standard

Light: Cobra fixture

Pole: Davit

Color: Novato Brown



Bus Shelters

Golden Gate Transit Bus Shelter, as available from the Golden Gate Transit District, 1011 Anderson Drive, San Rafael, CA. 94901, (415) 457-3110. Color: Novato Brown or equal.

Follow Golden Gate Transit standards for locating planting around bus shelters.



Cobble

In medians too narrow for planting, use San Francisco Cobblestone.

Available from Provenzano Bros., Inc., 1850 De La Cruz Boulevard, Santa Clara, CA. 95050, (408) 727-3030.

In median at creek or oak woodland intrusions, use river-washed Noiya cobble, 4 to 6 inches in diameter. Available from Morgan Masonry, 2233 San Ramon Valley Boulevard, San Ramon, CA. 94583, (415) 837-7296.

City Colors

Novato Brown has been selected as the City paint color, to bring a cohesiveness to the area. This color will be used for traffic posts, signage, light poles and bus shelters.

Median Treatment

Strengthen and unify the streetscape pattern while giving special emphasis to entries, the creek corridor, and oak woodland intrusions.

Reduce the visual scale of the wide boulevard with a generously landscaped median.

Pave the median nose with San Francisco cobble for a minimum distance of 20 feet from the end.

Plant low shrubs and ground cover along the length of the turn lane.

Avoid planting in medians less than 4 feet wide.

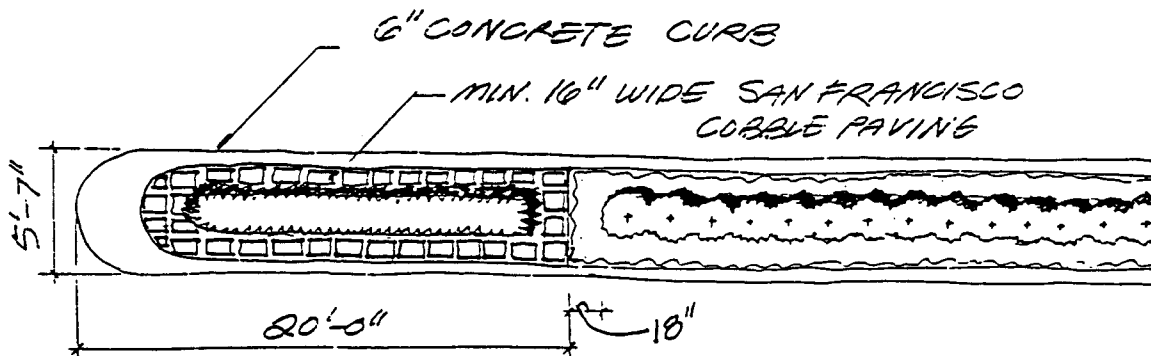
Slightly berm medians over 8 feet wide.

Design the irrigation system to eliminate run-off onto curbs and pavement. Shrubs and/or earth mounds are not to exceed 4 feet in height in medians.

Utilize xeriscape planting in median.

Shrub planting should be simple. Contiguous single species masses a minimum 80 feet in length is preferable. Wherever possible, use a double row of shrubs.

Coordinate tree placement in medians with the location of signage, lighting, and utilities.



Special Paving

Use special paving to highlight neighborhood entries and emphasize important intersections.

Design the structural cross section of paving to respond to site soil conditions.

The layout of special paving at the intersections should match with the location of crosswalk areas to accommodate handicap access and traffic safety.

Location of special paving should not interfere with regulatory signage placed directly on the pavement.

Integrate the design of entry walls and features with the paving pattern.

Finish special paving materials with a skid resistant treatment.

The preferred concrete paving treatment is:

Finish: Medium sandblasted with troweled bands and scored grids

Color: A warm, rich tan or light brown to contrast with normal paving color and minimize staining. Examples of such colors are: Adobe Tan(C-21), Mocha Brown(C-33), or Santa Barbara Brown (C-35), by L.M. Scofield 213-723-5285



Accent Trellis

The accent trellis will act as a permanent, vertical structure at intersections, that through repetition, becomes associated with Novato.

Design trellis in similar materials to 3 rail fence.

Trellises must be a minimum of 5 feet away from curb, or more as necessary for driver visibility at corners.

Scale of trellises should be consistent with intended use.

Plant with climbing, flowering vines.

Street Signs

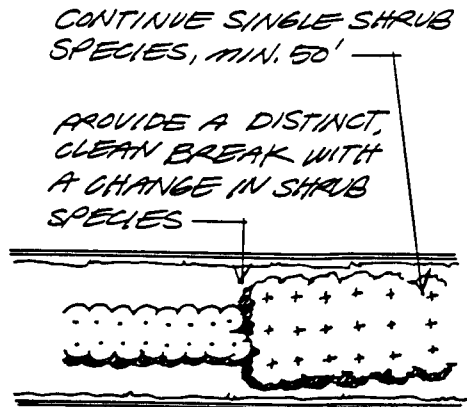
Develop a system of signage that facilitates movement patterns and contributes to the community image.

Create a sign program with a consistent design for both regulatory and directional signage.

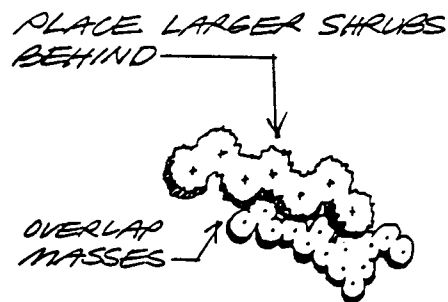
Use materials for signs that are vandal-resistant and easily replaceable.

Locate street signage in the median.

Shrub Massing



FORMAL SHRUB MASS



INFORMAL SHRUB MASS

Setbacks & Sidewalks

In order to project the green parkway character desired by the Novato community, it is essential that the design of the street and sidewalk provide adequate space for trees and other plant materials. Because most of the major streets have already been developed, it will not always be possible to achieve the optimum condition. Optimally, the sidewalk is located away from the curb, so that a green landscape zone edges the street.

- The ideal landscape setback between curb and edge of right-of-way should be 13 to 20 feet.
 - Where setback is less than 12 feet and a sidewalk is required, the sidewalk should be monolithic with curb.
 - Where privacy walls are required, a minimum of 2 feet of landscaping should occur between wall and back of sidewalk. A 5 foot wide planting area is desirable. In 2 foot wide areas, plant materials should be limited to those shrubs and vines that can survive in confined areas.
 - Privacy walls should not exceed a height of eight feet or be lower than five feet tall. Where possible, tilt grades of landscape areas up to the wall to visually reduce the height of the privacy wall.
 - If necessary, low retaining walls can be used to maintain the eight feet maximum height limit for privacy walls. Provide landscape areas both behind and in front of low retaining walls.
 - Sidewalks should be five feet wide unless they are also used for bikeways. Bike use path width should expand to eight feet with two foot level shoulders on each side.
- Sidewalks should be concrete except in rural areas where asphalt paths are acceptable.

Landscaping Standards

These standards describe proper practices and methods that will assure:

- Selection of appropriate plants for Novato
- Water conservation
- Irrigation Systems
- Specimen tree preservation
- Maintenance

Selection of Appropriate Plants for Novato

The preceding streetscape design guidelines describe an overall approach to plant selection and placement along the major thoroughfares within the City of Novato, based upon environmental as well as cultural patterns. The specific criteria for entries, arterials, intersections and other prototypes as illustrated in previous chapters identify the preferred tree species, yet allow for individual selection of shrubs and ground covers.

Each specific situation will require adapting the recommendations and prototypes to fit. These guidelines intend to be flexible to changing circumstances; in the event that planting the recommended tree is not possible or desirable, the following criteria and tree listings provide guidance and information for the development of a planting concept.

The selection of the right plant for the right place is of critical importance to the final result of any beautification program. These guidelines discuss criteria that can help planners and designers choose those plants that will enhance this Plan's overall goals.

Trees are the primary focus of these guidelines because of their predominance in the Novato landscape. Existing trees on the wooded hillside and along the lush creeks form the framework and backdrop of the City's environment. All new trees planted in the community will affect the quality of the environment for years to come. They will become the City's living heritage. Tree

maintenance and preservation allow this heritage to last into the future.

As a design problem, tree selection is best solved on an individual case by case basis. An objective approach will guarantee consistent results and a more harmonious landscape.

Selection criteria can be divided into three major categories: visual (aesthetic) criteria; functional (utilitarian) criteria; and cultural (horticultural or ecological) criteria. All three categories interrelate, and although one may dominate at certain times, all must be considered.

Visual Criteria

Each tree has its own inherent visual characteristics. These include form, color and texture, as well as seasonal changes such as fall color and spring flowers. In combination, these give a tree its own character.

For example, Lombardy Poplar has an emphatically erect form with bright green foliage. A Valley Oak has a broad, sheltering canopy of dark, dusty green supported by a massive sculptural trunk and branching structure. Some trees are bright and lively; others are dark and somber. Each has a visual impact in the landscape.

Consider the time factor when evaluating the visual quality and form of trees. The shapes of some trees change as they mature. Also, the ultimate size of mature trees must be considered in relation to the spaces they occupy.

To unite the various land uses, large, visually dominant trees have been selected for each of the major streets. These distinctive street plantings will provide an organizing visual structure for the City.

The Streetscape Plan also reflects the natural patterns of the City. The preferred tree palette emphasizes native plant materials and oak-like, round-headed trees with deciduous accent trees.

Functional Criteria

Trees serve many functions in the landscape. Trees can act as architectural elements to define space, as a building might define space. They can be used to provide a canopy (ceiling) over a space or define its edge (walls or screen). A broad-spreading, round-headed tree casts a large shadow and can serve as a canopy tree. A narrow, upright tree that branches close to the ground can serve as a visual barrier or screen. The degree of screening depends upon the density of the trees and their spacing in the ground. Environmental control functions of trees include climate control, acoustical control (noise buffering), and atmospheric purification.

Cultural Criteria

The ultimate test of the success of any tree planting depends upon the survival of the plant itself. Each tree has its own set of tolerances and preferences that determine its horticultural suitability. Ecologically, plants adapt to habitats based primarily upon climate and soil types. By matching these habitats as closely as possible in a new environment, greater success is assured.

We can modify a plant's environment horticulturally to better suit its needs. Water is the most common modification. As general principle, drought tolerant species should be used in public plantings; along streets, highways, and open areas.

How much maintenance a plant needs is another aspect of cultural criteria. If the degree or quality of maintenance can be determined ahead of time, appropriate trees can be selected to suit the situation. This is an essential criterion for the design of public landscape plantings. In essence, the trees used should be selected to match the growing conditions and anticipated degree of maintenance.

The overall goal is to establish a unique yet flexible plant palette, that responds to the distinct visual and horticultural characteristics of different locations within the city. Observe the fol-

lowing guidelines when selecting street trees, shrubs, and ground covers:

- The plant must be visually and horticulturally appropriate to Novato.
- Select the plant to minimize root interference with underground utilities.
- Select the plant to minimize interference with overhead power lines, as well as truck and bus movement along roads. Avoid planting tall trees under utility poles.
- A plant must be able to survive in the constricted and stressful street environment, with its auto exhaust fumes, limited growth space, and potential for vandalism.
- Landscapes should be designed with xeriscape concepts in mind and require low to moderate water use overall. See North Marin Water District's brochure on the subject. Group plants with high water requirements, such as ferns and azaleas, together.
- Use of native plants is strongly encouraged.
- Try to include trees and shrubs with a powerful sculptural form such as the oak, the sycamore, and the manzanita.
- Try to include drought tolerant perennials in accent areas such as Mexican primrose, lavender, salvia.
- Plant wildflowers in areas that abut open space or in awkward marginal areas.

Preferred Plant List

The following plant list represents a partial sampling of plant materials suitable for use on streets not covered in the Streetscape Design Guidelines chapter. These plants, and those like them, typify the city, in terms of character. As this list is not exhaustive, further refinement will be necessary to respond to each specific site situation. Consultation with horticulturists, nurserymen, landscape architects, or other knowledgeable sources is encouraged.

The City should continually update these plant lists, based on an evaluation of each plant in the streetscape setting.

This plant list is organized into groupings according to their function, as follows:

- Highway 101 Freeway Corridor
- Major Streets
- Entry and Intersection Accent Trees
- Evergreen Screen Trees
- Shrubs
- Ground covers
- Perennials

Highway 101 Freeway Corridor

Albizia julibrissin – Silk Tree
Alnus cordata – Italian Alder
Populus candicans – Balm of Gilead
Populus nigra Italica' – Lombardy Poplar
Quercus agrifolia – Coast Live Oak
Quercus lobata – Valley Oak
Schinus molle – California Pepper

Major Streets

Alnus cordata – Italian Alder
Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata' – Columnar Hornbeam
Celtis sinensis – Chinese Hackberry
Fraxinus oxycarpa 'Raywood' – Raywood Ash
Ginkgo biloba – Ginkgo
Koelreuteria bipinnata – Chinese Flame Tree

Liriodendron tulipifera – Tulip Tree
Pistacia chinensis – Chinese Pistache
Platanus acerifolia 'Youngblood' – London Plane
Pyrus calleryana 'Aristocrat' or 'Red Spire' – Bradford Pear
Quercus agrifolia – Coast Live Oak
Quercus coccinea – Scarlet Oak
Quercus ilex – Holly Oak
Quercus lobata – Valley Oak
Quercus suber – Cork Oak

Entry and Intersection Accent Trees

Albizia julibrissin – Silk Tree
Alnus cordata – Italian Alder
Cercis canadensis – Eastern Redbud
Crataegus phaenopyrum – Washington Thorn
Lagerstroemia indica faurei – Grape Myrtle
Pistacia chinensis – Chinese Pistache
Prunus yedoensis 'Akebono' – Flowering Cherry
Pyrus calleryana 'Capital' or 'Chanticleer' – Columnar Flowering Pear
Pyrus kawakamii – Evergreen Pear
Quercus agrifolia – Specimen size (36 inch box or larger) – Coast Live Oak
Quercus lobata – Specimen size (36 inch box or larger) – Valley Oak
Quercus suber – Cork Oak
Sequoia sempervirens – Redwood

Evergreen Screen Trees

Rhus lancea – African Sumac
Ligustrum lucidum – Glossy Privet
Quercus ilex – Holly Oak
Sequoia sempervirens – Redwood

Shrubs

Arctostaphylos species – Manzanita
Ceanothus species – Wild Lilac
Cistus species – Rock Rose
Dietes iridioides – Fortnight Lily
Diosma pulchrum – Breath of Heaven
Escallonia species – Escallonia

Nandina domestica – Heavenly
Bamboo
Prunus species – Laurel
Sollya heterophylla – Australian
Bluebell

Ground covers

Acacia redolens – Dwarf Acacia
Arctostaphylos species – Dwarf
Manzanita
Baccharis pilularis 'Twin Peaks' or
'Pigeon Point' – Dwarf Coyote
Brush
Coprosma kirkii or 'Verde Vista' –
Creeping Coprosma
Myoporum 'Putah Creek,' or 'South
Coast' – Dwarf Myoporum
Trachelospermum jasminoides – Star
jasmine

Perennials

Cheiranthus cheiri – Wallflower
Coreopsis species – Coreopsis
Erigeron karvinskianus – Fleabane
Euryops pectinatus – Golden Shrub
Daisy
Gaura lindheimeri – Gaura
Hemerocallis species – Day Lily
Iris douglasiana – Pacific Coast Iris
Lavandula angustifolia – English
Lavender
Lantana montevidensis – Lantana
Oenothera berlandierii – Mexican
Evening Primrose
Romneya coulteri – Matilija Poppy
Salvia species – Sage
Santolina chamaecyparissus –
Lavender Cotton
Teucrium chamaedrys – Germander

Water Conservation

The importance of water conservation has become especially dramatic given the extended drought affecting the region; as such the City of Novato intends to promote a high level of water conservation. Landscape design as well as water

management practices will achieve this conservation.

Novato has a history of avoiding the use of high-water use planting in the streetscape. A program of water conservation within the streetscape has been in place for years, developed in concert with the North Marin Water District. One example of the success of this program involves the replacement of lawn in the median of San Marin Drive. Once re-landscaped, the median has given many years of fine service and beauty, while avoiding the asphalt damage and motorist complaints associated with the old median treatment.

Current research has led to the development of new water conservation methods. New turf types use as little as half the water as a normal lawn. Horticulturists are working with drought-tolerant native and Mediterranean plants to develop cultivars that are more lush and attractive looking. Technological advances in irrigation devices, such as moisture-sensors, have altered watering practices so that water usage is based on need rather than time.

Address water conservation at all stages of a project, from design development and material selection to management practices. The success of these choices can be assured by following proper planting, irrigation, and maintenance practices. Mulching planting areas, digging deep large planting holes, and irrigating at times of low evaporation, are examples of practices that contribute to water conservation. Other products, such as root barriers and individual bubblers or drip emitters, encourage a tree's roots to reach for ground water.

The City will thoroughly evaluate streetscape planting plans to insure minimum water use.

Use lawn only in appropriate areas along the streetscape, such as parks or high-image areas.

- Avoid the use of turf in narrow (less than 16 feet wide) areas.
- Utilize a drought tolerant plant palette.
- Minimize water use by use of drought tolerant shrubs and ground cover.

Irrigation Systems

Irrigation systems should be designed for maximum efficiency, so that the precipitation rate will not exceed the absorption rate of the soil. Automatic controllers should be programmed to efficiently monitor and minimize run-off. Use tensiometers and rain sensors where practical. Adjust and trim all sprinkler heads to obtain proper watering coverage and to avoid over spray onto walks and other paved areas. Automatic timers should be adjusted seasonally to respond to changing water requirements.

Specimen Tree Preservation

Preservation of existing specimen trees along the street is a high priority for Novato. These trees are valuable to the community because they lend a visual coherence and "image," as well as symbolizing the heritage of Novato.

Preservation generally involves avoiding major changes to the environment of a given tree. Influences that can negatively affect a tree, and should therefore be avoided, include:

- raising the soil level around the trunk
- directing drainage water towards the trunk
- paving over roots
- damaging trunk or limbs
- severe pruning, such as heading back
- changing the moisture level

Oak trees are especially intolerant of any disturbance to their root systems. As a California native, the oak tree has evolved to tolerate the dry summer months. Extra water application to a tree that was previously unwatered during this

dry period can cause root and crown rotting diseases that will eventually kill the tree.

The following measures should be followed to protect mature oaks and other large specimen trees:

- Erect protective fencing at the drip line to prevent soil compaction around the roots during construction.
- No major construction should occur within the drip line of the tree. Trenching within ten feet of the trunks of existing trees should be done by hand and directed to avoid major roots.
- A water permeable material, such as cobble, instead of concrete, should be used as paving material in root zone to allow adequate aeration of the roots. Place sleeves in the paving material to assure aeration of the roots.
- Planting within the root zone is acceptable only if the additional plants have the same water requirements as the specimen tree.
- Maintain existing grades within the drip line of existing trees. If it is necessary to change the grade around a tree, retaining walls and additional drains should be used to preserve the existing air and water patterns.
- Existing trees should be inspected and treated for pests and diseases. Pruning for removal of dead or diseased wood and for aesthetic shaping should be done by qualified personnel. Trees should be fed with fertilizer to help them recover from the shock of pruning.

Maintenance

The landscape is a dynamic living system that requires continual care and nurturing to perform at its best. A regular program of on-going maintenance will ensure the continuing visual quality of Novato's streetscape system.

- The irrigation system should be checked frequently to make adjustments to eliminate over spray onto sidewalks; to prevent runoff an erosion on slopes; to repair damaged equipment; and to modify water coverage to accommodate plant growth. Check and adjust time clocks at regular intervals to adapt to changing seasonal water demands and to account for the reduced water demand as plants mature.
- The use of perennial flowering plants to add color and visual interest to the street is encouraged. Perennials have an advantage over annual color plants in that they require a lower amount of water and a lower amount of maintenance. However, perennials must still be pruned to encourage bloom and reduce woody growth. After a number of years, perennials may also need to be replaced.
- Implement a regular program of fertilization, pruning, and as necessary, spraying for pest control. An annual assessment of tree and shrub health, especially for mature oak trees, would identify deficiencies and issues before they become major problems.
- Plants should be allowed to develop their natural sculptural character and form, **Avoid pruning shrubs into balls, lollipops, or other geometric forms.** Allowing the plant to develop its natural form reduces maintenance needs, as well as create a character more appropriate for Novato's streets.
- Systematically replace existing plant materials which are inappropriate due to their ultimate size or high water demand.
- **The City will assume maintenance responsibility for medians, and hazardous conditions (such as broken limbs and buckled walks) resulting from trees planted in the street right of way. It is the responsibility of the property owners to maintain their street frontage landscaping in a neat and healthy manner.**

4

Implementation of the Streetscape Master Plan

In preparing this Master Plan, we have found much about Novato that is good. Our City is blessed with striking and varied natural features. The City has long had high standards for development. Many projects have been sensitively and creatively designed. However, there remain many opportunities to improve and preserve Novato's Streetscape.

This Master Plan is both a source and implementation tool for the Novato General Plan, which is currently under revision. This will give it the widest and broadest effect.

This Master Plan should be used as a guideline setting forth the general principles and themes for the major streets in the City. It is not simply a fixed list of materials or treatments. The designer and those who review the design should ask "Does the project match with the character of Novato as arrived at in this Streetscape Master Plan?" This plan was developed through community input at a number of workshops. In developing the plan, we have attempted to interpret and summarize that input in a usable way. Every project in Novato should implement the Streetscape Master Plan in some way, including private, public, and volunteer projects, as well as projects by other agencies.

Types of Projects

Private Projects

Private projects are those whose improvement costs are paid by a private party who obtains permission from the City for the Project. Improvements within and along the property are required by Novato's Municipal Code as a condition of the permit. All private projects require design review and approval. City Staff, Design Review Committee, Planning Commission and City Council should consider how well the proposed improvements conform to the principles and themes set forth in this Streetscape Master Plan.

Much of the design of private project improvements is dictated by development standards and standard plans. Many of these development standards and standard plans may need revision to attain the spirit of the Streetscape Master Plan. This work should be done at the earliest opportunity.

Public Projects

Public projects are those where the improvement costs come from City revenues or from other public agencies. Public projects have the greatest potential to implement streetscape improvements because they can accomplish landscaping along a significant length of a street, rather than a short section associated with a private project. Streetscape planting must be an integral element of all public projects.

Community input is vital to developing successful streetscape designs. A community workshop program is already a part of early public project designs. City Planning Division and Maintenance Division Staff should have the opportunity to review plans at an early stage so that potential conflicts can be identified. This staff review should be supplemented by a review and comment session with the Design Review Committee, also during the early stages of design.

Funding Sources

Funding is the main obstacle to implementing public streetscape improvements. The following are potential fund sources for public projects:

Federal Aid

Major capacity-increasing projects, such as South Novato Boulevard, sometimes qualify for federal aid. Landscaping is often eligible for matching under these funding programs, particularly where the landscaping mitigates an environmental concern. The streetscape created by these projects should be well designed. Opportunities for Federal aid participation should be maximized.

Developer Cash Deposits

Developers sometimes contribute cash in-lieu fees instead of constructing streetscape improvements along their frontage. Usually there is a time limit on the use of the fees by the City. The City should quickly respond to such deposits by executing public projects to perform the streetscape improvements. Other fund sources often are needed to supplement the developer cash deposits in order to complete the intended improvements.

Measure F Bond Funds

The City has undertaken a major program of reconstructing and rehabilitating City streets. While many of these streets are not specifically addressed in this Master Plan, good streetscape design according to the principles and themes of this Master Plan should be included in all of the bond-funded projects.

Developer Fees

Some cities have allocated fees for individual development projects toward streetscape improvements, such as beautifying major intersections. The funds generated by these fees could be used to build improvements throughout the City. The City should consider adopting such a fee structure.

Assessment District Financing

Assessment district financing has been successfully used for funding maintenance of significant new streetscape projects. The City should continue and expand this practice. The City should consider assessment district financing for construction of streetscape related improvements as well.

Examples: District for funding Acquisition and Construction; District for funding Landscaping and Lighting; District for funding Maintenance.

Other Revenue Sources

Other tax methods could be used to generate revenues for streetscape improvements and/or maintenance (as well as other public services).

These methods include general obligation bonds, utility taxes, excise taxes or redevelopment financing. Some of these revenue sources would require investigation by a bond counsel to determine whether they could be used for particular streetscape improvements.

Examples: Business Improvement District, Business Improvement Area, Downtown Revitalization District, Parking Improvement District ...

Technical Information Sources

Main Street Project (State source)
California Downtown Association

Implementing Specific Projects

Old Town

Beautifying the downtown core area, in conjunction with new commercial and public development elsewhere in the City, will be an excellent investment. It will bring people off the freeway and into Novato's shops and businesses. Staff has prepared a project proposal to design streetscape improvements for Grant Avenue and adjacent streets. The project is partially funded; the pavement would be rebuilt using Measure F Bond Funds. Additional funding is needed to complete the design and to beautify the street at the same time the pavement is rebuilt. Even more than other projects, it is critical to seek community input on this project.

Redwood Boulevard

A developer cash deposit is on hand for streetscape improvements at Redwood Boulevard and Escallonia Drive. The private project that generated this deposit was the impetus for the Streetscape Master Plan. The original design of the streetscape should be reviewed according to the principles and themes of this Master Plan. If necessary, the improvements should be redesigned at a later time and then a public project should be developed to build the improvements. Additional funds may be needed.

South Novato Boulevard

A conceptual streetscape design was developed for the South Novato Boulevard improvements from Rowland Boulevard to Arthur Street, as part of this master plan. This project is funded by Federal Aid and Measure F Bonds. The conceptual design should be further developed and the scheme applied to the rest of South Novato Boulevard as it is improved.

Park Projects

Several major park projects adjacent to city streets are proposed in the City's Capital Improvement Program, including a new Community Center at O'Hair Park and Scottsdale Marsh Acquisition and Enhancement. Design the landscaping along City streets adjacent to these projects according to the themes and principles of the Streetscape Master Plan.

Underground Utility Projects

Pacific Gas and Electric Company set aside a portion of their rates for utility undergrounding per Public Utility Commission Rule No. 20A. The City organizes and prioritizes the underground utilities projects, often coordinating them with street reconstruction projects. The City should continue its active undergrounding program, placing a priority on major streets to be reconstructed under the Measure F Bond Program.

City of Novato 60 kv Relocation Project

The City has developed and obtained funds for a project to relocate a major 60 Kilovolt (KV) transmission line to a new route removing it from visible residential and commercial area in Novato. A \$400,000 PG&E incentive due to relocation savings on South Novato Boulevard has been applied to this project. The City should ensure that this project is successfully completed.

Other Agency Projects

Many projects and programs that affect the streetscape are not funded or permitted directly by the City of Novato: Cal Trans, School Dis-

tricts, utilities, Marin County, and the U.S. Government, for example. The City should actively communicate and coordinate with these agencies on their projects. City staff should be alert for any public hearings on these projects to ensure that these projects incorporate our streetscape themes and principles.

Volunteer Projects

Volunteer projects are those where the cost of the improvements comes from a person or a group out of their own good will. The City should take an active role in promoting the Streetscape Master Plan to the community. There have been many successful projects throughout Novato accomplished by volunteers: fountains, benches and garden club plantings, for example. The City should encourage more of these projects.

One new way that volunteers can contribute to Novato's streetscape is the "Adopt-a-Freeway" program through Cal Trans. This program would permit the clean-up and /or landscaping of US 101 by volunteer groups. Cal Trans will assume the maintenance responsibility for these new landscape areas if the design conforms with their landscape policies and standards. An information packet about this program is available from the Cal Trans San Francisco District.

Implementation Strategy

At the first City contact the Planning Division or the Engineering Division will inform developers that there are streetscape requirements and that the Streetscape Master Plan book should be consulted when preparing frontage and overall landscape improvements. This information is to be made available at the same time that zoning and development instructions are given.

Developers will incorporate streetscape guidelines, zoning regulations and development standards into conceptual plans that are submitted

for preliminary review by City staff and the Design Review Committee.

If revisions are required, designers and developers will prepare the necessary changes before submitting final plans to the Design Review Committee, or the Planning Commission and/or the City Council. The hearing body will hold a public meeting and the project will be approved as is or with minor changes.

Upon approval of the project, detailed plans will be submitted to the Planning, Engineering and Building Divisions, and to health, safety and environmental regulatory agencies for a comprehensive review for conformance to all regulations and special conditions of approval.

Summary

One of the positive results arising from this Streetscape Master Plan is a new enthusiasm for enhancing the beauty of Novato's public environment. Implementing the plan will be a challenge, requiring skill, time and money. The goal at times may seem out of reach, but in implementing our Streetscape Master Plan, as proposed, the City can take measurable steps towards the goal. Soon, the results will be obvious.

5

Glossary

Deciduous - Describes a plant that sheds its leaves at a certain season each year.

Hardscape - Concrete work, including paving, planter boxes, fountains, sculpture and other amenities.

Intrusion - A point along the roadway edge where a natural vegetative character (for example oaks, creeks or marsh vegetation) is integrated.

Riparian Vegetation - Vegetation found naturally along the banks of creek corridors.

Streetscape - The landscape area adjacent the street, the roadside environment.

Tensiometer - A device used to measure the moisture content in the soil.

Xeriscape - A landscape design using plants that are well adapted to the Mediterranean climatic conditions of the Novato area.