

**EMERALD LAKE HILLS
SPECIFIC PLAN**

**Adopted by Woodside Town Council
October 18, 1995**

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EMERALD LAKE HILLS SPECIFIC PLAN

I. INTRODUCTION

The Emerald Lake Hills area of Woodside comprises about 250 acres of land located in the northernmost portion of the Town, bounded by Canada Road and I-280 on the west, Jefferson Ave. on the south, the City of Redwood City on the east, and unincorporated San Mateo County on the north (Figures 1 and 2).

Emerald Lake Hills was originally established through the recordation of three subdivisions, the "Estates of Emerald Lakes", Subdivisions One and Two, and the "Highlands of Emerald Lakes", Subdivision Six, all filed in 1927. The three subdivisions created 384 lots, with typical lot sizes of 15,000 to 20,000 square feet for the first two subdivisions (276 lots), and 7,500 to 15,000 square feet for the third (108 lots).

Over the past 60+ years, an estimated 159 homes have been constructed in the area, and are generally occupied by full-time residents of the Town of Woodside. These homes are frequently situated on properties comprising two or more of the smaller lots.

The area is environmentally sensitive, and is characterized by narrow winding roads, natural vegetation (especially along creeks and drainageways), moderate to steep topography, moderate to high fire hazard, and modest and generally unobtrusive homes, some with accompanying horses and horse facilities. Many of the lots have sweeping views of the western hills and/or the San Francisco Bay. The animal population of the area includes hawks, owls and other birds, deer, skunks, possum, raccoons and foxes. All of the area is served by private wastewater disposal (septic systems), the Los Altos Garbage Company, Pacific Gas & Electric, and Western Cabled Systems. Almost all of the area is served by the Redwood City Water Department, with a small portion along Canada Road being served by California Water Service Co.

Annexation Into the Town of Woodside

The Town of Woodside was incorporated in 1956, but the Emerald Lake Hills area was not annexed into the Town until 1964. "R-1" zoning was applied to the portions of the study area in closest proximity to Canada Road and to Jefferson Ave. (Figure 3), requiring a minimum lot size of 20,000 square feet, making most of the original lots non-conforming. The "R-1" area comprises about one-fourth of the study area, but includes about 40% of the existing homes and lots within the area. The remainder of the Emerald Lake Hills area was zoned "SR" (Suburban Residential), requiring a minimum lot size of one acre, again making most of the original lots non-conforming. Because of the small lot sizes, steep slopes, and septic system and other constraints, however, many homes were constructed on two or more adjoining lots.

FIGURE 1
LOCATION MAP

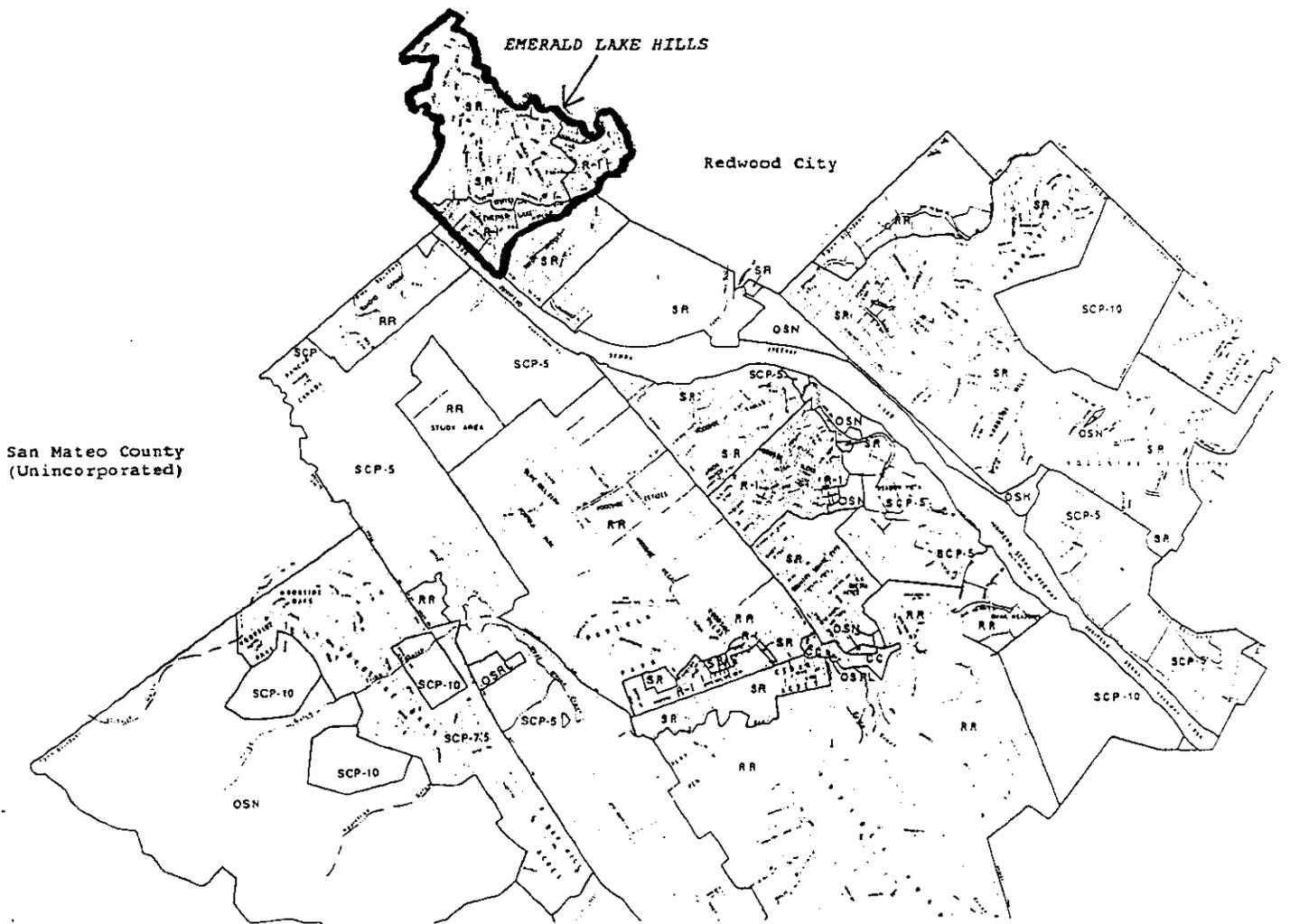
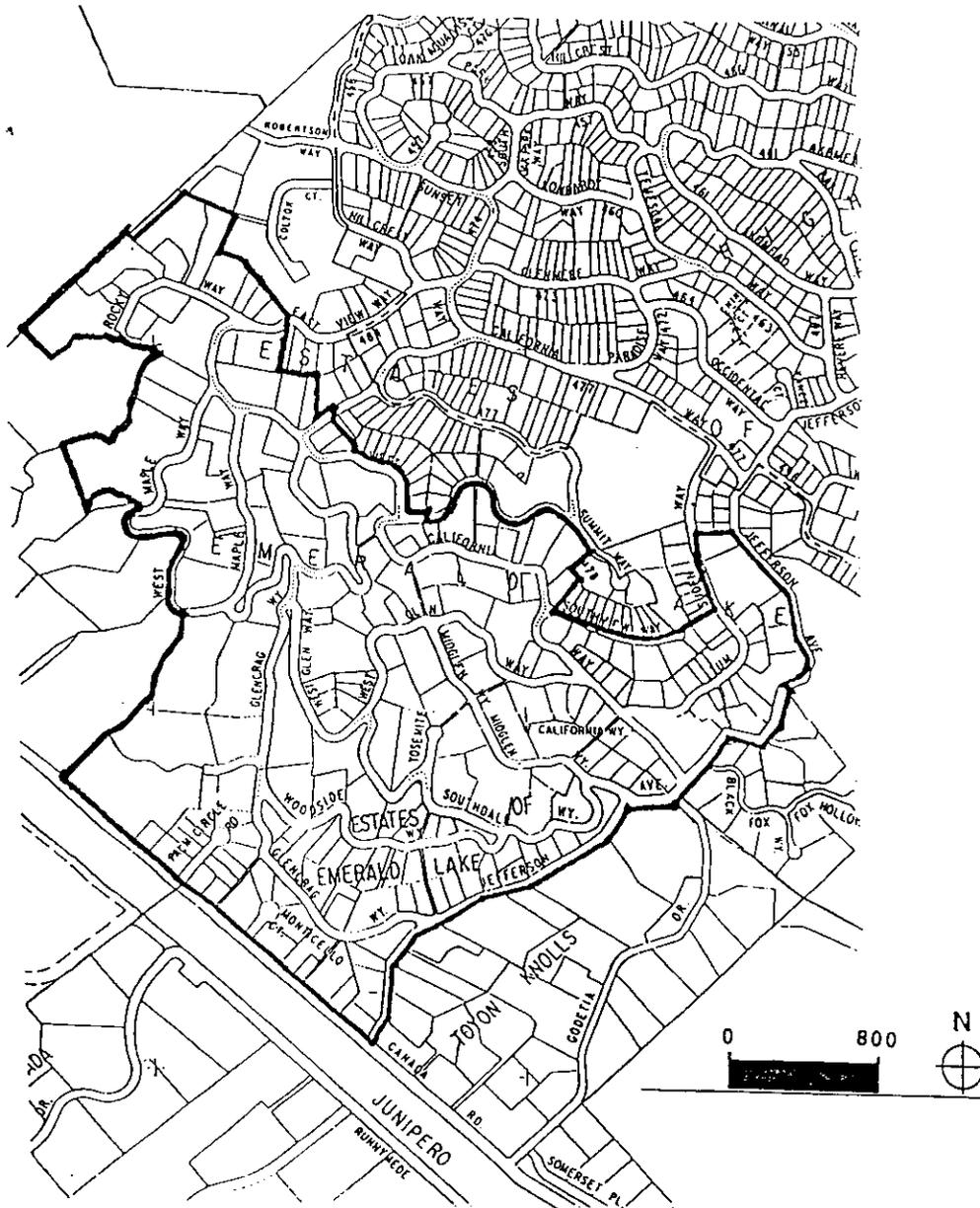


FIGURE 2
EMERALD LAKE HILLS



In 1988, the Town enacted an ordinance limiting the maximum size of main residences, including a limit of 3,000 square feet for homes in the "R-1" zone, and a 4,000 square foot limit for homes in the "SR" zone. The Town also enacted maximum floor-to-area ratios for building on each lot ranging from 30%-36% for lots in the "R-1" zone and 18% for lots in the "SR" zone. Tables 1 and 2 summarize the Town's current development standards in the "R-1" and "SR" zones:

TABLE 1
"R-1" Zone Development Standards

Minimum Lot Size:	20,000 square feet
Minimum Lot Width:	80 feet
Floor Area Ratio:	36% - up to 12,000 sq. ft. 30% - over 12,000 sq. ft.
Maximum Size of Main Residence:	3,000 square feet
Maximum Paved Area:	5,000 square feet
Height Limit:	28 feet
Required Setbacks:	
Front:	30 feet
Rear:	25 feet
Side:	15 feet
	22.5 feet for any portion of structure over 17 feet high

TABLE 2
"SR" Zone Development Standards

Minimum Lot Size:	1 acre
Minimum Lot Width:	100 feet
Floor Area Ratio:	18%
Maximum Size of Main Residence:	4,000 square feet
Maximum Paved Area:	15,000 square feet
Height Limit:	30 feet
Required Setbacks:	
Front:	50 feet
Rear:	25 feet
Side:	20 feet

R-1 Committee

In 1991, the Town Council appointed a citizens committee (the "R-1" Committee) to review development standards in the "R-1" zoning district to determine what changes, if any, were appropriate to better recognize the unique circumstances of these small lots. The Committee was composed of residents of the Woodside Glens, Emerald Lake Hills, and a small area along Woodside Road, which comprise the three R-1 zoned areas of the Town. The Committee formulated a series of recommendations to the Town Council, including:

- 1*. Re-affirming the goals of the Woodside General Plan and the current R-1 zone setbacks;
- 2*. Allowing existing non-conforming main residences to encroach into front yards, not to exceed 150 square feet and not more than 50% encroachment;
- 3*. An exception procedure to allow encroachments into setbacks for main residences, not to exceed 33% encroachment and to be offset by an equal increase of the opposite yard setback;
- 4*. Allowing a 440 square foot attached garage in addition to the maximum residence size limit;
- 5*. Allowing replacement of demolished non-conforming main residences, within the existing building envelope;
6. Requiring a "minimum natural or landscaped area" of 40% on lots 12,000 square feet or more and 30% on lots less than 12,000 square feet;
- 7*. Improvements to the building permit process to provide more expeditious review and clearer guidelines;
8. Reduction of allowable floor area to a maximum of 25% to 36%, based on lot size;
9. Limiting accessory buildings to 720 square foot maximum, usable as living units only on lots of 30,000 square feet or greater; and
10. Merger of existing non-conforming lots under common ownership.

Most of the Committee's recommendations have become law in the Town of Woodside (asterisked items), and the remainder are under review. Subsequent to the Committee's studies, however, many Emerald Lake Hills residents have become increasingly concerned with the potential fire safety, water supply, drainage, traffic, and septic system hazards existing in the area. Also of serious concern is the potential for build-out of small lots which might exacerbate those concerns, as well as the impacts of that future development on open space, equestrian uses, and the rural quality of the Emerald Lake Hills.

II. PURPOSE OF SPECIFIC PLAN

On June 17, 1992, the Town Council directed staff to prepare a Specific Plan for the area, as well as a Specific Plan for the Woodside Glens area. On August 11, 1992, the Town Council appointed over 40 property owners in the Woodside Glens and Emerald Lake Hills areas to a Specific Plan Committee. The primary charge of the group was defined as follows:

"Provide direction to the Planning Director regarding priorities and issues to be addressed by the Specific Plan. Issues to be considered should include, but are not limited to: fire safety, traffic safety, road access, parking, sewer and water service, maintenance of rural character and open space, etc."

The Specific Plan Committee subsequently broke up into two groups, one each for the Woodside Glens and Emerald Lake Hills. The Emerald Lake Hills group met ten times in public forums from July 30, 1992 through June 10, 1993, providing notice to area residents of each meeting. Committee members also contributed numerous additional hours of individual and group investigation. At the June 10th meeting, 36 area residents attended and 11 letters were submitted for consideration, prior to the Committee developing a consensus. The Committee then presented its findings and recommendations in written form (dated June 28, 1993) to the Town Council in July of 1993.

State Law and Specific Plans

Sections 65450 through 65457 of the State Government Code outlines requirements for the preparation of "specific plans" for all or part of an area covered by a local government's general plan. In particular, Section 65451 lists the required contents of a specific plan, as follows:

- "(a) A specific plan shall include a text and a diagram or diagrams which specify all of the following in detail:**
- (1) The distribution, location, and extent of the uses of land, including open space, within the area covered by the plan.**
 - (2) The proposed distribution, location, and extent and intensity of major components of public and private transportation, sewage, water, drainage, solid waste disposal, energy, and other essential facilities proposed to be located within the area covered by the plan and needed to support the land uses described in the plan.**
 - (3) Standards and criteria by which development will proceed, and standards for the conservation, development, and utilization of natural resources, where applicable.**
 - (4) A program of implementation measures including**

regulations, programs, public works projects, and financing measures necessary to carry out paragraphs (1), (2), and (3).

- (b) The specific plan shall include a statement of the relationship of the specific plan to the general plan."

State law requires that specific plans be prepared and adopted in the same manner as general plans, i.e., public notice and hearings by the Planning Commission and Town Council. The Government Code also explicitly requires that the specific plan be consistent with the general plan, and that any public works project, subdivision map, and zoning or other regulations must be consistent with the specific plan.

Organization of the Specific Plan

The Emerald Lake Hills Specific Plan is organized as follows:

- △ Section III states the overall goals of the Specific Plan.
- △ Section IV addresses the key issues of concern by identifying the current status of the issues, policies regarding each issue, and specific actions to be taken to implement the policies.
- △ Section V describes the potential for buildout of additional homes in the Emerald Lake Hills, prescribes policies related to future development, and outlines specific actions to implement the policies.
- △ Section VI summarizes the implementation actions outlined in the previous sections, and discusses overall regulatory and financing mechanisms to achieve implementation.
- △ Section VII discusses the Specific Plan's relationship to the General Plan.

III. SPECIFIC PLAN GOALS

The following represent the key goals of the Emerald Lake Hills Specific Plan:

- G1:** *To maintain and, where possible, enhance the existing natural and rural quality of the Emerald Lake Hills.*
- G2:** *To enhance the safety and health of all residents of Emerald Lake Hills for both daily functioning and under emergency conditions.*

G3: *To allow future development to the extent that such development protects the open, rural quality of Emerald Lake Hills and enhances public safety and convenience.*

IV. SPECIFIC PLAN ISSUES AND POLICIES

A. Open Space, Trails and Equestrian Use

Current Status:

There is no publicly owned open space in the Emerald Lake Hills. The nearest public open space is San Mateo County's Edgewood Park, immediately to the north of the study area. Edgewood Park contains hiking and equestrian trails and picnic facilities, and provides important visual relief for neighbors and for travelers along I-280 and Canada Road. There is also at least one parcel with a small conservation easement dedicated to protection of the natural vegetation, although public access is not permitted.

The open, rural character of the study area is largely defined, however, by the private open space of the area, comprised of portions of each private parcel which remain undeveloped and generally undisturbed, or which are used for corrals or other equestrian facilities. In addition to providing a sense of open space to the community, such lands also preserve natural drainage patterns, prevent erosion, and protect habitat for area wildlife. Insensitive development has reduced the amount of open space in the area in the past several years, creating visual degradation and drainage and erosion problems. Also, improved maintenance of open space vegetation is needed to minimize potential fire hazards.

Equestrian facilities and trails make up a significant component of the open, rural character of the Emerald Lake Hills. The Town's Official Trails Map (1982) notes that "there are numerous substandard roadside trails" in the area, but does not suggest an extensive trail system. Figure 4 depicts existing and proposed (1982 Trails Map) trails in and near the Emerald Lake Hills. Utility rights-of-way are also sometimes used as trails.

Policies:

P1: *Private parcels should maintain open space sufficient to preserve the open, rural character of the Emerald Lake Hills. Lot mergers should be encouraged to assure greater open space protection.*

P2: *The development and maintenance of trails should be encouraged and facilitated to better preserve the rural character of the area, and to allow both equestrian and pedestrian uses on the facilities.*

P3: *The trails system in the Emerald Lake Hills should be improved and completed to link with other Woodside and County trails.*

P4: *Vegetation within open space areas should be appropriately maintained to reduce fire hazards.*

Actions:

1. Enact a requirement that a minimum of 40% of every building parcel in the area be maintained in a natural state or utilized for pasture purposes, and strictly apply the natural area requirements of the hillside development provisions of the Zoning Code to all development.
2. Develop a policy to provide flexibility for equestrian use of properties which merges lots.
3. Develop, under the auspices of a citizens committee, a vegetation trimming program for residential properties in the Emerald Lake Hills, including identification of trouble spots, with the objective of reducing fire hazard potential for the area.
4. Direct the Trails Committee to review equestrian trails for the Emerald Lake Hills, with a priority on making connections to Canada Road and to Edgewood Park. Trails should be clearly marked to prevent encroachment.

B. Roads and Parking

Current Status:

The study area is characterized by quiet, narrow, and winding roads. The vast majority of roadways in the Emerald Lake Hills are substandard in width, based on the Town's roadway design standards, and some segments have exhibited a higher than average accident rate (C-REM Engineers, "Study of the Operational Capacity of the Town's Minor Rural Roads in Certain R-1, SR, and SCP Zones", 1990). These roads are frequently only 50-80% of the standard width, and road surface conditions presently range from fair to very poor on the Pavement Condition Index (PCI), exhibiting deteriorating pavement, cracked surfaces, depressions and fractures, potholes, and crumbling shoulders. On-street parking and speeding motorists further exacerbate safety concerns.

A 1989 "Woodside Roads Reconnaissance Geotechnical Investigation" by William Cotton and Associates identified numerous geotechnical constraints regarding roadways which exhibit distress due to soil creep or ponding/seepage. In

particular, portions of Glencrag Way, Jefferson Ave., Woodside Way, and Tum Suden Way are affected by soil creep, and small sections of West Glen Way and Glencrag Way are impacted by near surface water. Portions of Midglen Way, West Glen Way, and West California Way are underlain by an "old" landslide.

Roadway deterioration has become so severe that one road in the area has become impassable and temporarily closed by the Town (Midglen Way, due to land movement), if remedial actions are not taken. Development over the past 5-10 years has sometimes created drainage problems which have contributed to the deterioration of roadways. Additionally, the ability of fire protection vehicles and equipment to negotiate the area streets is very tenuous, due to the narrow roadways and sharp curves. Figure 5 identifies some key constraints to maintaining safe roadway passage and emergency access.

Potential improvements to roadways have been and will be severely limited by budgetary constraints and by the environmental sensitivity of the area. Roadway widening would likely require extensive land alteration and vegetation removal, and could result in extensive impacts on drainage and the visual quality of Emerald Lake Hills.

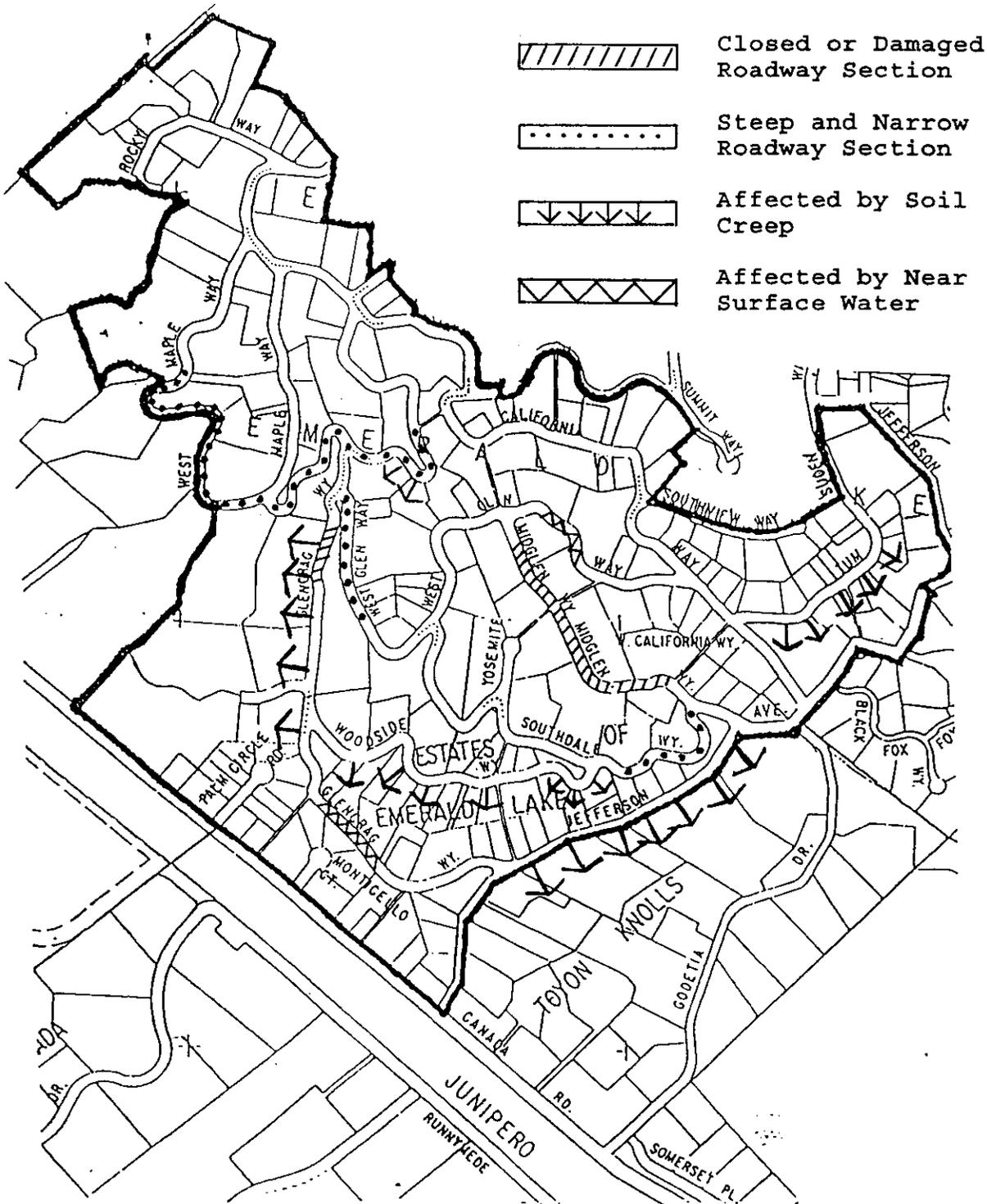
Parking which encroaches on or near the roadway pavement is not generally a problem in the Emerald Lake Hills, but would be a serious safety hazard if inadequate parking resulted from future development. Steep driveways pose a similar potential for unsafe intersections at the roadway, parking on the roadway, and backing onto the roadway. Less than adequate parking and/or driveway access to new development will exacerbate existing safety hazards, including access by emergency vehicles.

Policies:

- P1:** *Provide adequate, unimpeded access to all homes for residents, visitors, delivery, and tradespeople, and for emergency vehicles.*
- P2:** *Maintain roadways in not less than fair condition, and preferably good condition (as measured on the "PCI" scale).*
- P3:** *Maximize off-street parking and strictly enforce the Town's requirement for four off-street parking spaces per residence, and encourage an adequate turnaround area so that vehicles do not need to back into a street.*
- P4:** *Assure that all new driveways strictly adhere to Town standards for grade, curvature, and intersection angles.*

FIGURE 5

EMERALD LAKE HILLS ROADWAY CONSTRAINTS



Actions:

1. Develop, with the input of an Emerald Lake Hills residents committee, a recommended program for roadway paving based on pavement condition and established road hierarchy in the Circulation Element of the Town General Plan, and drainage improvements in the area, including an evaluation of funding options (share of road impact fees, new development contributions, etc.), consistent with maintaining the rural character of the neighborhood. Specific improvements which should be addressed include, but are not limited to:
 - △ Repair of the slope bank and shoulder of Glencrag Way below Maple Way.
 - △ Repair/reconstruction of the closed portion of Midglen Way.
 - △ Viability of one-way roadway sections, such as Maple Way/West Maple Way, etc.
2. Strictly enforce the Town's off-street parking and driveway access requirements for new developments and require upgrades to provide adequate parking and access for any additions or remodeling. Adequate parking must include adequate on-site turnaround to discourage backing out into the roadway unless a solution with adequate parking is deemed feasible and beneficial without jeopardizing public safety and degrading the rural nature of the area.

C. DrainageCurrent Status:

Slopes in the study area typically range from 10-30%, with some areas as steep as 50%, and are readily susceptible to erosion. Natural vegetation ranges from grass covered hillsides to small canyons of oaks and other native trees. The area's rainwater is currently channelled across the natural land surfaces, driveways, and roadways to the area creeks to a tributary of Dry Creek along Canada Road. Recent development, however, has increased the amount of impervious surface in the area, increasing the rate of water runoff, and decreasing the natural area available to absorb runoff. Some of this development has contributed to drainage problems, resulting in occasional damage to adjacent roadways, erosion of drainageways, and increased flooding of roads and private property.

Additionally, the Emerald Lake Hills area contains many localized ponds and points of seepage, as mapped by William

Cotton and Associates in 1989. These features further contribute to the complexity of the drainage system and require careful analysis and mitigation in the design of new development in the area.

Policies:

- P1:** *Natural vegetation of the area shall be maintained as much as feasible to reduce stormwater runoff and the potential for drainage problems.*
- P2:** *Proposed projects shall be designed to assure that no negative drainage impacts on adjacent or downstream properties will occur.*

Actions:

1. Enact a requirement that a minimum of 40% of every building parcel in the area be maintained in a natural state or utilized for pasture purposes, and strictly apply the natural area requirements of the hillside development provisions of the Zoning Code to all development.
2. For all new development or significant additions to structures or paved area or corrals, require that a drainage study be prepared, addressing the project's potential impacts on the drainage system, including any on-site or off-site improvements necessary to accommodate drainage safely.

D. Water Supply and Fire Protection

Current Status:

Water service to the Emerald Lake Hills is provided primarily by the City of Redwood City Water Department, but a small area adjacent to Canada Road is served by the California Water Service Company. Fire protection is provided by the Woodside Fire Protection District, which maintains a station on California Way near Jefferson Ave. While service to the Canada Road properties is adequate, much of the Redwood City system is comprised of 1930's vintage two-inch water mains (six-inch lines are desired) in a deteriorating state (Figure 6). Approximately 17,000 feet out of an estimated 34,000 feet of water main is of the inadequate two-inch size.

Redwood City has recently upgraded lines and hydrants along West California Way, and along Jefferson to Midglen, but has no other plans to upgrade the two inch mains to six inches. The Department provides new service, however, only to property in areas of six-inch mains or if the property owner extends

adequate lines to the site. While such action protects new development, it generally does not resolve problems for existing developed areas with service from the two-inch mains. In fact, some residents have complained of decreased pressure during high use periods, leaving those on the older system with decreased water pressure.

The Emerald Lake Hills area is designated in the highest risk categories for fire hazard in Woodside's General Plan, due to inadequate water service, difficult access, and steep topography. The General Plan considers water service for fire protection to be adequate only if capable of delivering 1,000 gallons of water per minute for a period of two hours, with a residual pressure of 20 pounds per square inch.

The Woodside Fire Protection District has recently conducted an audit of the area water system and indicates that areas most at risk include the Maple and West Maple Way loop, Southdale Way, Jefferson between Glencrag and Midglen, and Glencrag between Jefferson and Woodside Way. Substantial improvements to the current system would still be necessary in order to achieve an adequate level of water pressure for fire protection for all Emerald Lake Hills residents.

Policies:

- P1: *Ensure a water supply and pressure adequate for residential needs.*
- P2: *Ensure a water supply adequate to meet emergency demands, particularly for fire flow.*
- P3: *Permit new development or additions in excess of 50% of existing square footage only when water service is provided consistent with the General Plan and Fire Code standards.*

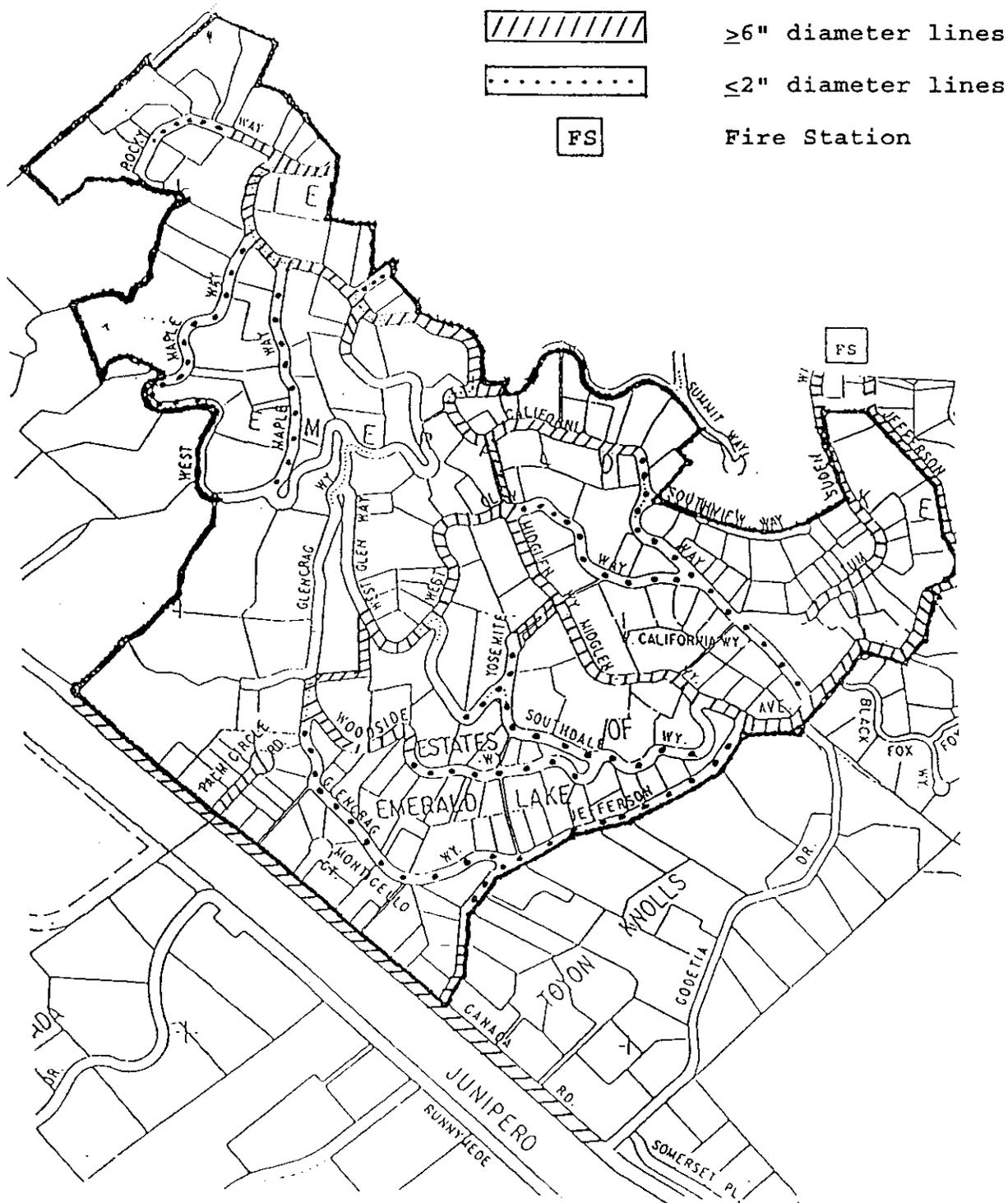
Actions:

1. Establish a citizens committee to meet with the Redwood City Water Department and Town staff to evaluate and develop methods which might be used to finance improvements to the area water system. Measures to be considered should include, but are not limited to:
 - Improvements by Redwood City amortized through user fees;
 - Creation of an assessment district;
 - Development impact fees; and
 - Development requirements for upgrading.
2. All new development, including additions in excess of 50%

of existing structure square footage, shall be required to upgrade water service to the property to meet General Plan and Fire Code standards, and in such a way that no significant decrease in water service is suffered by any area customer.

FIGURE 6

EMERALD LAKE HILLS WATER SYSTEM



E. Wastewater DisposalCurrent Status:

All of the Emerald Lake Hills area properties are served by private wastewater disposal, i.e., septic systems. Approval of such systems is primarily regulated by the San Mateo County Health Services Agency. Percolation testing in recent years indicates that much of the area in the hills exhibits marginal percolation rates, which is especially critical on smaller, non-conforming lots and/or steep properties. Additionally, springs and ponds, creeks, landslides, and steep slopes can often impair the effectiveness of septic drainfields.

The Health Department's standards do not include special criteria for such difficult sites, other than requirements for geotechnical studies. Additionally, as the past decade has seen extensive drought, the accuracy of percolation testing during that time has been questioned. In 1994, the Town Council adopted revised on-site wastewater disposal regulations which require that percolation tests be conducted in the location of proposed drainfields, and prohibiting pumping effluent uphill except with Town Council approval under very limited circumstances, and for the expansion drainfield area only.

An area of particular concern is the portion of the study area located between the creek along Glencrag Way, Canada Road and those areas identified in Ordinance No. 1995-481, which extended a sewer moratorium for the Redwood Creek Trunk Sewer Assessment District. The Health Department has indicated that a number of properties in this area have experienced septic system operational problems, especially as the soil is marginally suited for such systems and there is a high groundwater level from the proximity to the creek.

A pending proposal before the Town would bring a sewer line up Canada Road from Godetia Drive to serve approximately 30-35 lots (some of which are vacant). The feasibility and desirability of serving some or all of those lots is currently under study by the Town Engineer. On August 16, 1995, the Town Council adopted an ordinance placing a moratorium on new connections to the Town's Redwood Creek Sewer Assessment District until capacity and transport issues were addressed and an allocation policy was established. However, the ordinance exempted properties with failing septic systems from the moratorium, if the Council determines that alternatives are not available and subject to the approval of the Fair Oaks Sewer Maintenance District (San Mateo County).

Policies:

- P1:** Each building parcel to be developed shall be capable of accommodating a standard septic tank and drainfield system, demonstrating adequate percolation under wet weather conditions and with tests specific to the areas to be used for drainfields. Tests are to be current, i.e., taken on or after the effective date of the Specific Plan adoption.
- P2:** Only standard septic systems shall be permitted on substandard size lots, and deviations from standards shall only be permitted on conforming lots where offset by mitigating factors such as extensive separation of drainfields from other properties, roadways, and creeks, and shall be supported by in-depth geotechnical and drainage studies.
- P3:** Sewer service shall be extended to existing areas with failing or problematic septic systems only when no other alternatives are available, and when deemed necessary to correct health and safety concerns, if in close proximity to an existing Town-designated sewer service area, and without cost to the Town, subject to the Town's sewer capacity limitations and agreements with other sewer service providers.

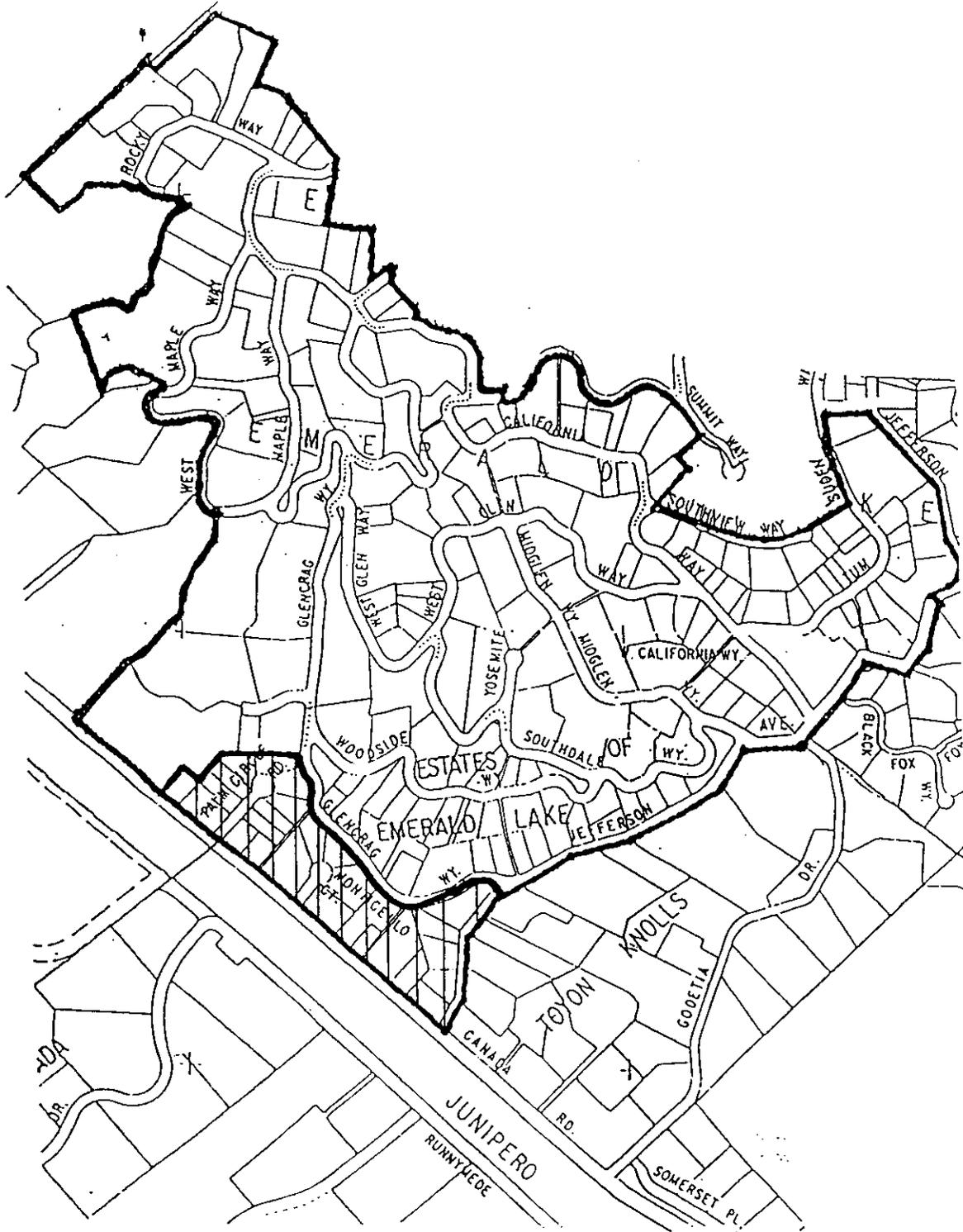
Actions:

1. The Town's septic system regulations shall be strictly enforced to require that any new development demonstrate adequate percolation areas in the locations to be used for drainfields, including percolation under wet weather conditions.
2. The Health Officer and Town officials shall not allow deviation from standard requirements on substandard size lots, and shall not allow deviation on conforming lots except where extensive separation of drainfields from other properties, roadways and creeks is available, and when in-depth geotechnical and drainage studies support the long-term viability of such systems.
3. The Town should assist with formulation of a plan to provide sewer service to existing developed lots with frontage on the east side of Canada Road from Godetia Drive to the northern Town boundary, on Palm Circle, on Monticello Court, and on the west side of Jefferson Ave. between Canada Road and Glencrag Way (Figure 7). Such plan shall be subject to the Town's sewer capacity limitations and Town agreements with other service

providers. Vacant lots shall only be served to the extent that they are conforming in size and consistent with the development restrictions of the Town's codes and this Specific Plan.

FIGURE 7

EMERALD LAKE HILLS POTENTIAL SEWER SERVICE AREA



V. POTENTIAL BUILDOUT

A. Current Status

While there are currently a total of 159 homes in the Emerald Lake Hills, there is actually a potential for a total of 337 lots (including existing lots) to be developed if physical (septic, slopes, water, etc.) and zoning (setbacks, parking, etc.) constraints are not applied, and if existing homes in some cases were demolished and replaced in conformance with setbacks (a map of the potential lot buildout in the Emerald Lake Hills is available for review at Town Hall).

In reality, however, many of the lots would likely not ever be built upon, due to environmental, zoning, and/or cost constraints or because the owner would prefer to maintain the existing house on a more reasonably sized parcel. Excluding lots currently developed with a house straddling lot lines, an additional 150 lots may deserve analysis for potential buildout.

While the total number of additional new homes built would probably be substantially less than 150, given physical and zoning constraints, buildout of those lots would certainly exacerbate most all of the inadequacies noted previously in the Specific Plan, including:

- reduction of extensive open space, diminishing the rural quality of the area;
- altering natural drainage patterns;
- substantially increased traffic on an already inadequate roadway system, and increased parking on the narrow roadways, resulting in more difficult and unsafe access for residents and for emergency vehicles; and
- greater burden on the area water system and increased human activity in the area, exacerbating the potential for fire and limiting the ability of residents and the Fire District to respond in the event of an emergency.

At the same time, however, new construction could be required to contribute to making public improvements, such as upgrading water lines, drainage, or roadways, which enhance health and safety for the Emerald Lake Hills, but only to the extent that the improvements do not impair the rural quality of the area.

The visual impact of new development is of primary concern in the Emerald Lake Hills area as well. Each new home and significant addition has the potential to diminish the rural quality of the area by decreasing the amount of natural vegetation and by construction of large, bulky houses which are inconsistent with others in the neighborhood. While most of the existing homes in the area are low-key and unobtrusive, recent larger houses on the smaller non-conforming lots have already seriously affected the

visual character of the neighborhood and should be further controlled through merger of lots or restrictions on the development of smaller lots.

Visual impact within the scenic corridor of Canada Road could also be greatly affected if sewer service is provided to those lots and if maximum development (3,000 square foot houses plus accessory buildings) of those lots results as the septic constraint is removed. Also, variances from zoning and site development regulations generally result in greater visual impact as well as affecting drainage, traffic safety and septic system operation.

Other visual impacts of concern, but not directly tied to buildout of non-conforming lots, include the undergrounding of utilities and the proliferation of signage, including real estate and construction signs, as well as roadway and directional signs. "No dumping" signs and the proliferation of real estate signs are currently unsightly to residents. Undergrounding of utilities should be required both for fire safety and visual protection purposes.

B. Policies

- P1:** *The number of lots available for future development should be limited to assure that additional development will not exacerbate concerns regarding emergency access and evacuation, traffic safety and parking, and water supply, and will not have a significant negative impact on open space and the rural quality of the area.*
- P2.** *All new development and significant additions in the Emerald Lake Hills should maintain open space and the rural character of the area through sensitive site and architectural design. Minimizing the visual impact of development may require limitations on house size and/or the size or number of accessory structures.*
- P3.** *All new development and significant additions in the Emerald Lake Hills shall comply with the provisions of the Woodside zoning and site development codes and shall be consistent with the provisions of the Emerald Lake Hills Specific Plan.*
- P4:** *All new development and significant additions in the Emerald Lake Hills shall contribute to making improvements which enhance the health and safety of the existing and future residents of the area.*
- P5:** *Existing signage should be reduced in the Emerald Lake Hills, and the Town should strictly apply signage standards for real estate and construction signs within the area.*

C. Actions

1. Develop a policy to encourage lot mergers by allowing additional equestrian use or other incentives when lots are merged.
2. Encourage mergers or applications for merger of all "unbuildable" lots under common ownership within the Emerald Lake Hills, as well as lots which property owners agree to merge. A lot would be considered "buildable" if the owner can demonstrate that an adequate building site and parking area exist consistent with the Town's zoning code provisions, generally without variances; that adequate access is available to the site; and that no portion of an existing main residence is located across lot lines or within the adjacent setback of the potentially developable lot.
3. No planning or building permit shall be issued by the Town for a project which relies on the combination of two or more lots for ordinance compliance, unless the properties are legally restricted from future use as separate parcels, and the owners agree not to object to lot merger action by the Town.
4. Enact a requirement that a minimum of 40% of every building parcel in the area be maintained in a natural state or utilized for pasture purposes, and strictly apply the natural area requirements of the hillside development provisions of the Zoning Code to all development.
5. Require that all new development or additions of 50% or more of existing structure square footage on non-conforming size lots in the Emerald Lake Hills meet the following criteria:
 - a. Compliance with all of the Town's zoning and site development codes; and
 - b. Merger with an adjoining lot or lots to create a conforming size building parcel; or in the case of an addition of 50% or more of an existing structure, acquisition of an adjoining lot such that the combined square footage of the two lots would constitute a conforming size, subject to the zoning standards being applied to the merged lot to be developed; or limitation of floor-area ratio (FAR) to apply to only the "buildable" area of the site, exclusive of slopes over 35%, rather than the gross site area, with a maximum house size utilizing existing zoning

standards; and

- c. Contribution of fees to and/or construction of improvements determined to further the goals of the Emerald Lake Hills Specific Plan (water, roadways, sewer, etc.), upon adoption of an ordinance requiring such improvements by new development in the area.
- 6. Remove existing "no dumping" signs and strictly enforce the Town's sign regulations regarding real estate and construction signs. Additional permanent signage should not be placed without input from area residents.
- 7. Require all new development to place utilities underground, and explore avenues to underground existing utilities.

VI. IMPLEMENTATION

In order to carry out the goals and policies of the Specific Plan, the actions described previously must be implemented within a reasonable timetable and with continued input of the affected residents. The following strategy outlines key implementation steps, including the party responsible for the action, a timeline for action, and estimated financing methods:

- 1. **Establish an Emerald Lake Hills neighborhood organization outside of the Town process to oversee communications and emergency preparedness; to provide input on roadway improvements; and to develop a vegetation trimming program.**

Responsibility: Residents
 Timeframe: Immediate
 Cost: Minimal staff time to coordinate with organization, but should be self-sustaining.

- 2. **Appoint a committee of citizens to work with the Redwood City Water District and the Town to evaluate measures available to improve water service to the area for fire safety purposes. The analysis should include financing mechanisms, which may include cost-sharing with other agencies; amortization through user fees; development contributions; and/or creating an assessment district.**

Responsibility: Council/Planning Director/Town Engineer
 Timeframe: Appoint by October 1, 1996
 Cost: Minimal staff time to prepare resolution and solicit names; on-going staff time to maintain committee activities; uncertain ultimate cost of improvements.

3. Develop a plan for allocating capacity and providing sewer service to problem septic system properties in the Canada Road/Palm Circle area, working with residents of the area and other involved sewer agencies.

Responsibility: Town Engineer/Council
Timeframe: October 1996
Cost: Staff costs, estimated at \$10,000;
general fund or sewer funds.

4. Initiate "voluntary" mergers and mergers of "unbuildable" contiguous lots under common ownership, subject to limitations outlined.

Responsibility: Planning Director
Timeframe: January 1997 (Planning Commission)
Cost: Staff costs, estimated at \$3,000;
general fund.

5. Develop and enact ordinances regarding open space requirements, merger incentives, restrictions on non-conforming lots, etc.

Responsibility: Planning Director
Timeframe: March 1997 (Planning Commission)
Cost: Staff costs, estimated at \$3,000;
general fund.

6. Direct the Trails Committee to review equestrian trails for the Emerald Lake Hills, with a priority on making connections to Canada Road and to Edgewood Park.

Responsibility: Council/Planning Director
Timeframe: Immediate
Cost: Minimal staff time; incorporate into Trails Committee work.

7. Amend the General Plan to revise the purpose statement for the R-1 zone to better emphasize the preservation of the rural quality of that zoning district, consistent with the recommendations of the R-1 Committee.

Responsibility: Planning Director (Planning Commission)
Timeframe: January 1997
Cost: Staff costs, estimated at \$500; general fund.

VII. CONSISTENCY WITH GENERAL PLAN

State law requires that a Specific Plan address the relationship between the Plan and a community's General Plan. The General Plan land use diagram designates the Emerald Lake Hills area as entirely residential with 20,000 square feet to 3 acre lots. The Plan indicates that the purpose of the "SR" (Suburban Residential) Zoning District is:

"To provide for suburban land or uses within the Town's predominantly rural setting."

The Plan further states that the purpose of the "R-1" (Residential) Zoning District is:

"To provide a higher intensity of suburban residential uses and to acknowledge a land use pattern which existed prior to the incorporation of the Town."

The "R-1 Committee" had recommended that the purpose language be modified to better reflect the need to preserve the rural character and open space of the neighborhood. The suggested revised language would read:

"To acknowledge a higher intensity of residential use which existed prior to the incorporation of the Town, while preserving the remaining open, natural and unique character of such neighborhoods."

The proposed Specific Plan is consistent with the Town of Woodside's General Plan in all respects, and helps to implement many important policies of the General Plan. The Specific Plan particularly supports the following "Policies for Intensity of Use" in the Land Use and Community Design and Aesthetics Element:

- P1: Property shall be developed with minimum disturbance to the natural terrain. The natural environment should be retained or restored as much as possible.
- P2: Retention of open space shall be considered in the review of all applications for development.
- P3: Intensity of land uses shall decrease as steepness of terrain increases.
- P5: Intensity of use of individual parcels and buildings shall be governed by considerations of: health and safety; impact on adjoining properties because of noise, traffic, night lighting, or other disturbing conditions; protection of natural land characteristics.

Furthermore, the Specific Plan helps implement the following key policy of the Conservation Element of the General Plan:

- P1: The natural features of a site proposed for development shall be one of the planning factors determining the scope and magnitude of development.

Additionally, the Specific Plan strongly supports the following goals and policies of the Circulation Element regarding roadways and parking:

- G1: To provide safe, pleasant and convenient access to individual properties.
- G2: To assure access to all properties during emergencies.
- P13: Off-road vehicular parking is the responsibility of individual land owners. On-road parking is usually not appropriate.

Finally, regarding water and wastewater service and drainage, the Specific Plan implements the following policies in the Utilities Element of the General Plan:

- P8: The problem of adequate water supply for the Planning Area is of utmost concern to the Town. Efforts to improve the existing situation shall be continued.
- P10: Work shall be continued toward the improvement of all water systems to provide sufficient line size and storage to meet established health and fire protection standards.
- P15: Each parcel served by an individual sewage disposal system shall be of such size and characteristics that an effective, reliable disposal system can be installed and maintained, and shall demonstrate effective functioning under wet weather conditions.
- P18: In areas served by on-site sewage disposal systems as permitted, the Town shall require that the property owner take geologic, hydrologic and soil conditions into account and exercise special care to assure that effluent will not activate landslides or contaminate groundwater or surface water.
- P25: Vegetative ground cover shall be retained to the maximum extent feasible, as a means of reducing stormwater runoff.