

**TOWN OF SAN ANSELMO
COUNCIL POLICY**

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EFFECTIVE: November 25, 2019	REVISED:	

APPROVED BY COUNCIL ACTION

SPECIFIC SUBJECT: Process and guidelines for benches, picnic tables, and other improvements in Open Space.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this Policy is to supplement Town Council Resolution 3335 (1995) which established the Town policy on memorial gifts and to guide review of donations and improvements proposed in public open space areas.

BACKGROUND

The Town periodically receives requests from family, friends, and colleagues that wish to honor the life of a loved one through a memorial or commemorative donation. The Town also seeks to maintain existing improvements in open space areas, such as picnic tables and signs. The Town wishes to encourage donations and improvements that are well suited to open space areas.

The Town recently established an open space zoning designation but has not yet adopted specific development regulations for open space areas. The Town of San Anselmo General Plan provides that public lands which have public access for nature study, hiking, etc. “are to be left in their natural state, with no improvements more extensive than trails and fire breaks.” (Open Space Element (D)(2))

The Sorich Ranch Park Master Plan, approved on July 27, 1993, provides for some improvements to be made in Sorich Park, including benches and picnic tables.

Town Council Resolution 3335 (1995) establishes the policy on memorial gifts.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Town of San Anselmo to accept improvements in Town open space areas after following the procedures set forth in this policy.

I. APPLICABLE OPEN SPACE AREAS

“Open space areas” shall include all land zoned Open Space (OS) on the Town Zoning Map, which are areas set aside for low intensity, passive recreational purposes, and parcels that are acquired for such purposes in the future:

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II. REVIEW PROCESS

Any person, group, or organization may make application to the Town for placement of an improvement in open space, such as a new bench. The Town Council may approve a fee to cover the costs of processing the request.

Open space improvements will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis. The Director of Building and Public Works (“Director”) shall initially screen donation and improvement proposals to determine if they comply with this policy.

The Director shall refer the proposal to the San Anselmo Open Space Committee. The Open Space Committee shall review the proposed improvement and make an advisory recommendation. Non-memorial improvements proposed for Sorich Park that are found to comply with the guidelines of the *Sorich Ranch Park Master Plan* do not require further review. For all other improvements, an advisory recommendation will be made to the Town Council.

The Town Council shall consider the Open Space Committee recommendation and make a final determination regarding the improvement and its consistency with the Town General Plan and Resolution 3335 on memorial gifts.

III. REVIEW CRITERIA

- A. Native trees are encouraged over physical improvements (benches, picnic tables).
- B. Applicants must suggest a location for the proposed improvement. The Town prefers improvements within developed areas and not on trail sides or other locations outside of developed areas. However, nothing prohibits the Town from considering proposals for other locations. Such proposals must be approved by a majority vote of the Open Space Committee, considering factors such as the following:
 - a. Will serve to encourage use of open space by all ages, such as a bench located to serve as a resting place along a trail.
 - b. Is not in a location that will attract activity that would damage natural resources, such as in a location to which visitors would make a new path through a pristine or sensitive natural area.
 - c. The location offers easy observation from commonly used facilities, frequented trails, etc. to reduce the likelihood of negative use.
- C. Benches and picnic tables must be of a size, design and construction which complement the natural features in the area where the bench or table will be installed. Benches made of simple split logs, log rounds and natural boulders are encouraged. Picnic tables constructed of FSC (Forest Stewardship Council certified) redwood or Cedar are encouraged.
- D. Applicants should note that the Town Council policy for memorial or commemorative gifts may require special consideration by the Town Council:

1. Memorial or commemorative gifts involving the addition of a plaque shall be reserved for persons who have made special contributions to the San Anselmo community, or to the lives of its members.
2. Memorial or commemorative gifts that are placed in prominent locations shall be given special consideration by the Town Council. These locations are reserved for community members whom the Council determines have made extraordinary contributions to the Town, or for occasions when the donation being made is part of a gift plan encouraged by the Town Council.

Preferred Bench Types

