

INTRODUCTION

This section addresses the existing recreation facilities in the City of Oxnard and the potential impacts of the proposed RiverPark Specific Plan. Sources used in the preparation of this section include the City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan (November 1990), the City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan Final EIR, (June 1990) and communication with staff of the City's Parks and Recreation Facilities Department.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

Citywide Parks and Recreation Facilities

There are 40 existing park facilities located within the City of Oxnard. The City of Oxnard classifies park facilities into five categories based upon the park's primary purpose and service area. These categories are: Mini-Parks, Neighborhood Parks, Community Playfields, Community Parks, and Special Purpose Facilities (golf courses, beaches, etc.). The City's primary focus is on Community and Neighborhood Parks. The following briefly describes the characteristics of each type of park found within the City.¹

Mini-Parks - This type of facility serves a limited population living within a very short radius of the facility, often less than one-quarter of a mile. These facilities are often targeted for a specific market segment, such as children or senior citizens. They are often found in proximity to medium-high density residential areas such as townhouse complexes, apartment complexes, or senior citizen housing.

Neighborhood Parks - This type of park is intended to provide the surrounding neighborhood with an area for intense recreational activities. These facilities are to be positioned in the middle of a neighborhood to facilitate easy accessibility. The emphasis is on free play areas which can be utilized for a number of activities, including ball games (soccer, softball) as well as kite flying, Frisbee, etc. A playground with play equipment is also an essential component of this facility. This type of park typically lacks lighting for nighttime use, and is noted for the lack of spectator facilities or improved ball fields with raised mounds, established base paths, field outlines, etc. The minimum land area for

¹ City of Oxnard Planning Department: *City of Oxnard 2020 General Plan*, "Parks and Recreation Element." Oxnard, California: November 1990; and communication with David Gorcey, City of Oxnard, April 4, 2001.

a neighborhood park is between 5 and 10 acres. These parks can either be stand alone, or may be developed for joint use adjacent to a school site.

Community Playfields - Community Playfields are large facilities, usually acting as athletic complexes, which are designed to meet the need for improved facilities associated with organized recreational events. Facilities found in this type of park include spectator amenities, ball fields, and sometimes lighting for evening use of the park. Community Playfields are designed to serve a broad segment of the City's population.

Community Parks - A Community Park is typically 20 to 30 acres in size, and offers amenities that cannot be contained within other types of parks. Both active and passive recreation activities can be accommodated within a Community Park. Types of facilities found within this type of park include sports complexes, large swimming pools, group picnic areas, gardens, etc.

Special Purpose Facility - These are areas reserved for specific or single-purpose recreation activities such as golf courses, nature centers, marinas, zoos, rifle ranges, etc.

Parkland Inventory

The City of Oxnard Parks and Recreation Element subdivides the City into five Recreation Planning Areas (RPAs) to assess park and recreation needs within specific areas of the City. The Specific Plan Area falls within the North Recreation Planning Area (RPA).

There are 756 acres of developed parkland that exist in the City of Oxnard including a 224-acre public golf course. A total of approximately 169 acres is in the form of neighborhood parks while the remainder is community level parks (212 acres) and State and County owned regional level parks. The golf course and the College Park are the only regional park facilities owned and maintained by the City of Oxnard. There is a total of thirteen existing or proposed parks (including the golf course) within the North RPA.

City of Oxnard Parks and Recreation Standards

The current City of Oxnard standard for total developed acres of parkland is 3.0 acres per thousand population, as established by the Quimby Act. Individual standards for Neighborhood and Community Parks are 1.5 acres per 1,000 population.

2020 General Plan Policies

Parks and Recreation Element

The Parks and Recreation Element of the *2020 General Plan* lists goals, objectives, and policies which pertain to the status of Outdoor Recreation in the City. The stated goal of the Parks and Recreation Element is the provision of a variety of quality recreation facilities and resources for Oxnard residents.

The Parks and Recreation Element indicates that there is an inadequate supply of park areas able to accommodate intensive recreation facilities within the City. There are also not enough large, grassy play areas for youth and adult passive and organized recreation needs. To address these and other concerns, a number of policies were created.

PROJECT IMPACTS

Thresholds of Significance

The City considers the impact of a project to be significant if sufficient park space is not provided based on the following standards:

- Neighborhood Parks: 1.5 acres per 1,000 new residents.
- Community Parks: 1.5 acres per 1,000 residents.

The City does not identify standards for Mini-Parks, Community Playfields, nor Special Purpose Parks, although such facilities are considered to be viable recreational/ parkland uses within the *2020 General Plan*.

Park Demand

The proposed RiverPark Specific Plan would allow development of a maximum of 2,805 dwelling units, within an estimated residential population of approximately 7,220 persons. Based on the City's park planning standards, approximately 11 acres of neighborhood parkland and 11 acres of community parkland is required to adequately serve a population of 7,220.

Parks Included in Specific Plan

As shown in **Figure 4.10.4-1**, the Specific Plan includes a variety of parks and open spaces. Three neighborhood parks are proposed within Residential Planning Districts. These parks are located in District F, the Vineyards Neighborhood District; District J, the RiverPark Mews Neighborhood District; and District H, the RiverPark Crescent Neighborhood District. In **Figure 4.10.4-1**, the neighborhood park in District F is identified as the El Rio Park, the park in District J is identified as the East Park, and the park in District H is identified as Crescent Park. The neighborhood parks in Districts F and J are approximately 5 acres in size and the park in District H is approximately 3 acres in size. In total, approximately 13 acres of neighborhood park land will be provided. This amount exceeds the 11 acres required under the City's planning standards for neighborhood parks. These parks are located in the southern, central and northern portions of the Specific Plan Area to provide neighborhood park land within walking distance of all residential neighborhoods that would be established by the Specific Plan. In addition, the El Rio Park in Planning District F, has been sited on the eastern boundary of the Specific Plan Area to serve the residents of the existing El Rio West residential neighborhood as well as the residents of the new neighborhoods in the Specific Plan Area.

Community park land will be provided on the elementary/intermediate school site along Vineyard Avenue in Planning Districts J and K. Use of the playfields on this school site is proposed through a joint use agreement with the Rio School District. It is planned that the Rio School District would have sole and exclusive use of the playfields on the school site during regular school hours and at such other times as these fields may be needed for school purposes. Regular school hours are defined as 7:00 AM to 4:00 PM, Monday through Friday for each day that the school(s) is in session. Outside of these periods, the playfields would be available for use by the City of Oxnard Parks and Recreation Department. It is anticipated that these playfields would be primarily scheduled for use for organized sports league games and practices. No site plan has been developed for this school site by the Rio School District at this time. Based on the school facilities requirements of the State Department of Education, a minimum of 12 acres of play fields would be required for the number of students planned for these schools. Depending on the site plans for the elementary and intermediate schools sites, up to 18 acres of play field space could be provided. The amount of community play fields provided on this school site would be greater than the 11 acres required under the City's planing standards for community park land.

In addition to this formal neighborhood and community park space, the Specific Plan includes other less formal park spaces, as shown in **Figure 4.10.4-1**. The largest of these park areas are the Central Park, in Oxnard Boulevard between Northpark and Southpark Drives and the Windrow Park, located

Figure 4.10.4-1
Open Space Master Plan

on the western edge of the Specific Plan Area between Southpark Drive and the elementary school site. In addition, the western elementary school site will contain playfields and other recreational facilities.

These park spaces are distributed throughout the Specific Plan as shown in **Figure 4.10.4-1**. The Specific Plan also includes Pedestrian and Bikeway Circulation Master Plans, shown in **Figures 4.10.4-2** and **4.10.4-3**, that will link these open space areas. Pedestrian sidewalks have also been integrated on both sides of vehicular roadways. Pedestrian crossings will be designated by a variation in roadway surfacing and other indicators to lessen any potential conflicts. As shown, hiking trails are planned around the reclaimed mine pits and through the planned residential neighborhoods. Opportunities are provided to link this system to the regional hiking trail planned offsite along the Santa Clara River Levee. Residential boulevards and roadways will interconnect neighborhood parks and encourage pedestrian access between the parks, the trails within the Specific Plan Area, the Santa Clara River trail and the native riparian woodland planned along the western edge of RiverPark 'B'. The Bikeway Circulation Plan includes Bike Paths, Lanes and Routes throughout the RiverPark Community. As with the pedestrian system, connections to the regional trail along the Santa Clara River are planned.

Consistency with Parks and Recreational Element Plans and Policies

In order to address the findings of the Park and Recreation Element, the City has established a goal to provide a variety of quality recreation facilities and resources for all Oxnard residents. Numerous objectives and policies have been established in support of this goal. The following provides a discussion of the consistency of the proposed project with applicable objectives and policies.

Objectives

- **Expand the variety of park types developed by the City.**
- **Build sufficient Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, and Special Purpose Facilities to meet the needs of the future residents of the City by the year 2020.**
- **Reduce overuse of Neighborhood Parks where possible.**
- **Prior to incorporation of additional land into the City, park provision shall be assessed and potential additional parkland identified.**

Discussion

As discussed above, the Specific Plan would create a variety of neighborhood, community and special purpose facilities linked by pedestrian and bicycle facilities. Sufficient neighborhood and community

park land will be provided to meet the needs of the 7,220 projected residents of the RiverPark Community. The RiverPark Project is consistent with these objectives.

Objectives

- **Create a physical link for pedestrian and bicycle traffic between facilities.**

Discussion

A Landscaped pedestrian walkways and bikeways would be located throughout the Specific Plan Area connecting the recreational facilities to the residential and commercial land uses. The RiverPark Project is consistent with these objectives.

Policies

- **The City shall seek to improve cooperation with various school districts within the City's Sphere of Influence regarding shared use of facilities.**
- **Future park sites should be located next to school sites whenever feasible.**
- **Prior to incorporation of additional land into the City, park provision shall be assessed and potential additional parkland identified.**

Discussion

The RiverPark Specific Plan is consistent with these applicable policies of the Parks and Recreation Element. The project will involve the incorporation of additional land into the City. As discussed above, adequate parkland is being provided. Consistent with these policies, parks are provided next to both planned school sites and joint use of the playfields associated with the elementary/intermediate school site in Planning Districts J and K is planned to provide community playfield facilities.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

The Parks and Recreation Element of the City's 2020 General Plan contains a projection of the amount of neighborhood and community park land needed to meet the needs of the population that would be generated by the development of all residential uses allowed by the 2020 General Plan. This element of the General Plan also defines measures to acquire and develop the required park sites. As discussed above, the RiverPark Specific Plan provides sufficient neighborhood and community park land to meet the needs of the population that will be associated with development of the residential uses allowed

Figure 4.10.4-2
Proposed Pedestrian Trails

Figure 4.10.4-3
Proposed Biking Trails

by the proposed Specific Plan. No cumulative impacts to parks and recreation services, therefore, will result.

MITIGATION MEASURES

No mitigation measures are required as no significant impacts have been identified.

UNAVOIDABLE SIGNIFICANT IMPACTS

No unavoidable significant impacts to park and recreation facilities will result from the RiverPark Project.