

## 3.16 PARKS AND RECREATION

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### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Parks and open space are important land use components in an urban environment, providing both visual relief from the built environment and contributing to residents' quality of life through aesthetic, recreational, and social value. The City's Planning Area consists of its incorporated boundaries and adopted Sphere of Influence (SOI). The County's Planning Area consists of unincorporated land within the One Valley One Visions (OVOV) Planning Area boundaries. Both the City and the County Planning Areas comprise the OVOV Planning Area. The City currently has 246 acres parkland through a combination of neighborhood, community, special use, and regional parks. Additionally, it has 4,092 acres of open space within the City and the adopted SOI.

A parkland standard is the ratio upon which dedications and/or development fees can be based; it creates an obligation to fund improvements that achieve the standard throughout the City. The Quimby Act, established by state law, requires that every city meet the standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The City's existing General Plan requires the City meet a goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents which, is allowed if a city adopts a general plan with the seven required elements (Land Use, Circulation, Housing, Conservation, Open Space, Noise, and Safety) and the proposed General Plan includes all seven elements. This is the highest standard allowed under the Quimby Act. The Quimby Act and the ratio standard for the existing General Plan are incorporated into the City's Municipal Code.

The City is currently deficit in its parkland acreage by 639 acres per the existing General Plan goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 people and deficit by 285 acres per the Quimby Act standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The projected population for the City's Planning Area is 275,000. Based on population projections and the General Plan goals for parkland acreage of 5 acres per 1,000 people, assuming development of all current proposed parkland, the City would be deficit in its parkland acreage by 916 acres and deficit by 366 acres per the Quimby Act standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 people (**Table 3.16-2**). If the City is unable to acquire the needed parkland as the City reaches buildout, then potential impacts on existing parks, trails, and recreation facilities would be significant.

As noted in the Parks and Recreation section of this environmental impact report (EIR), the Quimby Act states that

*The dedication of land, or the payment of fees, or both, shall not exceed the proportionate amount necessary to provide three acres of park area per 1,000 persons residing within a subdivision, unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community park area, exceeds that limit, in which case the legislative body may adopt the calculated amount as a higher standard not to exceed five acres per 1,000 persons residing within a subdivision.*

Therefore, a city or county may require 3 acres of park space per 1,000 residents for new development.<sup>1</sup>

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The Santa Clarita Valley is an irregularly shaped area draining a watershed area of approximately 500 square miles. Its boundaries are defined by significant mountain ridges of varying heights. Major ridgelines of the San Gabriel and Santa Susana Mountains form the Valley boundary to the south, east, and west, separating the area from the San Fernando Valley and metropolitan communities of the Los Angeles Basin to the south. Ridgelines of the Sierra Pelona Mountains define the Valley's northern reach. The physical characteristics of the OVOV Planning Area, in conjunction with the large amount of undeveloped land, afford Valley residents and visitors a wide array of open space that provide plentiful passive and active recreational opportunities. For purposes of this Parks and Recreation section, the definition for active and passive parkland is as follows:

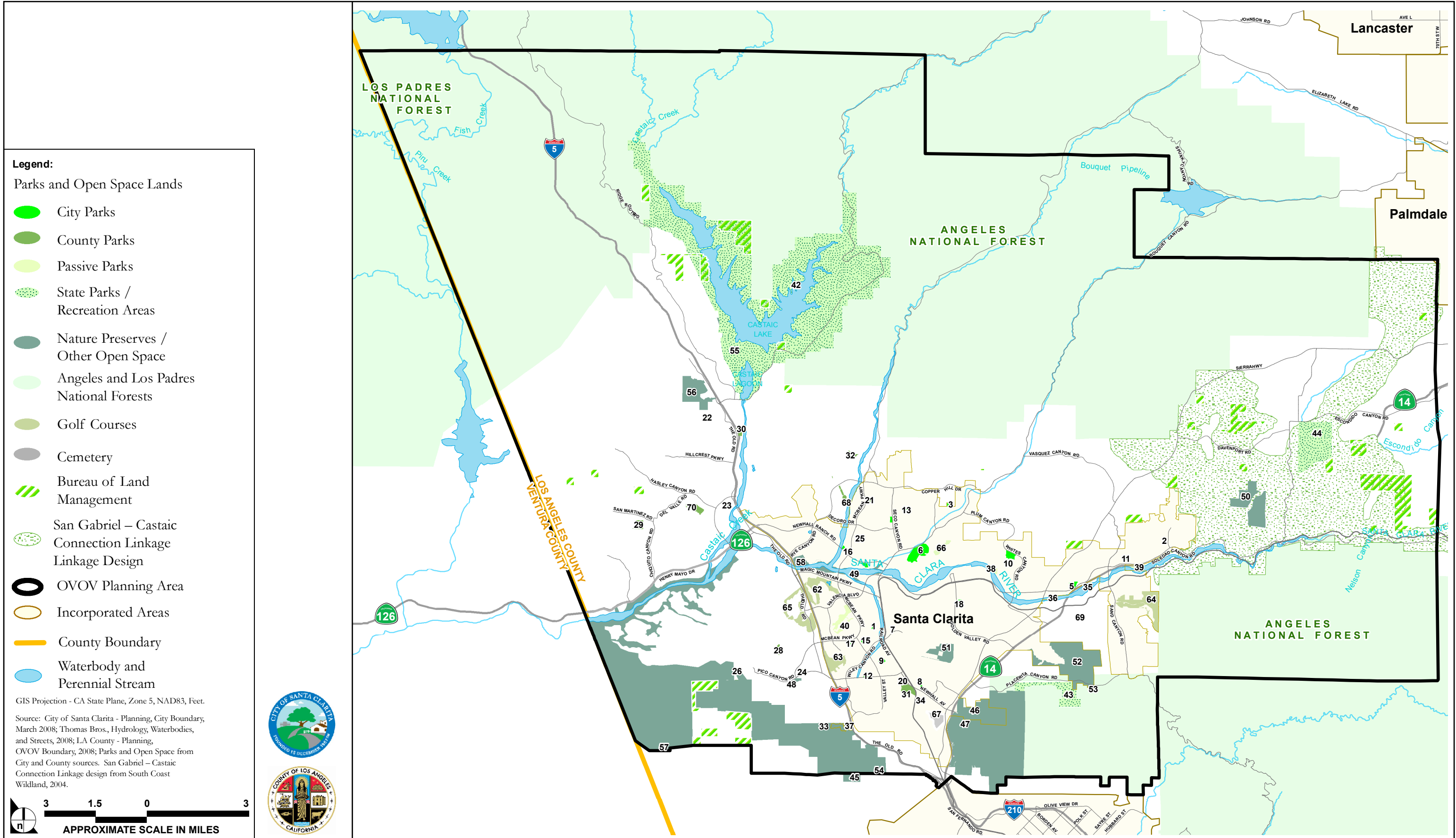
- Active recreation requires the use of organized play areas such as softball, baseball, football, and soccer fields; volleyball, tennis, and basketball courts, swimming, and various forms of children's play equipment.
- Passive recreation typically does not require the use of organized play areas and are often irregular in shape and include open space areas, "pocket" parks, trails, and other unimproved lands. Passive recreation includes activities such as picnicking, and water sports such as fishing, rowing, and canoeing.

### Existing Parks

The City of Santa Clarita Department of Parks, Recreation, and Community Services currently maintains 20 City parks totaling 244 acres. These parks range in size from slightly more than 0.5 acre to 80 acres, and include numerous recreational facilities included in the City's neighborhood, community, special use facilities, and regional parks. In addition, within the City's boundary, the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department owns and maintains the William S. Hart Park, Cheseborough Park and Northbridge Park, an additional 239.2 acres. City parklands are illustrated on **Figure 3.16-1, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Resources**, and summarized in **Table 3.16-1, Existing Parkland in the City's Planning Area**. Locations of parks are identified in **Figure 3.16-1, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Resources**, within the City's Planning Area using the map reference number provided in **Table 3.16-1**. The numbering of parks in **Table 3.16-1** and on **Figure 3.16-1** is not intended to be sequential and represent only those resources located within the City's Planning Area. A complete listing of parks, recreation, and open space resources within the OVOV Planning Area can be found in the proposed General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element (2009).

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<sup>1</sup> California Government Code, Section 66477.

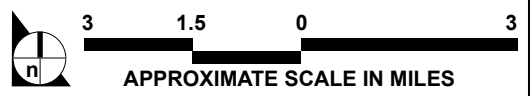


**Legend:**

**Parks and Open Space Lands**

- City Parks
- County Parks
- Passive Parks
- State Parks / Recreation Areas
- Nature Preserves / Other Open Space
- Angeles and Los Padres National Forests
- Golf Courses
- Cemetery
- Bureau of Land Management
- San Gabriel – Castaic Connection Linkage Linkage Design
- OVOV Planning Area
- Incorporated Areas
- County Boundary
- Waterbody and Perennial Stream

GIS Projection - CA State Plane, Zone 5, NAD83, Feet.  
 Source: City of Santa Clarita - Planning, City Boundary, March 2008; Thomas Bros., Hydrology, Waterbodies, and Streets, 2008; LA County - Planning, OVOV Boundary, 2008; Parks and Open Space from City and County sources. San Gabriel – Castaic Connection Linkage design from South Coast Wildland, 2004.



SOURCE: City of Santa Clarita, County of Los Angeles, Valleywide General Plan - March 2009

FIGURE 3.16-1

**Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Resources**

**Table 3.16-1  
Existing Parkland in the City's Planning Area**

<b>City Owned Parkland</b>	<b>Acre</b>	<b>Type</b>	<b>Map Reference</b>
Almendra Park	4.3	Neighborhood	1
Begonias Lane Park	4.2	Neighborhood	2
Circle J Ranch Park	5.3	Neighborhood	7
Creekview Park	5.0	Neighborhood	8
North Oaks Park	2.3	Neighborhood	10
Oak Springs Canyon Park	5.7	Neighborhood	11
Old Orchard Park	5.4	Neighborhood	12
Pamplico Park	7.6	Neighborhood	13
Santa Clarita Park	7.3	Neighborhood	14
Todd Longshore Park	5.6	Neighborhood	19
Valencia Glen Park	7.3	Neighborhood	15
Valencia Meadows Park	6.1	Neighborhood	17
<b>Total Neighborhood Parks</b>	<b>66.1</b>		
Bouquet Canyon Park	10.5	Community	3
Bridgeport Park	16.0	Community	4
Canyon Country Park	19.3	Community	5
Newhall Memorial Park	14.3	Community	9
Valencia Heritage Park	17.2	Community	16
<b>Total Community Parks</b>	<b>77.3</b>		
Veterans Historical Plaza	0.5	Special Use Facility	20
<b>Total Special Use Facility</b>	<b>0.5</b>		
Central Park	80.0	Regional	6
Santa Clarita Sports Complex	22.0	Regional	18
<b>Total Regional Parks</b>	<b>102.0</b>		
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>245.9</b>		

Sources: City of Santa Clarita Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, December 2008;; Table CO-2, Draft Conservation and Open Space Element One Valley, One Vision, 2008.

Note: Locations of parks are identified in **Figure 3.16-1, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Resources**, within the City's Planning Area using the map reference number provided in **Table 3.16-1**. The numbering of parks in **Table 3.16-1** and on **Figure 3.16-1** is not intended to be sequential and represent only those resources located within the City's Planning Area. A complete listing of parks, recreation, and open space resources within the OVOV Planning Area can be found in the proposed General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element.

The City's parks can be categorized into four common types as derived from the National Parks and Recreation Association standards:

- Neighborhood
- Community
- Special Use Facilities
- Regional

### ***Neighborhood Parks***

Neighborhood parks typically provide active recreational areas with fields, courts, and/or some passive areas such as picnic areas. They vary in size from five to 10 acres and are intended to serve a population up to 5,000 within a 0.5-mile radius. Generally, they are located centrally to the residential development served and should not be divided by natural or man-made barriers such as thoroughfares or irrigation or drainage canals. The City has 12 neighborhood parks.

### ***Community Parks***

Community parks are at least 10 to 40 acres in size and are located to serve several neighborhoods of approximately 20,000 people within a 2-mile radius. They can include both passive and active areas and may contain features such as gymnasiums, multi-purpose rooms, classrooms, and offices for recreation staff. Other facilities often found at community parks might include sports fields, sports courts, amphitheatres, group picnic areas, and off-street parking. Large special events such as concerts and festivals might also be held in community parks. The City has five community parks.

### ***Special Use Facilities***

Special Use Facilities generally possess a unique character or function focused on a single type of activity. Vista points, greenbelts, rest areas, or community buildings (without an associated park) might be considered Special Use Facilities. Special Use Facilities are not usually included in the service area analysis for neighborhood parks. The Veterans Historical Plaza is considered a special use facility.

### ***Regional Parks***

Regional parks usually exceed 40 acres. As identified in the City's Master Plan for Parks, Recreation and Community Services, regional parks provide for organized or league sports complexes, individual sports, cultural enrichment, large passive areas, and historical protection and interpretation. These parks are

accessible to larger community populations living within a radius distance of approximately 1 hour's drive. The City's two regional parks are Central Park and the Santa Clarita Sports Complex.

The City's Central Park is a multi-use park, maintained by the City, and is classified as a regional park intended to serve the entire metropolitan region of the Santa Clarita Valley. This park provides facilities for league sports, cultural enrichment, and passive open space.<sup>2</sup>

In addition to acquiring and developing new park land, the City continues to expand and upgrade sports and recreational facilities at its existing parks. In 2007, the City awarded a design contract for a major expansion to the existing sports complex in the Centre Pointe Business Park, which will include an 18,000-square-foot gymnasium, a remodeled and expanded skate park, and multi-use fields on 15 acres. The gymnasium has been designed but construction is on hold. The new 40,000-square-foot skate park opened in March 2008 and the 14 acres of park development is open. A total of approximately 250 parking spaces have been added.<sup>3</sup>

### Natural Open Space Parks

Natural Open Space Park is a new category of park facility that was previously included under Special Use Facilities. Natural Open Space Parks are increasing in the City in terms of quantities, size, and importance, thereby, warranting a new category. Natural Open Space Parks are those in which most of the park is undeveloped; the undeveloped portions contain vegetation, topography, or features which are important to retain in their natural states. Developed areas should be 10 percent or less of the gross area, not including trails. Physical public access to natural areas via trails should be encouraged where feasible and appropriate. For the purposes of defining this park type, "natural" refers to vegetation and land forms indigenous to the area. These areas would be considered part of the developed portion of a Natural Open Space Park.<sup>4</sup>

The Open Space designation is also intended to identify and reserve land for both natural and active open space uses, including

- public and private parks,
- conservancy lands,

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<sup>2</sup> City of Santa Clarita, Conservation and Open Space Element (2009).

<sup>3</sup> City of Santa Clarita, Communication with Tom Reilly, Park Development Administrator and Impact Sciences, September 9, 2009.

<sup>4</sup> City of Santa Clarita, *Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, 2008.

- nature preserves,
- wildlife habitats,
- water bodies and adjacent riparian habitat,
- wetland areas dedicated to open space use,
- drainage easements,
- cemeteries,
- golf courses, and
- other open space areas dedicated for public or private use,

Typical uses may include recreation, horticulture, limited agriculture, animal grazing, and habitat preservation. Accessory uses incidental to the primary use, such as restrooms, visitor centers, paved parking, clubhouses, maintenance structures, and manager's offices, may be allowed provided that such structures do not cover more than 10 percent of the site area, except as otherwise permitted by the reviewing authority pursuant to discretionary review.

The City began planning for preservation of open space following its incorporation in 1987, and since then has acquired more than 3,000 acres of land for the purpose of preservation of natural habitat and open space. Approximately 50 percent of an open space greenbelt around the City's incorporated boundaries was completed in 2007.<sup>5</sup> Nature preserves and other open space areas located within the City boundaries include those listed in **Table 3.16-2, Open Space in the City's Planning Area.**

The City partnered with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC), a state agency in the 2002 joint acquisition of Whitney Canyon. The Conservancy is a state agency created in 1980 under the auspices of the SMMC Agency. It was initially established to preserve land and provide opportunities for recreation in the Santa Monica Mountains and the Rim of the Valley Corridor. The SMMC is primarily responsible for funding acquisition of land with statewide and regional significance.

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<sup>5</sup> Draft Conservation and Open Space Element One Valley One Vision, 2008.

**Table 3.16-2**  
**Open Space in the City's Planning Area<sup>1</sup>**

<b>Passive Parks</b>	<b>Acres</b>		<b>Map Reference</b>
Chevron-Pioneer	4.6	Special Use	34
Mint Canyon	18.6		36
Sand Canyon River	20.0		39
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>43.2</b>		
<b>Open Space</b>	<b>Acres</b>		
Whitney Canyon <sup>2</sup>	442		46
Santa Clara River Open Space	Approximately 2,000		49
Golden Valley Ranch	901		52
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>3,343</b>		
<b>Private Golf Courses</b>	<b>Acres</b>		
Valencia Country Club	194	Private	62
Vista Valencia	63	Private	63
Robinson Ranch	344	Private	64
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>601</b>		
<b>Utility Facilities/Corridors</b>			
Castaic Lake Water Agency Conservatory Garden and Learning Center	48.7	Castaic Lake Water Agency	66
<b>Cemetery</b>			
Eternal Valley Memorial	56	Private	67
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,091.9</b>		

<sup>1</sup> This is the total amount of amount open space located within the City limits and the City Sphere of Influence.

<sup>2</sup> Whitney Canyon is owned by the JPA.

Sources: City of Santa Clarita Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services, December 2008; County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation 2007; Table CO-2, Draft Conservation and Open Space Element One Valley, One Vision, 2008.

## School Recreational Facilities

School facilities provide additional land and facilities for recreational use on a limited basis through a joint-use agreement between the City and school districts. Formal agreements for general public use of school facilities have been entered into by several school districts for additional usable acres. In general, school recreational facilities are open to the public during non-school hours. Elementary schools provide



adjunct recreation opportunities to surrounding neighborhoods during non-education hours. Junior high schools and high schools provide adjunct community-wide facilities for public use.<sup>6</sup>

Joint Use Agreements between the City and school districts describe general responsibilities and benefits of each party regarding the use of both City and school district facilities. The Agreement and state law allow the school district and the City to cooperate with each other for the purposes of improving facilities and for organizing, promoting, and conducting recreation and education programs for children and adults.

There are 38 public school campuses within the City, belonging to five different school districts. Many campuses have outdoor play areas and sports fields that are used by the City, by sports organizations, and by Santa Clarita residents. There are two private college campuses and one public college, College of the Canyon. The City has established Joint Use Agreements to utilize facilities on 14 campuses:

- Arroyo Seco Junior High School
- Bridgeport Elementary School
- Golden Valley High School
- James Foster Elementary School
- La Mesa Junior High School
- Placerita Junior High School
- Rancho Pico Junior High School
- Rio Norte Junior High School
- Saugus High School
- Sierra Vista Junior High School
- Valencia High School
- West Ranch High School
- Canyon High School
- William S. Hart High School

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<sup>6</sup> City of Santa Clarita, *Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, 2008.

Of the above listed schools, Rancho Pico Junior High School and West Ranch High School are not located within the City's Planning Area. Schools not having Joint Use Agreements with the City are not listed above. The school districts are responsible for maintaining school campuses and their associated fields and courts.

## **Undeveloped Park Space**

Planned parklands are summarized in **Table 3.16-3**. Undeveloped park space sites are either owned by the City or are within approved developments with required park acreage.<sup>7</sup> Owned sites are subject to a master planning and environmental process that will determine amount of developable acreage. The following text describes some of the planned parkland from **Table 3.16-3**.

### ***Bridgeport Market Place***

The City will soon own this 5-acre flat property at the intersection of Grandview and Newhall Ranch Road. It is the site of a known earthquake fault and no habitable structures are allowed. It has been used in the past as parking for special events at Bridgeport Park across the street and as a special event staging area (5K runs, art festivals, pet clinics, etc).

### ***Discovery Park***

This is a City-owned 24-plus-acre site with a significant floodplain area. A Master Plan Design and Construction Documents, as well as a California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) document, has been completed for approximately 10 acres of passive river park improvements. Phase I has been completed and consists of a trail connection to Camp Plenty Trailhead.

### ***Rivendale***

This is a City-owned property of 60 acres located at the mouth of Towsley Canyon. It is currently used by the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy (SMMC) as a trailhead for access to the Towsley property. A flood plain, Significant Ecological Area designation, and steep topography are major constraints. Historically, the site was used for equestrian boarding. There are freeway visibility, access, and noise constraints associated with the project site.

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<sup>7</sup> City of Santa Clarita, *Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan*, 2008.

**Table 3.16-3  
Planned Park Lands**

<b>Undeveloped Park Sites</b>	<b>Parcel Size/Acreage</b>	<b>Potential Active Parkland</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Bridgeport Market Place	4.8	4.8	Neighborhood (special use)
Discovery Park	24	10	Community
Rivendale	60	20	Regional
River Village Park	Approximately 28.2	5	Neighborhood
Round Mountain	142	10	Community
South Fork Corridor	106	10	
Placerita Canyon (SDI)	140	75	Regional
Undeveloped portion of Central Park	28	28	Regional
Future Phases of Santa Clarita Complex	30	30	Regional
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>563</b>	<b>193</b>	
<b>Natural Open Space Parks</b>	<b>Parcel Size/Acreage</b>	<b>Potential Active Parkland</b>	
Colmer Property	40	0	
Gates King Industrial Center Park	208	0	
Quigley Canyon	158	20	
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>406</b>	<b>20</b>	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>969</b>	<b>213</b>	

Source: City of Santa Clarita. Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. 2008.

### ***River Village Park***

This 29-acre site is dedicated to the City (subject to City accepting improvements). Construction plans for 5-acre active park features are being reviewed by City staff. The remainder of the site has both natural and manufactured slopes with oak trees and a trail connection to Newhall Ranch Road. The expected construction date is 2010.

### ***Round Mountain***

The City will soon own this property at the intersection of Interstate 5 and the Santa Clara River, as part of a negotiation to provide mitigation for the River Village Project. The floodplain, limited vehicular access, existing utility corridor, and potential endangered species are possible constraints. The upland

area is bisected by Santa Clara River Trail Segment One. There may be potential for limited access from the industrial park to the north.

### ***South Fork Corridor***

The City will soon own property both in and alongside the South Fork of the Santa Clara River. The existing South Fork Trail runs the length of the property. It was also acquired as part of a negotiation for the River Village Project.

### **State Parks and Recreation Areas**

The two state parks located within the OVOV Planning Area that are used by City residents are Castaic Lake Recreation Area and Placerita Canyon State Park. These parklands, operated by the County of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department, total approximately 8,840 acres.

#### ***Castaic Lake State and County Recreation Area***

The 8,700-acre Castaic Lake State and County Recreation Area is a multi-use park located in the unincorporated area of Castaic, and it includes 2,600 surface acres of water contained in an upper and lower reservoir system. Castaic Lake reservoir and surrounding land is owned by the state; however, the County leases the land and operates the upper lake, Castaic Lake Reservoir, and the lower lake, Castaic Lagoon. Facilities at the upper lake include major boat ramps and supporting facilities with fishing, boating, water, and jet skiing, and parking for boats and trailers. Development around the 180-acre Castaic Lagoon includes major picnic areas for groups and families, swimming beaches, parking areas, non-motorized boat facilities, and general day-use recreation facilities, such as comfort stations.

#### ***Placerita Canyon Open Space***

Placerita Canyon Open Space is located east of the Antelope Valley Freeway and is accessible from Placerita Canyon Road. It contains a nature center, picnic areas, overnight and day camping facilities, a children's play area, hiking trails, and an equestrian campground.

### **Federal Land**

Angeles National Forest and Los Padres National Forest lands exist within and adjacent to the OVOV Planning Area. Some of the facilities in the national forests include hiking trails and campgrounds.

### ***Angeles National Forest***

A small portion of the City's Planning Area (approximately 100 acres) is located within the Angeles National Forest. The Angeles National Forest covers 693,000 acres of land area in the San Gabriel Mountains, which constitutes approximately one-quarter of the land located within Los Angeles County. The US Forest Service administers the National Forest, which is an agency of the US Department of Agriculture. The Angeles National Forest is supervised in districts. The Angeles National Forest offers a wide range of camping (with fees) and picnicking facilities. In addition, there are hundreds of miles of trails in the forest; some of which are not located within the City, but would potentially connect to trails within the City (see discussion on trails below). There are four reservoirs in the Angeles National Forest, including Castaic and Pyramid Lakes (5 miles northeast and 18 miles north of the site, respectively) providing water skiing, fishing, sail boarding, canoeing, jet skiing, and swimming activities. The water reservoirs charge entrance fees, as well as boat launching, boat rental, and overnight camping fees. In addition to the identified recreational opportunities, the Angeles National Forest provides a home for an array of wildlife. The Angeles National Forest contains a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail.

### ***Los Padres National Forest***

The nearly 2 million-acre Los Padres National Forest is located primarily in the northern section of Ventura County. However, a portion of the Los Padres National Forest crosses the Los Angeles/Ventura County line, 8 miles north of State Route 126 (SR-126). Various recreation facilities are provided in the Los Padres National Forest, include hiking, equestrian and off-road vehicle trails, and camping areas (with fees) accessible by road and trail. There are 57 dispersed trail camps, 19 developed family campgrounds, and 1 developed group campground. Many miles of recreation roads are utilized by visitors as scenic drives and by off-highway vehicles. The forest has inventoried 374 miles of trails, including 18 miles of the Gene-Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trail, which begins at Reyes Creek Campground and ends at Lion Campground. Other areas found in the Forest include the approximately 9,500-acre Dick Smith Wilderness and the 53,000-acre Sespe Condor Sanctuary (both located in Ventura County).

### **Commercial Recreational Facilities**

Private facilities in the OVOV Planning Area include the Valencia Country Club and golf courses such as the Vista Valencia Golf Course, Robinson Ranch Golf Course, the TPC Golf Course, and The Greens. Mountasia is also located in the OVOV Planning Area. Other facilities such as equestrian ranches and riding facilities are located in the County's OVOV Planning Area.

## Regional Trails

Various state trails comprise part of the trail system within the OVOV Planning Area, which are maintained and operated by the City and the County. Each jurisdiction bears responsibility for trail operation within its jurisdictional boundaries. The Santa Clarita Valley Trails Advisory Council (SCVTAC) worked on revisions to the Master Plan of the regional trail system with the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation. Working in partnership with the SMMC and Rivers and Mountains Conservancy (RMC), the City and County have developed a system of parks, trails and preserve areas that form the Rim of the Valley Trail Corridor. The Rim of the Valley encompasses the Santa Clara River Valley in addition to the San Fernando, La Crescenta, and Simi Valleys.

The Rim of the Valley Trail is proposed to be 200 miles in length and is located within the Rim of the Valley Corridor. The trail, as proposed, is located on both public and private land. Much of the trail has not been constructed and remains as a proposed trail. Currently, only 10 miles have been acquired in the Santa Susana Mountains in addition to the 47-mile Backbone Trail located in the Santa Monica Mountains. The regional trail corridor is intended to ultimately connect the Santa Clarita communities and County unincorporated areas with diverse recreational opportunities in both the OVOV Planning Area and the surrounding region. The trail system is accessible to equestrians, hikers, joggers, and bicyclists. In addition to providing both leisure and practical commuting opportunities, trails can also protect and preserve access to regional recreational assets such as rivers, mountain areas and national and state forest areas. For a more detailed discussion on the City's Bikeway Master Plan, please refer to **Section 3.2, Transportation and Circulation**, of this EIR.

Additionally, the trails in the OVOV Planning Area are part of a larger National Scenic trail system, the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT), which spans 2,650 miles from Mexico to Canada. The PCT lies west of the Angeles Crest National Scenic Byway and descends to Highway 14 at Agua Dulce, traversing the Sierra Pelona, and continuing north across the San Andreas Fault Zone where it climbs out of the OVOV Planning Area to the Sierra Nevadas.

### *State Trails*

Two of the larger trails in the system are described below, followed by a listing of other state trails.

#### **Pacific Crest Trail**

This segment of the Pacific Crest Trail is 160 miles located along the Sierra Pelona Mountain Range, providing views of the Antelope Valley, various terrain, vegetation wilderness, and the San Gabriel

Mountains. Campgrounds, picnic areas, and staging areas are available and managed by the US Forest Service (USFS).

### **Santa Clara River Trail**

The Santa Clara River has been primarily preserved as a Significant Ecological Area (SEA) and as open space to provide flood protection.<sup>8</sup> The State of California recently adopted the Santa Clara River as a State Recreation Trail Corridor. Its preservation has allowed for the development of a 14-mile-long multi-use trail following the river's banks from Valencia to Canyon Country, which is the backbone to the Valley's larger trail system.

### **Other State Trails**

- William S. Hart Park Trail 2.8 miles
- Gavin Canyon Trail 8.0 miles
- Pico Canyon Trail 9.0 miles
- Sand Canyon Trail 4.0 miles
- Castaic Creek Trail 5.0 miles
- Castaic Lake Trail 2.0 miles
- Bouquet Canyon Trail 7.0 miles
- Placerita Creek Trail 6.0 miles
- Acton Community Trail 22.0 miles
- Northside Connector Trail 6.5 miles
- Vasquez Loop Trail 17.3 miles
- Hasley Canyon Trail 3.4 miles
- Mint Canyon Trail 3.7 miles

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<sup>8</sup> SCGP, Parks and Recreation Element/Open Space and Conservation Element, June 25, 1991.

## ***City-Operated Trails***

The City of Santa Clarita maintains 38.0 miles of trails. The locations of existing trails within the City are depicted in **Figure 3.16-2, Master Plan of Trails**. A backbone system is comprised of major linkages along the South Fork of the Santa Clara River, Bouquet Canyon, and Placerita Canyon areas.<sup>9</sup> Several of the City's trail corridors are intended for multi-use and bicycle use. Multi-use trails are paved and unpaved and are designated to accommodate equestrians and pedestrians. Class 1 Bike Paths are located in a separate right-of-way dedicated to pedestrian and bicycle use (see **Section 3.2, Transportation and Circulation**, for a discussion of bike paths). These trails and their locations are fully described in the May 2006 City of Santa Clarita Trails publication. This publication is projected to be updated and available in 2009.

### **Santa Clara River Trail**

The City of Santa Clarita has adopted the state and County's plan for trails along the Santa Clara River. This project is a 14.0-mile-long trail along the riverbanks from Interstate 5 that includes a Class I bicycle facility and also accommodates pedestrians and equestrians. Its easternmost terminus will provide an integral link with existing and planned regional trails within the County of Los Angeles, including the Pacific Crest Trail in eastern Santa Clarita Valley. The trail is part of the Santa Clarita Valley Areawide Plan for integrated trails.<sup>10</sup>

### **South Fork Trail**

This 3.4-mile trail runs along the South Fork of the Santa Clara River from Newhall at Orchard Village Road north to the Santa Clara River Trail in Valencia. An extension of this trail from Orchard Village Road to Towsley Canyon Park is proposed.

### **Proposed Planned Trails and Trailheads**

The following is a summary of the planned trails and trailheads for the City.

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<sup>9</sup> SCGP, Park and Recreation.

<sup>10</sup> Los Angeles County Department of Regional Planning, Santa Clarita Valley Areawide Plan (Los Angeles, California: Comprehensively Updated December 6, 1990), p. 62.



**Table 3.16-4  
Planned Trails and Trailheads**

<b>Trails</b>	<b>Acres</b>	<b>Classification</b>
Golden Valley Ranch Trailhead	2.0	
Iron Canyon Trail	1 (mile)	Multi-Use
Magic Mountain Trailhead	2.0	Trestle
Sand Canyon Trail	0.05	Phase III
Santa Clara River	1.5	Segments 4 & 5
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.55 (1 mile)</b>	

*Source: City of Santa Clarita. Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan. 2008. Exhibit 5.4-1.*

## REGULATORY FRAMEWORK

### State Regulations

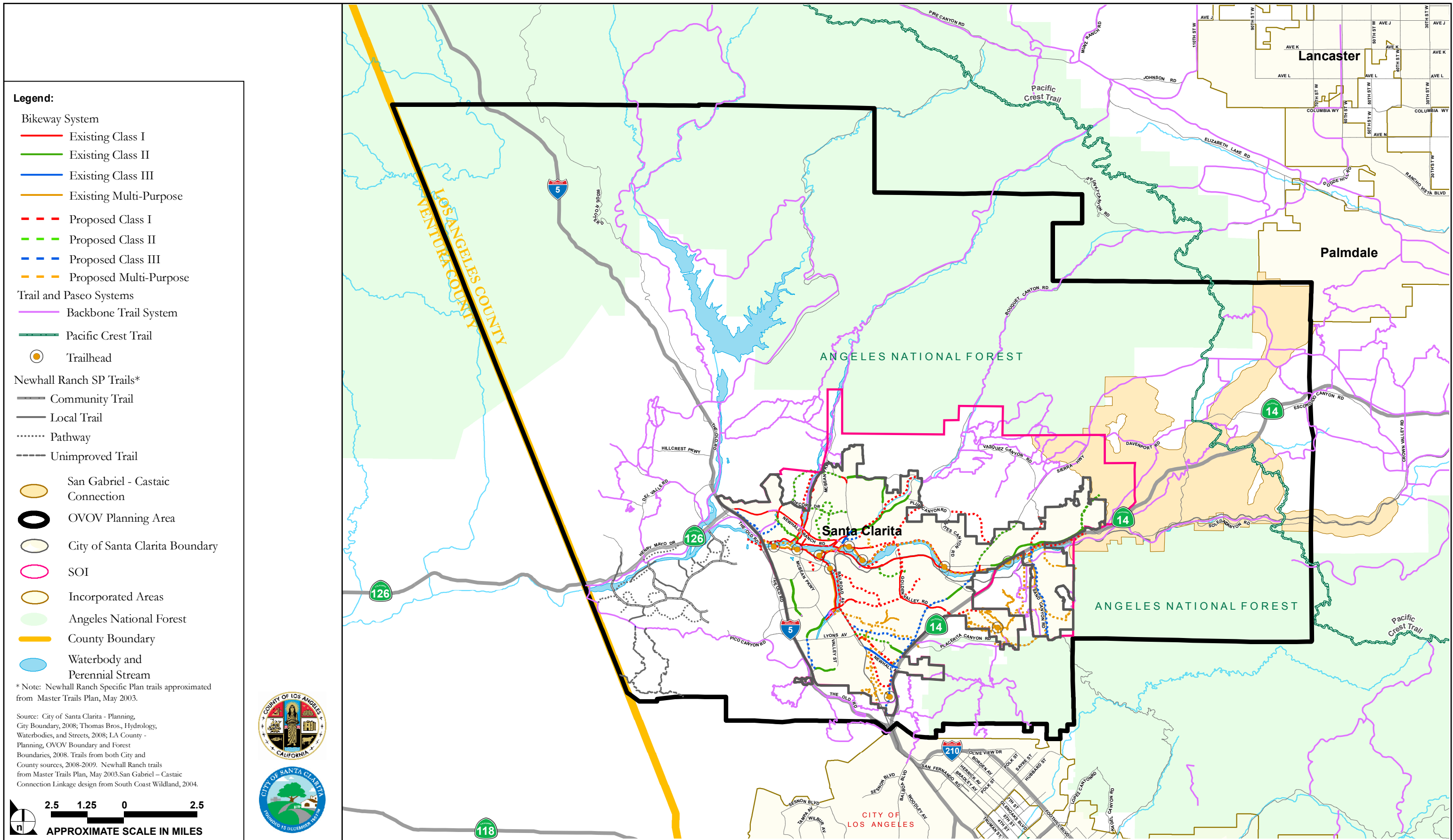
#### *Quimby Act*

The Quimby Act<sup>11</sup> authorizes local agencies to establish an ordinance requiring new development to pay a fee or dedicate land for park and recreation facilities. Revenues generated through the Quimby Act cannot be used for the operation and maintenance of park facilities. To impose Quimby Act fees, the county or city must have a general plan or a specific plan that contains policies and standards for park facilities. Quimby Act fees must "bear a reasonable relationship" to the proposed subdivision. Counties and cities can use the Quimby Act fees only for developing new parks or rehabilitating parks that serve that subdivision.

The primary instrument for protecting and preserving parkland is the State Public Park Preservation Act.<sup>12</sup> Under the Public Resource Code, cities and counties may not acquire any real property that is in use as a public park for any non-park use unless compensation or land, or both, are provided to replace the parkland acquired. This provides no net loss of parkland and facilities.

<sup>11</sup> California Government Code, Section 66477. "Quimby Act."

<sup>12</sup> California Public Resources Code, Section 5400-5409.



SOURCE: City of Santa Clarita, County of Los Angeles, Valleywide General Plan - August 2009

FIGURE 3.16-2

Master Plan of Trails

## Local

### *City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code*

#### **Park Fees or Dedication Requirements**

The ordinance states that at the time of approval of the tentative tract map, tentative parcel map, or vesting map, the Planning Commission shall determine, pursuant to Section 16.15.050,

*Where a park or recreation facility has been designated in the Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan, and is to be located in whole or in part within the proposed subdivision to serve the immediate and future needs of the residents of the subdivision, the subdivider shall dedicate land for a local park sufficient in size and topography that bears a reasonable relationship to serve the present and future needs of the residents of the subdivision. The amount of land to be provided shall be determined pursuant to the following formula:*

- *Average number of persons/unit: 3 acres = minimum acreage dedication per 1,000 persons*

the land required for dedication, in-lieu fee payment, or combination of both. As a condition of approval of a final map, the subdivider shall dedicate land, pay a fee in lieu thereof, or both, at the option of the City, for neighborhood and community parks or recreational purposes in accordance with the standards herein, the General Plan, and the formula contained in this section. However, only the payment of fees shall be required in subdivisions of 50 or fewer parcels, except that when a condominium project, stock cooperative or a community apartment project exceeds 50 dwelling units, dedication of land may be required notwithstanding that the number of parcels may be less than 50.

It is found and determined that the public interest, convenience, health, welfare, and safety require that a minimum of 3 acres of property for each 1,000 persons residing within this City be devoted to neighborhood and community park recreational purposes.

The City currently uses a goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents as per the proposed General Plan **Policy CO 9.1.1**.

#### **Park Definition**

Per the City's Municipal Code, "Park" means every park, roadside rest, golf course, riding and hiking trail, open space easement to which the public has an unrestricted right of access and use for park or

recreation purposes, and every other recreation facility owned, managed or controlled by the City and under the jurisdiction of the Director.<sup>13</sup>

### ***Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan***

The City of Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan's (2008) main purpose is to provide a realistic guide for the creative, orderly development and management of parks, recreation facilities and programs for the City, now and into the future. The Master Plan is an implementation tool of the General Plan, providing strategies for addressing the General Plan's Vision Statement, as well as goals and policies based on current analysis and community input.

### **THRESHOLDS OF SIGNIFICANCE**

The *State CEQA Guidelines* identifies certain criteria for determining whether any significant parks and recreation resources will result with the implementation of the OVOV General Plan:

- Would the general plan increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; and
- Does the general plan include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

### **Impact Analysis**

This impact analysis section evaluates the potential effects of the proposed General Plan goals, objectives, and policies on existing parks and recreational facilities within the City's Planning Area using the *State CEQA Guidelines* thresholds of significance.

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<sup>13</sup> City of Santa Clarita, Municipal Code, Section 14.020.010, "Definitions."

**Impact 3.16-1**            **Would the general plan increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that potential substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.**

### **Parkland**

The City's anticipated growth and development per the proposed General Plan would increase the demand for some of the existing parks and recreational facilities, and would also require the construction of new parks and new recreational facilities. It is not anticipated that substantial physical deterioration of existing facilities would occur with implementation of the proposed General Plan (**Policies CO 9.1.6, CO 9.1.14**). Per **Table 3.16-3**, the City has planned for a combination of regional, community, neighborhood, and natural open space parkland totaling 213 acres, which would supplement the City's existing parkland summarized in **Table 3.16-1 (Goal CO 9, Objective CO 9.1, Policies CO 9.1.1 through CO 9.1.3, CO 9.1.13)**.

Per **Goal CO 9**, the City should strive to achieve equitable distribution of park, recreational, and trail facilities to serve all areas of the City and the adopted SOI. **Objective CO 9.1** would require that priority be given to locations that are not now adequately served and that new parklands include a diversity of parks. This objective would minimize overuse of existing facilities and their substantial physical deterioration with buildout of the proposed General Plan, particularly if new development projects provide fair share towards construction of these parklands and that construction is phased to meet the needs of residents (**Policies CO 9.1.9, CO 9.1.10, CO 9.1.12, CO 9.1.14**).

Park locations should also consider potential adverse impacts on adjacent development from noise, lights, flying balls, traffic, special events, and other operational activities and uses as well as impacts on public safety and welfare (**Policies CO 9.1.11 and CO 9.1.12**). Additionally, construction, development, and acquisition of new parkland should be conducted to make available park and recreation facilities for the very young and the very old (**Policy CO 9.1.8**) and to provide a wide variety of recreational programs geared to all ages and abilities, including passive, active, educational, and cultural programs (**Policy CO 9.1.15**).

In conformance with the Quimby Act, the City's park fee ordinance requires dedication or payment of in-lieu fees for a minimum of 3 acres of parkland for each 1,000 residents. The proposed General Plan requires a goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 population throughout the OVOV Planning Area (**Policy CO 9.1.1**). **Table 3.16-5** describes the existing population, existing amount of parkland, and the

recommended goal of parkland to comply with the Quimby Act. It also includes the projected build out, projected population, and the surplus or deficit of parkland for the City's Planning Area.

**Table 3.16-5  
Parkland Acreage Goal and Quantities**

Year	Population	Acres Demanded (Based on 5 Ac/1000)	Existing Parkland (Ac)	Surplus or (-) Deficit
1987 <sup>6</sup>	115,000*	575 <sup>1</sup>	57 <sup>3</sup>	-518
2007 <sup>6</sup>	177,045	885 <sup>1</sup>	246 <sup>4</sup>	-639
Year	Population	Acres Demanded (Based on 3 Ac/1000)	Existing Parkland (Ac)	Surplus or (-) Deficit
2007	177,045	531 <sup>2</sup>	246 <sup>4</sup>	-285
Year	Population	Acres Demanded (Based on 5 Ac/1000)	Existing and Proposed Parkland (Ac)	Surplus or (-) Deficit
<b>Build out (2030)</b>	275,000**	1,375 <sup>1</sup>	459 <sup>5</sup>	-916
Year	Population	Acres Demanded (Based on 3 Ac/1000)	Existing and Proposed Parkland (Ac)	Surplus or (-) Deficit
<b>Build out (2030)</b>	275,000**	825 <sup>2</sup>	459 <sup>5</sup>	-366

\* Approximate

\*\* Approximate anticipated build out population per the City's General Plan.

<sup>1</sup> Based on the goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

<sup>2</sup> Based on the goal of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

<sup>3</sup> City of Santa Clarita, Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan Update, 2008, Exhibit 3.5-1.

<sup>4</sup> Based on the total from Table 3.16-1.

<sup>5</sup> Based on total from Tables 3.16-1 and 3.16-3 (potential active parkland).

<sup>6</sup> These figures only include the City and buildout includes the SOI and the City.

The City has not achieved its goal for parkland acreage per the existing General Plan requirements of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The City's 246 acres of existing parkland fall 639 acres short of the General Plan goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents and 285 acres short of the Quimby Act standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The projected estimated population for the City's Planning Area is 275,000. Based on population projections and the General Plan goal for parkland acreage of 5 acres per 1,000 people, the City would be deficit in its parkland acreage by 916 acres and deficit by 366 acres per the Quimby Act standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. Existing and proposed parkland acreage in **Table 3.16-5** is derived from **Tables 3.16-1** and **3.16-3** of this EIR section.

The City is currently in a state of deficit and with the projected buildout population would remain in a state of deficit unless the City acquires the needed amount of parkland. Should there be a lack of funding to open the planned parks, the City could work with the County and other agencies to make use of their facilities (**Policy CO 9.1.2, CO 9.1.4**). Additionally, the City and County could extend the hours of use for the parks and facilities (**Policy CO 9.1.6**), which would help reduce potential impacts to a significant level by extending the hours of operation at facilities like the Castaic Sports Complex.

### **Open Space**

The open space located within the City Planning Area is listed in **Table 3.16-2** and totals approximately 4,133 acres (**Goal CO 10, Objective CO 10.1, and Policy CO 10.1.7**). The open space designation also identifies and reserves land for both natural and active open space uses. As mentioned above there have been over 3,000 acres acquired since 1987 around and adjacent to the City's Planning Area to be preserved and maintained for the City. This would include the identified cultural and historical resources in **Section 3.8, Cultural Resources (Policy CO 10.1.4)**.

The designation of the open space areas around and within the City's Planning Area would make use of areas that have been designated to defer development. These areas include slopes that are generally greater than 20 percent, areas designated as 100-year floodplains along the Santa Clara River, and any areas identified within the City's Municipal Code that would potentially pose an adverse impact to the risk of injury, life, and loss to people and structures (**Policy CO 10.1.5 and Policy 10.1.6**). The proposed General Plan requires no building permit may be issued, no subdivision map approved, and no zoning ordinance adopted that is not consistent with the open space plan contained in the Conservation and Open Space element (**Policy 10.1.6**).

The open space acquisition plan would pursue the planned open space and planned park areas to ensure that the City Planning Area is surrounded by greenbelts (**Policy CO 10.1.10, CO 10.1.13**). Additionally, the City would need to identify, pursue, and ensure adequate funding sources to maintain open space areas (**Policy CO 10.1.12**). The City could partner with conservation agencies and other entities to acquire and maintain open space, combining funding and other resources for joint-use projects, where appropriate (**Policy CO 10.1.11**). In conformance with state law, ensure that any action by which open space land is acquired or disposed of, restricted, or regulated, should be consistent with Conservation and Open Space Element (**Policy 10.1.15**) and that all development is consistent with the open space plan contained in this element (**Policy 10.1.16**). Additionally, the City should ensure that the open space acquisition plan developed pursuant to the 2007 Open Space District formation conforms to General Plan goals and objectives (**Policy CO 10.1.10**). The open space policies of the proposed General Plan also allow

alternative energy projects in areas designated for open space, where it would be consistent with other uses and values.

### **Development Projects**

**Objective CO 10.2** ensures the inclusion of adequate open space within development projects. **Policies CO 10.2.1 through CO 10.2.5** encourage provisions of vegetated open space of a development project's gross site, which may include shallow wetlands and ponds, drought resistant landscaping and pedestrian hardscape that includes a vegetated area (**Policy CO 10.2.1**), encourage that open space provided within development projects be usable and accessible (**Policy CO 10.2.2**), where feasible create development with shared amenities and green spaces (**Policy CO 10.2.3**); incorporate site features such as significant trees, vegetation, terrain, or water features (**Policy CO 10.2.4**), and allow density transfers and clustering to encourage retention of open space (**Policy CO 10.2.5**).

### ***Proposed General Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies***

The proposed General Plan includes the following goals, objectives, and policies to reduce or minimize the effects of future growth on the City's parks and recreational facilities. As specified in these policies, new development shall also meet the parkland requirements as established in the Quimby Act and City enabling ordinances.

**Goal CO 9:** Equitable distribution of park, recreational, and trail facilities to serve all areas and demographic needs of existing and future residents.

**Objective CO 9.1:** Develop new parklands throughout the Santa Clarita Valley, with priority given to locations that are not now adequately served, and encompassing a diversity of park types and functions (including passive and active areas) in consideration of the recreational needs of residents to be served by each park, based on the following guidelines:

**Policy CO 9.1.1:** Common park standards shall be developed and applied throughout the Santa Clarita Valley, consistent with community character objectives, with a goal of five acres of parkland per 1,000 population.

**Policy CO 9.1.2:** A range of parkland types, sizes, and uses shall be provided to accommodate recreational and leisure activities.



- Policy CO 9.1.3:** Provide local and community parks within a reasonable distance of residential neighborhoods.
- Policy CO 9.1.4:** Explore and implement opportunities to share facilities with school districts, utility easements, flood control facilities, and other land uses, where feasible.
- Policy CO 9.1.6:** Continue to upgrade and expand existing facilities to enhance service to residents, including extension of hours through lighted facilities, where appropriate.
- Policy CO 9.1.8:** Make available easily accessible park and recreation facilities throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.
- Policy CO 9.1.9:** Ensure that new development projects provide a fair share towards park and recreational facilities, phased to meet needs of residents as dwelling units become occupied, pursuant to the Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) and local ordinances as applicable.
- Policy CO 9.1.10:** Where appropriate, use flexible planning and zoning tools to obtain adequate park and open space land, including but not limited to specific plans, development agreements, clustering, and transfer of development rights.
- Policy CO 9.1.11:** Locate and design parks to address potential adverse impacts on adjacent development from noise, lights, flying balls, traffic, special events, and other operational activities and uses.
- Policy CO 9.1.12:** Establish minimum design standards for both public and private parks to provide for public safety and welfare through lighting, access, crime prevention through design, equipment, visibility, and other aspects of design.
- Policy CO 9.1.13:** Provide passive areas for natural habitat, meditation, bird-watching, and similar activities in parks, where feasible and

appropriate, including meditation gardens, wildflower and butterfly gardens, botanic gardens, and similar features.

**Policy CO 9.1.14:** Ensure adequate park maintenance, and encourage programs for volunteers to assist in maintaining local parks, where feasible and appropriate.

**Policy CO 9.1.15:** Provide a wide variety of recreational programs geared to all ages and abilities, including passive, active, educational, and cultural programs.

**Goal CO 10:** Preservation of open space to meet the community's multiple objectives for resource preservation.

**Objective CO 10.1:** Identify areas throughout the Santa Clarita Valley which should be preserved as open space in order to conserve significant resources for long-term community benefit.

**Policy CO 10.1.4:** Maintain and acquire, where appropriate, open space to preserve cultural and historical resources.

**Policy CO 10.1.5:** Maintain open space corridors along canyons and ridgelines as a way of delineating and defining communities and neighborhoods, providing residents with access to natural areas, and preserving scenic beauty.

**Policy CO 10.1.6:** Delineate open space uses within hazardous areas to protect public health and safety, which may include areas subject to seismic rupture, flooding, wildfires, or unsafe levels of noise or air pollution.

**Policy CO 10.1.7:** Acquire adequate open space for recreational uses, coordinating location and type of open space with master plans for trails and parks.

**Policy CO 10.1.10:** Ensure that the open space acquisition plan developed pursuant to the 2007 Open Space District formation conforms to General Plan goals and objectives.

- Policy CO 10.1.11:** Partner with conservation agencies and other entities to acquire and maintain open space, combining funding and other resources for joint-use projects, where appropriate.
- Policy CO 10.1.12:** Identify, pursue, and ensure adequate funding sources to maintain open space areas.
- Policy CO 10.1.13:** Provide reasonable accommodation to ensure that residents throughout the Santa Clarita Valley have equal access to open space areas, in consideration of the health benefits to residents from access to nature.
- Policy CO 10.1.15:** In conformance with State law, ensure that any action by which open space land is acquired or disposed of, restricted, or regulated, be consistent with the open space plan contained in this Element.
- Policy CO 10.1.16:** In conformance with State law, ensure that all development is consistent with the open space plan contained in this Element.
- Policy CO 10.1.17:** Allow alternative energy projects in areas designated for open space, where consistent with other uses and values.
- Objective CO 10.2:** Ensure the inclusion of adequate open space within development projects.
- Policy CO 10.2.1:** Encourage provision of vegetated open space on a development project's site, which may include shallow wetlands and ponds, drought tolerant landscaping, and pedestrian hardscape that includes vegetated areas.
- Policy CO 10.2.2:** Encourage that open space provided within development projects be usable and accessible, rather than configured in unusable strips and left-over remnants, and that open space areas are designed to connect to each other and to adjacent open spaces, to the extent reasonable and practical.
- Policy CO 10.2.3:** Where feasible, integrate open space areas with neighboring uses and parcels, to create shared amenities and green spaces.

**Policy CO 10.2.4:** Seek opportunities to incorporate site features into the open space of a project design, which may include significant trees, vegetation, terrain, or water features, to provide thermal, acoustic, and aesthetic benefits.

**Policy CO 10.2.5:** Where appropriate, allow density transfers and clustering to encourage retention of open space provided all residential lots meet the applicable minimum lot size requirements of the Land Use Element and the Zoning Ordinance.

### *Effectiveness of General Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies*

The above goals, objectives, and policies will help ensure that the City's future residents would be provided with adequate parks and recreation facilities to meet the proposed General Plan goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Currently, with the City's combined existing and proposed parkland of 459 acres, an additional 916 acres of parkland would need to be obtained. These goals, objectives, and policies require that new development, along with the guidance of the City, design, implement, and ensure that the potential future residents have adequate opportunities to be able to use the recreational facilities, parks, and trails. The incorporation of multi-use facilities, extended hours of operation, and joint-use between the City, County, and other agencies would ensure that City's future residents have adequate park space and adequate facilities. Additionally, policies require use of appropriate zoning tools to obtain adequate park and open land as well as requiring the City to identify and ensure adequate funding to maintain open space areas. A possible route to meet the goal of the proposed General Plan would be to use the existing and planned open space areas in the following manner:

- There are 10 identified undeveloped park sites totaling 213 acres within the City of Santa Clarita, Table 3.16-3. Depending upon specific design and public process outcomes for each site, it is likely that most opportunity sites will be considered parks for which full acreage credit is given when developed. Some opportunity park sites may ultimately be considered "natural open space parks," a different type of park for which a maximum of 10 percent acreage credit can be given because a maximum of 10 percent of a natural open space park can be improved for active recreation. Some acquisition sites can be developed as neighborhood or community parks, some as natural open space parks. The gross acreage of the acquisition targets is more than 1,000 acres. Priority should be given to meeting the current acreage deficit of 916 acres.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> City of Santa Clarita, *Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan Update*, 2008.

The following funding strategy is currently being used to acquire and develop open space and parkland.

- The Santa Clarita Open Space and Acquisition Plan (OSAP) includes parcels within the boundaries of the service area that are considered to receive special benefit from the open space preservation district (District). The total area of the District is 118,314 acres. Of that area, 84,602 acres, or approximately 71.5 percent, is outside the City's Planning Area. It provides planning and administration for the acquisition and construction of parks, open space, trails, and grounds as well as the operations and maintenance supplies to maintain the parks, facilities, trails, and open space. In addition, this program works with the community on the master plans and designs of various park facilities, and oversees the implementation of these designs by managing the construction process. By having this new District expand the City's existing Program, the City is able to get credit for the facilities and services relating to parks and open space it is currently funding. The District is proposed to be in place for 30 years.<sup>15</sup>

With the acquisition of 916 acres of parkland and use of the OSAP over the buildout period, impacts on parks and recreational facilities would be less than significant, particularly if the acquisition for parks and recreation is coordinated with the City's growth and development.

### Plan to Plan Analysis

The City's 246 acres of existing parkland falls 639 acres short of the General Plan goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents and 285 acres short of the Quimby Act standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 people. The projected estimated population for the City's Planning Area is 275,000. Based on population projections and the General Plan goal for parkland acreage of 5 acres per 1,000 people, the City would be deficit in its parkland acreage by 916 acres and deficit by 366 acres per the Quimby Act standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 people under the proposed General Plan. However, the proposed General Plan has more definitive strategies (OSAP) to acquire and develop parkland when compared the existing General Plan. Consequently, there are fewer impacts to parklands associated with the proposed General Plan, when compared to the existing General Plan.

**Impact 3.15-2                      Does the General Plan include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have a potentially adverse physical effect on the environment.**

The demand on recreational facilities such as sports fields and courts will also increase with buildout of the proposed General Plan. **Policy CO 9.1.5** promotes development of more playfields for youth sports activities, in conjunction with tournament facilities where needed. Optimizing opportunities to share facilities is provided in **Policy CO 9.1.4**. As the City Planning Area reaches buildout there is the

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<sup>15</sup> City of Santa Clarita, *Open Space Preservation District Engineer's Report*, 2007.

opportunity to meet the demand of recreational facilities with the planned parks. As projects are planned, their design will be refined in accordance with the anticipated demands on new athletic fields, community input, cost considerations, and the potential environmental impacts, at that time.

Depending upon the location and function of these new parks or trails, there is potential for park/trail construction or expansion to create adverse physical effects on the environment. The dedication of open space and the developer impact fees (i.e., the Quimby Act) would set aside funding to connect trails throughout the City Planning Area. These potential physical impacts on the environment would be mitigated on a project-by-project basis in order to meet the current guidelines.

**Figure 3.16-2, Master Plan of Trails**, defines the current and proposed trail network locations within the OVOV Planning Area (**Policy CO 9.1.11, Objective CO 9.2, Policy 9.2.1, and Policy CO 9.2.6**). The cooperation between the City and County would work with non-profit organizations to promote community involvement and to also enhance the community by encouraging volunteer work to adequately perform park maintenance (**Policies CO 9.1.14 and CO 9.2.9**).

The planned acquisition of natural open space (**Table 3.16-3**) would allow opportunities for residents of the OVOV Planning Area to bird watch or to enjoy potential botanical gardens (**Policy CO 9.1.13**). The Santa Clara River flows through the OVOV Planning Area providing the opportunity to set aside, where appropriate, open space for bikeways and trail development and use as a passive recreational area (**Goal CO 10, Objective CO 10.1, Policies CO 9.1.7, 9.1.13, 9.2.3, 9.2.8**). Use of appropriate segments of the Santa Clara River as a major recreational focal point for development of an integrated system of bikeways and trails, and trail connections with new development projects would allow the City to connect trails throughout the OVOV Planning Area and to state trails (**Policy CO 9.2.3 and CO 9.2.4**). The implementation of the proposed land use plans and the open space and conservation element would set aside area for open space or public use in cooperation with **Figure 3.16-2**. The designation of trails would be determined by the City in cooperation with the County and state to implement the proposed Master Plan of the regional trail system (**Policy CO 9.2.8**).

### ***Proposed General Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies***

- |                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| <b>Policy CO 9.1.5:</b> | Promote development of more playfields for youth and adult sports activities, in conjunction with tournament facilities, where needed. |
| <b>Policy CO 9.1.7:</b> | Establish appropriate segments of the Santa Clara River as a recreational focal point, encouraging a beneficial mix of passive         |

and active recreational uses with natural ecosystems by providing buffers for sensitive habitat.

**Policy CO 9.1.11:** Locate and design parks to address potential adverse impacts on adjacent development from noise, lights, flying balls, traffic, special events, and other operational activities and uses.

**Policy CO 9.1.12:** Establish minimum design standards for both public and private parks to provide for public safety and welfare through lighting, access, crime prevention through design, equipment, visibility, and other aspects of design.

**Policy CO 9.1.14:** Ensure adequate park maintenance, and encourage programs for volunteers to assist in maintaining local parks, where feasible and appropriate.

**Policy CO 9.1.15:** Provide a wide variety of recreational programs geared to all ages and abilities, including passive, active, educational, and cultural programs.

**Objective CO 9.2:** Recognize that trails are an important recreational asset that, when integrated with transportation systems, contribute to mobility throughout the Santa Clarita Valley.

**Policy CO 9.2.1:** Plan for a continuous and unified multi-use trail network for a variety of users, to be developed with common standards, in order to unify Santa Clarita Valley communities and connect with regional and state trails such as the Pacific Crest Trail.

**Policy CO 9.2.3:** Use the Santa Clara River as a major recreational focal point for development of an integrated system of bikeways and trails, while protecting sensitive ecological areas.

**Policy CO 9.2.4:** Ensure that new development projects provide trail connections to local and regional trail systems, where appropriate.

**Policy CO 9.2.6:** Provide trails to scenic vistas and viewpoints.

**Policy CO 9.2.8:** Ensure that trails are designed to protect habitat, ecosystems, and water quality.

**Policy CO 9.2.9:** Pursue funding for trail maintenance and encourage volunteer participation in trail maintenance programs, where appropriate.

### ***Effectiveness of the General Plan Goals, Objectives, and Policies***

The goals, objectives, and policies contained within the proposed General Plan promote the development of adequate park space and recreational facilities for use by City residents through buildout of the General Plan. The development and the connection of local, regional, and state trails would potentially give City residents multiple recreational options within the City's Planning Area. Implementation of the proposed goals, objectives, and policies would reduce potential impacts on park and recreation facilities provided adequate funding is feasible and/or dedications of parkland occurs for the expansion of the park space and recreational facilities. With implementation of the above goals, objectives, and policies potential impacts on parkland and recreational facilities would be less than significant and no mitigation would be required.

### **Plan to Plan Analysis**

Both the existing and proposed General Plans require the need for additional recreational opportunities throughout the community. As discussed above, the environmental impacts of any recreational facility is analyzed on a project-by project basis. Impacts for both Plans are similar.

### **MITIGATION FRAMEWORK**

No mitigation is required.

### **SIGNIFICANCE OF IMPACT WITH MITIGATION FRAMEWORK**

Implementation of the goals, objectives, and policies contained within the proposed General Plan would reduce potential impacts on parkland and recreational facilities and/or services to less than significant. Additionally, these goals, objectives, and policies promote the use of open space thereby enhancing the recreational opportunities within the City's Planning Area.