

## **Section Five**

### **5.0 RECREATION FACILITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

This Section presents potential opportunities to meet recreation needs identified in the Needs Assessment section based on analysis of existing inventory and demand, community outreach, and consideration of the City's established goals and policies.

Fortunately, there are many opportunity sites to consider in Santa Clarita (Exhibit 5.4-1). There are eighteen (18) identified undeveloped park sites, six (6) of which are likely to be natural open space parks within the City. Another nine (9) new sites have been identified for acquisition. Therefore, solving the recreation needs puzzle could be accomplished in a variety of ways, depending upon specific analysis and design of each site and upon future acquisition outcomes. Moreover, the City's process of park design and development involves extensive community input that will likely affect park and recreation facility design. It is clear that it is not realistic for this Master Plan to present a single, defined pathway for development of future parks over time. This Master Plan report strives instead to identify opportunities to consider and to pursue in more detail.

For City park projects, choosing a project or projects to pursue occurs as a result of the capital improvement project budget process conducted by the City each year. The chosen project would then follow a process pathway, with community input, that will determine what amenities will be added to the park. The opportunities discussion that follows, as well as Exhibit 5.4-1, offers a way to visualize the overall need in the context of the opportunities so that the ultimate goal of satisfying recreation needs is kept in mind.

#### **5.1 Overall Concept**

The discussions below assume that several of the opportunity sites described in Section 2 will be improved for the purpose of addressing recreation needs. Use of the opportunity sites will involve separate design and administrative processes that may ultimately alter how they are to be utilized, in which case, the overall concept of meeting recreation needs to be somewhat flexible.

Satisfaction of identified needs does not appear to be a daunting task; the City has effectively pursued park and recreation facility additions and planned for more. It is intended that the City pursue satisfaction of recreation facility needs using the following key strategies and improvements:

- As established in the City's Open Space Acquisition Plan and in Section Six of this report, a "green belt" of open space will be created surrounding the City;
- Major community parks are located along north/south and east/west trail and road systems, linking residential areas with parks and with significant open space;
- Neighborhood Parks are within reasonable walking distance of most homes;
- Design and use of opportunity sites should be pursued in order to meet recreation needs and goals (parkland acreage and recreation element quantities);
- New residential development is planned to include park and recreation facilities that adequately serve its planned population and that complements and enhances the City park system as a whole.

Exhibit 5.1-1 graphically depicts an integrated system of open spaces, parks, and trails that provides connectivity, variety, and interest.

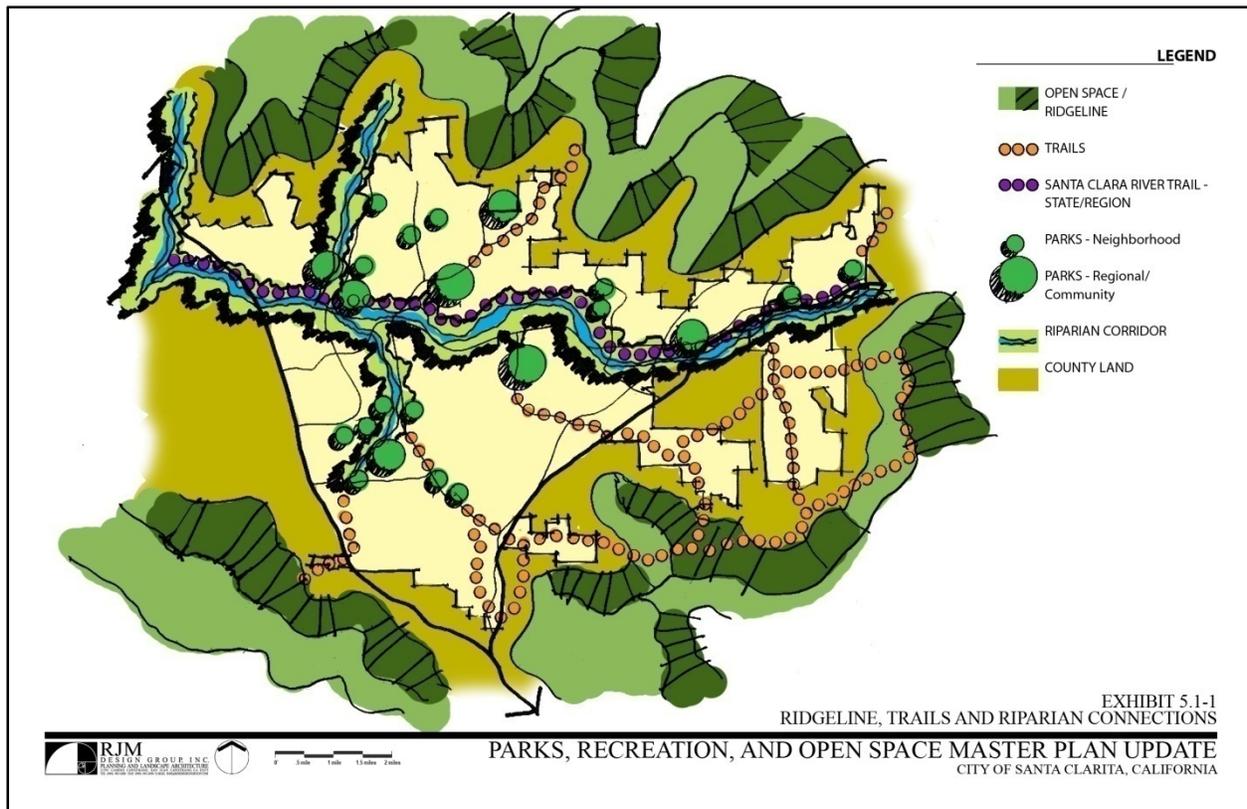
Central to the concept plan are the Guiding Principles established in the Santa Clarita Valleywide General Plan process:

*The natural buffer area surrounding the entire Valley, which includes the Angeles National Forest, Santa Susanna, San Gabriel, Sierra Pelona, and Del Sur mountains, shall be preserved as a regional recreational, ecological, and aesthetic resource.*

Guiding Principle 5

*The Santa Clara River corridor and its major tributaries shall be preserved as open space to accommodate storm water flows and protect critical plant and animal species (riparian vegetation, fish, etc.).* Guiding Principle 6

Exhibit 5.1-1: Overall Concept for Santa Clarita



## 5.2 Key Issues

Based on the needs assessment process and on previous strategic plan processes, a set of key issues has been identified that are addressed below. Key issues include:

- New open space acquisition
- New trails to connect to existing trail network
- Provision of quantities of sports facilities appropriate to the current and future population, to include:
  - Indoor Basketball Courts
  - Soccer Fields - youth
  - Tennis Courts
  - Baseball Fields - youth
  - Softball Fields – youth

- Provision of parkland acreage quantities consistent with the City standard of 5 acres per 1,000, with appropriate distribution
- Provision of appropriate numbers of community centers in appropriate locations
- Non-resident use of City facilities

## **Open Space Acquisition**

The City has been involved with the production of several recent documents establishing goals for open space and evaluating opportunities to maximize open space preservation. The City's Open Space Acquisition Plan (2002), the Open Space Acquisition Implementation Work Program (2008), the 2007 Community Strategic Plan, and the Open Space Preservation District Engineer's Report make clear the importance of open space in protecting visual, recreation, cultural, and environmental resources in Santa Clarita. Additionally, the OVOV Vision and Guiding Principles document and the OVOV Technical Background Report emphasize the role of open space in the area.

Section Six of this report summarizes findings of these documents and clarifies the current status of open space planning.

## **New Trails**

The draft Santa Clarita Non-Motorized Transportation Plan is under consideration for approval at the time of this Master Plan report. It is a comprehensive document that will guide the future development of bicycle and pedestrian facilities, paseos, and trails within the City. With extensive input from the community, the Plan focuses on trail facilities, planning and policies related to bicycling and walking, non-motorized connections to transit, programs, and safe routes to schools that together form the basis of an overall non-motorized transportation network. Both on-street and off-street facilities are addressed. Existing and proposed trails are shown in relation to open space and parkland, illustrating a strong connection between the Non-Motorized Transportation Plan and this Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan report. No further trail planning is included in this Master Plan report.

New parks will play an integral and vital part of the City's bike and trail system. Whenever possible, new parks shall make a connection to the bike and trail system. Also, new and existing parks shall provide amenities to encourage the use of the bike and trail system such as bicycle air stations and bicycle parking (i.e. racks).

## Sports Facilities

The recreation facility demand analysis provides important data on the types of recreation facilities used by Santa Clarita residents. This information, coupled with information from the community outreach process and sports user groups, has been compared to the City's inventory of facilities to determine whether the City has a surplus or deficit for a variety of recreation elements such as sports fields and courts. Based on the information collected, there are anticipated deficits for the following recreation elements at ultimate build-out:

- Indoor Basketball Courts (3)
- Soccer Fields - youth (16)
- Tennis Courts (80)
- Baseball Fields – youth (4)
- Softball Fields - youth (3)

Each of these is discussed below.

### Gymnasium / Indoor Basketball Courts

**Background:** According to the Demand and Need Analysis evaluation, Santa Clarita will need three (3) additional indoor basketball courts by the time the City reaches ultimate build-out. Gymnasium / Indoor Basketball are among the needs most often indicated by Master Plan needs identification tools.

Gymnasiums are often part of a larger community center building in which offices, meeting rooms, exercise rooms, and other elements are found.

**Recommendations:** As shown in Exhibit 5.4-1, three sites have already been considered for inclusion of new indoor basketball courts:

- *Central Park (planned and in design)*
- *Sports Complex (planned and designed)*
- *Canyon Country Site (location TBD)*

It is anticipated that the above locations could fully address identified quantity needs for indoor basketball courts. Additional sites compatible with indoor courts include:

- *Bouquet Canyon School*
- *Rivendale*
- *Summerhill Lane Parkland*
- *Whitaker-Bermite Property*

Central Park and the Santa Clarita Sports Complex are signature community parks and community centers serving all of Santa Clarita.

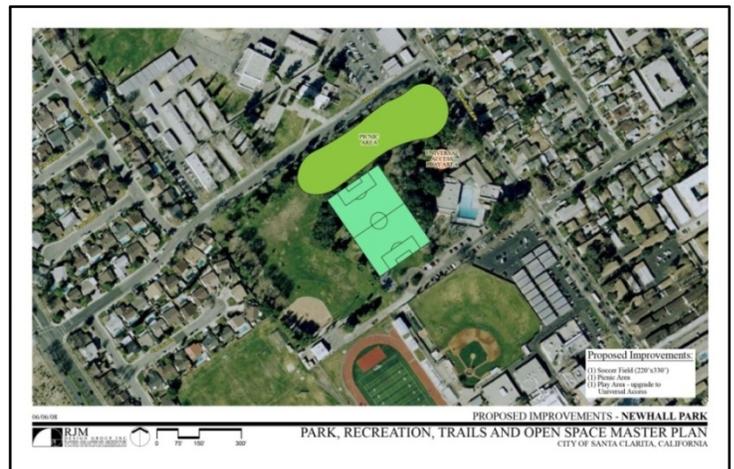
## Soccer Fields

**Background:** Although twenty (20) fields are currently utilized for soccer games in Santa Clarita, most games are played at schools. The City will need 16 additional fields by the time the City reaches ultimate build-out. Soccer fields are among the needs most often indicated by Master Plan needs identification tools. There are over 4,000 Santa Clarita youth participating in organized soccer games currently.

Soccer fields are often used as overlay elements on baseball and/or softball fields. Scheduling can address potential time slot conflicts; however an overlay soccer field is not always counted as a full field because other activities may limit its availability. Dedicated soccer fields, if feasible, provide maximum availability. Multi-use with football is considered appropriate and desirable.

**Recommendations:** As shown in Exhibit 5.4-1, several sites are considered potentially compatible with new soccer fields including:

- *Creekview Park Expansion*
- *Newhall Park*
- *Santa Clarita Sports Complex (planned and designed)*
- *Bridgeport Marketplace Site*
- *Norland Avenue Site*
- *Rivendale Site*
- *South Fork Corridor*
- *Wiley Site*
- *Bouquet Canyon School*
- *Via Princessa/Metrolink Site*
- *Whitaker-Bermite Property*



## Tennis Courts

**Background:** According to the Demand and Need Analysis evaluation, Santa Clarita will need eighty (80) additional tennis courts by the time the City reaches ultimate build-out. Tennis courts are among the facilities identified as high priority according to the Needs Summary Matrix.

**Recommendations:** One site has already been considered for inclusion of new tennis courts:

- Provide thirteen (13) courts at Central Park, Phase IV

Additional sites that are potentially compatible with tennis courts include:

- Creekview Park expansion
- Old Orchard Park
- Santa Clarita Park
- Bridgeport Marketplace
- Chevron Pioneer Oil Refinery Site
- Soledad and Bouquet Open Space
- Mancara
- Norland Avenue
- Rivendale Site
- Round Mountain



- *South Fork Corridor*
- *Wiley Site*
- *Bouquet Canyon School*
- *Summerhill Lane Parkland*
- *Via Princessa/Metrolink Site*
- *Whitaker-Bermite Property*

The City may strive to provide additional public tennis courts; clearly there is a quantity needed and distribution of public courts could be more equitable. However, meeting the entire identified need of 80 courts could be considered a low priority. It is not uncommon that excessive need for tennis courts is observed during the demand and needs analysis portion of needs assessment. This may be because telephone survey respondents incorrectly consider courts owned by associations, clubs, or schools to be public. This generates demand, but without inventory credit for these types of facilities an inflated need figure is generated. Therefore these private tennis clubs (such as Valencia Paseo Club) may partially fill the need for tennis courts.

As the City pursues park projects in the future, consideration should be given to providing at least some public courts in different areas of the City.

## Baseball and Softball Fields

**Background:** Seven (7) private league fields are currently utilized for youth baseball games. By build-out, an additional four (4) fields are anticipated to be needed. A need for three (3) additional softball fields is also anticipated at build-out.

It is desirable to provide ballfields that are designed appropriately for either softball or baseball, but that can also be programmed for other activities.

**Recommendations:** As shown in Exhibit 5.4-1, several sites are considered potentially compatible with new ballfields, including:

- *Creekview Park Expansion*
- *Rivendale Site*
- *Wiley Site*
- *Bouquet Canyon School*
- *Via Princessa/Metrolink Site*
- *Whitaker-Bermite Property*

## Community Centers

**Background:** Additional Community Center/Senior Center elements are among the needs most often indicated by Master Plan needs identification tools, and a community center was highly ranked in priority by participants in the Needs Prioritization Workshop. Need for a community center serving eastern Santa Clarita was often expressed.

The City has already begun planning for a 35,000 SF community center building at Central Park as part of a Phase III design effort. It is anticipated that recreation elements could include: gymnasium, exercise and dance rooms, racquetball, multi-use classrooms, and a warming kitchen. Phase III of Central Park could add basketball courts, a wet-play park, a dog park, and picnicking facilities. Combined with existing sports fields, Central Park will be a major recreation facility for the entire City.

**Recommendations:** As shown in Exhibit 5.4-1, one site has already been considered for construction of a community center:

- *Central Park (planned and in design)*

Additional sites that are potentially compatible with new community center facilities include:

- *Bouquet Canyon School Site*
- *Canyon Country Site*
- *Summerhill Lane Parkland*
- *Whitaker-Bermite Property*

Community centers are often considered the heart of the community, a place where the community comes together for recreation, learning, socializing, growing, and health. In fact, rather than dividing community center activities into different locations (i.e. senior center, teen center, etc), there is growing interest in integrated “multi-generational” facilities which are flexible and diverse. Moreover, trends in retirement are toward more active recreation pursuits often found in community centers offering a broad range of services and facilities.

## Parkland Acreage

**Background:** Based on the City's parkland standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents, a current parkland deficit of 648.2 acres exists. A future deficit of 951.2 acres will occur if no new parkland is added and the City continues to grow as anticipated.

**Recommendations:** There are twelve (12) identified undeveloped park sites totaling 688 acres within the City of Santa Clarita (See Exhibit 5.4-1). 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. On the other hand, some opportunity park sites may ultimately be considered "natural open space parks", a different type of park for which a maximum of 10% acreage credit can be given because a maximum of 10% of a natural open space park can be improved for active recreation. Additionally, six (6) future natural open space parks are identified totaling 1,289 acres within the City. Most of the area in these parks will remain as natural open space but as much as 10% (or 129 acres total) of the gross area can be developed (by definition) and be counted as parkland acreage credit. So there are approximately 1,977 acres of potential parkland and open space under the City's control and perhaps as much as 817 acres (688 plus 129) could be counted toward the parkland acreage goal. If developed, this could more than meet the acreage goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents.

On top of that, another nine (9) new sites have been identified for future acquisition (See Exhibit 5.4-1). 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.

It is fair to say that the potential exists to meet the City's acreage goal of 5 acres per 1,000 residents, even without identified acquisition targets needed for reasons other than acreage. Priority should be given to meeting the current acreage deficit of 648.2 acres.

## Park Use by Non-Residents

**Background:** During the Master Plan process the issue of park use by non-residents was raised. At the time, it was noted that some recreation programs had a relatively high percentage of participants from outside City boundaries. It is not uncommon for park and program users to cross City

boundaries, in both directions. If that flow is higher than anticipated or is primarily in one direction, it becomes an issue to address.

**Recommendations:** The City notes that two recent efforts are serving to address the issue of park use by non-residents. First, annexation has claimed a portion of the non-resident population previously thought to be frequent users of City parks and programs. The City observes that current non-resident use of programs is not as high as previously noted and points to annexation as a possible factor. Second, the City of Santa Clarita and the County of Los Angeles are jointly working on the One Valley One Vision Valleywide General Plan. This document will guide development outside the City and one of its goals is to ensure that park requirements and standards are similar if not the same as those of the City of Santa Clarita. This should, over time, mean that appropriate park and recreation facilities will be provided for populations outside City boundaries, thus lessening demand on City parks and programs.

### **5.3 Facility Maintenance and Operations Recommendations**

The City of Santa Clarita should continue to follow its current maintenance standards and practices with new facilities and areas. Staff should monitor changes in technology and practices that may lower maintenance costs while continuing to meet or exceed standards. With the addition of new areas and facilities, staff should evaluate the feasibility of de-centralizing or zoning some maintenance functions by area. For example, athletic field maintenance might be more efficient as new facilities come on-line if that function is split into an east and west zone, thus reducing travel time between fields and permitting personnel to spend more time performing maintenance activities.

Due to the timing of construction of most facilities in Santa Clarita, many will reach the end of their usable life at about the same time. This may place a heavy capital replacement burden on the City of Santa Clarita at that future date. One recommendation is that components of each area and facility (such as playgrounds, restrooms, etc.) be entered into an asset management database together with the current replacement costs, current facility or area conditions, and estimated remaining usable life (in years). Each subsequent year, information on conditions should be updated and the replacement costs adjusted based on the consumer price index (CPI) for construction in the economic region that includes Santa Clarita (Southern California). This database should also include the maintenance cost information that is currently being tracked by maintenance managers. This practice

will enable the City of Santa Clarita to conduct a cost-benefit analysis for repairing versus replacing each facility and/or component, as well as better estimate the fiscal year that each asset will need to be replaced.

## **5.4 Summary of Recommendations at Opportunity Sites**

Exhibit 5.4-1 is intended to show general feasibility only, for purposes of community-wide recreation master planning. When an actual project is undertaken, design will be refined in accordance with environmental considerations, accurate topographical information, community input, and cost considerations in effect at the time.

In addition to the identified opportunity sites in Exhibit 5.4-1, the County has plans to add three (3) community parks and two (2) neighborhood parks west of the 5 freeway, and one (1) park in the Whites Canyon area. These parks will offer diverse recreation opportunities. A listing of potential amenities and location of these parks is listed in the Appendix.

Santa Clarita Parks, Recreation & Open Space Master Plan  
Recreation Facility Recommendations

**Exhibit 5.4-1: Summary of Recommendations at Opportunity Sites**

**DEFINITIONS**

\* = Lease  
\*\* = Future Dedication  
MRCA = Mountain Recreation Conservation Authority

**Park Classifications**

R=Regional  
C=Community  
N=Neighborhood  
S=Special Use

Opportunity Sites	Park Classification	Parcel Size/Acreage	Potential Active Parkland	Ownership	Existing Master Plan	FACILITY NEEDS IN SANTA CLARITA																												
						PASSIVE										ACTIVE																		
						Art Facility (Museum, Studio/Workshop)	Outdoor Amphitheatre (small)	Hiking Trails/Walking/Running/Jogging	Open Grass/Turf Areas	Open Space (preserve and enhance)	Parking	Picnic Tables/Facilities	Restrooms	Baseball Field	Basketball Court (outdoor)	Bicycle Trails	BMX Track/Racetrack	Community Centers/Senior Center/Teen/Youth Center	Off-Leash Dog Area	Event Park and 1000-2500 seat amphitheater	Football	Gymnasium / Indoor Basketball	Multi-Purpose Field	Neighborhood Park	Skateboard Park	Soccer Field/Lighted	Softball Field	Special Needs Facility (Univ. Access Play)	Splash Play/Swim Elements	Tennis Court	Tot Lot/playground			
<b>EXISTING PARKS</b>																																		
Central Park III and IV	R	28	28	*																														
Creekview Park Expansion	C	n/a	n/a	*																														
Newhall Park	C	n/a	n/a	City																														
Old Orchard Park	N	n/a	n/a	City																														
Santa Clarita Park	N	n/a	n/a	City																														
Sports Complex IV	R	16	16	City																														
Sports Complex V	R	24	24	City																														
<b>UNDEVELOPED PARK SITES</b>																																		
Bridgeport Market Place	N	4.8	4.8	City																														
Chevron Pioneer Oil Refinery Site	S	4.6		City																														
Soledad and Bouquet Open Space		235		City																														
Discovery Park (includes floodplain)	C	24	10	City																														
Kcystone Park	N	6		**																														
Mancara	N	5		**																														
Norland Ave. at Lost Cyn. (includes floodplain)	C	58		City																														
Rivendate (includes floodplain)	R	60		City																														
River Village Park	N	28.2	5	**																														
Round Mountain (includes floodplain)	C	142	10	City																														
South Fork Corridor (includes floodplain)		106	10	City																														
Wiley Site (includes floodplain)	C	14	7	City																														
<b>NATURAL OPEN SPACE PARKS</b>																																		
Colmer Property		40		City																														
Elsmere Canyon		400		MRCA																														
Gates King Industrial Center Park		208		City																														
Lost Canyon		41.2		City																														
Quigley Canyon Park	OS	158		City																														
Whitney Canyon		442	20	JPA																														
<b>ACQUISITION TARGETS</b>																																		
Beale's Cut	OS	60		County																														
Bouquet Canyon School (temp site)	C	6	5	SD																														
Canyon County Site	S	3	3	Private																														
Chesebrough Park	N	5.2		County																														
Northridge Park	N	5.9		County																														
Quigley Canyon Park Expansion		20		Private																														
Summerhill Lane Parkland		3.5	3	County																														
Via Princessa/Metrolink		11	10	County																														
Whitaker-Bermite Property		996	50	**																														
<b>UNDEVELOPED TRAILS AND TRAILHEADS</b>																																		
Golden Valley Ranch Trailhead		2 ac		**																														
Iron Canyon Trail (Multi-use)		1 mi		**																														
Magic Mountain Trailhead (trestle)		2 ac		**																														
Sand Canyon Trail - Phase 3		0.05		City																														
Santa Clara River - Segments 4 and 5		1.5		**																														
<b>FACILITY DEFICITS AT BUILD-OUT FROM EXHIBIT 3.3-2:</b>									59			75		4	3	44						2				4	16	3			80	22		