

## Section Three

### 3.0 RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The purpose of the facility needs assessment process is to identify the current and future recreation facility needs within the community, to identify recreation demand that is unmet, and to suggest the relative priority of each identified need. Needs were identified and prioritized by engaging the community in a series of community outreach forums and other needs identification tools listed below. The process involved gathering both qualitative input (e.g. workshops, focus groups, questionnaires, stakeholder interviews) and quantitative input (e.g. telephone survey, sports organization survey, demand analysis). Qualitative input is the voice of the community. Quantitative input is statistically valid information. Using only qualitative feedback as a basis for the number, type, and location of recreation facilities ignores the fact that such feedback may not be representative of the entire community and also may not quantify facility needs beyond “more”. Each needs identification tool and each bit of information gathered is a piece of the recreation puzzle leading to a more thorough understanding of the community. All of the pieces, taken together, provide an overall picture of recreation facility needs specific to Santa Clarita now and in the future.

The following methods and processes (needs identification tools) were utilized in the facility and program needs assessment and will be addressed in this section:

**Community Outreach:** Information was gathered from Santa Clarita residents and stakeholders through a variety of methods including: a series of three (3) workshops, workshop participant questionnaires, staff focus group, stakeholder interviews, community focus group, and a sports organization survey.

**Community-Wide Telephone Survey:** The telephone survey provides current, statistically valid information specific to Santa Clarita that provides detailed information on the types of recreation facilities and programs most often utilized by Santa Clarita and nearby residents. A total of 550 randomly-selected, geographically distributed telephone interviews were completed with the adult head of the household.

**Recreation Facility Demand and Needs Analysis:** Quantitative evaluation of Santa Clarita facility needs based on the statistically valid telephone survey, facility inventory, relevant demographics, and sports organization survey.

**Service Area Analysis:** Evaluation of where parks and recreation facilities are distributed throughout residential areas in Santa Clarita.

**Acreage Analysis:** Evaluation of parkland acreage needs in Santa Clarita based on a goal of 5 acres per thousand residents, identified recreation needs, and available supply.

**Maintenance and Operations Analysis:** Site visits and analysis of maintenance and operations practices.

**Program Needs Analysis:** Evaluation of recreation program needs (see Section Four) that generates facility needs.

**Trends Analysis:** Evaluation of societal trends and associated recreation implications.

### **3.1 Community Outreach**

The community outreach effort ranged from lively evening workshop discussions to one-on-one stakeholder interviews. The community outreach portion of the Needs Assessment provided a number of opportunities to obtain perspective from residents, users of facilities and programs, and providers of facilities and programs. Within this section, the community outreach effort has been organized into eight (8) separate needs identification tools, they are:

- Community Workshop #1 – Community Characteristics and Issues
- Community Workshop #2 – Sports Facilities
- Workshop Participant Questionnaires
- Stakeholder Interviews
- Staff Focus Group
- Community Focus Group
- Community Workshop #3 – Program and Facility Needs Prioritization
- Sports Organization Survey

Another needs identification tool included in the community outreach effort, the Citywide Telephone Survey, is discussed separately in section 3.2. The information received from each of these sources has been included in the overall prioritization of needs and recommendations. A brief summary of each community input is provided below, and the complete summary is included in the Appendix document.

## **Community Workshop #1 – Community Characteristics and Issues**

The first community workshop was held on June 11, 2007. Thirty-eight (38) residents attended the workshop. The purpose of Workshop #1 was to identify the most important community characteristics that contribute to why Santa Clarita is a great place to live, work, and play. Workshop participants also listed trends, and/or issues that may be impacting those attributes and how Parks, Recreation, and Community Services can support important community characteristics.

According to the workshop participants, the community characteristics that make Santa Clarita a great place to live, work, and play are:

- Safety
- Wide variety of activities and facilities
- Good schools
- Family values
- Natural areas

Issues or trends that may negatively impact those characteristics include:

- Growth/overdevelopment
- Traffic (need better public transit)
- Loss of hillsides/ridgelines

When asked about the role parks and recreation can play to support positive community characteristics, respondents indicated:

- Provide a wide variety of facilities and activities for all groups/ages
- Listen to the residents/encourage resident participation
- Maintain current activities
- Preserve open space

## **Community Workshop #2 – Sports Facilities**

On July 18, 2007, residents and representatives of sports user groups in Santa Clarita were invited to discuss park issues relating to sports and active use of park facilities. Thirty (30) attendees participated in the evening's workshop discussions. Representatives from sports groups were asked to participate because of their extensive familiarity with athletic facilities and with the organizations that tend to use them. The workshop participants discussed the best and worst sports facilities in the City, the sports facility needs, and opportunities to meet those needs.

The top sports facilities identified were:

- Central Park (multi-use, variety, lighted fields, well maintained)
- Santa Clarita Sports Complex (multi-use, growth potential, clean)
- Aquatic Center (state of the art, fitness/competition/recreation, variety of uses)

The worst sports facilities identified were:

- Newhall Park (poor lighting, safety, lack of activities, small parking lot)
- Bouquet Canyon Park (softball field, upkeep)

Top sports facility needs include:

- Multi-Use Fields
- Gymnasium/Indoor Basketball Courts
- Tennis Facility/Courts
- BMX Facility
- Special Needs Park

When asked about opportunities to meet current and future sports facility needs, participants identified the following:

- Expand or renovate existing parks
- Joint Use Agreements/partnerships
- Acquire vacant or open space land

Workshop participants indicated that the three most important improvements to Santa Clarita's park, recreation, and open space network are:

- New, expanded, or renovated parks
- Lighting in parks
- Provide active parks

### **Workshop Participant Questionnaires**

During the first two (2) workshops, a questionnaire was distributed and completed by a total of forty-eight (48) workshop participants. Consistent themes and issues raised by respondents include:

- Santa Clarita parks are in excellent/good condition
- Tennis courts are needed

## **Stakeholder Interviews**

Interviews were held on September 17 and 18, 2007. Each interview was conducted over a period of 45 to 60 minutes. A total of fourteen (14) stakeholders were interviewed and a table summarizing all stakeholder comments is included in the Appendix.

When asked what are the most important issues related to Parks, Open Space, Recreation Facilities, and Services currently provided, the most common responses (by at least three of the fourteen interviewees) included:

- Acquire, preserve, maintain open space, greenbelts and ridgelines/Integrate open space plan with Master Plan
- Keeping pace with growth/current deficit in parks, facilities, and open space
- Acquisition, construction, accessibility, and connectivity of multi-use trails
- Meeting recreational needs of the future

When asked what are the important services and facilities for the future, respondents indicated:

- Tennis courts that meet NTA standards for competition
- Provide parks and recreation facilities in multiple locations/identify gaps in services (e.g. Canyon Country)
- Amphitheater/outdoor theater
- Communicate/coordinate with areas proposed for annexation to guarantee quality park system
- Big League Dreams – fields for youth and adult baseball/regional baseball complex
- Dog parks
- Aquatics facilities (e.g. play pool at Newhall, Olympic sized pool)
- More performing arts venues
- More parkland/walkable, accessible communities/plans for pedestrians

In answer to the question about what the Department does best in providing services the most common responses (by at least three of the interviewees) included:

- Good services/good department/everything
- Variety and quality of recreational services with high participation for diverse community
- Creating new parks and opportunities for recreation
- Good maintenance of parks and facilities
- Staff have pride in their work and the City

In answer to the question about how the Department could improve in providing recreation services and facilities, the most common response (by at least three of the interviewees) included:

- Acquire and develop more open space and parkland

When asked if there were any particular segment of the population that is currently underserved, the most common responses were:

- Growing older adults
- At risk youth/teens
- Canyon Country residents

Interviewees most often indicated that opportunities to provide programs, services, and facilities were:

- More partnering with other entities for outreach, facilities, and program development (e.g. environmental groups, health and wellness groups, College of the Canyons, school district, and private sector)

Interviewees expressed their vision for recreation facilities and services in 2017. The most common responses include:

- City meets national park standards (5 acres of parkland per thousand residents)
- Maintain vision for greenbelts and link trails with communities
- Greatly increase open space and passive parklands around City, ensure accessibility

When asked what the one recreation facility most desired to see added to meet the needs of the community, the most common responses included:

- Community center/recreation facility to serve Canyon Country
- Sports Park/community center/senior center in eastside

### **Staff Focus Group**

A discussion session with City staff members was held on October 1, 2007.

When asked what are the Parks, Recreation, and Community Services Department's greatest strengths and assets in meeting the needs of residents, the most common responses included:

- Dedicated Staff and teamwork
- Provide well-maintained facilities
- Listens to the community

Consensus responses indicate that the most important recreation issues include:

- Expand facilities and programs
- Traffic (parking in parks, location of facilities)
- Safety in parks (park rangers needed)

The greatest constraints/challenges in meeting the needs of residents are:

- Budgets and funding
- Need full-time Staff/Staff specialists
- Ability to offer new programs

Participants expressed their vision for parks, open space, facilities, and services in 2017:

- Provide multiple diverse programs and activities to serve all interests and ages
- Provide safe facilities

Priorities that the Department needs to address to better serve community residents included:

- Teen programs
- Community center with facilities for arts, teens, and seniors

Participants indicated that the following needs to be done to accomplish priority items:

- Assess and prioritize needs
- Identify funding opportunities and secure funding
- Make it happen

A table summarizing all focus group comments is included in the Appendix document.

### **Community Focus Group**

A discussion session with community leaders was held on October 1, 2007.

When asked what are the most important issues related to parks, open space, recreation facilities and services currently provided, participants provided a long and diverse set of responses. Items most often indicated include:

- Lack of therapeutic recreation
- Activity center in Canyon Country
- Decentralized facilities
- Gallery space for artists and public art

Parks, open space, recreation facilities, and recreation services can be improved as follows:

- Enhance partnerships with non-profits
- Ensuring more open space
- Communication of services
- Accessible playgrounds for all ages and abilities
- Decentralize facilities
- Natural areas with interpretation and environmental education

A full summary of the session can be found in the Appendix document.

### **Community Workshop #3 – Needs Summary and Prioritization**

On November 28, 2007, members of the Santa Clarita community and participants from previous workshops were invited to an overview of the Master Plan process, and summary of the recreation facility and program needs in the City. Thirty-two (32) attendees participated in the evening's workshop discussions. Participants discussed relative priority of needs. According to workshop participants, the top recreation facilities needed in Santa Clarita are:

- Lighting in Parks
- Teen/Youth Center
- Special Needs Facility
- Senior Center
- Open Space
- Multi-purpose Fields

A full summary of the workshop can be found in the Appendix document.

### **Sports Organization Survey**

To supplement the information regarding participation in organized sports obtained from the Community Telephone Survey, a questionnaire was designed and distributed to the sports organizations that use public facilities. Detailed information was requested for each division in the group regarding the number of players, the size of facility required, and the time and place of all games and practices. Twenty (20) sports organizations responded. Information was received

from softball, baseball, football, soccer, volleyball, BMX, fishing, and basketball organizations. The full summary of the sports organization survey can be found in the Appendix.

This information is used to better define peak day demand and convert that to the number of facilities required to meet the needs of this segment of the recreation market (see Section 3.3, Recreation Demand and Needs Analysis).

Sports groups also answered qualitative questions about facility needs for their organizations. Responses include:

- Ballfield maintenance is generally perceived as “good” to “excellent”,
- Soccer field maintenance is generally rated “fair” to “excellent”,
- Baseball and softball organizations requested more fields for games and practices,
- Soccer organizations requested more fields, lights, and maintenance adjustments,
- Football organizations requested more fields for games and practice and more parking,
- Basketball and volleyball organizations requested more gymnasiums and less reliance on schools, and
- BMX and fishing groups requested facilities in Santa Clarita.

## **3.2 Community-Wide Telephone Survey**

A total of 550 interviews were completed with adult head of households living in the Santa Clarita Valley. These respondents were contacted through the use of a random digit dial sample. This sample methodology compensates for the incidence of unlisted telephone numbers. Survey eligibility was confirmed by verifying that the respondent’s home was located within one of nine eligible postal codes.

These 13-minute interviews were conducted via telephone by professional interviewers during the August and September 2007 fielding of the resident telephone survey using direct-entry computer technology. All interviews conducted among Santa Clarita Valley residents were edited by skilled supervisors of the field organization and 10% were validated for accuracy.

The sample error for a sample size of 550 ranges from +/-1.9% to +/-4.3% (depending on the response distribution) at the 95% confidence level. This means that if we were to survey every household in Santa Clarita, we are confident that, 95% of the time, the results for a question would differ by less than 4.3 percentage points from the results derived from this sample.

Responses to the survey questions provide vital information, including:

**Frequency of Use:** Almost half (42%) of Santa Clarita households reported being a frequent user of park and recreation facilities (utilizing recreation facilities at least three (3) times a month) while another forty percent (40%) described themselves

as moderate users (patrons of facilities two to twenty-four times annually). This pattern is comparable to the average of other communities studied.

**Most Used Facility:** Central Park was reported as the most often used park by the highest percentage of households (32%). Canyon Country Park, Santa Clarita Sports Complex, and Old Orchard Park were also mentioned often.

**Most Common Recreation Activities:** Of the fourteen (14) activities tested in the survey, the largest share of the population reported participation during the last year in: Passive Use of Open Grass in Public Recreation Facilities (65%), Trail Use for Active Recreation (56%), Picnicking at Picnic Tables in Public Parks (55%), and Walking on Public Trails for Passive Relaxation (54%). Bicycling and swimming were activities reported next most often. Walking/Jogging/Running/Hiking was most often reported among households located in Sub-area 4 (postal zip codes 91354 and 91355).

**Activities Location:** Santa Clarita is the location for at least 84% of all reported recreation activities. Twelve of the fourteen tested activities occur in Santa Clarita more than 90% of the time.

**Facilities Maintenance:** Nearly all respondents (96%) indicated that maintenance of facilities in Santa Clarita is "Excellent" or "Good", representing an above-average positive rating compared with other communities surveyed. Almost all (99%) respondents said that facility maintenance is very important or somewhat important in their decision to use those facilities.

**Overall Satisfaction:** More than nine in ten (96%) stated they were either "Very Satisfied" or "Somewhat Satisfied" with existing recreation facilities and programs in the Santa Clarita Valley.

**Most Desired Active Facility:** The active recreation facilities cited as most desired by Santa Clarita residents surveyed were Swimming Pool for Recreation (7%), Tennis Courts (5%), Bike Trails (5%), Walking/Running/Jogging Paths (4%), Dog Park (4%), and Skateboard Park (4%). One in five (20%) indicated their household members have no new recreation facilities needs.

**Most Desired Passive Facility.** The passive recreation facilities cited as most desired by Santa Clarita residents surveyed were Walking Trails (21%), Open Space (12%), Outdoor Concert Stage (12%), Performing Arts Center (9%), Library (6%), and Open Grass Areas (5%).

A key element of the telephone survey is information that generates participation rates in each of fourteen (14) recreational activities. These participation rates are

analyzed in the recreation demand and needs analysis (Section 3.3), where facility demand is calculated in relationship to the population served.

### **3.3 Recreation Facility Demand and Needs Analysis**

This section summarizes the evaluation of demand for fourteen (14) recreation and park activities based upon actual participation rates as determined by the residents of Santa Clarita. A key element in any park and recreation planning strategy is an understanding of the nature of demand for parks and recreation facilities. Without this understanding, policy can only be based on general standards, such as population ratios (acres per thousand population) or service area (distance to park facility).

Such standards are useful, but the demand analysis guarantees that the needs assessment reflects Santa Clarita specifically.

The National Recreation and Park Association, in their 1983 update to the publication *Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines*, states: "Park and recreation services are community services." Ideally, the national standards should stand the test in communities of all sizes. However, the reality often makes it difficult or inadvisable to apply national standards without question to specific locales. The uniqueness of every community, due to differing geographical, cultural, climatic, and socioeconomic characteristics, makes it imperative that every community develop its *own* standards for recreation, parks and open space."

The information used to calculate community demand for recreation facilities comes from four sources:

- The Communitywide Telephone Survey
- Santa Clarita Population Projections
- Sports Organization Survey
- California State Department of Parks and Recreation

The telephone survey provides a statistically valid basis for determining how the residents of Santa Clarita participate in recreation activities. The participation rates in recreation activities from the survey constitute a quantitative basis for the demand analysis that is used in calculating the current need for facilities.

The nature of growth and population change establishes trends in demand for recreation and leisure services. These population projections, together with the survey results describing participation rates for various demographic measures, is the basis for a quantitative projection of future facility needs.

In terms of sports facilities, it should be noted that the analysis pertains to participation in sports games on game fields, for which quantitative inventory is possible. This information is obtained in part from the sports organization survey. Participation in sports practices and evaluation of practice field demand is not included, in part because practices often occur on informal, non-regulation facilities.

Further, it is assumed that practices can occur on game fields during non-peak portions of the season. Based on the responses received from the sports organization survey there appears to be a need for additional practice fields in baseball, softball, football, and soccer.

The sports organization survey obtained information regarding the number of players and teams in each league or sports organization, age ranges of the players, what seasons they play, if they travel outside Santa Clarita to play, if they participate in tournaments, ratings of field/facility maintenance and scheduling, projections of growth, and facilities they have the greatest need for both now and in the future. Detailed information was requested for each division in the sport regarding the number of players, the size of facility required, and the time and place of all games and practices.

This information is used as a supplement to the telephone survey results and as a means to better define peak day demand (number of participants who will be involved in a given activity on the busiest day of the year) and convert that to the number of facilities required to meet the needs of this segment of the recreation market. Information regarding which of the existing facilities are currently being used by the sports groups provides an understanding of the inventory of sports facilities regarding usage for adult sports, youth sports, and practices.

### **Recreation Facility Requirements**

The demand for certain recreation facilities is calculated based upon actual participation rates as determined from the telephone survey. The facility demand for each of the selected activities is determined based upon current and future population figures. The total facility demand is compared to the existing facility inventory which results in a surplus or deficit.

Of the fourteen (14) activities surveyed two were identified as having a current surplus of facilities (youth softball and swimming pools); the remainder show current deficits (see Exhibit 3.3-1).

Exhibit 3.3-1: 2007 Facility Needs

Facility	Facility Need Ratio - City of Santa Clarita	2007 Needs	Existing City Facilities	Surplus/ Deficit(-)	School Facilities Avail.*	Other Facilities Avail.	Total Facilities Avail.	Total Surplus/ Deficit(-)
<b>Softball Fields:</b>								
Organized Youth	1/15,850 pop.	11.2	9.0	-2.2	0.0	3.0	12.0	0.8
<b>Baseball Fields:</b>								
Organized Youth	1/20,900 pop.	8.5	0.0	-8.5	0.0	7.0	7.0	-1.5
<b>Soccer Fields</b>								
Organized Youth	1/6,250 pop.	28.3	11.0	-17.3	10.0	1.0	22.0	-6.3
<b>Football Fields</b>								
Organized Youth	1/35,650 pop.	5.0	0.0	-5.0	5.0	0.0	5.0	0.0
<b>Indoor Basketball Cts.:</b>								
Organized Youth/Adult	1/22,350 pop.	7.9	2.0	-5.9	5.5	0.0	7.5	-0.4
Tot Lots/Playgrounds	1/5,000 pop.	35.5	26.0	-9.5	0.0	3.0	29.0	-6.5
Picnic Tables	1/850 pop.	210	193	-17	0	16	209	-1
<b>Swimming Pools (Public)</b>								
Recreational	1/39,750 pop.	4.5	6.9 **	2.4	0.0	0.0	6.9	2.4
Tennis Courts	1/2,750 pop.	64.8	7.0	-57.8	3.0	3.0	13.0	-51.8
Walking/Jogging Paths (mi.)	1/3,700 pop.	47.7	37.0 ***	-10.7	0.0	15.0	52.0	4.3
Walking Paths (mi.)	1/4,250 pop.	41.5	37.0 ***	-4.5	0.0	15.0	52.0	10.5
Bicycling Paths (mi.)	1/3,400 pop.	51.9	29.0 ****	-22.9	0.0	0.0	29.0	-22.9
Skate Boarding Facility	1/65,650 pop.	2.7	1.0 *****	-1.7	0.0	0.0	1.0	-1.7
Open Grass in Parks (acres)	1/2,250 pop.	78.3	45.2	-33.1	0.0	7.8	53.0	-25.3

\* School facilities other than fields are counted at 50 percent to allow for time not available to the public.

\*\*The City has 8 pools with a combined 42,600 sq. ft. - equivalent to 6.9 pools measuring 25 meters x 25 yards.

\*\*\* There are a total of 37 miles of paths maintained by the City. It is assumed that these paths are used for both walking/jogging for exercise and also walking for pleasure.

\*\*\*\* Paved Class I Off-Road Trails.

\*\*\*\*\* Existing skate park to be demolished.

Source: Coman Consulting, Inc., based on data from California State Department of Parks and Recreation and the Santa Clarita Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, October 2007.

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**Exhibit 3.3-2: Facility Needs at Build-Out**

Facility	Facility Need Ratio - City of Santa Clarita	Buildout Needs	Existing City Facilities	Surplus/ Deficit(-)	School Facilities Avail.†	Other Facilities Avail.	Total Facilities Avail.	Total Surplus/ Deficit(-)
<b>Softball Fields:</b>								
Organized Youth	1/15,850 pop.	15.0	9.0	-6.0	0.0	3.0	12.0	-3.0
<b>Baseball Fields:</b>								
Organized Youth	1/20,900 pop.	11.4	0.0	-11.4	0.0	7.0	7.0	-4.4
<b>Soccer Fields</b>								
Organized Youth	1/6,250 pop.	38.0	11.0	-27.0	10.0	1.0	22.0	-16.0
<b>Football Fields</b>								
Organized Youth	1/35,650 pop.	6.7	0.0	-6.7	5.0	0.0	5.0	-1.7
<b>Indoor Basketball Cts.:</b>								
Organized Youth/Adult	1/22,350 pop.	10.6	2.0	-8.6	5.5	0.0	7.5	-3.1
Tot Lots/Playgrounds	1/4,700 pop.	50.6	26.0	-24.6	0.0	3.0	29.0	-21.6
Picnic Tables	1/890 pop.	268	193	-75	0	16	209	-59
<b>Swimming Pools (Public)</b>								
Recreational	1/37,600 pop.	6.3	6.9 **	0.6	0.0	0.0	6.9	0.6
Tennis Courts	1/2,550 pop.	93.2	7.0	-86.2	3.0	3.0	13.0	-80.2
Walking/Jogging Paths (mi.)	1/3,550 pop.	67.1	37.0 ***	-30.1	0.0	15.0	52.0	-15.1
Walking Paths (mi.)	1/4,150 pop.	57.1	37.0 ***	-20.1	0.0	15.0	52.0	-5.1
Bicycling Paths (mi.)	1/3,250 pop.	73.0	29.0 ****	-44.0	0.0	0.0	29.0	-44.0
Skate Boarding Facility	1/59,550 pop.	4.0	1.0 *****	-3.0	0.0	0.0	1.0	-3.0
Open Grass in Parks (acres)	1/2,250 pop.	105.1	45.2	-59.9	0.0	7.8	53.0	-52.1

\*School facilities other than fields are counted at 50 percent to allow for time not available to the public.

\*\*The City has 8 pools with a combined 42,600 sq. ft. - equivalent to 6.9 pools measuring 25 meters x 25 yards.

\*\*\*There are a total of 36 miles of paths maintained by the City. It is assumed that these paths are used for both walking/jogging for exercise and also walking for pleasure.

\*\*\*\*Paved Class I Off-Road Trails.

\*\*\*\*\*Existing skate park to be demolished.

Source: Coman Consulting, Inc., based on data from California State Department of Parks and Recreation and the Santa Clarita Recreation Needs Assessment Survey, October 2007.

SC/demand - 5/12/08

These deficits will increase (see Exhibit 3.3-2) as the population grows to ultimate build-out unless facilities are added. The largest deficit numbers anticipated at build-out are represented by:

- Soccer fields (16)
- Tot lots/playgrounds (22)
- Tennis courts (80)
- Bicycle Trails (44 miles)
- Open Turf in Parks (52 acres)

Perhaps the most significant future deficits relative to availability of parkland are sports fields. Provision of 3 softball fields, 5 baseball fields, and 16 soccer fields to meet needs would require more than 75 acres of land. It should be noted that a factor is included in demand calculations to account for resting of sports fields; 20% of availability is assumed for resting and recovery of fields.

Some of the more costly facility deficits based on cost per square foot are indoor basketball courts (3 needed) and skateboard facility (equivalent of 4 needed). Recreational swimming pool quantities are anticipated to remain in numbers appropriate to the population, even if no new pools are built.

### **3.4 Service Area Analysis**

In addition to providing appropriate quantities and types of recreation facilities, the City strives to provide them in useful and appropriate locations. Service Area Analysis was conducted with respect to neighborhood parks and to community centers.

#### **Neighborhood Park Service Area Analysis**

One-half (.5) mile is approximately a 20-minute walk for most people. It is generally considered a significant threshold in distance, beyond which some segments of the population will tend to decline walking opportunities.

Most residences should be within one-half mile, a convenient walkable distance for most people, of a neighborhood park or other park that may satisfy common recreation needs. This .5 mile radius around parks and recreational facilities is defined as a neighborhood park "service area". In essence, the existing parks are providing a nearby location for residents to utilize for active or passive recreation. This service area emphasis is key in a community in which families, neighborhoods, and active living are central issues, and is supported by the Vision and Guiding Principles developed as part of the Santa Clarita Valleywide General Plan process:

*Housing developments located in the more urbanized communities of the Valley shall be designed to create a sense of neighborhood by...promoting walkability and containing places that serve as centers of activity and identity (schools, multi-purpose facilities, parks, convenience services, neighborhood commercial centers, etc). Guiding Principle 20.a*

And:

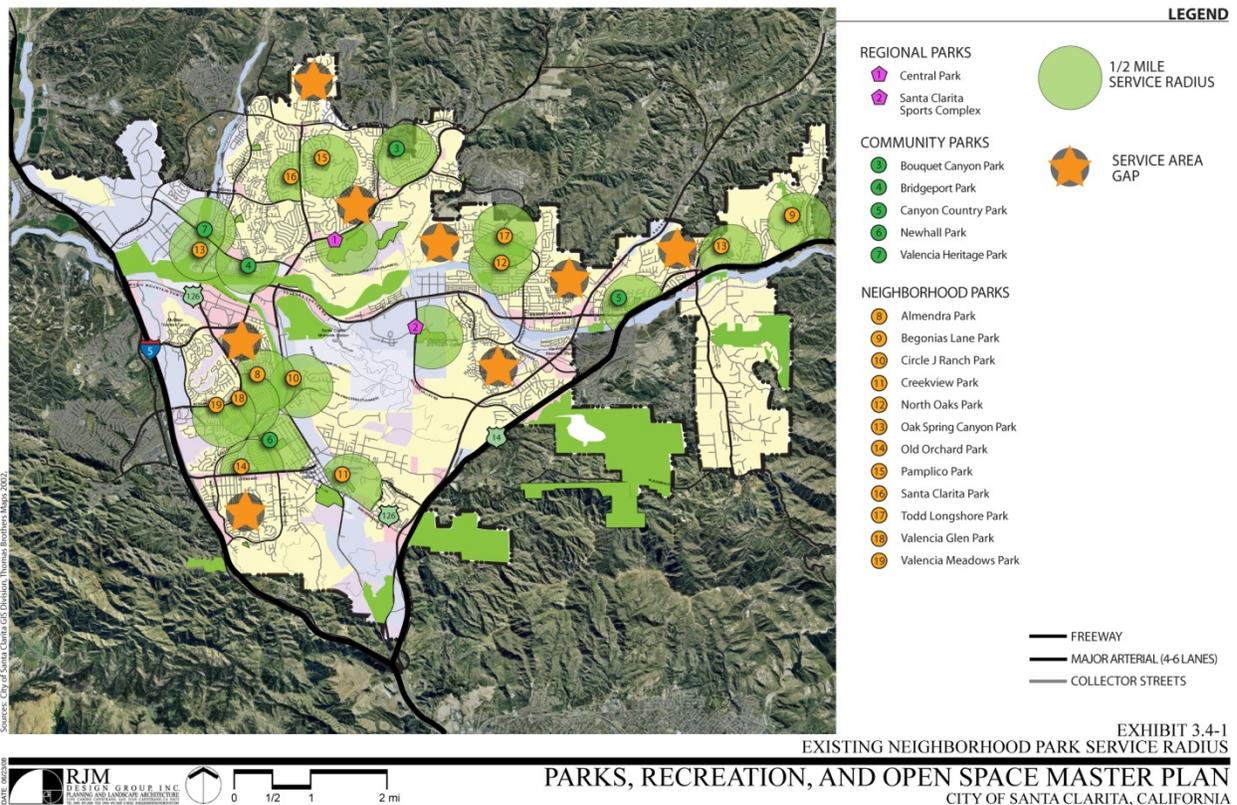
*New parklands will be developed throughout the Santa Clarita Valley, with priority on locations that are not now adequately served. These shall encompass a diversity of park types and functions, including passive and active areas, in consideration of the recreational needs of the residents to be served.*

Guiding Principle 36

Proximity to parks is more than a convenience issue. It helps to establish an excellent City park system by providing improved air quality, circulation, social opportunities, community identity, and community health benefits. Proximity to parkland is one of the elements identified as predicting levels of physical activity in the community, and a survey of U.S. adults finds that people with access to neighborhood parks were nearly twice as likely to be physically active as those without access to parks. Further, 43% of people with safe places to walk within ten minutes of home met recommended activity levels, while just 27% of those without safe places to walk were active enough to meet recommended activity levels (Active Living by Design, Land Use Fact Sheet).

To analyze the extent to which the distribution of existing Santa Clarita facilities is appropriate, a service area radius map is provided (see Exhibit 3.4-1). Circular service area radii are generated with the park location as the central radius point. Geographical or other physical obstructions should be considered in analysis of actual service area, so service area shapes are not necessarily full circles but may be truncated to reflect a major barrier, such as an arterial roadway. When areas zoned for residential use fall outside graphic service area designations, it can be said that the area may be underserved by the existing parks.

**Exhibit 3.4-1: Service Area Radius Map and Service Gap Areas**



The service area analysis demonstrates that there are eight (8) residential areas outside of the established .5 mile service radius from a developed neighborhood park:

- Area north of Soledad Canyon Road, east of Sierra Hwy
- Area north of Soledad Canyon Road, west of Sierra Hwy
- Area south of Via Princesa, west of Sierra Hwy
- Area between Bouquet Canyon Road and the Santa Clara River
- Area north of Bouquet Canyon Road around Haskell Canyon Road
- Area north of Copper Hill Drive
- Area south of Valencia Blvd, east of McBean Parkway
- Area south of Lyons Avenue, west of Calgrove Blvd

Gaps in service can be addressed by adding a new facility, expanding existing facilities, or by making available an existing facility, such as a school, that has not been previously available for recreation.

There are additional rural, low-density residential areas not within .5 mile of a public park, primarily in Sand Canyon. This area is not considered a priority gap area because of the large residential parcels and availability of private open space for recreation.

## **Community Center Distribution**

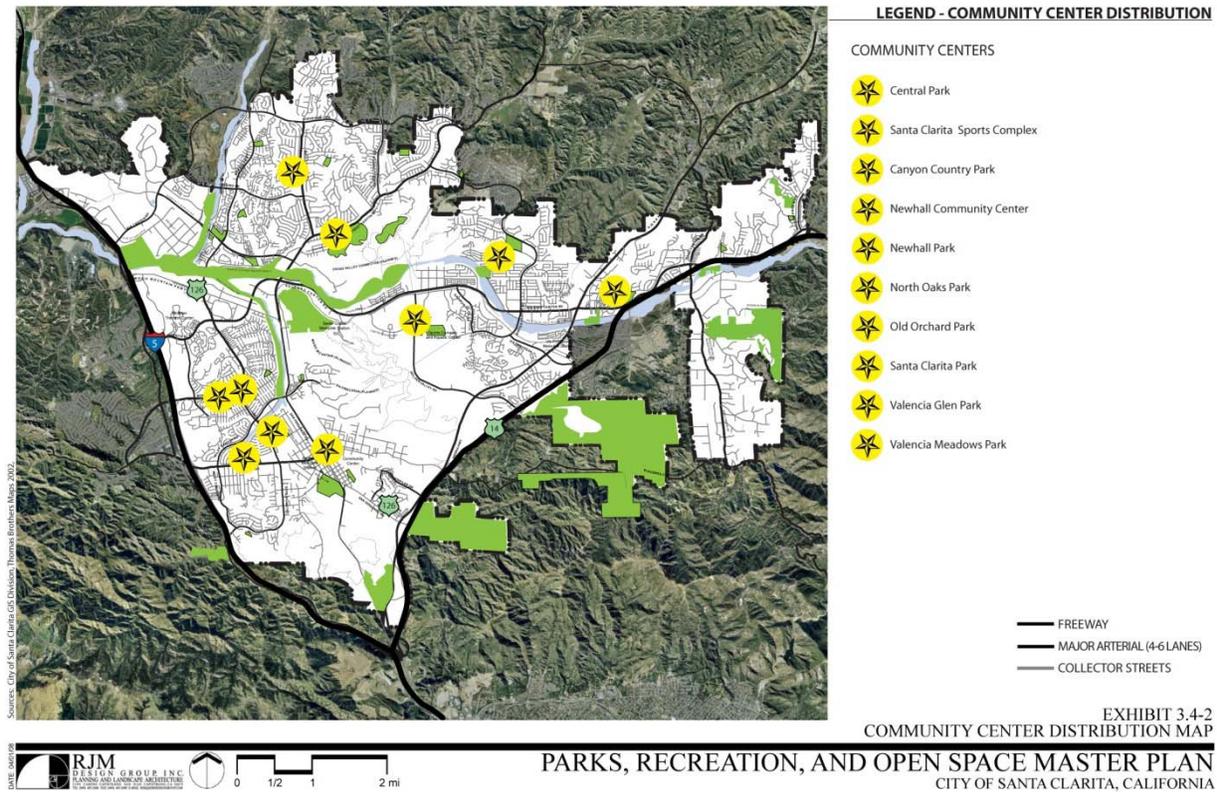
Since transportation to community centers is often by car, bike, or public transportation, the idea of a fixed service radius figure is not as useful as it is for neighborhood parks where convenience and walking distance are factors. However, it is still helpful to analyze community center locations in geographically large cities such as Santa Clarita in order to determine if distribution is generally equitable and effective. A map is generated to identify general areas in which community centers are absent or are limited (See Exhibit 3.4-2). This analysis will aid in prioritizing recommendations described in Section Five.

It can be said that the following areas are deficient in community centers.

- Central Santa Clarita around the Soledad and Bouquet Open Space opportunity site identified in Section 2.8
- Eastern Santa Clarita around the Canyon Country opportunity site identified in Section 2.8

During the needs analysis process of this report, the need for a community center in the eastern portion of Santa Clarita was expressed by community participants. The community building in Canyon Country Park, located on Exhibit 3.4-2, does not have the size or flexibility of use usually provided by a significant community center facility.

**Exhibit 3.4-2: Community Center Distribution Map**



### 3.5 Acreage Analysis

The City of Santa Clarita strives to provide 5 acres of local parkland per thousand residents, as established in the 1991 General Plan, Parks and Recreation Element.

This policy raises several questions: Are there currently 5 acres of parkland per thousand residents? If not, how many more acres are needed now and in the future to keep pace with growth? Is the goal of a minimum of 5 acres per thousand enough parkland to accommodate all identified future recreation demands? The following discussion addresses these questions, examining the issue of parkland acreage from two standpoints: 1) overall City-wide acreage needs as compared to the parkland acreage standard and 2) acreage needs as calculated based on identified recreation facility needs.

#### City-wide Parkland Acreage Based on Acreage Standard

In general, a parkland acreage standard is the ratio upon which development fees and/or dedications can be based. Establishment of a standard creates an obligation to fund improvements that achieve the standard throughout the City. Five (5) acres / 1,000 is the highest standard allowed under the provisions of the Quimby Act, State law that gives the City its authority to require fees or dedicated property to offset new development impacts on recreation facilities. Establishment of a standard does not necessarily limit the City in the acceptance of negotiated

fees or property as conditions of approval for future development.

On the other hand, a parkland acreage goal can be higher than the standard, reflecting a community's desire or need for additional parkland. A City's acreage goal represents a self-imposed target that provides a planning guideline without a formal commitment to fund achievement of the goal.

The OVOV Technical Background Report indicates that "local parkland" pertains to community parks, neighborhood parks, and special use facilities. *Golf courses, and parkland outside the City's boundaries are therefore not counted. In addition, the City does not credit natural/passive open space within natural open space parks as parkland.*

**Exhibit 3.5-1: Acreage Goal and Quantities**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Population</b>	<b>Acres demanded (based on 5 AC/1000)</b>	<b>Local Parkland</b>	<b>Surplus or (-) Deficit</b>
1987	115,000*	575	57	-518
2007	177,158	886	237.8	-648.2
Build-out	237,750**	1,189	237.8	-951.2***
*Approximate **Approximate anticipated build out population. ***Represents deficit if no new parkland is added.				

So, how do current parkland quantities compare to the 5 acre per 1000 residents standard? Exhibit 3.5-1 updates a similar exhibit from the OVOV Technical Background Report. The following points are worth noting:

- 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. These are significant shortages.
- Golf courses, which were not included in the OVOV Technical Background Report tables, are not included in acreage totals of this Master Plan.
- School grounds are not included in acreage totals.
- Facilities and populations outside the City -- but in the OVOV General Plan planning areas -- are not included in this analysis.
- There is 68 acres of undeveloped parkland at Central Park and Santa Clarita Sports Complex
- There are twelve (12) identified undeveloped park sites totaling 688 acres within the City that, when designed and developed, could contribute toward the parkland acreage goal.
- There are nine (9) sites identified for possible acquisition.
- There are six (6) sites identified as future natural open space parks within the

City, for which approximately 10% of the gross acreage could count towards the acreage goal.

The following table illustrates how the local parkland acreage figure in Exhibit 3.5-1 is derived:

	Parkland Acreage Credit toward acreage goal (AC)
<b>Regional Parks</b>	
Central Park	80.0
Santa Clarita Sports Complex	20.0
<b>Community Parks</b>	
Bouquet Canyon Park	9.0
Bridgeport Park	16.0
Canyon Country Park	17.2
Newhall Park	14.3
Valencia Heritage Park	17.2
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>	
Almendra Park	4.3
Begonias Lane Park	4.2
Circle J Ranch Park	5.3
Creekview Park	5.0
North Oaks Park	2.3
Oak Spring Canyon Park	5.0
Old Orchard Park	5.4
Pamplico Park	5.0
Santa Clarita Park	7.3
Todd Longshore Park	5.0
Valencia Glen Park	5.5
Valencia Meadows Park	4.8
<b>Special Use Facilities</b>	
Newhall Community Center	4.5
Veterans Historical Plaza	.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>237.8</b>

### **Parkland Acreage Needed to Accommodate Identified Facility Needs**

Based upon the facility needs requirements (See Exhibit 3.5-2) the City has current and future needs for sports fields, playgrounds/tot lots, tennis courts, open turf areas, neighborhood parks, and community centers. The future acreage requirement for these recreational activities is summarized in Table 3.5-2 below.

**Table 3.5-2: Acreage Analysis Based on Recreation Elements Needed at Build-Out**

Activity	Number Needed*	Acreage Each	Subtotal	Multiplier**	Total Acreage
Softball, youth	3	2.0	6.0	1.5	9.0
Baseball, youth	4	2.0	8.0	1.5	12.0
Soccer, youth	16	2.0	32.0	1.5	48.0
Football, youth	2	2.0	4.0	1.5	6.0
Basketball, Indoor	3	.5	1.5	2.0	3.0
Playground/Tot Lot	22	0.25	5.5	1.5	8.25
Tennis Courts	80	.2	16.0	1.5	24.0
Skateboard Facility	3	.4	1.2	1.5	1.8
Open Turf	52	--	52.0	N/A	52.0
Neighborhood Park/Service Gap	8	5.0	40.0	N/A	40.0
Community Center Gap	2	25.0	50.0	N/A	50.0
<b>Total Acreage to Accommodate Facility Needs at Build Out</b>					<b>254.05</b>
*From Exhibit 3.3-2 and Section 3.4					
**A multiplier is used to account for approximate acreage needed for support elements (parking, buffers, walkways, etc.)					

The sum of 254 acres is an approximate figure representing a need to add acreage and/or utilize existing underutilized acreage in order to satisfy known recreation element needs. This number is compared to the acreage deficit generated by adherence to the City's standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents (951 more acres needed). It appears that there is *no clear need to establish an acreage goal higher than the City standard and that the current acreage standard will accommodate identified recreation needs.*

It should be noted that this acreage analysis does not include an evaluation of need for natural/passive open space, which is addressed by policy established in other documents.

### 3.6 Maintenance and Operations Analysis

The City's previous Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan includes provisions calling for effective park design and maintenance to "...promote community pride, exhibit cleanliness and security, and reduces public liability." As part of this Master Plan process an analysis of maintenance and operations was undertaken. A separate report evaluating maintenance standards and operations issues is included in the Appendix. This report suggests some possible changes in maintenance standards and practices which could lead to changes in daily maintenance activity.

This report echoes results of many of the community outreach inputs -- maintenance of park and recreation facilities in Santa Clarita is very good. This is consistent with the high importance placed on maintenance conditions by the residents which is clearly evident from the community input.

### **3.7 Program Analysis**

A complete recreation program analysis is included in Section Four of this Master Plan. Some of the recommendations have implications for facilities, since many programs require facilities for operation. Facilities or improvements needed to address program needs include:

- Community centers that
  - provide support for youth experiences in a variety of programs, including non-sports activities,
  - address the needs of multi-generational families,
  - provide indoor and outdoor spaces for supervised free play,
  - allow for expanded youth programs and services, including teen dances,
  - strengthen the existing youth employment program,
  - promote mentoring and volunteer programs,
  - expand physical fitness opportunities, and
  - decentralize services and programs for older adults.
- Places for non-traditional youth activities such as BMX programs
- Arts Facility/Museum
- Continuation of efforts to provide accessible facilities
- Event Park
- Trails
- Special Needs Facilities

These facility needs are included in the Needs Summary Matrix at the end of this Section.

### **3.8 Trends and Implications Analysis**

A complete copy of the trends report is found in the Appendix. The report reviews current literature and studies on social and recreational trends and discusses the potential impact on the City of Santa Clarita. Needs pertaining to recreation facilities include:

- "Intergenerational" facilities that address needs of all of the City's population regardless of age
- Facilities that support programs, and provide positive, safe, and secure recreational alternatives

- Facilities that support programs and activities, promote personal connections, and allow the community to highlight and share their diverse backgrounds
- Neighborhood parks that allow for increased community connectedness
- Facilities, such as neighborhood parks, that conveniently support healthy lifestyles
- Facilities that support increased multi-cultural family arts events
- Facilities in which children can experience and appreciate nature and open space

These facility needs are included in the Needs Summary Matrix at the end of this Section.

### **3.9 Facility Needs Summary and Prioritization**

This is a key portion of the Master Plan that brings together information from various public and staff input, as well as other relevant studies and analysis, and distills them into a broader overall picture of recreation in the form of recreation facilities that can support the needs of the Santa Clarita citizenry to achieve the community vision.

Since all of the needs identification tools are directly or indirectly based on community input, it is fair to say that all of the needs identified are significant and important to some portion of the community. However, it is generally helpful to attempt to determine which needs have the highest priority as perceived by the largest number of residents.

The Facility Needs Summary (Exhibit 3.9-1) uses a numerical ranking system to establish relative priorities; the more needs identification tools that indicate a particular need, the higher the ranking. For instance, "Gymnasium" is indicated as a need by six (6) tools and therefore has a higher relative priority than, say, "Picnic Tables" with three (3) tools shown. In determining the overall numerical total, the Exhibit gives greater weight to quantitative tools (statistically valid) by counting each as double the value of a qualitative tool. This is reflected in the top header (Qualitative x2 vs Quantitative x1).

Exhibit 3.9-1  
**Santa Clarita  
Facility Needs Summary**

Identified Recreation Facility Need	NEEDS IDENTIFICATION TOOLS												Total # of Tools that Identified Need	
	QUANTITATIVE (X2)			QUALITATIVE (X1)										
	Community-Wide Telephone Survey	Demand Needs Analysis	Service Radius	Workshop #1 - 6/11/07	Workshop #2 - 7/18/07	Workshop #3 - 11/28/07	Workshop Participant Questionnaires	Stakeholder Interviews	Staff Focus Group	Community Focus Group	Sports Organization Survey	Program Needs Analysis		Trends Analysis
Art Facility (Museum, Studio/Workshop)														4
Baseball Field														3
Bandshell/Outdoor Amphitheatre														4
Basketball Court (Indoor)														3
Bicycle Trails														3
BMX Track/Racetrack														3
Central Park Expansion														1
Community Centers (additional, distributed/Canyon Country)														8
Concession Stand Improvements (extended hours)														1
Cultural Arts Center														1
Dog Park														4
Equestrian Trails														2
Event Park														3
Exercise Course in Parks														1
Field Maintenance														1
Fitness Center														1
Fly Fishing/Casting Pond														2
Football														2
Golf Course/Driving Range														2
Gymnasium														6
Healing Garden														1
Health and Wellness Center														1
Hiking Trails														5
Library														2
Lighting in Parks														2
Multi-Purpose Field														4
Neighborhood Park														3
Open Grass/Turf Areas														6
Open Space (preserve and enhance)														7
Parking (additional at parks)														1
Performing Arts Center														4
Picnic Tables/Facilities														3
Pocket Parks														1
Santa Clarita Sports Park Expansion														1
Senior Center/Facility (eastside)														5
Shade Structures at Sports Fields														1
Skateboard Park														4
Soccer Field/Lighted														6
Softball Field														3
Special Needs Facility														5
Swimming Pool (recreation/lessons)														4
Storage for Sports Equipment														1
Teen/Youth Center														4
Tennis Court														7
Tot Lot/Playground														4
Walking/Running/Jogging														8

Based on the Exhibit 3.9-1 and for the purposes of this summary, facility needs which are suggested as “high priority” are highlighted in yellow and include (in alphabetical order, indicated numerically by a 6 or above):

- Community Centers (additional, distributed appropriately)
- Gymnasium
- Open Turf areas
- Open Space (preserve and enhance)
- Soccer Fields (lighted)
- Tennis Courts
- Walking/Running/Jogging Trails

Facility needs considered “priority” needs (receiving a numerical score of 3, 4, or 5) are shown as bold type and include:

- Art Facility
- Baseball Fields
- Bandshell/Outdoor Amphitheater
- Basketball Court (indoor)
- Bicycle Trails
- BMX Track
- Dog Park
- Event Park
- Hiking Trails
- Multi-purpose Field
- Neighborhood Parks
- Performing Arts Center
- Picnic Facilities
- Senior Facility
- Skateboard Park
- Softball Fields
- Special Needs Facility\*
- Swimming Pool (recreation/lessons)
- Teen/Youth Center
- Tot Lot/Playground

\*Special Needs Facility is taken to mean a universally accessible playground.