

Section Two

2.0 EXISTING RECREATION RESOURCES

This portion of the Master Plan provides an overview of existing parks, recreation facilities and opportunity areas in and around Santa Clarita.

2.1 Park Definition

The City of Santa Clarita Municipal Code establishes the following definition:

“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. (Ord. 90-12, 5/29/90; Ord. 05-1 § 2, 1/25/05)

This Master Plan report will use the term “park” and “recreation facility” interchangeably and, consistent with the Municipal Code, the terms refer to all five City park types described in section 2.3.

2.2 New Parks and Recreation Facilities Since Previous Master Plan

Since 1995, when the previous Master Plan was adopted, the City has aggressively pursued and/or facilitated design and implementation of a significant number of recreation facility projects. The following is a partial list of public facilities added to the park and recreation system between 1995 and 2007:

- Begonias Lane Park
- Bridgeport Community Park
- Central Park
- Circle J Ranch Park
- Newhall Community Center
- Creekview Park
- Oak Spring Canyon Park
- Pamplico Park
- Santa Clarita Sports Complex
- Todd Longshore Park

- Valencia Heritage Park
- Veterans Historical Plaza

These facilities represent an addition of over 280 gross acres to the park system. In addition to these parks and recreation facilities, approximately twenty-five (25) miles of public trails and 3,000 acres of Open Space has been acquired and/or developed for recreation opportunities.

2.3 City Park Types

Parks can be classified by type based primarily on their size, function and character. The City of Santa Clarita Technical Background Report (Phase III of the OVOV General Plan) describes four park classifications for City facilities: Metro-Regional Parks, Community Parks, Neighborhood Parks, and Special Use Facilities. The Technical Background Report describes Passive Parks as a fifth type of open space/parkland. The categorization of parks is important in understanding City-wide acreage needs and in communicating what type of parks are needed in the future. This master plan will utilize the following categories:

Regional Parks *(Over 40 acres of Parkland)*

Regional parks serve larger community populations and provide recreation facilities or open space in significant numbers or sizes. Central Park and the Santa Clarita Sports Complex are the City's two regional parks.

Community Parks *(10-40 acres of Parkland)*

Community Parks can provide a broad range of both passive and active recreational opportunities, but their primary purpose is to provide active recreational opportunities for use by a larger segment of the population than neighborhood parks. Community Parks are generally considered to serve several neighborhoods within a two-mile radius. If a Community Park is located within a residential area it can also serve a neighborhood park function and, therefore, is included in the service area analysis for Neighborhood Parks.

Recreation centers are important features in some community parks. These are building facilities that 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.

There are five (5) Community Parks in Santa Clarita: Bouquet Canyon Park, Bridgeport Park, Canyon Country Park, Newhall Park, and Valencia Heritage Park.

Neighborhood Parks (5-10 acres of Parkland)

Neighborhood Parks are intended to serve City residents who live in close proximity; however they also contribute to the overall park system available to the entire community. Ideally, everyone in the City would live within convenient walking distance (typically one-half mile) of a Neighborhood Park. This is defined as the “service radius” or “service area” of a neighborhood park.

Neighborhood Parks should address daily recreation needs of the surrounding neighborhood; features of neighborhood parks might include playgrounds, multi-purpose open turf areas, limited sports fields, picnic tables and/or picnic shelters, walking paths, attractive landscaping, small parking areas and recreation features such as basketball courts. A size of five (5) acres or more is considered appropriate to serve a neighborhood of approximately 5,000 within its service area.

Natural Open Space Parks

Natural Open Space Parks are those in which most of the park is undeveloped, and the undeveloped portions contain vegetation, topography, or features which are important to retain in their natural states. Developed areas should be 10% 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; turf, irrigated manufactured slopes, detention basins, weedy disturbed areas, and areas landscaped with ornamental vegetation would be considered part of the developed portion of a Natural Open Space Park.

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 Santa Clarita in terms of quantities, size, and importance and therefore a new category is warranted.

Special Use Facilities

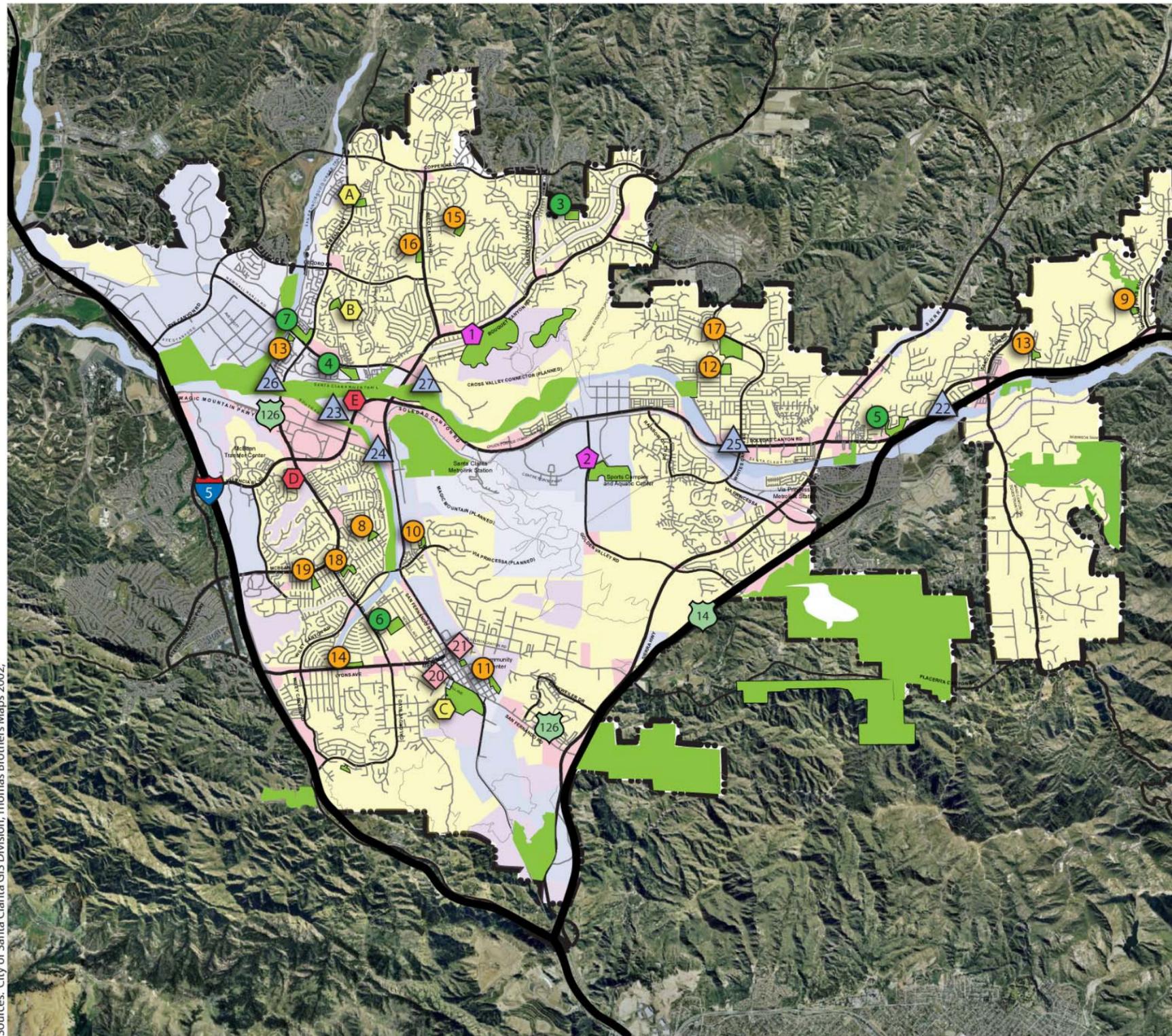
Special Use Facilities generally possess a unique character or function focused on a single type of activity. Vista points, greenbelts, rest areas, or community buildings (without an associated park) might be considered Special Use Facilities. Special Use Facilities aren’t usually included in the service area analysis for neighborhood parks.

2.4 Existing City Recreation Facilities

Unique and diverse recreational opportunities are available throughout Santa Clarita in City facilities. One can find natural open spaces, trails, community buildings, streams, sports courts and fields, a disc golf course, swimming pools, passive areas, playgrounds, a skate park, equestrian staging areas, and much more. As a City that has emerged over the past few decades, newer areas of Santa Clarita have benefited from planning efforts that reflect relatively current thinking about neighborhood identity, neighborhood parks, and developer participation in recreation facility implementation. This has led to an effective system of diverse parks, strongly associated with adjacent residential areas and important to overall community identity. This is one of the many strengths of the community, although some neighborhood park gaps remain in older areas. Additional neighborhood parks are planned as part of future residential areas. Another strength of the park system is the passive/special use parks and trails that take advantage of open space and natural areas of the community.

Exhibit 2.4-1 is a map showing the location of each existing park and Exhibit 2.4-2 is a matrix that describes size and features of existing public parks and recreation facilities within the City of Santa Clarita. More than 342 gross acres of park and open space are found in these twenty-one (21) City facilities.

Exhibit 2.4-1: Location of Existing Parks and Recreation Facilities



LEGEND - PARKS

CITY

REGIONAL PARKS

- 1 Central Park
- 2 Santa Clarita Sports Complex

COMMUNITY PARKS

- 3 Bouquet Park
- 4 Bridgeport Canyon Park
- 5 Canyon Country Park
- 6 Newhall Park
- 7 Valencia Heritage Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- 8 Almendra Park
- 9 Begonias Lane Park
- 10 Circle J Ranch Park
- 11 Creekview Park
- 12 North Oaks Park
- 13 Oak Spring Canyon Park
- 14 Old Orchard Park
- 15 Pamplico Park
- 16 Santa Clarita Park
- 17 Todd Longshore Park
- 18 Valencia Glen Park
- 19 Valencia Meadows Park

CITY

SPECIAL USE FACILITIES

- 20 Veterans /Historical Plaza
- 21 Newhall Community Center

TRAILS AND TRAILHEADS

- 22 Lost Canyon Trailhead
- 23 Auto Ctr/Pony League Trailhead
- 24 South Fork Trailhead
- 25 Camp Plenty Trailhead
- 26 Promenade Trailhead
- 27 River Village Trailhead

COUNTY

PARKS

- A Chesebrough Park
- B Northbridge Park
- C William S. Hart Park

PRIVATE

PARK/REC FACILITIES

- D Summit Park
- E William S. Hart Little League Complex

— FREEWAY

— MAJOR ARTERIAL (4-6 LANES)

— COLLECTOR STREETS

EXHIBIT 2.4-1
EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES MAP

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN
CITY OF SANTA CLARITA, CALIFORNIA

DATE: 06/23/08

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Existing Recreation Resources

2.5 Parks and Recreation Facilities Adjacent to the City

Significant recreational amenities exist in the communities immediately adjacent to the City of Santa Clarita, offering a diverse set of recreational opportunities. While Santa Clarita residents' may use them, they are not included in the demand and needs analysis. They are:

- Acton Open Space
- Castaic Lake State Recreation Area
- Castaic Regional Sports Complex
- Del Valle Park
- Hasley Canyon Park
- Hasley Equestrian Area
- Jake Kuredjian Park
- Pacific Crest Park
- Pico Canyon Park
- Placerita Canyon Nature Center (State Park)
- Plum Canyon/David March Park
- Richard Rioux County Park
- Santa Clarita Woodlands Park (SMMC/MRCA)
- Tesoro Del Valle Park (private)
- Val Verde Park
- Vasquez Rocks Natural Area Park

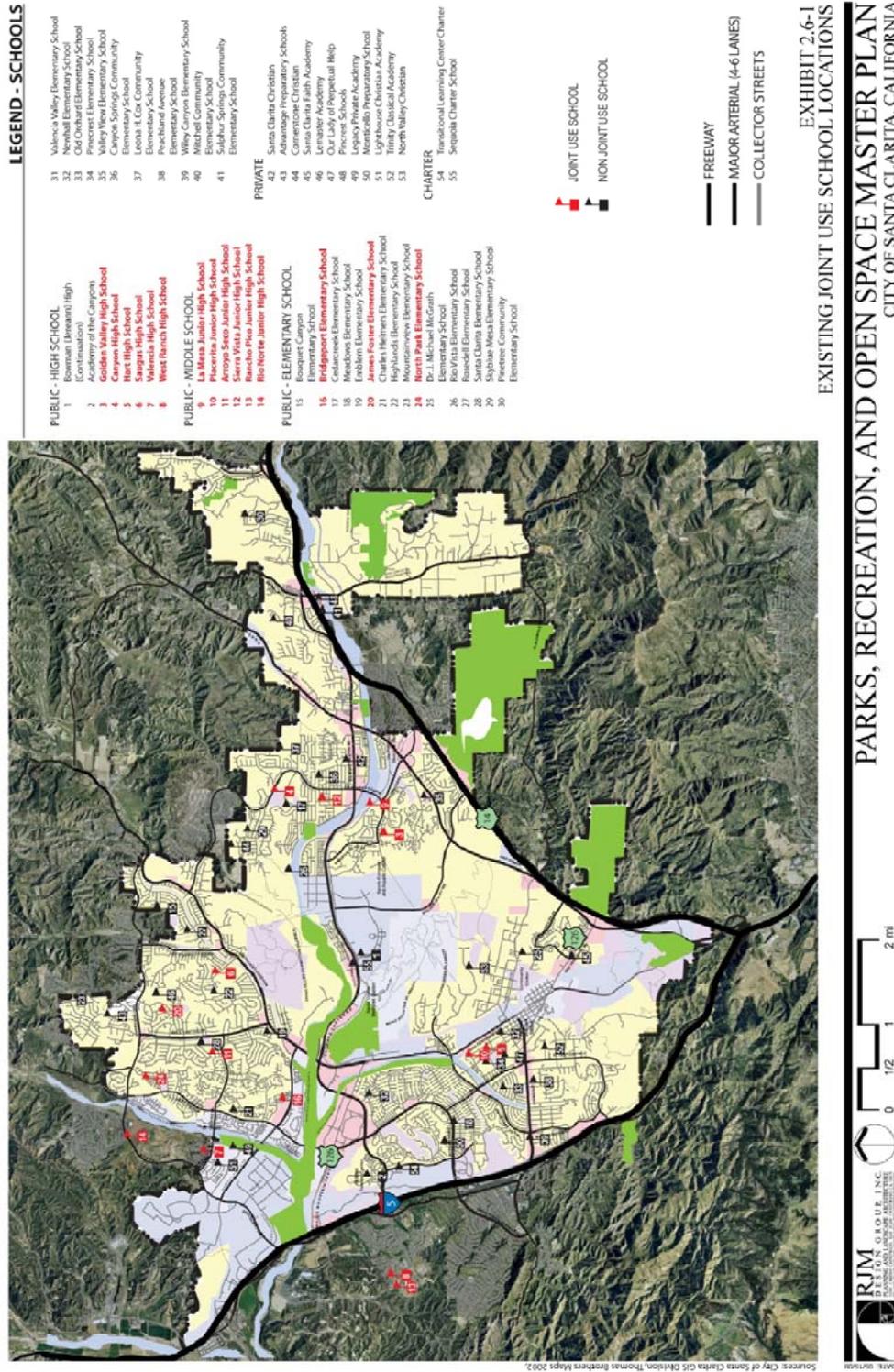
2.6 Public School Facilities

In almost every Santa Clarita neighborhood, school facilities play an important role in family life and routine. In a sense, they are civic gathering places and important resources in the community. There are thirty-two (32) public school campuses (Exhibit 2.6-1) within Santa Clarita, belonging to four 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 also two (2) private college campuses and one public college, College of the Canyon.

Of these, the City has established Joint Use Agreements to utilize facilities on fourteen (14) campuses.

- Arroyo Seco Junior High School
- Bridgeport Elementary School
- Golden Valley High School

Exhibit 2.6-1: Existing Joint Use School Locations



- 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

Schools not having joint use agreements with the City are not listed above, it is possible that facilities at these schools are underutilized. School sites could provide a significant number and distribution of outdoor recreational opportunities not currently utilized for public recreation (i.e. outdoor basketball courts, and tennis courts).

Joint Use Agreements between the City and school districts describe general responsibilities and benefits of each party regarding the use of both City and 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.

Although games are played at some campuses, school facilities are especially important in providing fields for sports practice. Facilities that are scheduled for games are included in the recreation demand and needs analysis

Currently, the school district is responsible for maintaining school campuses and their associated fields and courts.

2.7 Private Recreation Facilities

Non-public facilities play a large role in meeting the recreational needs of the residents of Santa Clarita. The array of programs and facilities they provide is substantial. Some programs are offered through the City, others are not. The network of private facilities within the City is made up of businesses, churches, clubs, private schools, organizations, and golf courses. Some of the golf courses in Santa Clarita are:

- Friendly Valley Golf Course
- Robinson Ranch Golf Course
- Valencia Country Club
- Vista Valencia Golf Course

This Master Plan Update does not provide a detailed inventory of private facilities since the City neither controls, maintains, ensures availability, nor programs them. These recreation resources are therefore not credited toward satisfaction of the City's acreage goals for public parks. However, as they do fill a recreation role, these facilities may individually be able to address certain specific identified needs in the City of Santa Clarita.

A component of this Master Plan is to review how existing public/private partnerships may be working in the provision of facilities and programs. Facility recommendations include an analysis of how private facilities could assist in meeting the needs for specific types of recreation programs.

2.8 Opportunity Sites

Throughout this Master Plan process numerous sites have been evaluated for the potential to provide recreational opportunities in the community. Several "opportunity sites" are currently planned as developer-built parks. Many are unplanned vacant park sites, and some are currently utilized for other purposes but may become available for recreational use in the future. A few sites are part of the Santa Clarita open space network and have favorable access and topographic characteristics that could accommodate more active recreation facilities.

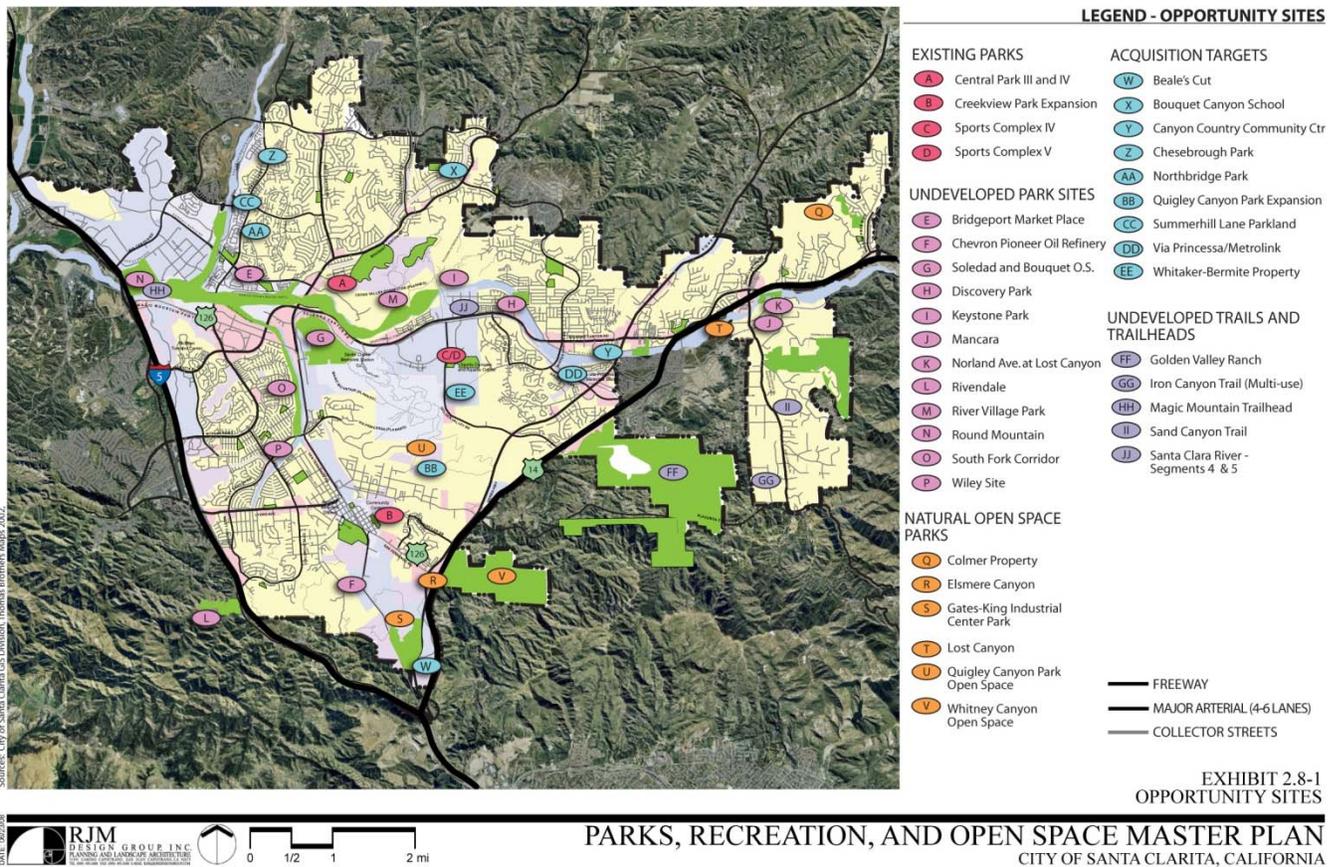
There are five (5) categories of opportunity sites indicated:

- **Existing Parks:** Parks that are partially developed and, although they have been master planned, have undeveloped acreage.
- **Undeveloped Park Sites:** These sites are either owned by the City or are within approved developments with required park acreage. Owned sites are subject to a master planning and environmental process that will determine amount of developable acreage. Some sites that are already planned to become active public recreation facilities, including developer-built parks and City projects, are also listed and indicated as planned facilities.

- **Natural Open Space Parks:** Areas owned by the City or a Joint Powers Authority of which the City is a member, and which have either significant development constraints or for which there have been expectations for primarily passive use. Some are currently used for passive recreation despite limited improvements.
- **Acquisition Targets:** Developed or undeveloped sites offering recreational opportunities, not currently owned by the City or under the City's control.
- **Undeveloped Trails and Trailheads:** Planned and potential trail connections and/or trailheads.

Locations of these sites are shown on Exhibit 2.8-1.

Exhibit 2.8-1: Locations of Opportunity Sites



Existing Parks

Central Park Phase III and IV: Approximately 28 acres are available for development, which could include a new community center and a multi-court tennis center.

Creekview Park Expansion: Owned by The Masters College, and adjacent to an existing 5-acre City park, this area is mostly in the floodplain of Newhall Creek. Passive area development on the opposite side of the creek would require a bridge for pedestrian and maintenance access, and could be deeded to City as part of approval of College Master Plan.

Sports Complex Phase IV and V: Phase IV will include a new signature $\pm 40,000$ SF skate park replacing an existing 12,000 SF facility. Also planned are outdoor basketball courts, an open play area, and new gymnasium with indoor basketball. Future development will include a universally access play area, soccer fields, amphitheater, dog park, and a BMX course.

Undeveloped Park Sites

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

Chevron/Pioneer Oil Refinery Site: Approximately 5 acres in size, and offers a significant historic preservation opportunity.

Soledad & Bouquet Open Space: The City owns this 235-acre property, but it is not yet master-planned. Topography is very hilly and there are spectacular views of the entire Valley. Protection of the ridgelines and the topography reduce the developable size of the property. Trail connections should be considered. This site is adjacent to the 900-acre Whitaker-Bermite property (Brownfield site) and the reclaimed wastewater plant.

Discovery Park: This is a City-owned 24+ acre site with a significant floodplain area. A Master Plan Design and Construction Documents, as well as a 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.

Keystone Park: Keystone is a proposed developer built park that may include passive areas, splash pad play area, picnicking, and an off-leash dog area.

Mancara Park: Mancara is a proposed developer built park that may include passive areas, play area, and picnicking.

Norland Avenue at Lost Canyon: 58 acres of City-owned property, however more than 50% of the property is in the floodplain. Bank protection and mitigation will be costly in order to use any significant portion of the remainder of this site. This could be a possible donor site for other project mitigation.

Rivendale: 60 acres of City-owned property located at the mouth of Towsley Canyon. It is currently used by the Santa Monica Mountain Conservancy as a trailhead for access to the Towsley property. A Flood Plain, SEA, and steep topography are major constraints. Historically, the site was used for equestrian boarding. There is freeway visibility, access, and noise.

River Village Park: 29-acre site dedicated to the City (subject to City accepting improvements). Construction plans for 5-acre active park features are being reviewed by 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 (currently under construction). 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.

Wiley Site: Anticipated as mitigation for nearby high density mixed use development. A major utility corridor, floodplain, and limited vehicular access are potential issues.

Natural Open Space Parks

Colmer Property: Property consists of natural and manufactured slopes behind homes. No public access is currently available.

Elsmere Canyon: The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy currently owns 400 acres at the mouth of this pristine oak woodland. Additional acquisition is needed to permanently protect the upper canyon including scenic seasonal stream and water fall.

Gate King Industrial Center Park: A very hilly and oak-studded area. Anticipated use is limited to trails. The Environmental Impact Report (EIR) restricts any more intensive use.

Lost Canyon: Developer proposed neighborhood park. Site to be determined.

Quigley Canyon Park: 158 acres of mostly hilly topography with a blue line stream bisecting. Several existing trails occur on the site.

Whitney Canyon Open Space: Owned by a Joint Powers Agreement (JPA) between the City and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. Master plan would be processed through their approval.

Acquisition Targets

Beale's Cut: An undetermined area of land in Newhall Pass that includes the site of the 90-foot deep cut completed in 1864 as a toll road linking the San Fernando Valley with the Santa Clarita Valley and points north.

Bouquet Canyon School: Approximately 5-acre site across the street from the existing Bouquet Canyon park. School District is planning to relocate to a new site and the property could be available to the City and/or other public agencies for acquisition.

Canyon Country Site: Possible site for a future community center.

Cheseborough Park: This park is owned and programmed by the County of Los Angeles. If acquired by the City, this park must be brought up to operations and maintenance standards.

Northbridge Park: This park is owned and programmed by the County of Los Angeles. If acquired by the City, park must be brought up to operations and maintenance standards.

Quigley Canyon Park Expansion: This 158-acre oak woodland is located in Placerita Canyon. Approximately ten acres are currently part of an oak tree bank established for a nearby development.

Summerhill Lane Parkland: A flat 3.5 acre site on the corner of McBean and Summerhill. This site has excellent access, no known constraints, and is adjacent to the City's open space and trail system. A Metropolitan Water District (MWD) easement is adjacent to the west.

Via Princessa/Metrolink Site: City-owned property currently serving as commuter rail station and parking lot. On opposite side of the railroad tracks is an additional 11 acres owned by the County of Los Angeles. Grade separated access would be required to connect the two parcels.

Whitaker-Bermite Site: Developer is planning 50 acres of parkland including one community park. This is a 900-acre Brownfield site. The City Council has maintained that no portion of this site can be developed until entire site is clear of hazardous materials and groundwater. An earthquake fault runs along the northerly property line.

Undeveloped Trails and Trailheads

Golden Valley Ranch Trail: A multi-use trail system exists on 900-acre open space preserve. Additional trails to be constructed as part of adjacent residential development.

Iron Canyon Trail (Multi-use): A multi-use trail connecting adjacent semi-rural areas with the Sand Canyon Trail Corridor.

Magic Mountain Trailhead: Located on Magic Mountain Parkway near Tourney Road, the site of a proposed two acre trailhead facility.

Sand Canyon Trail : A multi-use trail connecting the National Forest areas to the south with the Santa Clara River Trail. Completion of this trail is approximately 30% complete.

Santa Clara River Segments 4 and 5: These are the remaining segments of the Santa Clara River Trail along the north bank of the river through the City. When constructed, these trails will complete a significant portion of the trail corridor extending from Interstate 5 to Discovery Park in Canyon Country.