

**CHAPTER 4.0**

**PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

**4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The State of California Government Code requires the incorporation of both a parks and recreation, and an open space element in all jurisdictional general plans.

California laws governing planning and development place more emphasis on the open space element than on any other component of general plans, with the exception of housing. Government Code Title 7 Planning and Land Use, Chapter 3 Local Planning, Article 5 Authority for and Scope of General Plans, Section 65302(e) requires "an open space element as provided in Article 10.5 (Open Space Lands) commencing with Section 65560."

The open space resources of California municipalities are then defined in Section 65560 as:

- (a) "Local open space plan" is the open space element of a county or city general plan adopted by the board or council...
- (b) "Open space land" is any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use as defined in this section, and which is designated on a local, regional or state open-space plan as any of the following:

- 1. Open space for the preservation of natural resources including, but not limited to, areas required for the preservation of plant and animal life, including habitat for fish and wildlife species; areas required for ecologic and other scientific study purposes; rivers, streams, bays and estuaries; and ... banks of rivers and streams, and watershed lands.

- 2. Open space used for the managed production of resources, including but not limited to ... agricultural lands and areas of economic importance for the production of food and fiber; areas required for recharge of ground water basins; ... and areas containing major mineral deposits, including those in short supply.
- 3. Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to areas of outstanding scenic, historic and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to ... rivers and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors.
- 4. Open space for public health and safety, including, but not limited to, areas which require special management or regulation because of hazardous or special conditions such as earthquake fault zones, unstable soil areas, flood plains, watersheds, areas presenting high fire risks, areas required for the protection of water quality.

In addition, the State of California General Plan Guidelines recommends that, when planning for "Open Space for Outdoor Recreation" (Number 3, above) the following be included;

- \* Inventory and analysis of areas of outstanding scenic beauty.
- \* Assessment of the demand for public and private parks and recreational facilities and an inventory of areas particularly suited to parks and recreational purposes.

Description of the type, location and size of existing public (federal, state, regional and local) and private parks and recreational facilities,

Review of federal, state, regional and local plans and proposal for the acquisition and improvement of public parks,

Assessment of present and future demands for parks and recreational facilities.

- \* Inventory of recreational trails and areas and an assessment of the demand for them.
- \* Inventory of trails proposed by and developed under the California Recreational Trails Plan of 1978.

In response to these directives, this Parks, Recreation and Open Space element identifies Fountain Valley's existing recreation facilities, its anticipated recreational needs, the potential location of future facilities, and considerations affecting the provision of new parks and recreational facilities.

## 4.2 EXISTING PARKLANDS

Parks and Open Space are those areas designated for recreational purposes, both active and passive, and/or areas which will preserve or enhance the natural environment. Parks in the City of Fountain Valley consist of Neighborhood, Community and Regional Parks, as shown on Figure 4-1.

### Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood Parks are those which are designed to serve primarily the neighborhoods in which they are located. These parks generally consist of moderate size grass areas with playground equipment and picnic tables. A Neighborhood Park can serve between 2,500 to 5,000 people. Neighborhood Parks are generally located adjacent to the elementary schools and are sometimes developed in conjunction with a school playground.

### Community Parks

Community Parks are typically larger and serve a larger area, located to serve several neighborhoods and up to 20,000 people. Community Parks consist of major open space, playground equipment and picnic facilities. Community Parks include: Courreges Park, Harper Park, Fulton Park, Westmont Park North, and Heritage Park.

### Regional Parks

The City's Regional Park, Mile Square Park serves as a focal point and provides recreation and open space opportunities to the entire City. In addition, Mile Square Park attracts regional recreation seekers.

Mile Square Park is located at the north end of Fountain Valley with the main entrance off Euclid between Edinger and Warner, with a total of 640 acres of public land dedicated for recreational use. Mile Square Park, a Regional Park as designated on the County's Regional Park Master Plan, is made up of County park land and City park land. The City has jurisdiction over 55 acres which is known as the Fountain Valley Recreation and Cultural Center. This area along with the County area has many recreational amenities including a recreational center with banquet rooms, gymnasium, eighteen softball diamonds, four soccer fields, an archery range, cricket field, area for model plane flying and land sailing, four volleyball courts, three handball courts, two indoor racquetball courts, six outdoor basketball courts, a shuffleboard and horseshoe area, twelve lighted tennis courts, picnic areas and restrooms. The park is also home to two golf courses. The east side of the park is reserved for passive uses, such as family gatherings and picnics.

Originally the entire site was under the control of the federal government; under the Nixon administration a number of sites throughout the United States, including the Mile Square Park site, were dedicated to a variety of local agencies with the stipulation that these sites be used solely for recreational purposes. In 1972, the City of Fountain Valley entered into an

agreement with the County to lease the 55 acres which currently house the City's Recreation and Cultural Center. The City has a 25 year lease with the County with an option to extend that lease by another 25 years for a rate of \$1.00 per year; the original 25 year lease began in 1972, and therefore can be extended through the year 2022 for the same rate. In 1992, the County initiated a land exchange with the federal government and now retains ownership of the 167 acre triangular airfield site.

**Parkland Requirements**

Most cities in California have a goal to achieve a ratio of three (3) to five (5) acres of parkland per thousand residents. SB 1785, passed in 1982, allows local governments to require the dedication of between 3 and 5 acres of park area per 1,000 residents in a subdivision, as follows. If the jurisdiction has an existing parks to population ratio of 5 acres to 1,000 population or greater, then that local government can require a dedication of up to 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 population for new development, or the equivalent in-lieu fees. If the ratio within a jurisdiction is between 3 and 5 acres of parkland, then the local government can require a dedication which coincides with the jurisdictions existing ratio. In those instances where the jurisdiction has less than 3 acres per 1,000 population, the local government may only require the dedication of parkland at a ratio up to 3 acres per 1,000 population.

Currently, based on a population of 53,691 people (taken from the 1990 U.S. Census) and parks totaling 708.75 acres, which includes the golf course operated under private enterprise at Mile Square Park and the federal land within the Park that will be dedicated to the County in 1991, the park acreage per thousand persons ratio is 13.2 acres per 1,000 residents. This total park acreage includes Mile Square Park as well as the parks summarized in Table 4-1, Existing Parks.

The City of Fountain Valley is participating in a school/park program (the schools listed in Table 4-1 with asterisk symbols are those participating in the school/park program). This program involves joint use of school grounds for the purpose of park land and facilities. This program has proven to be advantageous to the City, the school district and the community's citizens for the following reasons:

- o Land is available at no cost to the City.
- o Site locations are convenient since parks are located in areas familiar to children.
- o Useful facilities, not generally provided on school grounds, are made available on park grounds.
- o A more thorough land use is achieved.
- o Overall physical appearance is enhanced.
- o Recreation equipment at the school is expanded as is park usefulness.
- o Existing school parking areas may be further utilized for park patrons.

**Goal**

- 4.1 Provide park and recreation opportunities that enable residents of all ages to use their leisure time in a rewarding, relaxing and creative manner.

**Policies**

- 4.1.1 Utilize available park and recreation funds to maximize the public's benefit.
- 4.1.2 Continue to develop neighborhood and community parks as well as special facilities such as interpretive nature parks, and bicycle or hiking trails.
- 4.1.3 Rehabilitate and upgrade existing park facilities.

**TABLE 4-1  
Existing Parks**

Neighborhood Parks

Allen Park* 16149 Mesquite Street 3.9 acres	Colony Park 10252 Cinco de Mayo .68 acres
Cordata Park 18761 Cordata Street 4.53 acres	Ellis Park 10301 Ellis Avenue 3.0 acres
Helm Park 9170 Helm Avenue 3.1 acres	Vista View Park 9235 Honeysuckle Avenue 3.03 acres
La Capilla Park 9720 La Capilla Avenue 2.37 acres	Los Alamos 17901 Los Alamos Street 4.0 acres
Monroe Park* 11370 Mt. Bodie 2.75 acres	Plavan Park* 9745 Warner Avenue 2.06 acres
Stonecress Park 11240 Stonecress Avenue 2.22 acres	

Community Parks

Courreges Park** 8664 Rogue River Avenue 10.0 acres	Fulton Park** 8620 El Lago Avenue 7.58 acres
Harper Park 8675 Bluebird Avenue 8.14 acres	Westmont Park North** El Rancho/La Fiesta 11.39 acres
Heritage Park (fee use park) 10200 Slater Avenue 1.0 acre	

Regional Park

Mile Square Park\*\*\*  
16801 Euclid Avenue  
640 acres

\* Indicates a joint use agreement between the School District and Parks Department. (Does not include school property.)

\*\* Includes acreage within the SCE easement only.

\*\*\* Includes Fountain Valley Recreational and Cultural Center (55 acres).

- 4.1.4 Maintain landscaping in parks, parkways and medians.
- 4.1.5 The City shall coordinate with community groups and neighborhoods in developing a tree replacement program for those existing trees which must be removed along public and private streets.
- 4.1.6 Dead and missing trees will be replaced and additional trees will be added where possible.
- 4.1.7 Ensure that neighborhood parks meet the particular needs of the residents they serve.
- 4.1.8 Provide for pedestrian and bicycle trails as linkages between open space and recreation facilities within the community.
- 4.1.9 Provide family oriented activities and community oriented opportunities to the citizens of Fountain Valley.

**Goal**

- 4.2 Maximize the recreational and open space opportunities afforded by Mile Square Park within the City.

**Policies**

- 4.2.1 The City will work with the County and the federal government to ensure that Mile Square Park will remain an important recreation amenity for the community.
- 4.2.2 The City shall review and coordinate concerns with the County of Orange, the Department of the Interior and other applicable agencies and organizations regarding the operation of Mile Square Park's year round activities as well as special events.

**4.3 OPEN SPACE**

The large parcels of open space and agriculture land that once characterized Fountain Valley have primarily been urbanized into a mix of residential, commercial and light industrial development interspersed with park land, green belts, play grounds and general open space areas.

The primary area of open space within the City is the Southern California Edison (SCE) easement and Mile Square Park.

The Southern California Edison Easement runs parallel to Newland Street and provides approximately 48 acres of open space area, of which 38 acres is made up of developed parkland. Easement land adjacent to school sites is used as open park space and typically has additional amenities such as play areas/tot lots and par fitness courses. Other portions of the greenbelt are used by nurseries and as Christmas tree lots.

In addition, as discussed in further detail in the Parks and Recreation Section of this Chapter, Mile Square Park offers a valuable open space amenity. The Park, located at the north end of Fountain Valley, is a large regional park, with a total of 640 acres of public land dedicated for recreational use.

**Goal**

- 4.3 Conserve, protect and enhance the natural resources in Fountain Valley.

**Policy**

- 4.3.1 Ensure the optimal use and support of the natural resources in the City for the benefit of all present and future citizens of the City.

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