



Parks and Recreation

ELEMENT K **PARKS AND RECREATION**

GOAL: Provide park and recreation opportunities at a level that maximizes available funds and enables residents of all ages to utilize their leisure time in a rewarding, relaxing, and creative manner.

Description of Parks and Recreation

A park is defined as any public or private land set aside for aesthetic, educational, recreational, or cultural use. It is related to open space, which is all land and water in an urban area not covered by buildings. The amount of park land required for dedication is established at the time of subdivision approval through the implementation of the Irvine Subdivision Ordinance (referred to as the Park Code). The Subdivision Ordinance establishes park credit standards and provides for any exceptions for dedication (i.e., housing incentives). Developers of residential subdivisions are required to dedicate park land, or pay fees in lieu of dedication, at the rate of five (5) acres per thousand (1,000) population consistent with the standards contained in these codes. The allocation of land is apportioned as follows:

- Community Parks: 2 acres
- Neighborhood Parks: 3 acres

The City of Irvine's public park system is divided into two park categories: community parks and neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks are further divided in public or private parks. Recreational facilities and services are also provided by the private sector and by jurisdictions other than the City. For example, Irvine also has a county regional park and several commercial recreational facilities. This element establishes guidelines for the orderly development of Irvine's park and recreation facilities.

Existing Conditions

City recreational facilities and services include neighborhood parks, community parks and programs, an aquatic center, athletic complexes, a nature center and a fine arts center. The City has ten developed community park sites totaling 179 acres and one special facility of 15 acres. Expansions are planned at two of the park sites and another 45 acre site is in design development. There are 24 public



Neighborhood Park - Northpark

neighborhood parks and over 180 private neighborhood parks. In addition, the City has 8 landscaped public recreational trails. Table K-1 provides descriptions park types within the City. Tables G-1 and G-2 provide standards and guidelines, respectively, for specific types of facilities relative to population. The Irvine Community Parks Master Plan provides guidelines for siting of community parks as well as design standards for specific facilities, such as golf courses, riding and hiking trails and picnic facilities.

The City jointly provides recreational facilities with other public agencies, such as

a community theater. Additional facilities and services located in parks include child care centers and senior centers. Mason Regional Park (operated by the County of Orange) currently provides recreational and open space facilities for the general public.



Turtle Rock Community Park

Additional recreation and leisure opportunities are available to the residents of Irvine because of its central location in Orange County. Public beaches, local mountains, natural parks, and deserts are all within short traveling distance from Irvine; including Aliso Wood Canyon Regional Park, Limestone Canyon Regional Park, Crystal Cove State Park and the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park. Southern California is also the location of several world-famous amusement parks, such as Disneyland and Knott's Berry Farm. Movie theatres, arcades, bowling alleys, skating rinks and miniature golf courses are just a few of the many recreational options available in the City and the region.

Figure K-1 shows the location of existing recreational facilities in the City.

Trends

In the past, developers have satisfied their dedication requirements with land alone. The recent trend has been to meet park dedication requirements by providing a combination of facilities, fees, and land. The City will continue to consider all creative funding sources to help defray improvement and maintenance costs.

As the community ages, more emphasis will be placed on park facility maintenance and rehabilitation programs as opposed to new construction. This change in direction from facility development to facility maintenance and rehabilitation requires a change in the focus of the parks and recreation programs. It will also require continual review and assessment of options to fund needed maintenance and rehabilitation programs. At the City, this is incorporated into the annual review of the Capital Improvement Program and the Strategic Business Plan.



Irvine's population has changed considerably since the City's original General Plan was adopted in 1973. The size of the average Irvine household has decreased from 3.44 persons to 2.61 persons in 1990. There are fewer young children and an increase in the number of citizens 65 years and older. It is expected that the trend towards smaller

families and the increase in the senior population will continue.



Just as Irvine's demographics have changed, so have its recreation demands. Older children and adults have shared an increased interest in team sports such as soccer and baseball. These recreation trends will challenge the flexibility of Irvine's existing park system. Due to the increasing costs of land, new housing is often developed at higher densities with less open space in private yards. This will place an additional burden on public/private open space and parks.

It is expected that the current trends in City revenues will continue to affect funds available for park improvements maintenance and rehabilitation. It is also expected that developers will continue to request that recreational amenities be credited towards park requirements, resulting in a reduction in actual parkland. However, this is an important trade off to ensure that parkland does not remain vacant because of diminishing governmental resources. Furthermore, nonresidential development will continue to generate additional demands on the public park and recreation system, for example, through employee participation in adult athletic leagues. It is expected that the approval authority will consider park dedication

requests and evaluate the balance between land dedicated and improvements provided consistent with current City Council Policy.

Identification of Issues

- 1. How can the City provide a quality park system which offers variety and flexibility to meet anticipated needs and demands, given a reduction in dedicated parkland and funds for the purchase of land, improvements and maintenance?**
- 2. How can the City adapt the parkland and facilities to respond to the changing needs over time?**
- 3. How can the City maximize the provision of recreational acquired through the parkland dedication process?**
- 4. How can the City continue park maintenance and rehabilitation at current standards at the lowest possible cost to the City?**



Heritage Park

Response to Issues

The following objectives and policies guide the development, operation, and maintenance of parks.

OBJECTIVE K-1: RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Provide for a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities and park facilities, in either public or private ownership, to accommodate a variety of types and sizes of functions.

The following policies support Objective K-1:

Policy (a) Provide community parks which serve residents of a planning area to citywide level by providing facilities appropriate for citizens of various ages and interests, such as:

- Community centers.
- Athletic facilities.
- Competition level swimming pools.
- Picnic areas.
- Cultural centers.
- Day care centers.

Policy (b) Encourage the development of special areas in community parks that will enhance recreational and leisure opportunities in the City, such as the Interpretive Center in Turtle Rock Community Park and the senior centers in

Rancho San Joaquin and Woodbridge and the fine arts center in Heritage Park.

Policy (c) Provide neighborhood parks that respond to recreational needs at a local level.



Canyon Park

Policy (d): Strongly advocate the creation of homeowners associations as a way to encourage the ownership and maintenance of private neighborhood parks.

Policy (e) Ensure that public parks are developed pursuant to Table G-2 in the Public Facilities and Service Element, with recreational amenities such as active play areas, passive open space, picnic facilities, and athletic fields and courts per standards identified in the Community Parks Master Plan.

Policy (f) Support and work with the County of Orange and the state in the development of regional and state parks.

Policy (g) Encourage citizen participation in the planning of park facilities.

Policy (h) Purchase and improve park and recreation facilities consistent with the availability of capital improvement funds

Policy (i) Pursue state and federal funding sources to acquire park facilities in addition to those dedicated to the City.

Policy (j) Adopt guidelines to permit the leasing of public parkland for use by private enterprise for commercial recreational purposes.

OBJECTIVE K-2: PARK DEDICATION

Require developers of residential land to dedicate land or fees for parks, consistent with the Quimby Act, Subdivision Map Act, Irvine Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances and General Plan standards.

The following policies support Objective K-2:

Policy (a) Require review by the Community Services Commission and /or the Planning Commission, as appropriate, of all land and facilities proposed for park dedication.



Policy (b) Use the adopted Community Parks Master Plan as a guideline for future development of community parks.

Policy (c) Require that applications for subdivision maps for residential development include a park program which identifies the following:

- Adaptability of the land for park and recreation use.
- Suitability of proposed facilities to meet the recreation needs of residents the park is to serve.
- Responsible agency and costs of maintenance.
- Location of the park or facilities for convenient access to housing, school, and employment centers.

Policy (d): Require park land dedicated by developers to meet minimum improvement standards to ensure a functional use of land. Use the Local Park Code as the standard for design and siting of neighborhood parks.

Policy (e): Grant credit for private neighborhood park facilities to those facilities identified in the City's Local Park Code.

Policy (f): Allow developers of low and moderate income housing to dedicate less park land and amenities subject to review by the Planning Commission.

Policy (g) Ensure parks developed in new residential communities, including areas to be annexed, include a balance of amenities comparable to facilities provided in existing neighborhoods with private and public facilities. Such amenities may include, but are not limited to, swimming pools, club houses, and tennis courts.

**OBJECTIVE K-3:
PARK LOCATION**

Locate park and recreation facilities for safe and easy access by their intended users.

The following policies support Objective K-3:

Policy (a) Require proposed park locations to be reviewed at the time of tentative tract approval to ensure safe and easy access for occupants of surrounding land uses.



Policy (b) Locate parks adjacent to school sites and other public facilities when feasible to reduce development and operating costs.

Policy (c) Use the latest adopted Community Parks Master Plan as a guideline for future siting of community parks:

- Locate parks adjacent to public trails. Trail linkages should serve to create a connected park system.
- Link parks and trails to other open space.

**OBJECTIVE K-4:
PARK MAINTENANCE
AND REHABILITATION**

Ensure that Irvine's park system is developed, maintained and rehabilitated in a manner that is cost-effective and consistent with the community's needs and ability to pay.

The following policies support Objective K-4:

Policy (a) Pursue all possible methods to generate revenue for the maintenance and rehabilitation of parks, such as maintenance districts, commercial leasing, user fees and other available private and public funding sources.

Policy (b) Maintain and rehabilitate the City's public parks consistent with the Strategic Business Plan and the availability of capital improvement funds.

Policy (c) Require that all public neighborhood parks be maintained and rehabilitated by the City to ensure their continued availability and use for residents.

Policy (d) Require maintenance and rehabilitation of all private neighborhood parks by the responsible homeowners association through a recorded agreement requiring the perpetual private ownership and maintenance of these parks.

Policy (e) Pursue joint use agreements with the Irvine and Tustin Unified School District and other educational entities.

Policy (f) Initiate discussions with local colleges and universities for joint-use of recreational facilities located on the campuses of these educational institutions.

RELATED OBJECTIVE NUMBERS

Land Use Element - A-1, A-3, A-4, A-7
Circulation Element -B-3, B-4, B -5, B -8
Cultural Resources Element - E-2
Public Facilities and Services Element - G-1, G-4
Energy Element - I-3
Conservation and Open Space Element -L-1, L-2, L-5, L-7, L-9
Growth Management Element - M-7

Table K-1

Parks and Recreation Facility Descriptions

PARK FACILITIES: There are five types of park facilities provided in Irvine. Each type is described below:

- **Regional Open Space:** Regional open space areas are lands primarily acquired through the dedications agreed to under the Implementation Actions Program of the Conservation and Open Space Element. Once dedicated to the city the land becomes permanent public open space area. These areas vary in size and location throughout the City and may have full or limited public access depending on the environmental sensitivity.
- **Regional Parks:** Regional parks are owned by the County of Orange and managed by the Harbors, Beaches and Parks Department. There is no mandated dedication standard or park size required. Regional parks can be active or passive parks.
- **Community Parks:** These parks are generally a minimum of 20 acres in size (excluding greenbelts, trails and school grounds) and able to serve a population of 10,000 persons. An exception to this standard exists in Lower Peters Canyon (Planning Area 4) where community parks may be a minimum of 10 acres in size (excluding greenbelts and school grounds). Community parks are owned and maintained by the City. Colonel Bill Barber Marine Corps Memorial Park, Heritage Community Park, Harvard Community Park and Turtle Rock Community Park are examples of community parks in Irvine. Community parks are developed with facilities that are Citywide in scope and are intended to serve more than one residential village.
- **Public Neighborhood Parks:** These parks are generally a minimum of 4 acres in size (excluding greenbelts, trails and school grounds) and able to serve a minimum population of 2,500 persons. Public parks are owned and maintained by the city. Orchard Park, San Carlo Park and Chaparral Park are examples of public neighborhood parks.
- **Private Neighborhood Parks:** These parks are a minimum of one third of an acre in size and able to serve the immediate development or specific planned community in which they are located. Private parks are owned and maintained by homeowner associations or maintenance district. They are generally a minimum of one third of an acre in size for developments with densities under 30 dwelling units per acre and a minimum of 6,000 square feet in size for developments with densities over 31 dwelling units per acre, except for developments in Planning Area 36 where the parks will comply with provisions contained in the “IBC Residential Mixed Use Vision and Overlay Zoning Code.”



Figure K-1

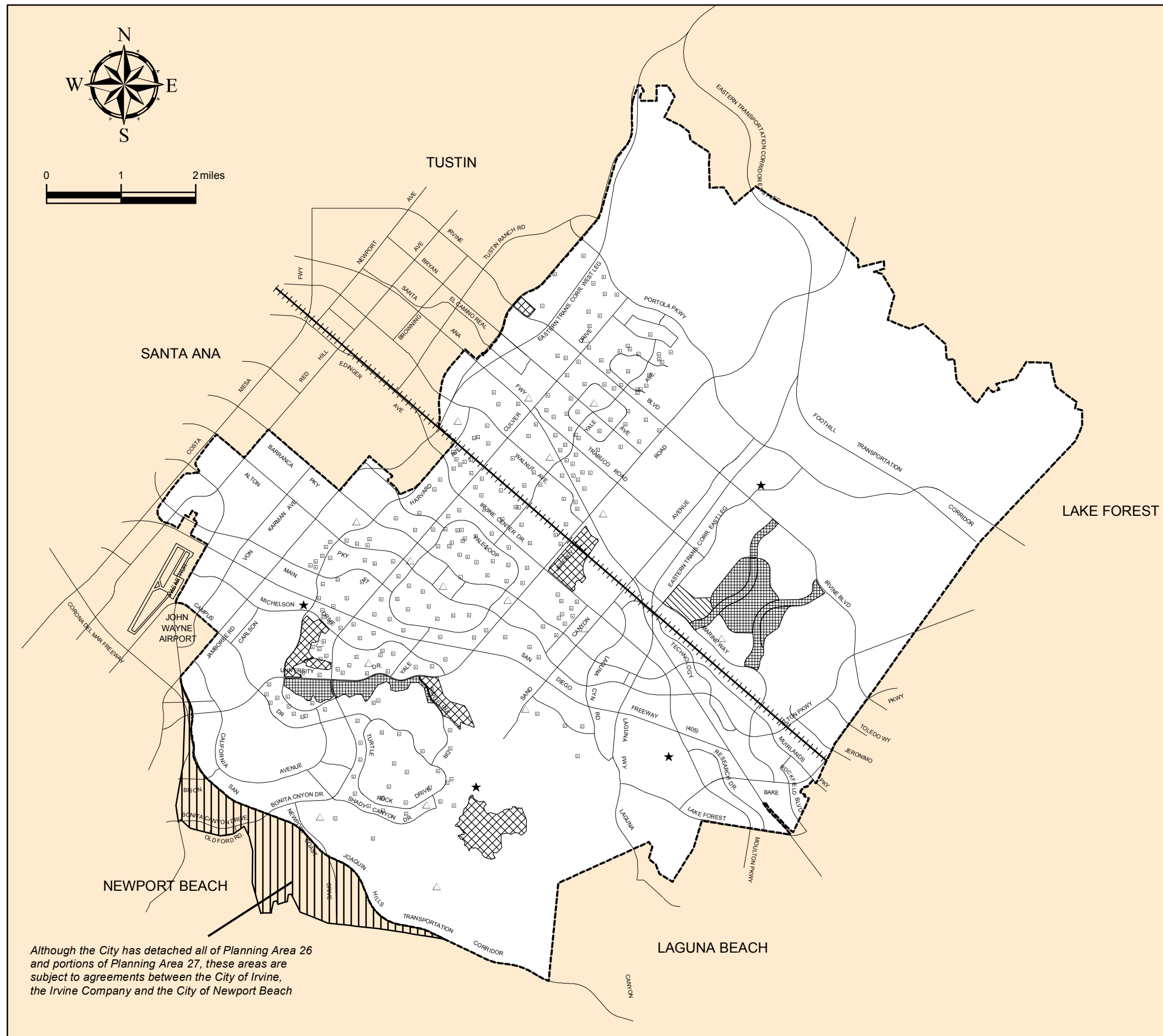
RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

LEGEND

-  City Sphere of Influence
-  Park *
-  Community Park
-  Major Private Commercial Recreation Facilities
-  Regional ** Park
-  Public Golf Course
-  Sports Park

* Includes neighborhood parks and private homeowners association recreation areas. Some private parks shown on the diagram may not meet the current minimum acreage requirement.

** Regional Park to be operated by the City, State, or City designated representative.



Although the City has detached all of Planning Area 26 and portions of Planning Area 27, these areas are subject to agreements between the City of Irvine, the Irvine Company and the City of Newport Beach