



## Irvine's Park System

The 100 best park systems in the United States include No. 10 ranked City of Irvine, and with good reason. The methodology used for 2018 by the national nonprofit, The Trust for Public Land, includes the main criteria of park access; park size and investment; and popular amenities. For the 2018 rankings: [Irvine No. 10](#)

Choices abound, from the iconic Northwood Community Park that includes a castle play structure along with the reflective Northwood Gratitude & Honor Memorial, to the Jeffrey Open Space Trail, which runs uninterrupted alongside Jeffrey Road for more than three miles from the I-5 to Portola Parkway, to the Quail Hill Community Center and its new playground.

Today's Irvine count is 19 community parks and 39 neighborhood parks, along with the Orange County Great Park, which is approximately 1,300 acres. Supplementing these numbers is the historic 1988 Open Space Initiative, which ensures permanent preservation of large areas of land throughout the City. The initiative's 30<sup>th</sup> Anniversary was celebrated in 2018. About 16,000 acres of parks, trails and wilderness areas – an area greater than one-third of the entire City – will be forever protected once build-out is achieved in about 20 years.

Bikeways and trail systems are typically the most desired amenities in communities throughout the country. For example, Irvine provides a network of on-street and off-street bikeways to encourage the use of bicycles as a safe and convenient means of transportation for the recreational user, the student biking to a neighborhood school, and for commuters getting to and from work.

## Top 10 Cities

1. Minneapolis
2. St. Paul
3. Washington, D.C.
4. Arlington, VA
5. San Francisco
6. Portland
7. Cincinnati
8. Chicago
9. New York
10. Irvine

Source: The Trust for Public Land, 2018



## What is Next for Irvine

Here is a list of parks and amenities that are either being developed, close to an opening date, or opened in recent years:

- Orange County Great Park: To complement the open, built section of the Great Park, the first phase of the 194-acre Sports Park opened in summer 2017 to complement passive recreation space now under development as part of new parkland totaling 688 acres over five years. Another 130 acres were scheduled to open to the public in 2018.
- Quail Hill Community Center (opened)
- Eastwood Village Neighborhood Park (opened)
- Portola Springs Community Park (32.5 acres, summer 2018)
- Los Olivos Community Park (12.5 acres, spring 2019)
- Gateway Community Park (70 acres, 2021)

## Resources list

- [Irvine's community and neighborhood parks](#)
- [Irvine's bikeways information](#)
- [Special: Watch ICTV's exclusive parks program](#)

## Open Space – 1988 Voter Initiative

The City of Irvine's landscape is defined as much by its permanent open space as it is by its built environment, thanks to the historic 1988 Open Space Initiative.

Overwhelmingly approved by 85 percent of Irvine voters, the Open Space Initiative ensured the permanent preservation of large areas of land throughout Irvine as master-planned growth occurs in other areas of the City. About 16,000 acres of parks, trails and wilderness areas—an area greater than one-third of the entire city—will be forever protected by the time of buildout. Irvine's Open Space Initiative was, and remains in 2018, one of the most innovative, creative and ambitious open space and community development planning programs ever put before voters in California. A living document—an accord with the Irvine Company—is the foundation for Irvine's open space planning. Through the agreement, as master-planned development in designated areas of Irvine proceeds, the city receives ownership of corresponding areas of open space.



The city's network of open space and trails connects to other preserved areas north and south of the city, creating a vast system that links with such stunning places as Limestone Canyon, Round Canyon, Laguna Coast Wilderness Park and Crystal Cove State Park.

Within the city's limits, some of those resources include Bommer and Shady Canyons, Quail Hill (the only area of natural open space along the San Diego Freeway between Los Angeles and Camp Pendleton), Orchard Hills and the Jeffrey Open Space Trail.

Caring for preserved land is an ongoing endeavor that requires special expertise, especially as the City grows and the desire for people to experience the open space increases. To ensure our open space legacy endures forever, the City has partnered with the non-profit Irvine Ranch Conservancy since 2005 to manage the preserved lands and provide continued protection of this spectacular natural resource.

Irvine's preserved open space is managed primarily as a habitat for wildlife, including sustainable and compatible recreation such as hiking, mountain biking, and trail running. The Conservancy works together with the City to grow public involvement and appreciation for the preserve through public events and volunteer opportunities. Most of the recreation programs on the preserve are led by volunteer community members.

For information and access to the open land, go to: [LetsGoOutside.org](http://LetsGoOutside.org) and [irconservancy.org](http://irconservancy.org)