

SAN LUIS OBISPO

Parks + Recreation Blueprint for the Future: 2021-2041

Parks and Recreation Plan and
General Plan Element Update



February 2021





February 2021



pros
consulting



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The **City of San Luis Obispo** thanks the community members, stakeholders, elected officials, and public agencies who participated in the development of this Comprehensive Profile for the Parks and Recreation Plan and General Plan Element Update.

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Arts Obispo

AYSO

Cal Poly (special thanks to NR 418 class, 2018)

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SLO Baseball

SLO Pickleball Club

SLO Railroad Museum

SLO REP Theatre

SLO Rugby

SLO Senior Center

SLO Soccer Club

SLO Women's Soccer Club

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Photography

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Members of the SLO Community

All of you who participated in workshops, responded to surveys, and showed an interest in the future of parks and recreation in San Luis Obispo.



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1

INTRODUCTION

VISION

The Parks and Recreation Plan and General Plan Element Update will serve as a blueprint, guiding the City in priority setting and resource allocation to achieve our mission to inspire ***happiness*** by creating community through people, parks, programs and open space.

IN THIS CHAPTER

The Value of Parks

Why Update the Plan?

The Update Process

Overarching Philosophy Regarding the Update

System-Wide Goals

Guiding Themes

The San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Plan and General Plan Element Update provides a comprehensive statement of the City's goals for parks and recreation and how those goals will be achieved over the long-term. The Plan was created in collaboration with community members, leaders, and the Parks and Recreation Commission. We believe it represents the community's vision, a vision we are inspired to realize.

The Plan policies and programs serves as a blueprint, guiding the City in priority setting and resource allocation. It is understood that the availability of financial resources can and will affect the timing of implementation but will not change the goals.



STARTING WITH QUESTIONS

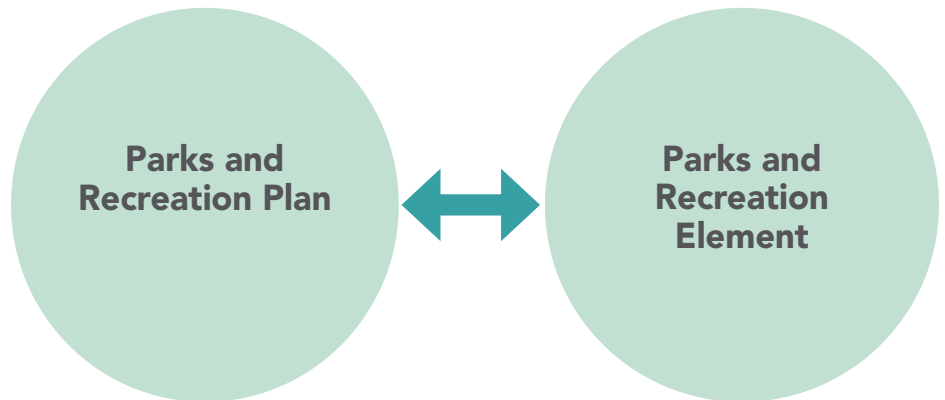
- + Does San Luis Obispo have the right amount and type of parks?
- + Given the condition of San Luis Obispo's parks what if any changes and improvements are needed?
- + Does San Luis Obispo have the amount and type of indoor and outdoor facilities for organized recreation activities to meet the community's need?
- + Does San Luis Obispo provide recreational programming that meets its residents' needs and if not, what should change?
- + What are the parks and recreation priorities for residents now and over the next 20 years?
- + How should San Luis Obispo plan for the future, changing demographics and increased residents and stakeholders?
- + How should San Luis Obispo fund its parks and recreation capital investments to meet the priorities arising from this plan?

PLAN AND ELEMENT

This Plan is two documents in one.

It stands alone as the essential guide for the Parks and Recreation Department in the years ahead.

At the same time, the Plan also serves as the Parks and Recreation Element in the City's General Plan. This means that the goals and policies in this document are also embedded in the City's larger blueprint for future growth and change.



READING THE PLAN

The Parks and Recreation Plan is divided into five chapters. Chapter 1 introduces the Planning process and overarching goals of the plan. Chapter 2 takes a deeper look at SLO's people through demographic analysis and its parks through a detailed inventory. Chapter 3 provides a summary of the community engagement work. Chapter 4 provides the detailed policies that flow from each of the system-wide goals. Finally, Chapter 5 provides the details around implementation, including phasing and priority projects.

WHY UPDATE THE PLAN?

Our Parks and Recreation Plan and General Plan Element Update is meant to serve as a visionary template for adapting our system so that it meets the needs of the community. It identifies opportunities for change, and embraces emerging trends in recreation and urban life. A number of particular opportunities presented themselves as we set out to update the Plan.

Making Better Use of Existing Parks.

Our existing parks are well-used and loved, but they can all be enriched in various ways to better serve today's residents. Just two examples: Emerson Park will benefit from a redesign to enhance its appeal, and Laguna Lake Park has great potential to accommodate more of our recreational needs.

Embracing Downtown.

Downtown SLO has become a vibrant destination for community life. The Downtown Concept Plan describes future plazas and gathering spaces downtown infused with art and culture. This Plan can help realize that vision.

Providing Athletic Fields Year-Round.

San Luis Obispo relies heavily on Damon-Garcia Sports Complex for its popular programs. The plan can help us define a way to better support field sports year-round.

Providing Programs for All Ages.

San Luis Obispo has a wide range of successful programs for youth and seniors. Adding services for adults could help to bring in more revenue, while better serving a significant and highly-active segment of the community.

Supporting Aquatics.

The SLO Swim Center has served the community well. The Swim Center is on school district property, and community use of the pool occurs through a joint-use agreement. Would an expanded or additional aquatics center be possible?

Serving the Daytime Population.

While the City currently has fewer than 50,000 residents, there is a substantially larger population of workers and students who spend time here during the day and make great use of the City's facilities. The new Parks and Recreation Element and Plan Update may break ground by taking the daytime population into account.

Aligning with Active Transportation.

The City General Plan has established a goal to reach 20 percent of all trips by bicycle and more than double the number of walking trips. The Plan can support these efforts by giving new attention to the recreational value of trails and urban multi-use paths, providing a safe place for people of all abilities to become more comfortable with recreational bicycling and walking before incorporating these activities into personal transportation modes, and improving urban access to parks.

Advancing Sustainable Management Practices.

San Luis Obispo has a strong desire to become environmentally sustainable and carbon neutral through implementation of the Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery (adopted August 2020). The Plan will play a role in advancing the environmental performance of our park system by recognizing opportunities to shift toward water-efficient planting, using recycled water, and advancing the City's goal to achieve carbon neutrality.



Addressing Safety in Parks.

How can the Plan harmonize with City efforts to serve all people regardless of housing status, and ensure that parks are available, safe, accessible, and inclusive for everyone?

Funding New Parks While Achieving Fiscal Health.

The Parks and Recreation Element and Plan has a role to play in helping to identify ways in which parks can be maintained and managed

more efficiently, and will be a valuable source for recommended improvements.

Tapping into Community Support.

There is an active group of parks volunteers and a current effort to establish a “Friends of Parks” organization that can help bring resources to parks. These sources of community support can be brought into the Parks and Recreation Element and Plan.

Respond to the Changing Composition of Our Population.

The current Parks and Recreation Element and Plan’s goals, policies and programs stand as our baseline. There are many ways in which the values that guided the current Plan remain true for the community.

At the same time, nearly 20 years have passed. San Luis Obispo has matured as a city. We have grown into new neighborhoods and have others on the planning horizon.

While many of the issues we face are long-standing, others are new or we have a new understanding of them. Recreation has changed too. The sports people play, the program preferences of people of all ages—the ways people use parks more broadly need to be understood from today's vantage point. And there is a new generation of residents whose voices need to be heard.

The Plan Update has allowed us to analyze and evaluate our changing population, our physical environment, the condition of our parks and the opportunities they present. It has created a forum for community input and ideas. All of this, we hope, is reflected in the new Plan.

A Fresh Look at Acreage Standards

The 2001 Parks and Recreation Element and Plan calls for the City to develop and maintain a park system at a rate of 10 acres of park land per 1,000 residents, including 5 acres of neighborhood parks. This is achieved either through land dedication and improvement during the development of new neighborhoods in annexation areas, or by charging fees in-lieu of land dedication, allowing the City to fund park land development. The acreage ratio at the time of the 2001 Plan

was 3.68. Both population and park acreage have grown very slightly since then.

A Careful Look at Facilities

The Parks and Recreation Department also manages numerous facilities that provide recreational and educational opportunities. These include the SLO Swim Center, SLO Skate Park, Laguna Lake Golf Course, Jack House and Gardens, Ludwick Community Center, and other sites.

The Parks and Recreation Element and Plan evaluates the condition and capacity of the City's existing parks and facilities, develops a strategy for maintaining and enhancing these facilities, and considers how new parks and facilities should be provided over the coming years.

Evaluate Recreation Programs and Services

The Parks and Recreation Department provides a range of activities, including programs for seniors; adult and youth sports; contracted fitness and enrichment classes; aquatics; open space preservation and educational opportunities; and many other programs for youth including before- and after-school programs, and spring break and summer camps.

The Plan update revisits recreational needs with fresh information about facility usage, program participation, and community priorities and preferences.

THE UPDATE PROCESS

The Plan Update took place in four overlapping phases over approximately 3 years

PHASE 1

Setting the Stage and Planning Framework consisted of project kick-off, review of background information, the development of a Community Engagement Plan, and an Initial Planning Framework report. This phase occurred during March and April 2018.

PHASE 2

Determining Community Needs covers the critical work of understanding the issues relevant to San Luis Obispo's park system and its development over the next

decade. Community engagement is a central part of this, and many engagement activities took place during this phase, starting in April 2018 and continuing through the Community Needs Assessment public workshops in June 2019. Additional workshops and public input opportunities continued through adoption of this document.

PHASE 3

This phase consisted of developing the update and conducting environmental review, and community needs were translated

into a Public Draft document, including background, vision and goals, policies, and implementing actions.

PHASE 4

Adopting the Plan and Element included final hearings before the Parks and Recreation Commission, Planning Commission, and City Council, and incorporating the input of these bodies into a final Plan for adoption.





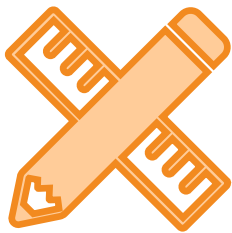
THE VALUE OF PARKS

San Luis Obispo's Parks and Recreation Department defines as its mission "to inspire happiness by creating community through people, parks, programs and open space." An earlier version of the mission statement—from the 2001 Parks & Recreation Plan—touches on a few other important ideas: how parks contribute to the city's character and beauty, are good for the environment, and promote health.

Indeed, parks are valuable for multiple reasons. Parks provide social benefits. They are places for people to walk and talk, play games, enjoy their family and friends and the natural setting they live in. Parks and Recreation programs stimulate a sense of community larger than family and friends: here is where we connect with others in athletic leagues and classes or informally at the playground or in the plaza. Parks and Recreation are valuable for public health. They give us a place to stretch our legs, to play sports, to swim laps, throw Frisbees and walk dogs. In a less obvious way, good parks and recreation services are economic development, too. They contribute to the City's quality of life and ability to attract and retain a happy, healthy workforce and employers. Not least, parks preserve space for plants and the City's urban forest, for water to drain naturally into the soil and many other ecological benefits.

GUIDING THEMES

The City has established six guiding themes that permeate through all recommendations, goals and ultimately policies through the Plan.



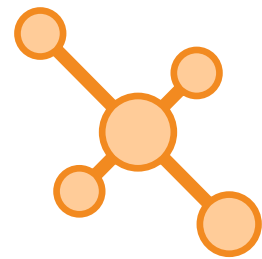
DESIGN EXCELLENCE

The City will set a standard of design excellence by creating an engaging, long-lasting, safe, comfortable, and sustainable park system. By holding the design of the City's parks and facilities to a high standard, assets will attract and retain diverse users from the community.



STEWARDSHIP AND SUSTAINABILITY

The City will protect and conserve natural resources while providing opportunities for the community to both support and learn from the natural environment. The design and maintenance of parks and facilities will strive to become operationally carbon neutral, will support access by foot and by bike, reduce or eliminate chemical use, and incorporate low-allergen plants and trees.



INCLUSION AND ACCESS

The City's parks, public spaces, recreation amenities and programs will be accessible to residents and visitors, including the full diversity of our community. The City will continue to work to create equitable access to recreation and green spaces, and to address both physical and non-physical barriers that may prevent people from having full access to the benefits of parks and recreation.



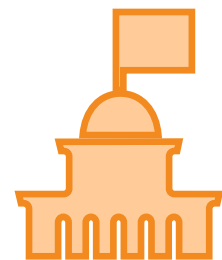
BUILDING COMMUNITY

Parks, facilities, and programs will encourage and support play, health, and interaction. The City will provide places to engage in a multitude of recreational activities, including supporting new trends in recreation. The physical infrastructure and amenities of parks and facilities will support and promote public health. Parks, facilities, and programs will provide opportunities for people to engage in activities together, as well as to be active independently.



PARTNERSHIPS AND PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The City will strive to partner with schools, California Polytechnic State University, Cuesta Community College, other public agencies, and private service providers and organizations to provide recreation services to improve efficiency and coverage. Partnerships will help reduce redundancies within the existing parks system, freeing up resources that can be directed towards assessing and meeting unmet needs.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

In order to practice good governance, the City will be transparent and accountable in its decision-making process, while being responsive to the community's needs and open to community participation. Good governance will aid in promoting the community's confidence in the City to not only expand the parks system, but to also manage, maintain, and improve the existing resources and programs.

SPOTLIGHT ON...

CLIMATE

Recent climate changes have had widespread impacts on human and natural systems. In California we experience losses to Sierra snowpack and water supply, more and more intense wildfires, extreme heat events and more. San Luis Obispo has been inspired to address climate change in all our actions. In 2020, the City adopted a new Climate Action Plan for Community Recovery and a New Active Transportation Plan. These Plans will push us to achieve **carbon neutrality in governmental operations by 2030**, and to make **20% of all our trips by bike, while doubling our walking trips**. The Parks and Recreation Plan has a role to play to help us reach these goals.

INCLUSION

The Plan Update has allowed us to reflect on our changing population, the condition of our parks and the opportunities they present. It has created a forum for community input and ideas.

This Plan must help guide us to design and operate our parks and programs in a way that is accessible, inclusive and just. This means equitable access to the environmental benefits of green space in all neighborhoods. It means culturally relevant programming that is accessible regardless of ability to pay, parks that welcome everyone, and equipment that provides opportunities for people of all abilities. The City of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation commits to provide cultural unity, through inclusivity and discovery, while developing a sense of community, and supporting healthy lifestyles.



OVERARCHING PHILOSOPHY

The Plan Update considers the Parks and Recreation Department's Mission Statement, *to Inspire Happiness by creating Community through People, Parks, Programs, and Open Space*, and identify parks and recreation as an essential service for the community of San Luis Obispo. The Update should support and facilitate this by providing for community health, wellness, security, and safety; design excellence; and environmental stewardship. The Update shall be consistent with the City's General Plan, Active Transportation Plan, and Climate Action Plan, including but not limited to neighborhood compatibility, safe sustainable transportation (multi-modal) access to parks and facilities, and maintenance and expansion of our City's urban forest.

Parks, facilities, amenities, and programs should be decentralized,

and provided throughout the City to serve the full community equitably. Recreational and community gathering opportunities should be located within safe walking or accessible distance of each neighborhood and promote community organization and a sense of ownership by residents. Neighborhood parks should include amenities for both active and passive recreation, and depending on the location, include a focal gathering point such as a gazebo. Gathering spaces would provide opportunities for local-level programming, such as concerts, events, educational opportunities, fitness classes, and food trucks in collaboration with local residents, businesses, non-profits, and faith organizations. The City Parks and Recreation Department should have the resources and staffing, and community and corporate partnerships, sufficient to create, support, and maintain these parks,

amenities, and programs.

The Update should consider opportunities for improvements and renovations within existing parks and facilities in the short term, while also considering long-term fiscal responsibility including economics of scale, cost/value of new land acquisition now and in the future, new sources of revenue, and community partnerships. The Update should identify the current inventory and condition of existing parks, facilities, and amenities, identify existing and future community needs and deficiencies, assess the capacity of existing parks and facilities to accommodate existing and future needs, and determine a dynamic path forward to achieve and exceed the City's identified level of service and acreage standards for parks and amenities in both the short-term (0-5 years), mid-term (5-10 years) and long-term (10-20 years).





2

PEOPLE & PARKS

To plan for a park system that optimally serves our community in the years ahead, we need to understand our recreational needs and the existing inventory and state of our parks. This chapter describes our people and our parks today.

IN THIS CHAPTER

SLO People

- *Population*
- *Demographics*
- *Local Market Potential*

SLO Parks & Recreation

- *Our Parks*
- *Park Facilities*

SLO'S PEOPLE

San Luis Obispo is notable for its unique community make-up influenced by the local university and community college, being the County hub, and for its popularity for its unique geographical coastal location and mild climate. The diverse mix of demographics of families, college students, retirees, and tourists, provide an engaged and active population.

San Luis Obispo is touted as one of the “Happiest Places in America,” and no wonder. Tucked between the Coast Range and the Pacific, “SLO” offers all the spoils of life, from the Mediterranean climate to the thousands of acres of protected open space to a charming and dynamic downtown.

This chapter summarizes the City's demographic and population trends. The analysis is based on US Census data, as well as California Department of Finance (2010) projections and the 2018 San Luis Obispo Community and Economic Profile produced by the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce. It should be noted that the most detailed demographic data available dates to the 2010 US Census, and may not be fully descriptive of the City's population today. In addition,



the 2010 US Census adhered to the 1997 Office of Management and Budget standards on race and ethnicity, which may not reflect current and evolving standards and guidelines.

POPULATION CHANGE

San Luis Obispo experienced relatively slow growth between 2000 and 2010, never exceeding a one percent annual growth rate. Between 2000 and 2017, the city grew at an average annual rate of about 0.4 percent, significantly lower than the statewide annual growth rate.

The San Luis Obispo Council of Local Governments 2050 Regional Growth Forecast for San Luis Obispo County assumes a slightly higher annual growth rate of 0.5 percent. The San Luis Obispo General Plan anticipates growth of approximately one percent annually, and a population reaching 56,700 by 2035.

This Plan Update considers both our resident population and the larger

“daytime population” including students and workers who recreate here. Accounting for the City’s workforce and students at Cal Poly (just outside City limits), SLO had an estimated daytime population of 72,770 in 2017, which is expected to rise to 88,300 by 2035.

POPULATION DENSITY

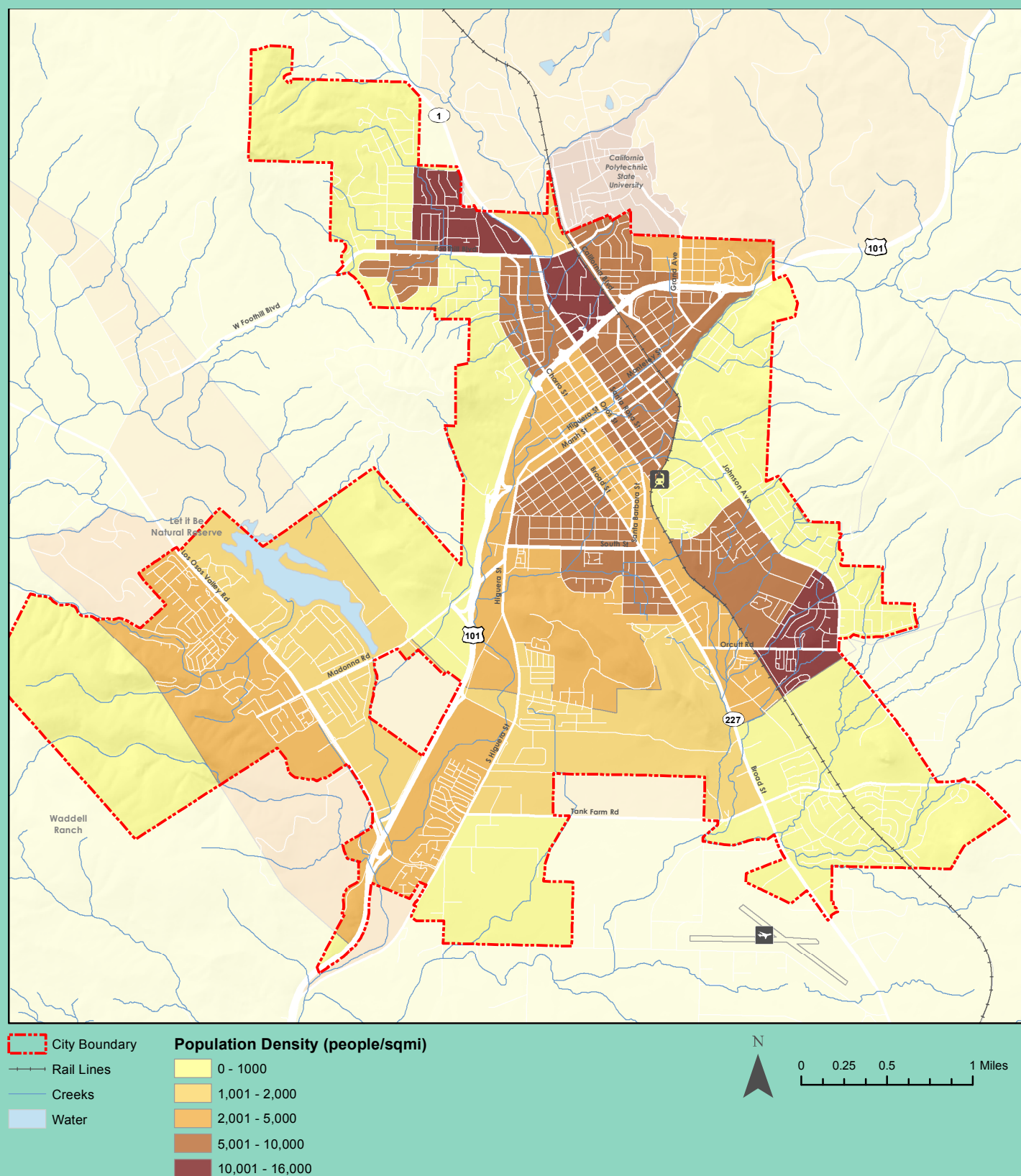
San Luis Obispo has a population density of approximately 3,500 persons per square mile Citywide. Three census tracts—two in the northern part of the City and one centered on Orcutt Road in the southeast—feature some higher-density housing and have over 10,000 people per square mile. In general, neighborhoods closer to the center are somewhat more densely populated than those on the periphery. See Figure 1-1.

Table 2-1
SAN LUIS OBISPO POPULATION TRENDS

YEAR	2000	2010	2017 (ESTIMATED)	2035 (PROJECTED)
Population	44,179	45,119	46,724	56,700
Daytime Population			72,770	88,300

Sources: US Census, 2010; California Department of Finance, 2017; San Luis Obispo General Plan, 2014.

Figure 2-1
POPULATION DENSITY



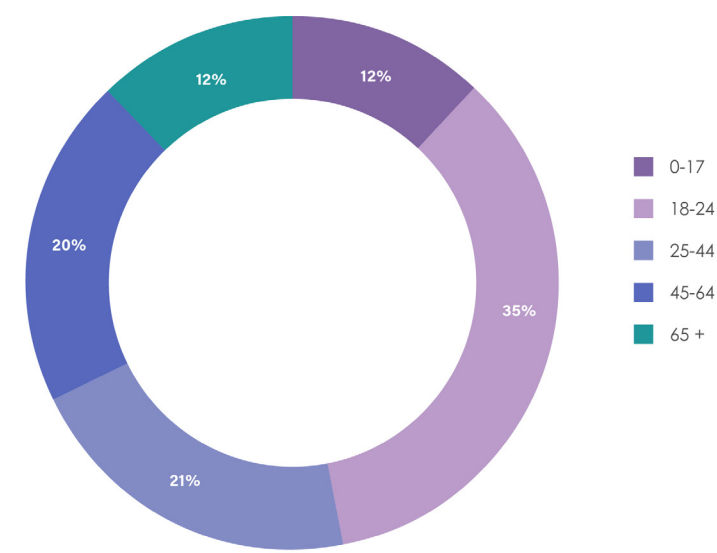
POPULATION BY AGE

Young adults aged 18-24 comprised a remarkable 35 percent of the city population in 2010, a proportion mainly attributed to the large student population. Other age demographics, namely children, teens, and adults aged 25-44, fall below County and State averages for those age groups. In 2010, 12 percent of the City's population

was aged 65 and older, comparable to the State average, but lower than the County population rate. For San Luis Obispo County as a whole, changes in percentage of age cohorts between 2000 and 2010 indicate a decline in children under 14, a significant rise in young adults aged 20-29, an equally significant decline in adults aged 35-44, and

major growth in adults aged 50-70 and 80 and over. While the 2010 Census is now considerably out-of-date, it remains the most accurate source of demographic data for the City.

Figure 2-2
SAN LUIS OBISPO AGE DISTRIBUTION, 2010



Source: California Dept. of Finance, 2010

RACE AND ETHNICITY

In 2010, residents of the City of San Luis Obispo were approximately 76 percent non-Hispanic white, 15 percent Hispanic or Latino, 5.2 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, and 1 percent Black/African-American.

San Luis Obispo County's 2010 ethnic makeup had a slightly lower proportion of non-Hispanic white and Asian/Pacific Islander residents compared to the City (71.1 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively), and a greater proportion of Hispanic or Latinx residents (20.8 percent). Both the City and the County are significantly less diverse than the state population as a whole.

The City's non-Hispanic white population fell by three percent as a percentage of the total population between 2000-2010. Conversely, the Hispanic or Latinx percentage of the population grew by three percent between 2000-2010. These trends are expected to continue. The California Department of Finance projects that by 2025 the County population will be approximately 64 percent non-Hispanic white, 27 percent Hispanic or Latino, 4.3 percent Asian or Pacific Islander, 1.8 percent Black or African American and 0.5 percent Native American. See Figures 1-3 and 1-4.

Figure 2-3
SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY RACIAL AND ETHNIC COMPOSITION

2010

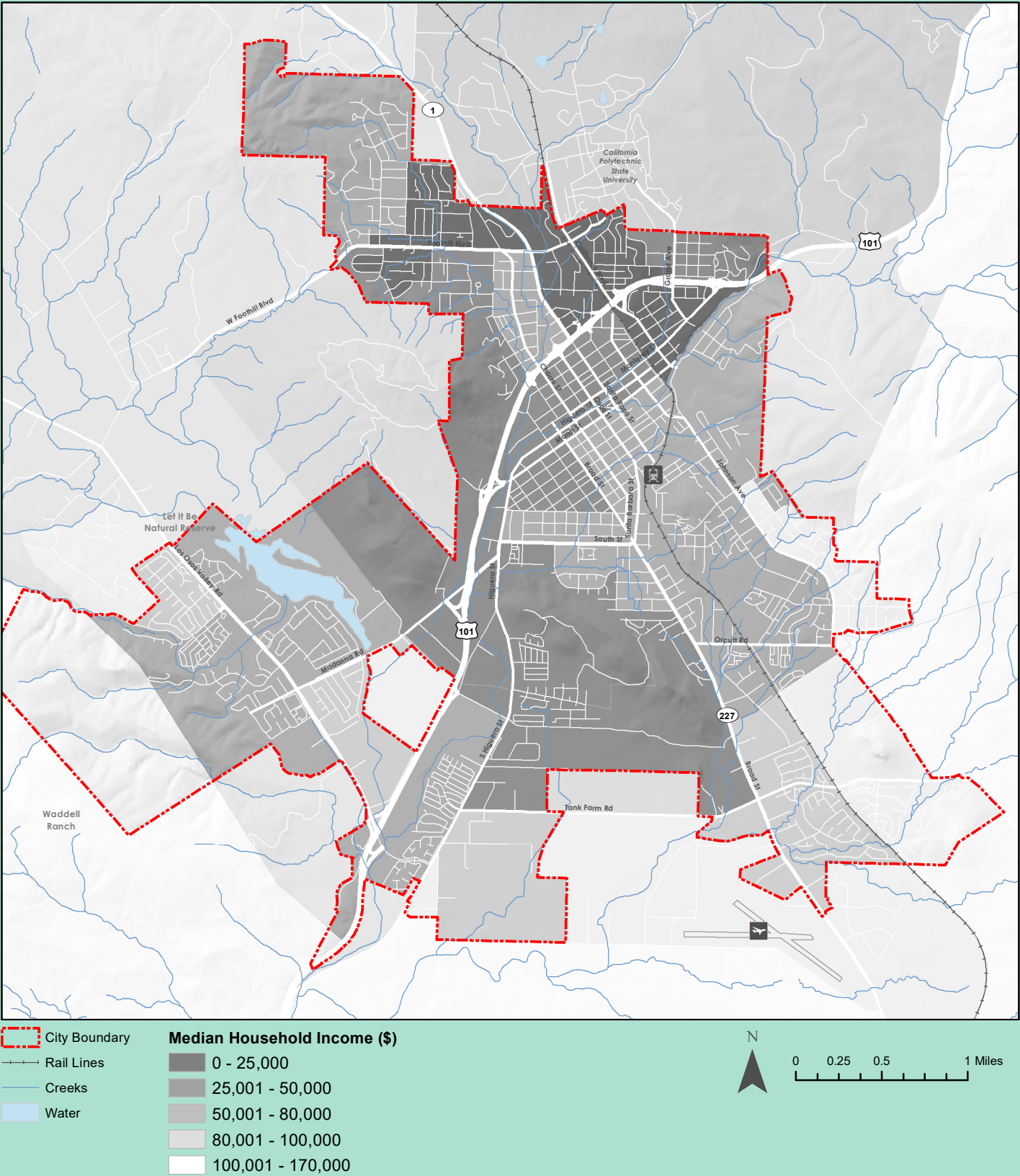


2025 (PROJECTED)



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2010
Note: Race and ethnicity category names are from the 2010 US Census and have been preserved here for accuracy.

Figure 2-4
**SAN LUIS OBISPO MEDIAN
HOUSEHOLD INCOME (2012-16)**



HOUSEHOLD INCOME

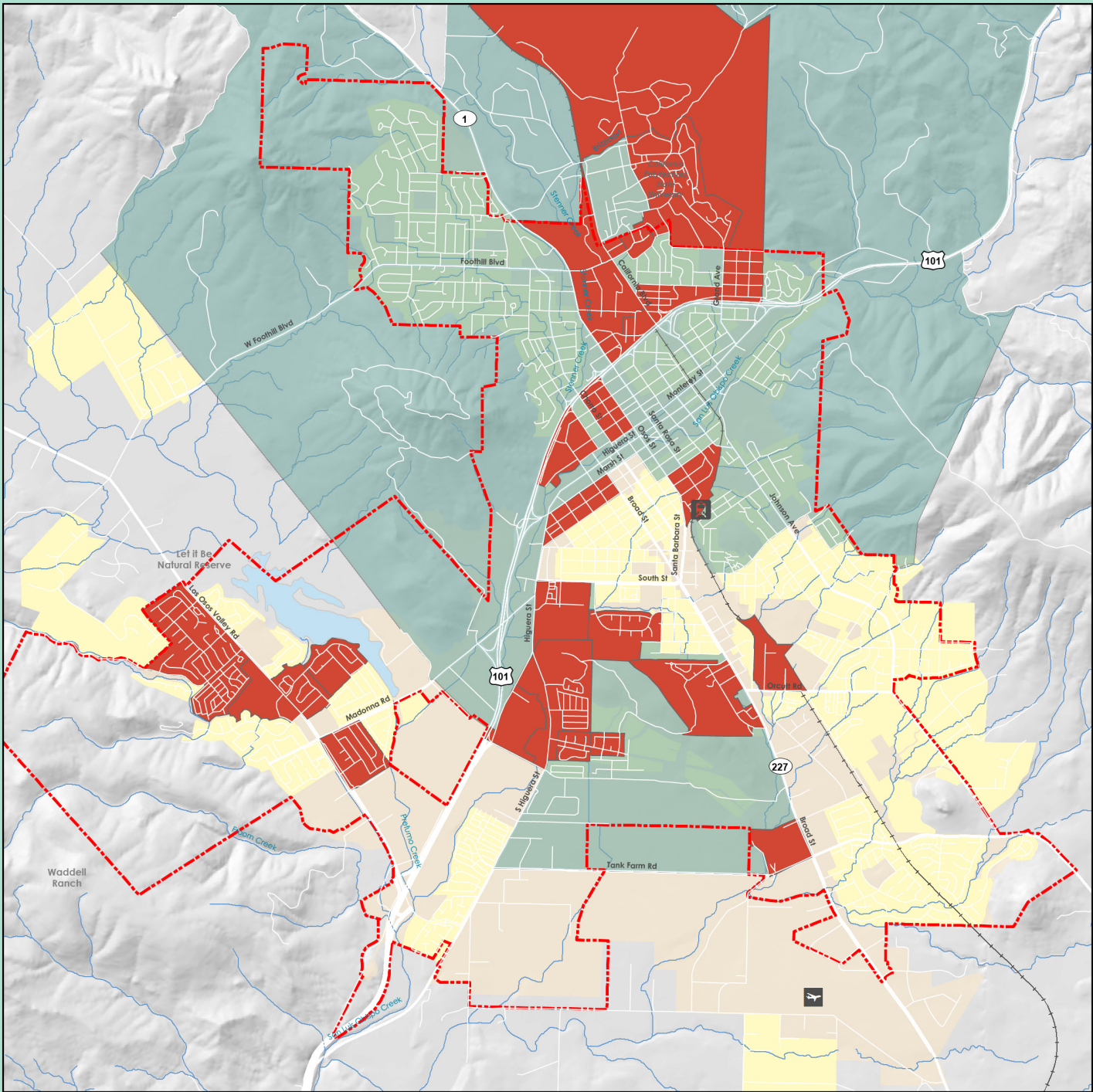
In 2010, median household income in the City was \$42,461, while the County's median household income was \$56,967. Median household income in both the City and County increased significantly between 2000-2010. One-third of City households qualify as extremely low income, earning less than \$24,999 annually, due in part to the student population. Figure 1-5 shows median household income by census tract.


WHAT DOES HOUSEHOLD INCOME MEAN FOR PARKS & RECREATION?


Parks and recreation facilities are important, low-cost resources that provides psychological, social, and physical health benefits for users. This is especially the case in areas that have lower median household incomes, where their private spaces often do not provide those amenities, therefore amplifying the importance and the use of public space by lower income residents. By providing equitable access across socio-economic groups to open space, the city is ensuring a place for physical activity, informal gathering and relaxation that may not be available in their residences and opportunities to build community across socioeconomic groups.





Figure 2-5
**SAN LUIS OBISPO LOW
 INCOME AND DISADVANTAGED
 COMMUNITIES**





- 


Disadvantaged Community (SLOCOG)
- 

Low-Income Community (AB 1550)
- 

City Boundary
- 

Rail Lines
- 

Creeks
- 

Residential Area
- 

Urban Reserve Area

LOW-INCOME AND DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

Equity is an important value for the City and for this Plan update.

State Definitions

The State of California's Assembly Bill 1550 and Senate Bill 535 provide a vehicle for the State to prioritize low-income and disadvantaged communities in the distribution of certain programs and services, including resources relevant for parks and recreation.

Disadvantaged communities are identified by the California Environmental Protection Agency as the top 25% most impacted census tracts in CalEnviroScreen 3.0 - a screening tool used to help identify communities disproportionately burdened by multiple sources of pollution and with population characteristics that make them more sensitive to pollution.

Low-income communities are defined as the census tracts that are either at or below 80 percent of the statewide median income, or at or below the threshold designated as low-income by the California Department of Housing and

Community Development's (HCD) 2016 State Income Limits.

By the State's definitions, portions of SLO are considered low-income, but none of the City falls into the disadvantaged category.

SLOCOG Definitions

The San Luis Obispo Council of Governments (SLOCOG) provides a somewhat different definition of "disadvantaged communities" by examining socio-economic indicators, including:

- + Median Household Income
- + Minority Status
- + Free or reduced-price meals under the National School Lunch Program
- + Population of persons aged 65 and up
- + Housing Affordability
- + Educational Attainment Language Proficiency
- + Households with no vehicles available
- + Access to regular local transit service
- + Sidewalk completeness
- + Proximity to a grocery store

Low-income and disadvantaged communities in SLO are shown in Figure 2-5.

LOCAL SPORT AND MARKET POTENTIAL

Tastes around recreations change and this is especially true from 2001 to today. Sports such as pickleball and disc golf have risen in popularity across the nation but were relatively unknown 17 years ago. Therefore, understanding the market potential in San Luis Obispo specifically is important for understanding which recreational and sports programs should be prioritized.

A Market Potential Index (MPI) measures the probable demand for a product or service within the City and its surrounding service area. The MPI shows the likelihood that an adult resident of the target area will participate in certain activities when compared to the US National average.

Overall, San Luis Obispo demonstrates high market potential for recreation activities across the board, from general sports and fitness to outdoor activities.

This becomes significant when the City considers building new facilities or starting up new programs, giving us a strong tool to estimate resident attendance.

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR GENERAL SPORTS



VOLLEYBALL

102% above national average



BASKETBALL

71% above national average



FOOTBALL

68% above national average



DISC GOLF

64% above national average



PICKLEBALL

* Because pickle ball's popularity is relatively new, national averages have not been collected. However, anecdotally, pickle ball in SLO is a major recreation activity.

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR GENERAL FITNESS



YOGA

43% above national average



EXERCISE EQUIPMENT

42% above national average



JOGGING

42% above national average

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY



BACKPACKING

71% above national average



BICYCLING (MOUNTAIN)

61% above national average



BICYCLING (ROAD)

61% above national average

Figure 2-6

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR GENERAL SPORTS

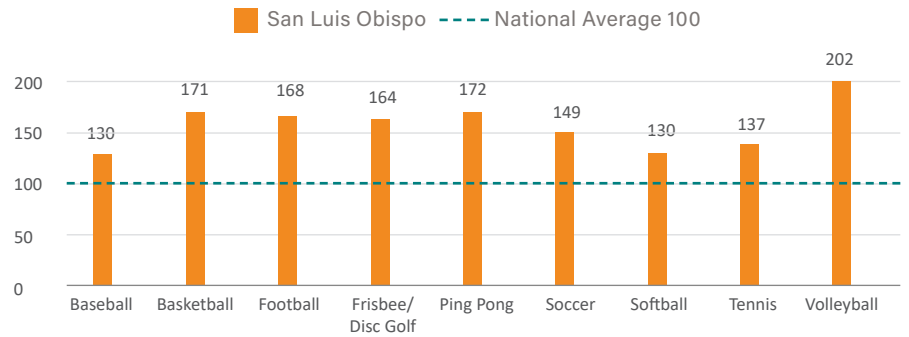


Figure 2-7

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR FITNESS

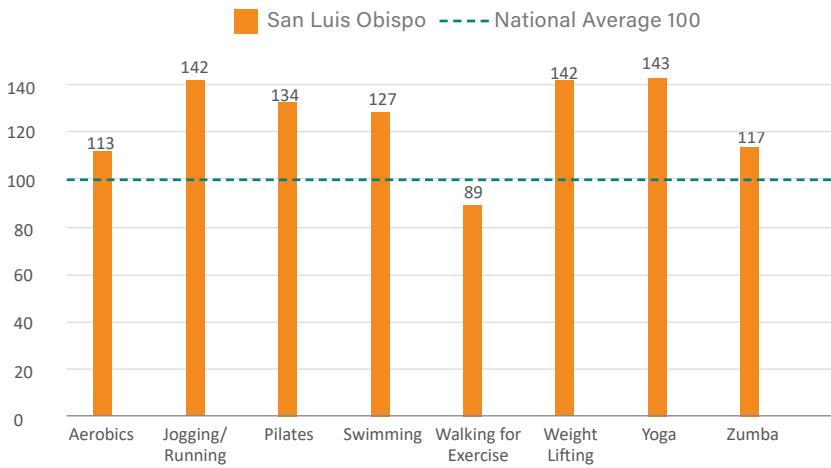
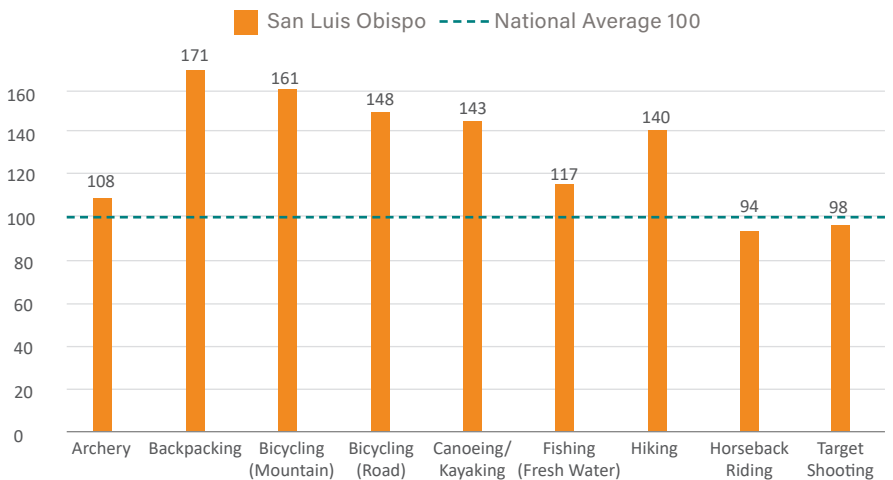


Figure 2-8

MARKET POTENTIAL INDEX FOR OUTDOOR ACTIVITY



SLO'S PARKS AND RECREATION

Our system includes 28 city parks and 15 special features and recreation facilities covering approximately 206 acres. In addition to mini, neighborhood and community parks, the City provides recreational features including a golf course, a sports complex, a stadium, a swim center, a recreation/community center, a senior center, a skate park, community gardens and the historic Jack House. There are also five school sites where multipurpose rooms/gymnasiums, and childcare rooms are available to the community through a Joint Use Agreement with the San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD). Additional softball fields are available for community use at El Chorro Regional Park through a joint use agreement with San Luis Obispo County. Finally, San Luis Obispo owns and manages 13 open spaces and recreational trails covering nearly 4,050 acres. These open spaces are not the subject of the Plan.

The park and recreation inventory, including park type and acreage, is provided as Table 2-1. The park system is shown geographically as Figure 2-1. The sections that follow describe the seven park or facility types that make up San Luis Obispo's system.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks in San Luis Obispo have unique features and include a wide range of amenities which attract users from throughout the City. The City has seven community parks totaling approximately 100 acres. Community parks are diverse in character, ranging from downtown's Mission Plaza to the combination of active and passive urban open spaces and off-leash dog area at Laguna Lake Park.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks provide convenient and accessible active and passive recreation to residents within one-half to one-mile walking distance. Basic elements typically include a turf playfield, playground equipment, and landscaped picnic/seating area. Other elements may include hard-surfaced courts, restrooms, group barbecues, incorporation of natural or cultural features, and on-site parking. San Luis Obispo has 10 neighborhood parks totaling approximately 35 acres. These include Emerson, French, and Laguna Hills parks, among others.

MINI-PARKS

Mini-parks, as defined in the 2001 Parks and Recreation Element and Plan, serve residents of the immediate area or those frequenting the area. Basic elements are comprised of passive amenities. Currently, San Luis Obispo has 9 mini parks totaling 7.2 acres. These parks range in size from the postage-stamp-sized Eto Park to the two-acre meandering Poinsettia Creek Walk.

DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACES

Downtown Public Spaces, while the smallest category of public parks at 3.7 acres in total, serve a large population, with regional significance. These are small parks or plazas that enable people to congregate in an urban setting.

RECREATION CENTERS

The Damon-Garcia Sports Complex, SLO Senior Citizen Center, SLO Swim Center, and Sinsheimer Stadium, among other sites, are classified as "Recreation Centers." See table 2-1 for a complete list.

SPECIAL FEATURES

Special Features in San Luis Obispo can range from Community Gardens to the Laguna Lake Golf Course to the SLO Skate Park. These parks provide special activities that are not easily classifiable in the other distinctions and, at times, may require specialized maintenance or staffing.

JOINT USE FACILITIES

The City of San Luis Obispo maintains a Joint Use Agreement with San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD), which currently establishes the terms for District and City use at specified school sites and at Sinsheimer Park. At each of the school sites where the Joint Use Agreement is currently effective, the City operates affordable childcare programs, and facilitates use of gymnasiums and

athletic fields for youth sports.

At Sinsheimer, the School District may use athletic facilities (the baseball stadium, tennis courts, swim center) without a charge for maintenance, repair, or utilities, in consideration for making the land available on which these facilities are constructed.

At El Chorro Regional Park, the County owns, maintains, and operates the park for recreational use, while the City has contributed

financially to softball field improvements including lighting, irrigation, renovation, enlargement, paving, and planting.

The City receives first priority for use of the softball fields for organized recreational use, and is responsible for supporting increased maintenance of the fields that results from that use. The facilities covered at each site currently subject to Joint Use Agreements are summarized in Table 2-2.



Table 2-2

SAN LUIS OBISPO PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES	ACRES
COMMUNITY PARKS	
Exposition Park	7.2
Laguna Lake Park	40.0
Meadow Park	16.0
Santa Rosa Park	11.0
Sinsheimer Park	21.7
SUBTOTAL	95.9
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	
Anholm Park	0.1
De Vaul Park	0.9
Emerson Park	3.3
French Park	10.0
Islay Hill Park	6.0
Johnson Park	5.0
Laguna Hills Park	3.2
Mitchell Park	3.0
Throop Park	3.0
Vista Lago Park	0.2
SUBTOTAL	34.7
MINI PARKS	
Buena Vista Park	0.5
Ellsford Park	1.0
Eto Park	0.2
Las Praderas Park	0.4
Poinsettia Creek Walk and Park	2.0
Priolo-Martin Park	0.5
Rodriguez Adobe Park	1.4
Stoneridge Park	1.0
Triangle Park	0.2
SUBTOTAL	7.2
DOWNTOWN PUBLIC SPACES	
Cheng Park	0.3
Mission Plaza	3.0
Mission Plaza Extension	0.4
SUBTOTAL	3.7
RECREATION CENTERS	
Damon-Garcia Sports Complex	22.0
Ludwick Community Center	1.0

PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES	ACRES
Meadow Park Center	0.1
Sinsheimer Stadium	1.8
SLO Senior Citizen Center	0.1
SLO Swim Center	NA
SUBTOTAL	25.0
SPECIAL FEATURES	
Broad Street Community Gardens	0.9
Emerson Park Community Gardens	NA
Jack House	0.1
Jack House Gardens	0.8
Kiwanis Centennial Garden	NA
Laguna Lake Golf Course	27.0
Laurel Lane Community Gardens	0.3
Railroad Bike Path	10.0
Rotary Community Garden at Meadow Park	NA
SLO Skate Park	NA
SLO Swim Center	NA
SUBTOTAL	39.1
TOTAL	205.6

Sources: WRT, 2019; City of San Luis Obispo Capital Facilities Fee Nexus Study, 2018; City of San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Element and Plan, 2001.

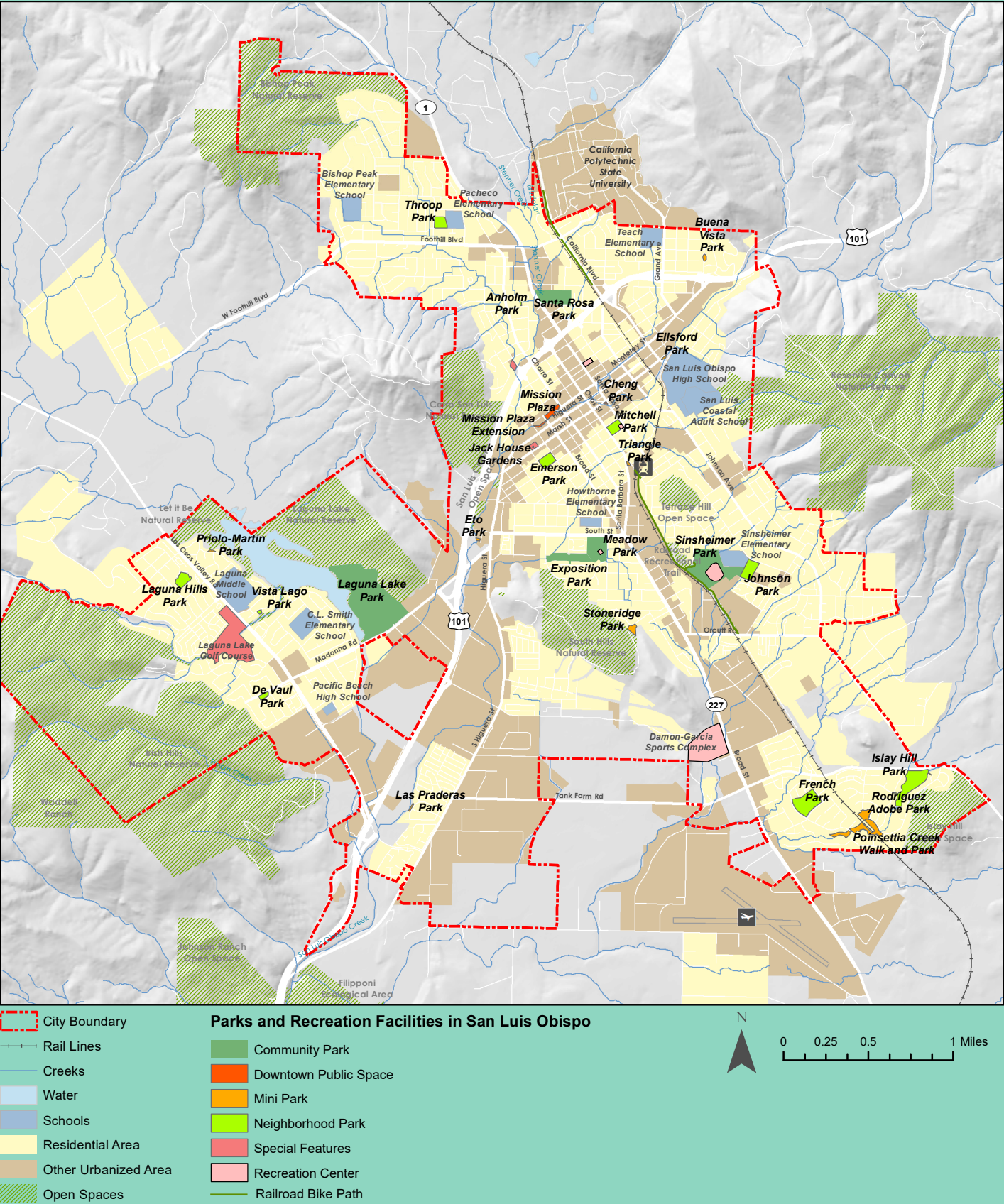
Table 2-2

SAN LUIS OBISPO JOINT USE FACILITIES¹

JOINT USE SITES	PARTNER	ATHLETIC FIELDS	MULTIPURPOSE ROOMS/ GYMNASIUMS	CHILD CARE ROOMS	PARK AND RECREATION AMENITIES
Bishop's Peak/Teach Elementary School	SLCUSD	√	√	√	
C.L. Smith Elementary School	SLCUSD	√	√	√	
Hawthorne Elementary School	SLCUSD	√	√	√	
Pacheco Elementary School	SLCUSD	√	√	√	
Sinsheimer Elementary School	SLCUSD	√	√	√	
Sinsheimer Park	SLCUSD				√
Throop Park	SLCUSD				√
El Chorro Regional Park	SLO County	√			

¹ Joint Use Agreement Between the City of San Luis Obispo and the San Luis Coastal Unified School District for the Joint Use of Facilities and the Provision of Programs, 2013; Joint Use Agreement Between the City of San Luis Obispo and the County of San Luis Obispo for Improvements and Use of the El Chorro Regional Park – Softball Fields, 2002; City of San Luis Obispo, 2019.

Figure 2-9
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES



PARK FEATURES AND AMENITIES

PLAYGROUNDS AND PICNIC AREAS

Currently there are 26 play areas, or tot lots at 14 parks, including 10 neighborhood parks and four community parks.

The city has approximately 189 picnic tables distributed among 16 parks.

SLO's parks have nine group picnic areas, including two each at Laguna Lake and Santa Rosa parks and one each at French, Johnson, Meadow, and Sinsheimer parks and one at Laguna Lake Golf Course.



Figure 2-10
PLAY AREAS AND CHILD LOTS

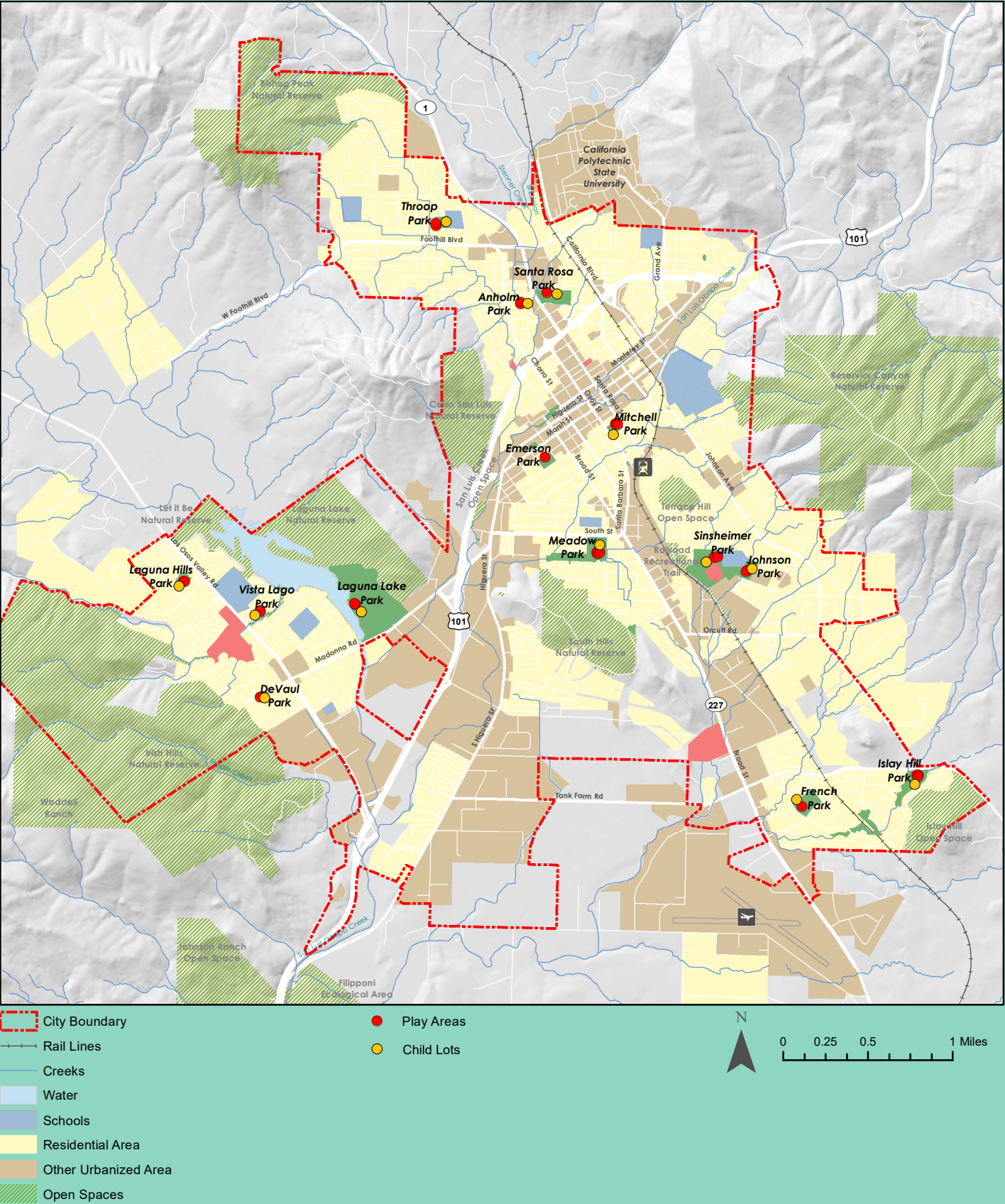
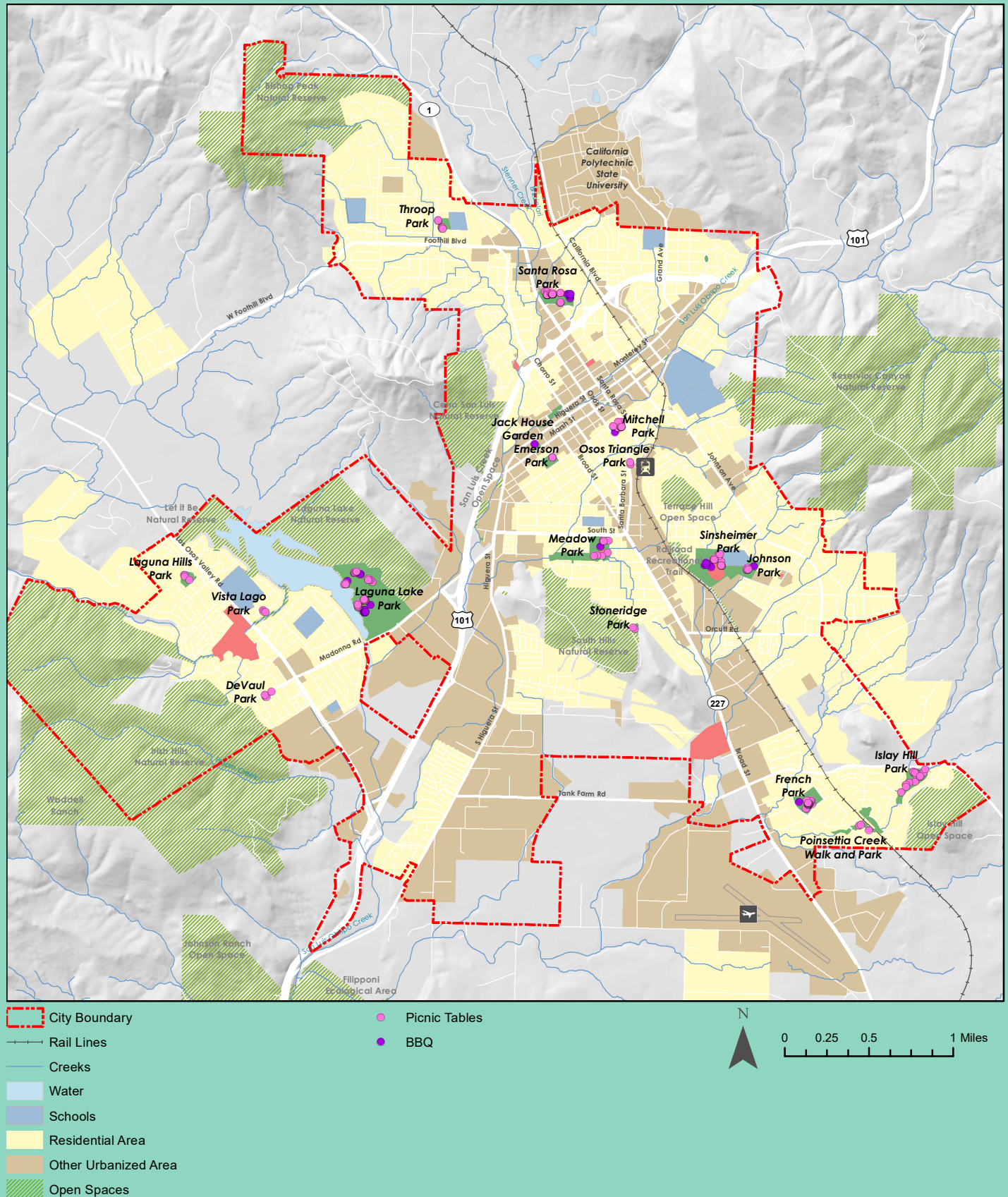


Figure 2-11
PICNIC TABLES AND BBQ



RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

- + The City has six diamond athletic fields. This includes two at Sinsheimer Park and one each at French, Meadow, Santa Rosa and Throop parks. A majority of these are youth fields. One, at Santa Rosa Park, is for adult softball.
- + The City has four regulation size soccer fields at Damon-Garcia Sports Complex.
- + The City has nine informal multiuse fields at eight parks. They are used for activities including sports practice (rugby, flag football) and pick-up games, as well as for simply enjoying.
- + There are six full basketball courts with one at each of six City parks.
- + The City has eight tennis courts, concentrated at Sinsheimer Park (six courts), with one each at French and Islay Hill Parks.
- + The City has three dedicated pickleball courts, all at French Park. There are also five temporary pickleball courts at French Park and three at Meadow Park.
- + The City has five volleyball courts, with two at Meadow Park and one each at Islay Hill, Laguna Lake and Sinsheimer parks.
- + Santa Rosa Park is home to the

SLO Skate Park and also features a lighted roller hockey rink (also striped for roller derby and basketball).

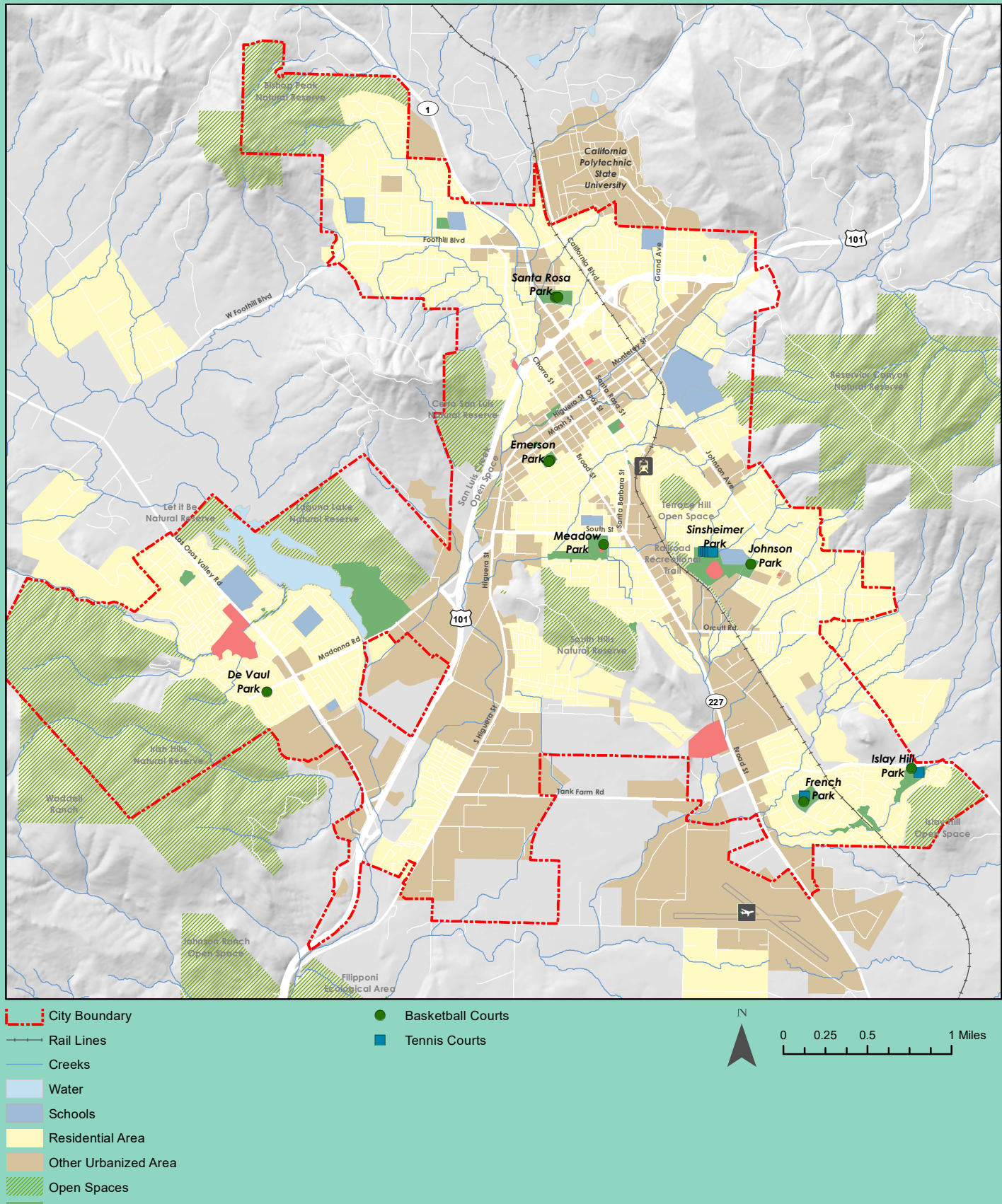
- + Disc golf courses are located at Laguna Lake Park and Sinsheimer Park.
- + There are 16 horseshoe courts, including 10 at Santa Rosa Park and two each at Sinsheimer, French and Meadow Parks.
- + Emerson Park has two bocce courts.

See Appendix D for more detail.

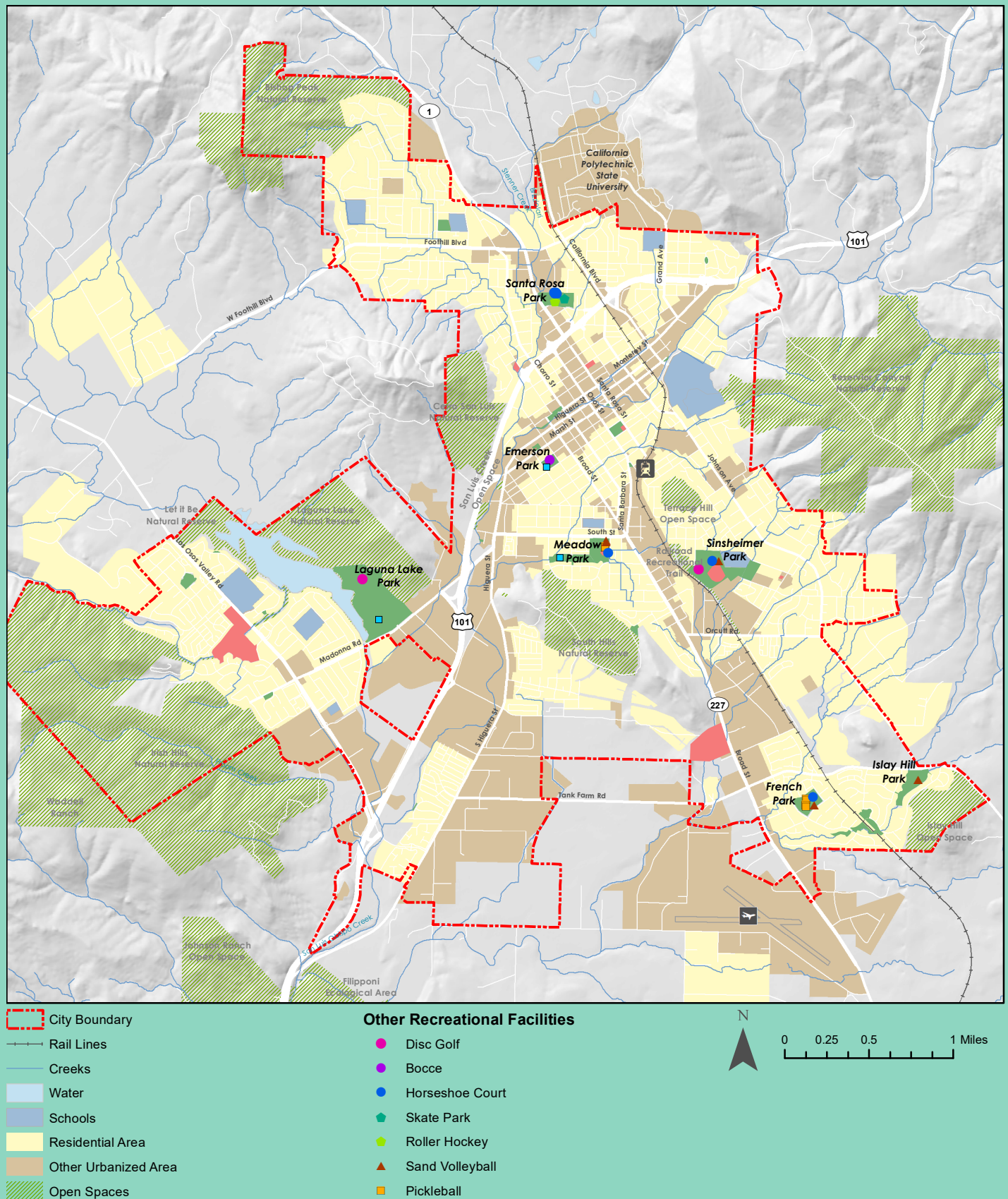


BASEBALL AND SOCCER FIELDS

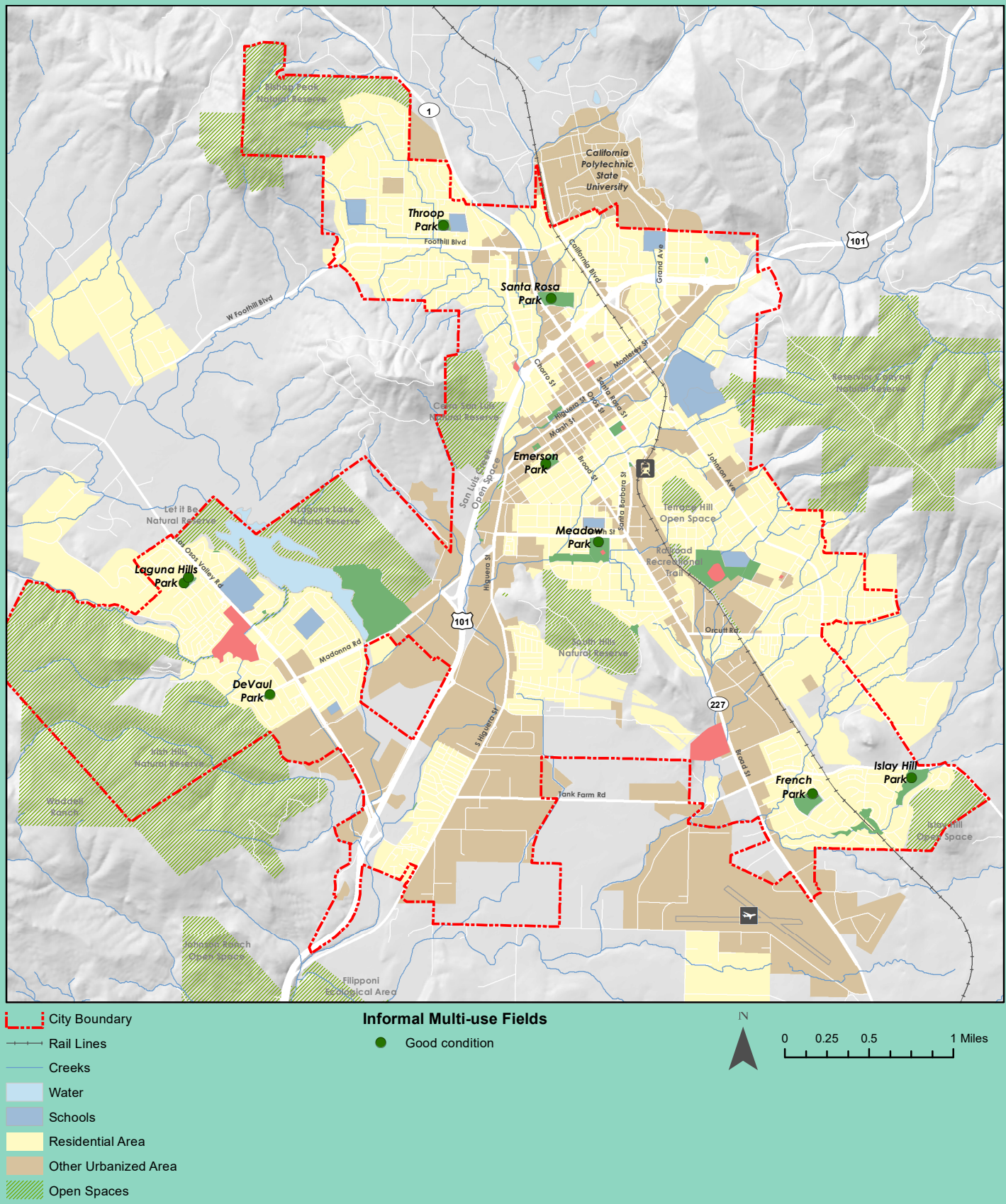
Figure 2-13
BASKETBALL AND TENNIS COURTS



OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES



INFORMAL MULTI-USE FIELDS



DOG AREAS

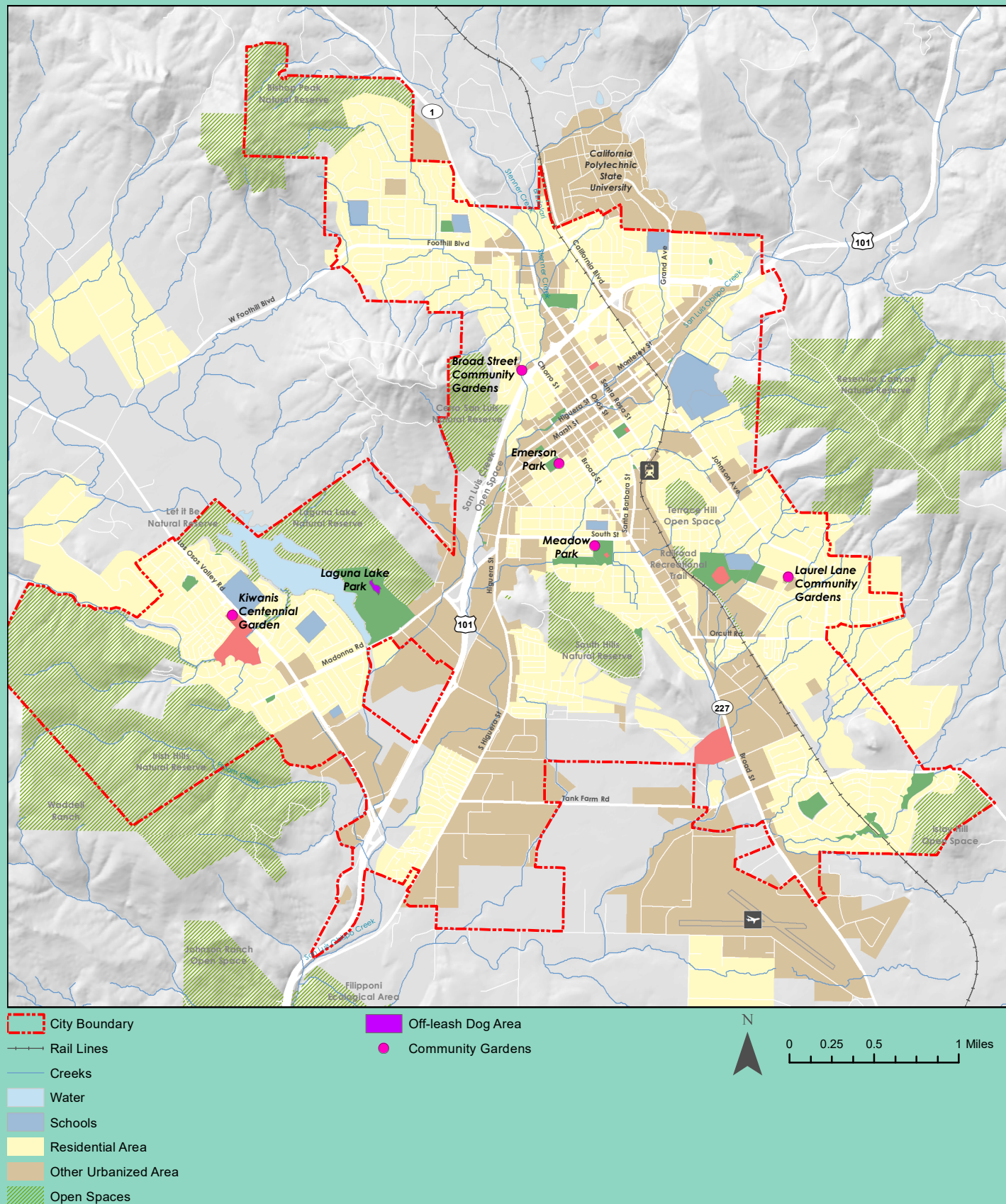
San Luis Obispo has one off-leash dog area located at Laguna Lake Park. El Chorro Regional Park features a dog park, operated by the County for use of all County residents.

COMMUNITY GARDENS

Community gardens are located at Emerson and Meadow Parks, as well as at Laguna Lake Golf Course (the Kiwanis Centennial community garden), Broad Street, and Laurel Lane.



DOG AREAS AND COMMUNITY GARDENS



TRAILS AND BIKE NETWORK

San Luis Obispo has a robust network of bike lanes and bike routes.

The City of San Luis Obispo manages the Railroad Safety Trail, a level, off-street path, which currently extends approximately 10 miles in two segments along railroad right-of-way traversing the city from north to south. The Railroad Safety Trail is used as a destination as well as a transportation facility. The trail section near Sinsheimer Park is used more by pedestrians and walkers than bicyclists, on average. It functions as a linear park and is the most used shared use path segment in the City.

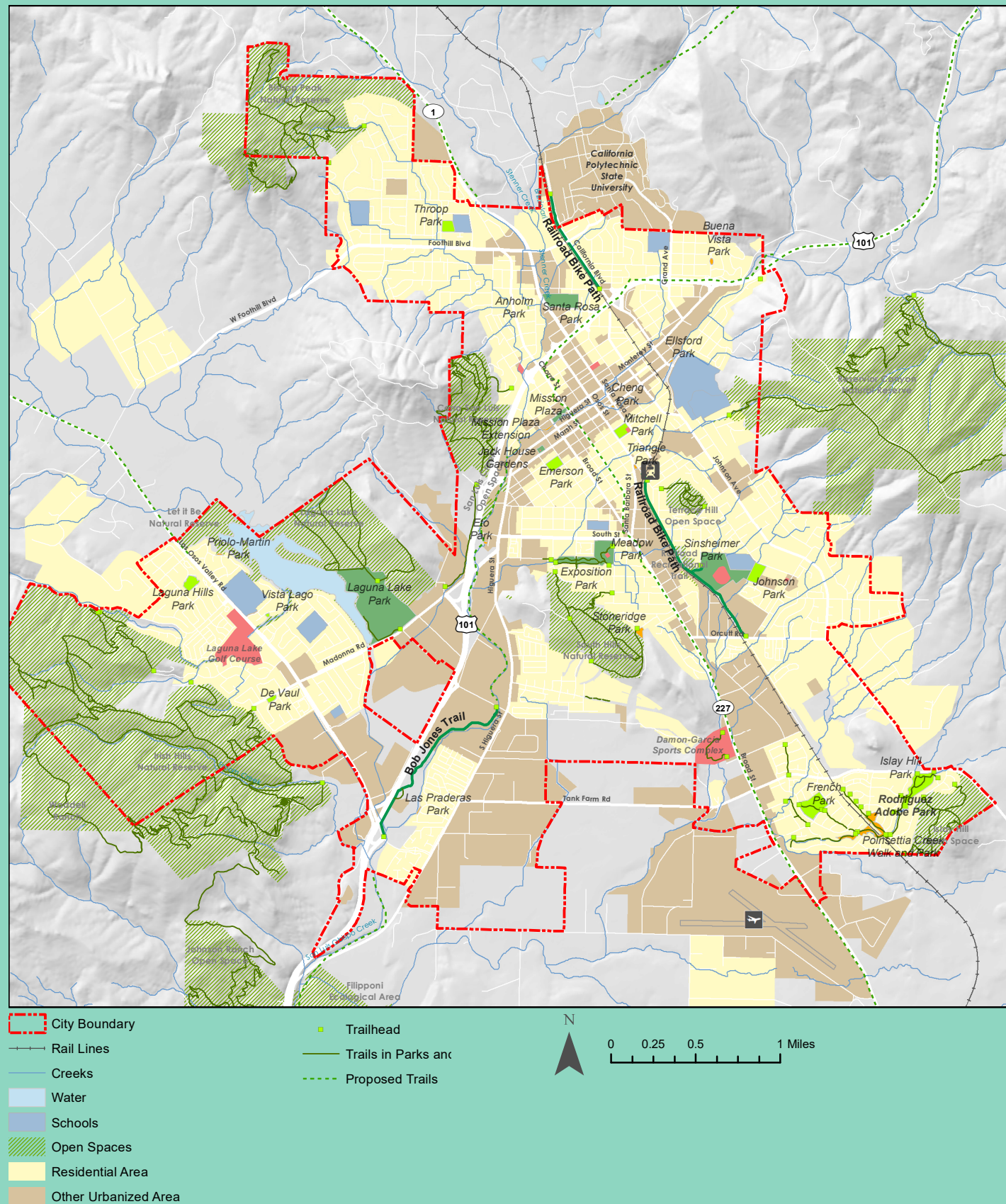
A level, off-street segment of the Bob Jones Bike Trail follows San Luis Obispo Creek on the City's southwest side and provides an important recreational resource for City residents and visitors.

Buffered bike lanes exist along Madonna Road, Los Osos Valley Road, Laurel Lane, and a short segment of Chorro Street downtown, while a network of bike lanes, shared bike streets, and special neighborhood greenways complete the network. Current plans call for the City's bike and pedestrian network to be expanded substantially.

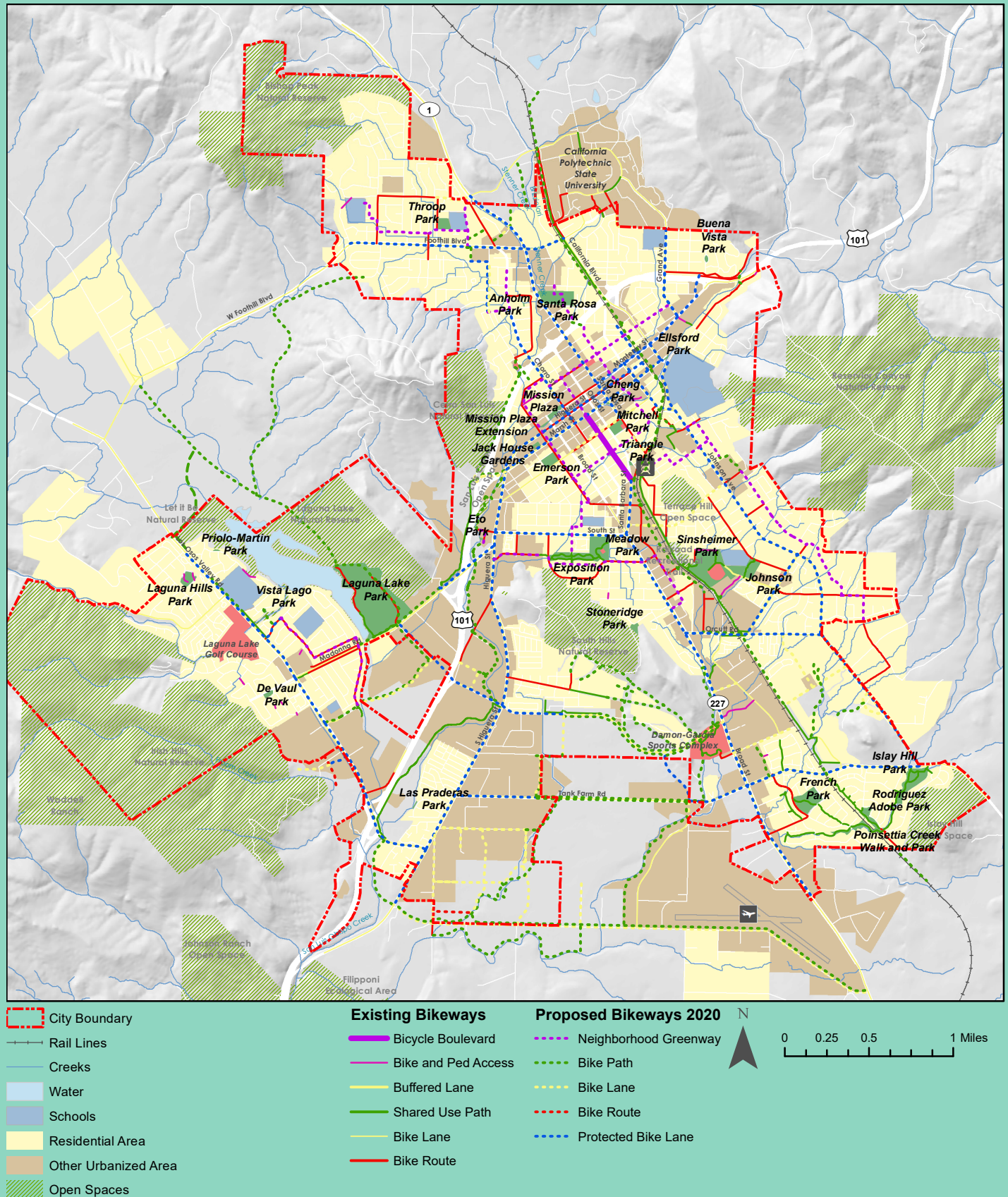
Existing and planned trail and bike networks are shown on Figures 2-16 and 2-17.



TRAIL NETWORK



ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION NETWORK





PARK CONDITION ASSESSMENT (2018)

The San Luis Obispo Parks Inventory and Assessment, produced in 2018 with support from Cal Poly students, provided a park-by-park narrative summary of park features and general conditions. The feature ratings have been used to identify trends that reflect the system as a whole.

PARK FEATURES AND RATINGS

Some 33 individual types of park features were evaluated, including several types of recreation facilities as well as parking areas, restrooms, drinking fountains, benches, and lighting. Several other features were not evaluated. These included buildings; fencing; hardscape area; turf; trees; and trails. Features that were rated and not rated are identified in Table 2-3. It should be noted that some features in the “Rated” category were not rated in all parks where they were found.

The team used a three-class general assessment rating system, as follows:

1. Needs replacement or non-functional (e.g. missing pieces or beyond repair). Not serving its primary purpose or functionality.
2. Needs repair or damaged or in state of disrepair but it can be restored to working order (functional but flawed). Only partially adequate for its intended use.
3. Good condition; in good repair and its functioning as intended

For several individual features, more detailed definitions were developed to describe a condition assessment of (1), (2), or (3). These more detailed definitions are provided in the San Luis Obispo Parks Inventory Assessment report.

FINDINGS

Over three quarters of rated park features were found to be in generally good condition, with 78 percent given a rating of (3). Fifteen percent of the features evaluated were rated (2) and six percent were rated (1). Informal multi-use fields, tennis courts, bicycle racks and lighting were found to be in the best condition across all parks. Almost all these features were rated 3 in the assessment.

Meanwhile, horseshoe pits, picnic tables and drinking fountains were found to be in the worst condition: only 60 percent of drinking fountains, 66 percent of picnic tables, and 25 percent of horseshoe pits were rated 3, with nearly two-thirds of horseshoe pits given a rating of 1.

Anholm Park, Cheng Park (planned for CIP renovation in 2021), Throop Park, Jack House Gardens contain features that were found to be in the best condition overall. Parks whose features were found to be non-functional or in need of replacement included Santa Rosa and Emerson (see Table 2-4). It is important to note that not all park features were

rated by the students.

The condition assessment identified specific potential improvements at each park, including potential improvements for features that were assessed but not rated. The recommendations show some general themes:

- + Landscaped and hardscaped area need better maintenance. This includes areas in Buena Vista Park, Las Praderas Park, and Cheng Park.
- + Park furnishings (benches, picnic tables, trash cans, drinking fountains) are in need of replacement or repair in most parks, especially in Vista Lago Park, French Park and Johnson Park.
- + Several parks were observed to lack full accessibility on walkways and trails due to slope, paving, or other conditions. These include Mission Plaza Extension, Islay Hill Park (outside of the playground and restrooms), Exposition Park, Mission Plaza and Emerson Park.
- + Some parks lack sufficient lighting. These parks include Ellsford, Emerson, Islay Hill, Exposition and Sinsheimer Parks.
- + Most sports facilities are in good condition. Horseshoe pits are a notable exception, including those in French Park and Santa Rosa Park.



FACILITY ASSESSMENT

In addition, facility assessments were conducted in 2018 by Ten Over Studio on the Parks and Recreation Administration Building, the Ludwick Community Center, the Senior Center, and the SLO Swim Center. The Ludwick Center was observed to have a combination of building condition and programmatic deficiencies that need to be addressed. Recommendations included:

- + Easing the space deficiency and improving access control at the Administration Building;
- + Consolidating the equipment, vehicles, and workspaces of rangers into a new ranger station;
- + Potentially replacing Ludwick Community Center with a new facility that better supports the

Department's vision;

- + Addressing security issues around the Senior Center;
- + Making significant improvements to the SLO Swim Center, including a new tot and therapy pool, a replacement pool, new shower and changing rooms, a new dedicated multipurpose room, a separate fitness room.

See Appendix B for more detail.

PLANNED PARKS

Some 25 new parks, park expansion or facility improvements are defined in specific or Plans, as follows.

In some cases, Development Agreements specify maintenance, ownership and operation of future parks.

AVILA RANCH

Neighborhood Park, Pocket Parks and Mini Parks: A 9.5-acre neighborhood park will serve the Avila Ranch development. The neighborhood park is planned to include group BBQs, basketball courts, tot lots, baseball diamonds, soccer fields, pickleball courts, tennis courts, a dog park, a skate park, and a community meeting pavilion area. Avila Ranch will also feature eight mini-parks and a pocket park. Each will be one-half to 2.5 acres in size.

MADONNA-FROOM

The Madonna-Froom Specific Plan area is identified in the General Plan. The Specific Plan, which includes a 3.6-acre trailhead park, was approved by the City Council in September 2020. The property is anticipated to be annexed into the City in 2021.

MARGARITA AREA SPECIFIC PLAN

Neighborhood Park, Greenway and Sports Fields: The Margarita Area Specific Plan (MASP) meets the City's park land standard by providing a 10-acre Neighborhood Park and a 16-acre improved sports field site. The Neighborhood Park will include trees, benches, picnic tables and small cooking stands, children's play equipment, game courts, a restroom, and play fields. Greenways are primarily for cycling and walking paths within linear, landscaped open areas. The Sports Fields will accommodate active recreational use and will include on-site parking.

No plans have been received to date for future development of this area of the MASP. Therefore, this Plan assumes there is an outstanding need for parkland in the MASP area.

ORCUTT AREA SPECIFIC PLAN

Neighborhood Park, Pocket Park and Trail Junction Park: The Orcutt Area Specific Plan features a neighborhood park, several pocket parks, a linear park and bicycle/pedestrian paths. The neighborhood park will serve as a community gathering place for casual recreation

and sports events. The linear park will double as a passive recreation/viewing area and stormwater management area. The pocket parks provide access points to the railroad bike path and passive recreation facilities such as seating for wildlife viewing.

SAN LUIS RANCH SPECIFIC PLAN

Central Neighborhood Park, Fitness Loop and Parkway, Pocket Parks and Preserve and Trailhead: The San Luis Ranch Specific Plan's park system is intended to provide active recreation, add to the natural beauty of the area, and create a neighborhood with a high quality of life. San Luis Ranch will include a central neighborhood park, pocket parks, an active linear park, green space, greenways, pedestrian and bike paths, and sports fields.

PLANNED PARKS AND PARK IMPROVEMENTS



PARKS AND URBAN OPEN SPACES IN THE DOWNTOWN CONCEPT PLAN

The Downtown Concept Plan presents the community's high-level vision for how downtown San Luis Obispo should be developed over the next 25 years, and includes principles, goals, and an implementation plan with prioritized major public programs and projects actions. The Downtown Concept Plan envisions the creation of new parks, enhancement of existing parks and facilities, and improvements to the San Luis Creek Walk to provide plentiful and safe public spaces in the city's core.

Cheng Park Expansion. Cheng Park is envisioned expanding across the creek onto the existing surface parking lot, with a paseo providing connections from Marsh and Pacific Streets.

Courthouse Park. The large lawn at the County building is envisioned as a demonstration garden with seating and interactive public art. Given County ownership, this may not be a City-operated park.

Diagonal Paseo. A diagonal plaza is envisioned through the block bounded by Marsh, Broad, Pacific, and Nipomo streets, providing a connection between Emerson Park and the downtown core as well as additional outdoor dining, event, and public art opportunities.

Higuera Street Plaza. The City-owned parking lot at Higuera and Nipomo streets is envisioned as a

public plaza with seating, interactive elements, and positive activity at this prominent downtown corner adjacent to San Luis Creek.

Mission Plaza Expansion. An expanded Museum of Art is shown connecting to Mission Plaza, with a Creek Walk extension underneath the Broad Street bridge.

Monterey Street Plaza. A small plaza area with outdoor seating is shown on Monterey Street.

Emerson Park. Improvements are envisioned at Emerson Park to provide more opportunities for outdoor recreation for neighborhood residents.

Ludwick Community Center. The Ludwick Center would be enhanced to include a full-sized gymnasium, multi-purpose rooms,

and underground parking.

Old Gas Works Site. The Old Gas Works building on Pismo Street could be rehabilitated and incorporated into a mid-block pocket park.

Rosa Butron Adobe. The City-owned Rosa Butron Adobe property would be opened to the public and managed as a park. A new connection from Dana Street is shown crossing San Luis Creek.

Toro/Marsh Pocket Park. A small pocket park is envisioned on the corner of Marsh and Toro Streets.

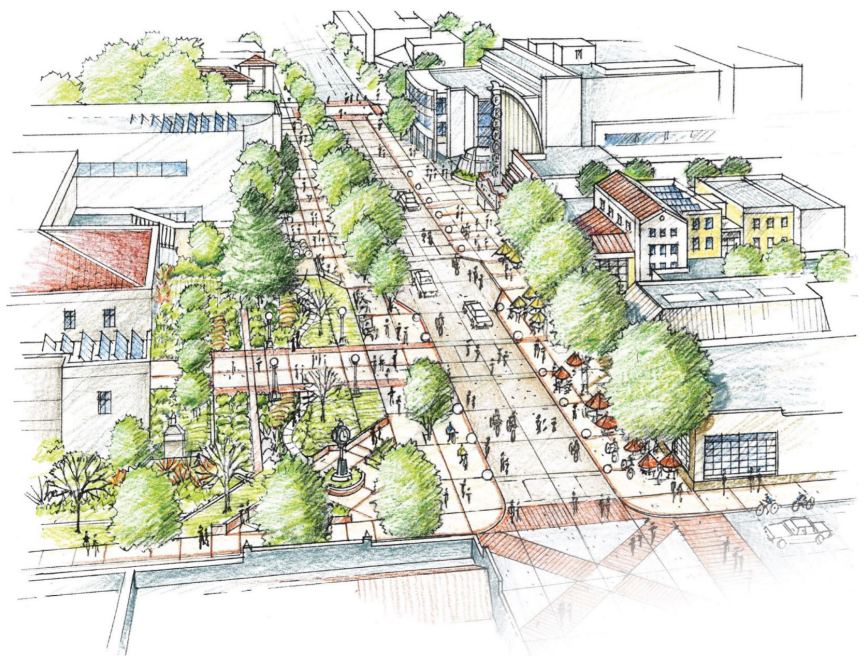
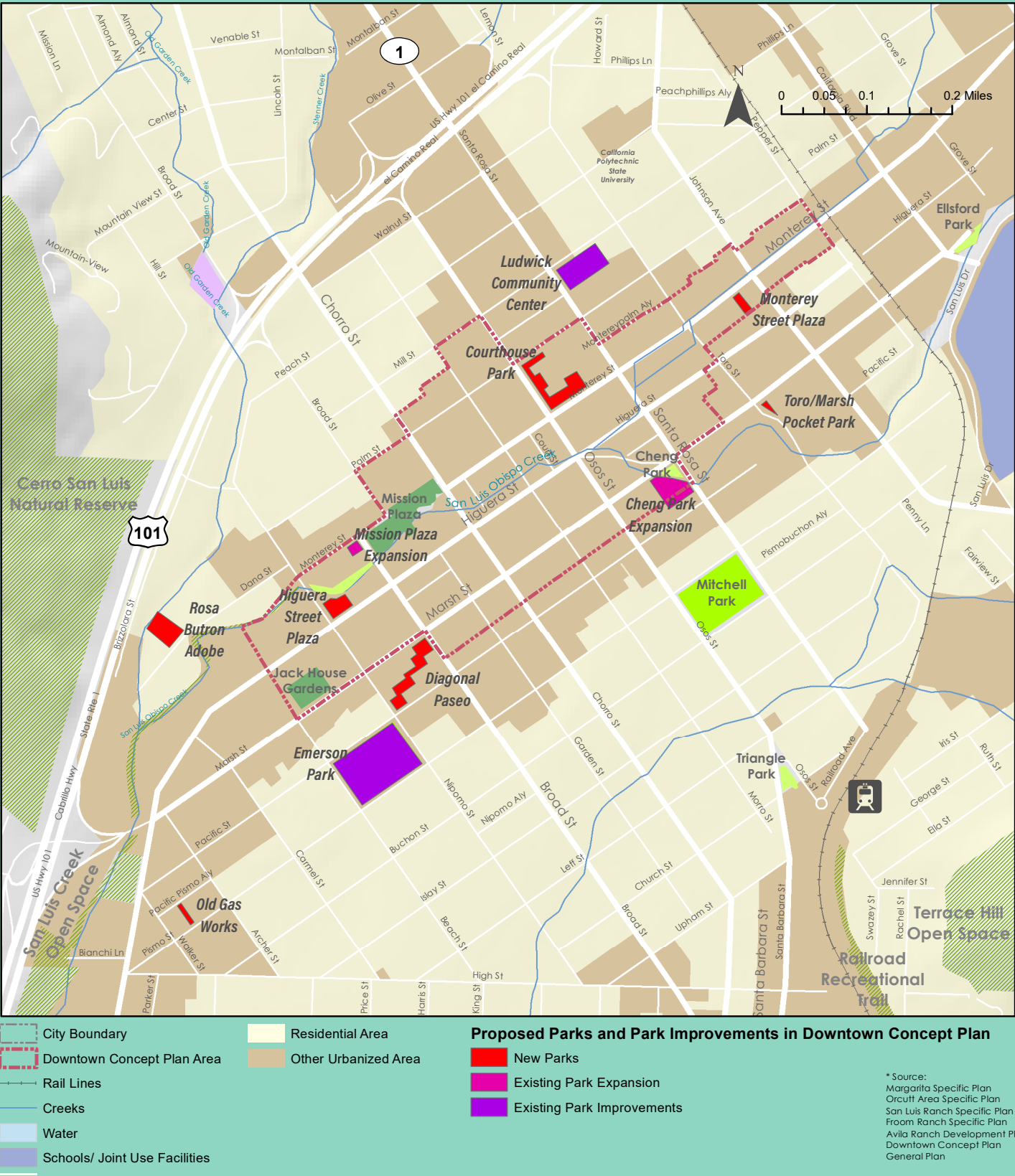


Figure 2-20
DOWNTOWN PARKS AND OPEN SPACES, EXISTING AND PROPOSED



RECREATION PROGRAMS

The San Luis Obispo Parks and Recreation Department has a professional staff that meets the parks and recreational needs of its community through a wide array of programs and services. Department staff are responsible for the management and production of recreation programs including community and neighborhood events, and the operation of multiple facilities including pools, a golf course, baseball stadium, sports fields, skate park, roller hockey rink and more. Employees are engaged year-round in planning, managing, producing, conducting, and evaluating programs and events. The functions within the Department combine to provide

hundreds of offerings in the areas of youth activities and camps, outdoor adventure, aquatics, sports, health, fitness, activities geared to seniors, and special events. In addition to the programs and activities provided directly by the Department, partnerships with other organizations are utilized to enhance recreational offerings to the community particularly in the areas of youth and adult activities. Through formal and informal cooperative relationships with the San Luis Coastal School District and nonprofit agencies, partners assist with delivering select programs and indoor space required for programs provided by the Department.

CORE PROGRAM APPROACH

Publicly produced recreation is challenged by the premise of being all things to all people, especially in a community such as San Luis Obispo with an active, engaged population with a diversity of recreational needs. The philosophy of the "Core Program Area" is to assist staff, policy makers, and the public to focus on what the most important recreational programs are in the San Luis Obispo community. As defined by PROS Consulting, program areas are considered as Core if they meet a majority of the following categories:

- + The program area has been provided for a long period of

Table 2-3

CORE PROGRAM AREAS

CORE PRIGRAM AREA	BRIEF DESCRIPTION
Aquatics	Provide a safe and well-maintained facility offering diverse aquatic activities. Recreation swimming, lap swimming, and swimming instruction.
Community Services	Manage recreational sports for youth and teens (age 5-18 years old), adult and seniors (50+). Produce community-wide special events, including events at the Historic Jack House, Mission Plaza, Downtown San Luis Obispo, SLO Swim Center and other city parks. Manage enrichment programs including Contract Classes, Community Gardens, Senior and Boomer Activities, and the SLO Skate Park. Serve as liaison to the Jack House Advisory Committee. Coordinate the City-Wide Volunteer program. Facilitate the City-Wide Special Event program and permitting process.
Facility Rentals	Manage, supervise and schedule internal and external uses of City buildings, facilities, fields, and reserved park areas. Coordinate the scheduling of facility maintenance with various City departments and user groups. Oversee the issuance of facility rental permits; facilitate the review and approval of permits for special events, banner and film permits.
Golf	Operate and maintain the 26-acre, 10-hole executive length Laguna Lake Golf Course 362 days of the year. Maintain a safe, attractive course while offering a reasonably priced recreational opportunity with an emphasis on senior and youth patrons. Focus on new program initiatives and increased sustainable practices in ongoing maintenance.
Youth Services	Provide services to over 1,200 children and their families before and after school, during spring and other school academic breaks and throughout the summer. Youth Services provides essential child care to families, while programs focus on the healthy and positive development of children, including both cognitive, academic and social development. Progressive and antibias curriculum offers a variety of activities, social experiences, and opportunities that promote learning, awareness of community, fitness and health, academic support and fun.

time (over 4-5 years) and/or is expected by the community.

- + The program area consumes a relatively large portion (5% or more) of the agency's overall budget.
- + The program area is offered 3-4 seasons per year.
- + The program area has wide demographic appeal.
- + There is a tiered level of skill development available within the program area's offerings.
- + There is full-time staff responsible for the program area.
- + There are facilities designed specifically to support the program area.
- + The agency controls a significant percentage (20% or more) of the local market.



ENSURING THE RIGHT CORE PROGRAM MIX

The Core Program Areas provided by San Luis Obispo currently appear to meet the major needs of the San Luis Obispo residents as identified through the community input received during the community input phase of the Plan project, but the program mix should be evaluated on a regular and recurring basis to ensure that the offerings within each Core Program Area – and the Core Program Areas themselves – align with changing leisure trends, demographics, and needs of residents.

Best practice guidelines as provided by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) recommends that six determinants be used to inform what programs and services are provided by the Department. According to NRPA, those determinants are:

- + Conceptual foundations of play, recreation, and leisure – Programs and services should encourage and promote a degree of freedom, choice, and voluntary engagement in their structure and design. Programs should reflect positive themes aimed at improving quality of life for both individuals and the overall community.
- + Organizational philosophy, mission, and vision – Programs and services should support the Department's mission and vision statements, values, goals, and objectives. These generally center on promoting personal health, community well-being, social equality, environmental awareness, and economic vitality.
- + Constituent interests and desired needs – Departments should actively seek to understand the recreational needs and interests of their constituency. This not only ensures an effective (and ethical) use of taxpayer dollars, but also helps to make sure that programs perform well and are valued by residents.
- + Creation of a constituent-centered culture – Programs and services do reflect a departmental culture where constituents' needs are the prime factor in creating and providing programs. This should be reflected not only in program design, but in terms of staff behaviors, architecture, furniture, technology, dress, forms of address, decision-making style, planning processes, and forms of communication.
- + Experiences desirable for clientele – Programs and services should be designed to provide the experiences desirable to meet the needs of the participants/clients in a community and identified target markets. This involves not only identifying and understanding the diversity of needs in a community, but also applying recreation programming expertise and skills to design, implement, and evaluate a variety of desirable experiences for residents to meet those needs.
- + Community opportunities – When planning programs and services, a Department should consider the network of opportunities afforded by other organizations such as nonprofits, schools, other public agencies, and the private sector. Departments should also recognize where gaps in service provision occur and consider how unmet needs can be addressed.

AGE SEGMENT RECOMMENDATIONS

The Department age balance should be maintained moving forward, and the Department should update this Age Segment Analysis every year to note changes or to refine age segment categories. Given the growing population trend for residents ages 55 and over and the growing demand for services in this age bracket, it is also recommended

that the Department further segment this group into 65-74 and 75+. These two sub-segments will have increasingly different needs and expectations for programs and services in coming years, and program planning will be needed to provide differing requirements for active seniors.

Age Segment Analyses should

ideally be done for each individual program offered by the Department. Program coordinators/managers should include this information when creating or updating program plans for individual programs. An Age Segment Analysis can also be incorporated into Mini Business Plans for comprehensive program planning.



LIFECYCLE ANALYSIS

A lifecycle analysis involves reviewing every program identified by City of San Luis Obispo staff to determine the stage of growth or decline for each as a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall recreation program portfolio. The various stages of program lifecycles are as follows:

- Introduction - New program; modest participation
- Take-Off - Rapid participation growth
- Growth - Moderate, but consistent participation growth
- Mature - Slow participation growth
- Saturated - Minimal to no participation growth; extreme competition
- Decline - Declining participation

This analysis is not based on strict quantitative data, but rather is based on staff's knowledge of their program areas. The table below shows the percentage distribution of the various lifecycle categories of the Department's recreation programs. These percentages were obtained by comparing the number of programs in each individual stage with the total number of programs listed by staff.

Overall, the lifecycle analysis results indicate an unbalanced distribution of all programs across the life cycle. A combined total of 77.1% of programs fall into the Introduction, Take-off and Growth stages,

primarily due to growth of programs introduced in the last three years.

RECOMMENDATIONS

While it is important to provide new programs to align with trends and help meet the evolving needs of the community, it is also important to have a stable core segment of programs that are in the Mature stage. Currently, the Department has only 16.1% of their programs in this category. The consulting team recommends this be approximately 40% so as to provide stability to the overall program portfolio, but without dominating the portfolio with programs that are advancing to the later stages of the lifecycle. Programs in the Mature stage should be tracked for signs they are entering the Saturation or Decline stages. There should be an ongoing process to evaluate program participation and trends to ensure that program offerings continue to meet the community's needs.

A total of 6.8% of programs are in saturated or declining phases. The consulting team recommends keeping as few programs as possible in these two stages, but it is understood that programs eventually evolve into saturation and

decline. If programs never reach these stages, it is an indication that staff may be "over-tweaking" their offerings and abbreviating the natural evolution of programs. This prevents programs from reaching their maximum participation, efficiency, and effectiveness. For departments challenged with doing the most they can with limited resources, this has the potential to be an area of concern.

As programs enter into the Decline stage, they must be closely reviewed and evaluated for repositioning or elimination. When this occurs, the consulting team's recommendation is to modify these programs to begin a new lifecycle with the introductory stage or to add new programs based upon community needs and trends.

Staff should complete a lifecycle review on an annual basis and ensure that the percentage distribution closely aligns with desired performance.







3

WHAT WE HEARD

Community engagement during the Plan Update process was instrumental in gauging the values and priorities of San Luis Obispo residents today. This chapter describes what we learned.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- *Community Engagement Overview*

Community engagement is vital to identifying, understanding, and incorporating San Luis Obispo residents' needs, values, and aspirations into the update of the City's Parks and Recreation Element and Plan. During the first phase of the Update, City Staff and the Consultant Team conducted a diverse set of outreach activities intended to inform community members about the process and collaborate with on their needs and vision for parks and recreation. This chapter summarizes what we heard.

For a more detailed summary, see Appendix C.



Community Engagement Tools

FOUNDATIONAL MEETINGS

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITES

STATISTICALLY VALID SURVEY

POP-UP EVENTS

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETINGS

PUBLIC WORKSHOPS

PHONE, EMAIL, AND COMMENT CARDS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

In April 2018, City Staff developed a comprehensive Community Engagement Plan for the Update process. The Plan identified goals and a series of outreach components to inform, consult and collaborate. These are summarized here.

FOUNDATIONAL MEETINGS

First, Parks and Recreation Department Staff arranged meetings with a range of residents, current and former commissioners, parks and recreation user groups, representatives of cultural organizations and others. As consultant for the City on the Plan

Update project, WRT met with 45 individuals in 16 half-hour to one-hour meetings on April 10 and 11, 2018. City Staff were not present, to encourage candid dialogue about issues.

Meanwhile, Staff worked to inform the public about the project itself, and the opportunity it presented for the community to share hopes and dreams about the future of parks and recreation in San Luis Obispo. With this in mind, outreach efforts conducted May through August 2018 focused on two foundational questions:

- + What do you love about City of SLO Parks, Activities, and

Recreational Facilities?

- + What do you wish to have in 20 years for City of SLO Parks, Activities, and Recreational Facilities?

POP-UPS

During the summer of 2018, City Staff conducted over 25 “pop-up” events with the Parks and Recreation “Bright Ideas” bicycle to reach San Luis Obispo residents and visitors in parks, facilities, programs, and events. During these pop-ups, the public had an opportunity to provide comments on portable white boards and take photos



with the “Bright Ideas” bicycle for sharing on the Parks and Recreation Instagram account. Comment cards were also provided, which included the two foundational questions identified above, as well as City contact information, and space for the commenter to provide contact information. These cards could be handed to City staff, mailed to the Parks and Recreation Department, or dropped into comment card collection boxes and Parks and Recreation facilities. Additional marketing materials included “Bright Ideas” stickers and a “Save the Date” magnet for the public workshop held in September 2018.

NEIGHBORHOOD MEETING

At the request of the Las Praderas neighborhood, City Staff met with interested neighbors to discuss the Update and the hopes and dreams for the Las Praderas Park and city as a whole. Staff continues to be available to go out into San Luis Obispo neighborhoods at the request of residents.

SOCIAL MEDIA AND WEBSITE

To foster engagement in the process, Parks and Recreation Staff maintained and updated the Plan website with new information, and posted updates and photos on the Department’s Facebook page. Photos from



pop-up events and meetings were posted to the Department’s Instagram. At all events, Staff collected contact information, allowing individuals to add their names and email addresses to the growing interested parties list in order to receive all email updates regarding workshops, key Parks and Recreation Commission meetings, and opportunities for input and engagement.

OTHER OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTREACH AND ENGAGEMENT

Staff also received comments by email and on the Open City Hall online portal. Additional pipelines for public comments included direct communications with Staff via phone and email, distribution of comment cards at the Parks and Recreation Department office, facilities, and events, and through the Open City Hall online portal. In addition, a survey was conducted August to October 2018 to establish

residents’ priorities for parks and recreation in the City of San Luis Obispo. The survey was mailed to a random sample of San Luis Obispo households. A total of 507 surveys were returned, allowing the survey to exceed its response rate goal and achieve a high level of statistical confidence.



“BRIGHT IDEAS” PUBLIC WORKSHOP

Supported by this extensive outreach, including multiple emails to a list over 6,000, over 600 people attended a participatory three-hour drop in interactive engagement workshop held at the Ludwick Community Center on September 13, 2018.

Utilizing a drop-in format yielded great results. The extended timeframe allowed people to come for as brief or long a period as desired. Both main entrances of the Ludwick Center were open and staffed, and the gym was set up with one informational and seven interactive “stations,” each designed to get different types of input on parks, facilities, and recreation in San Luis Obispo. At sign-in stations, Staff gave members of the public Passports to be stamped (encouraging attendees to stop at each interactive station) and returned for eligibility for entrance in a drawing for a Fitbit™. The first station, in the main foyer, was informational about the Update process itself and staffed by Community Development planners. Those staff were able to address general questions about the Update and the overall planning process. Within the main gym were six

activity stations where workshop attendees could address focused questions or complete various exercises; a seventh “station” was provided for children. Each of these activities, and the resulting feedback, is summarized below.

PARK IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES WORKSHOP

In September 2019, following the completion of the analysis phase of the Update, the City and WRT returned to the community to present the findings and gauge support for potential improvements to specific parks.



FOUNDATIONAL MEETINGS

In April 2018, WRT met with 45 individuals in small groups. Individuals represented a range of organizations and perspectives, including advocates for swimming, open space, dog parks, the senior center, golf, organized sports, cultural organizations, and neighborhoods, as well as members of the Planning Commission and City Council.

The following provides a summary of themes, priorities, goals, opportunities, and challenges that emerged from these meetings.

PLAN PROCESS AND GOALS

Reach Beyond the Usual Voices

Several participants spoke about the need to reach beyond “the loudest voices and most organized groups” during the planning process.

Provide a Strong Foundation for Implementation

The Plan Update should be comprehensive, and should provide a strategy and prioritization for future improvements.

Parks are Where You Build Community

The core message should be that “parks are where you build community.” We should not lose sight of this even as it addresses specific facility and program needs.

NEW PARKS AND URBAN TRAILS

Public Spaces Downtown and Along the Creeks

Participants spoke positively about new public spaces downtown, making the connection between downtown growth and livability and open space preservation around the edges.

The creeks that flow through San Luis Obispo are a great potential asset, and could be the backbone of a creek walk or park.

New Parks in Neighborhoods

SLO should continue to strive to provide new parks, especially in densifying neighborhoods near downtown.

Trails and Trail Connections

The City should build on its trail system by extending key trails and creating spurs to parks and neighborhoods.

FACILITY NEEDS

More Facilities for Field Sports

Sports advocates believe there is a need for additional fields beyond improving Damon-Garcia, pointing to the large numbers of youth and adult soccer participants and the growing popularity of other field sports (rugby, lacrosse and field hockey). There was considerable interest in developing a complex of fields large enough to support tournaments.

Dog Parks and Dog Areas

The City does not currently have a fenced dog park, and only one formal off-leash area, at Laguna Lake Park. While three dog parks are currently in development plans, two of these are only a quarter acre in size, which may be too small, based on current community input.

Skate/Bike Parks/Tracks

There is unmet need for a skate and bike park or track. Facilities oriented to kids may help to build confident bikers who feel comfortable getting around without a car.

Tennis and Pickleball

The Sinsheimer Park tennis courts are rarely used because there’s no backstop, and [at the time of our meetings] there were no dedicated pickleball courts in San Luis Obispo.

Indoor Recreation

The Ludwick Community Center gym is not highly-used. Given the small size of that gym and the poor condition of the facility, starting over with a new facility may be best.

Indoor soccer and indoor rock climbing were noted as potentially popular activities.

Swim Center Improvements

Swimmers supported the creation of a separate kids’ area at the pool, which would help make the pool more of a community place. A spray ground adjacent to the pool was

proposed. Parking expansion and safety improvements were noted as priorities.

Managing and Preserving the Golf Course

Laguna Lake Golf Course gives active adults an affordable and healthy activity while also supporting a good level of use by young people in the afternoons and evenings.

Senior Center

The Senior Center facility limits the programming that can be offered. There is a desire to better serve younger, more active seniors, and safety concerns about Mitchell Park.

STRATEGIES FOR PARK AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT

Development of new parks and facilities will require the commitment of significant resources. Three potential strategies emerged from our conversations.

Regional Coordination

A regional strategy could be applied to planning for tournament-level facilities for field sports, diamond sports, and/or bike racing. The County's Parks and Recreation planning process and Cal Poly's campus Plan may be vehicles for this coordination.

Partnerships

Sports leagues and "Friends of" organized groups or non-profit

organizations can "band together" to advocate and raise funds for new facilities and amenities. The success of the skate park is a positive recent model in San Luis Obispo.

Leveraging the Development Process

The park amenities being proposed in Specific Plan areas is not always well-suited to needs. In addition, parks are being created late in the development process. These issues should be addressed in the Plan Update

PARK ACTIVATION AND PROGRAMMING

Park Activation

Some parks in SLO are under-used. Greater activation of parks to make them more attractive to all segments of the community needs to be a priority. Ideas for activating Mitchell and Emerson parks included evening festivals; a bocce court; a dog area; and better synergy with the building programs.

Mission Plaza is home to numerous festivals and events, but the plaza, the creek, and downtown streets were still seen by some as having untapped potential.

Program Priorities and Strategies

Where should the Plan focus attention in terms of programming? Stakeholders called attention to three areas of focus:

- + Affordable programs for children and youth
- + Programming for active seniors.
- + Embracing apps and educational games, like the recent "Pics on Peaks" program.

PARKS DEPARTMENT ROLE AND PARTNERSHIPS

The separation of maintenance and programming may not be a good model.

Parks and Recreation should focus on helping people connect with their community of interest, and helping groups coordinate activities.

POP-UP EVENTS

Over the course of summer 2018, City Staff conducted over 25 “pop-up” events to reach San Luis Obispo residents and visitors in parks and facilities, at programs and events. Staff worked to inform the public about the project itself, and the opportunity it presented for the community to share hopes and dreams about the future of parks and recreation in San Luis Obispo. Staff also distributed comment cards and solicited feedback online through Open City Hall, and received over 160 responses. The outreach during this stage focused on two foundational questions.

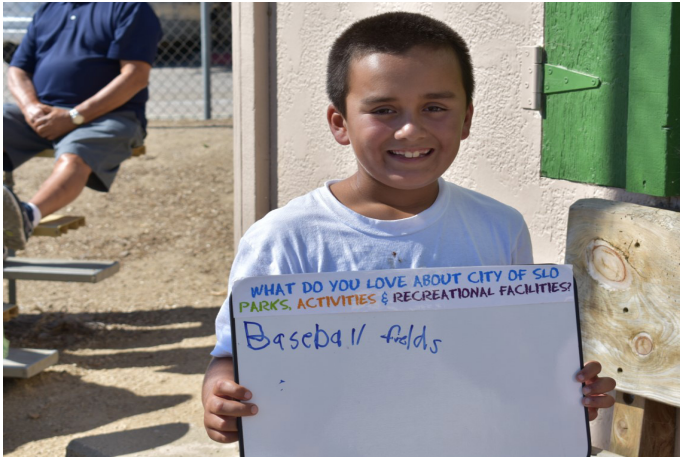
What Do You Love About SLO Parks, Activities and Recreational Facilities?

The most commonly cited activities community members loved were youth sports (12 responses), community events and programs (10 responses), hiking, and softball (7 responses each). The second group of responses referred to specific parks or facilities. Here, Sinsheimer Park got by far the greatest response (19) followed by Santa Rosa Park/Skate Park (9 responses). Third, responses described certain qualities of San Luis Obispo’s parks. These included comments about the parks being clean and well maintained (11); accessible, bike-friendly, or providing easy access to trails (9), and family-friendly and nice for all ages (8).

What do you wish to have in 20 years for City of SLO Parks, Activities, and Recreational Facilities?

Many people identified the need for new parks or facilities. These included more parks, open spaces or trails (14); more soccer fields basketball courts or pickleball courts (11); more bike trails or better connectivity between the bike and open space networks (11); more pools, splash pads, or water parks (8); and more skate parks or ramps (6). Other people focused on programming. Some 21 responses described a range of recreation classes or activities including wildlife education, yoga, gardening, art, music, and summer camps. Night hiking (7 responses); more opportunities for people of all ages (6); better hours and/or fee for the pool (5); and more off-leash time and/or more dog park (4 responses) were also notable.





"BRIGHT IDEAS" WORKSHOP

Community input received during the workshop, the pop-ups, emailed responses, and received comment cards, and open City Hall are condensed to a series of key topics as they were presented at the workshop.

ASSESSING PARKS AND FACILITIES

At the "Parks in Need of Love" station, attendees were given an opportunity to fill out a "report card" on the condition of one or more parks and provide comments on specific needs.

Ten parks received the greatest share of report cards. Average "grades" for each of these parks, along with the number of report cards received, is shown in Table 3-1.

Sinsheimer Park was both the most-often graded park and the one that attendees gave the highest ratings. Sinsheimer was noted for its "wonderful" play area and hill slide, as well as the need for more shade. Sinsheimer Stadium, however, was given poor marks. The Stadium's restrooms and public address system were especially identified for improvements.

Other parks that received substantial feedback included:

- Laguna Lake Park was described by several

Table 3-1

"GRADES" FOR SAN LUIS OBISPO PARKS AND FACILITIES

PARK	AVERAGE GRADE	REPORT CARDS
Sinsheimer Park	B	47
Meadow Park	B-	21
DeVaul Park	B-	4
French Park	B-	18
Santa Rosa Park	B-	6
Damon-Garcia Sports Complex	B-	5
Cuesta Park	C+	6
Throop Park	C+	4
Anholm Park	C+	11
SLO Swim Center	C	10
Mitchell Park	C	10
Johnson Park	C	2
Emerson Park	C-	10
Mission Plaza	C-	3
Laguna Lake Park	D+	25
Islay Hill Park	D	16
Sinsheimer Stadium	D-	13
Las Praderas Mini Park	F	3

commenters as needing a fully-fenced or otherwise improved dog park. Some called for dredging of the lake.

- Meadow Park was described as pretty and serene, but noted that the community building, the paths, bridges, and workout stations all needed updating.
- Islay Hill Park was described as a park with a great location in need of updated equipment and new ground material, as well as better signage for the trailheads.¹

¹The Islay Park playground was replaced with new equipment in September 2020.

- Emerson Park is well-liked but needs restrooms.
- Mitchell Park is well-liked as a gathering place near downtown, but there is concern about how the park is used.
- SLO Swim Center received many positive comments; people wanted shade over the seating area and longer operating hours.
- Community members wanted to see pickleball courts at French Park. These courts were constructed in 2020.

Table 3-2

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES THAT SHOULD BE A FOCUS IN THE YEARS TO COME

ACTIVITY	RESPONSES
Swimming	32
Pickleball	23
Yoga	15
Kids' programs	14
Environmental education	11
Gardening	10
Aqua aerobics	8
Biking	7
Dogs	7
Youth programs	7
Youth sports	7
Family activities	6
Bike education	5
Clean up events	5
Fitness	5
Hiking	5
Camps	4
Chess	4
Community activities	4
Dance classes	4
Kayaking	4
Language classes	4
Martial arts	4
Tai chi	4

PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES

At the “Dreams of Programs and Activities” workshop station, participants were asked to write, using sticky notes, what types of activities they felt should be the focus in the coming years. Children at the “Parks, Jr.” station also got a chance to express their preferences, responding to images of different types of facilities and activities using dots to communicate their favorites.

People of all ages cited a diverse array of programs and activities. Programs identified by the most people included swimming, pickleball, yoga, kids' programs, environmental education, gardening, and others shown on Table 3-2.

Children expressed many specific

requests that could loosely be grouped into a few broad categories. The most popular of these was new/improved play equipment, both indoor and outdoor, including unique features like ziplines, foam pits, climbing trees, and giant chess sets. Most of the remaining responses fell into one of these categories: recreational classes (e.g. dance, Spanish, karate), events and excursions (e.g. overnight camping, outdoor movies, visits to the zoo), activities related to video games, requests for more shade at parks and the pool, and improvements to the Sun and Fun and Club Star facilities and resources.



EVENTS IN PARKS

Special events were the subject of the “Events in Parks” workshop station, where participants were asked to indicate what parks are good locations for events, and what type of events they wanted to see, using dots to identify parks and sticky notes to summarize events.

Concerts and other ideas for music in parks were by far the most popular type of event based on workshop feedback. Other top event categories were food trucks and events, sports tournaments and events, movies, arts events and fairs, cultural festivals, and community picnics and barbeques, among others (see Table 5-3 Ideas for Events in Parks).

Mitchell Park (15 dots), Laguna Lake Park (12), Mission Plaza (11), French Park (6), Sinsheimer Park (6), and Jack House and Gardens (6) were most-cited as places where events should take place. When comments about events at Sinsheimer Stadium and SLO Swim Center are included, ten responses described events at Sinsheimer.





DREAMS OF PARKS AND FACILITIES

At the “Dreams of Parks and Facilities” station, the presentation board showed a variety of types of amenities and facilities in parks, including a range of sports facilities as well as passive recreation, cultural and sustainable features. Using these examples as a starting point, workshop attendees were asked to use sticky notes to share ideas for new park facilities or amenities.

A great diversity of ideas were shared. Pickleball and some variation on a water park or splash pad were the subject of the most responses (44 and 40, respectively). Many people also weighed in on the need for enhancements to the SLO Swim Center; a new dog park or fenced dog area; new facilities for diamond sports and field sports; new neighborhood and pocket parks; and a new indoor recreation center/community center. Table 3-3 identifies facility types that garnered the most responses; in many cases, responses were more detailed and specific (i.e., shade over playgrounds; zip lines).

Table 3-3
DREAMS FOR PARKS AND FACILITIES

FACILITY TYPE	RESPONSES
Pickleball	44
Water park, splash pad	40
Swim Center enhancements	33
Dog park	28
Baseball, softball	24
New parks	23
Recreation or community center	22
Soccer, rugby	18
Shade	17
Bike park	16
New pool	16

FACILITY TYPE	RESPONSES
Bike paths	14
Adventure park	13
Walking trails	13
Play equipment	11
Swim Center operating hours	11
Stadium enhancements	10
Water refill stations	10
Charging stations	9
Community gardens	9
Trees	9



PARK IMPROVEMENT PRIORITIES WORKSHOP

In September 2019, following the completion of the analysis phase of the Update, the City and WRT returned to the community to present the findings and gauge support for potential improvements to specific parks and types of facilities. What we heard is summarized here.

YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

Participants were asked to state their priorities for park improvements in their neighborhood, from a list of options. Of these options, “safer access” was the highest priority, followed by walking paths, neighborhood events, and dog park.

COMMUNITY PARKS

For Laguna Lake Park, we asked participants to rank a list of 11 potential improvements. The most popular: a bike pump track, an adventure playground, a botanical garden, a walking path, an outdoor learning area, and additional picnic areas.

For Sinsheimer Park, a bike pump track, multi-use turf fields and lighting at the Stadium, Stockton Field, and the tennis courts all got at least 75% approval. Additional tennis courts got under 50%.

Figure 3-1
PRIORITIES FOR YOUR NEIGHBORHOOD

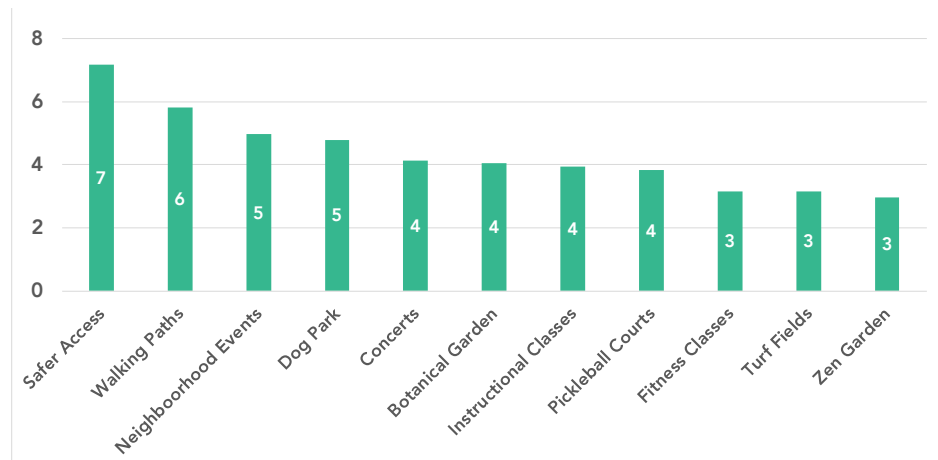


Figure 3-2
RANKED IMPROVEMENTS FOR LAGUNA LAKE PARK

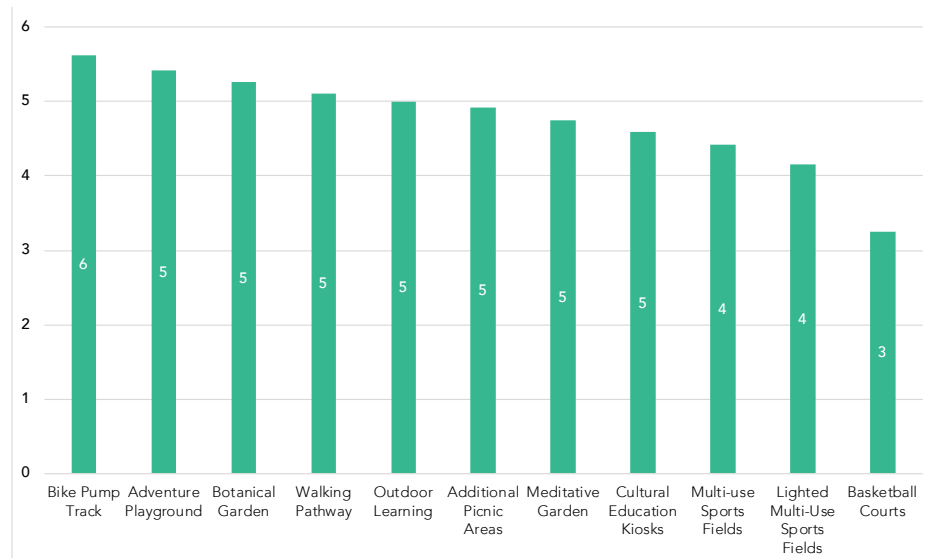
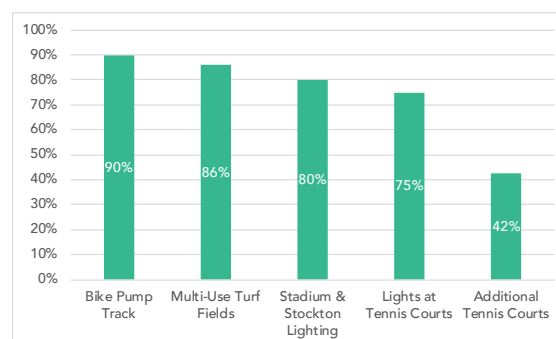


Figure 3-3
SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT SINSHEIMER PARK



FIELDS AND FACILITIES

For **Sinsheimer Stadium**, participants were asked if they supported or opposed specific changes. Community events, upgrades to the Stadium and restrooms, and multi-use sports at the Stadium all received very strong support; two-thirds of participants also supported shifting to artificial turf.

Participants were asked to rank four potential improvements to the **SLO Swim Center**. Of these, extended hours for recreation swim and for lap swim were the highest ranked.

Finally, participants were asked about their support for some other specific potential improvements. Of these non-golf programs at the **Laguna Lake Golf Course**, remodel or expansion of the **Ludwick Community Center**, and activation of the **Jack House**, and enhancing the **Senior Center** all got very high levels of support. Synthetic turf was also supported by three-quarters of participants.

Figure 3-4

SUPPORT FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT SINSHEIMER STADIUM

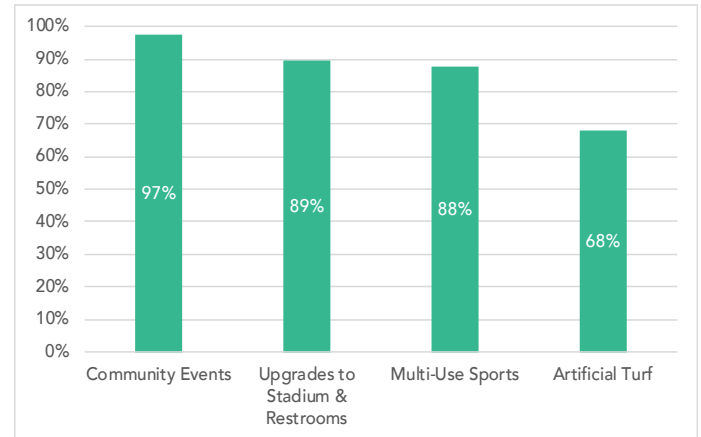


Figure 3-5

RANKED IMPROVEMENTS AT SLO SWIM CENTER

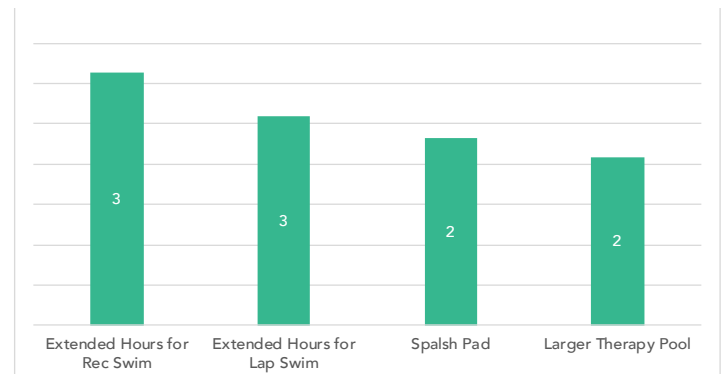
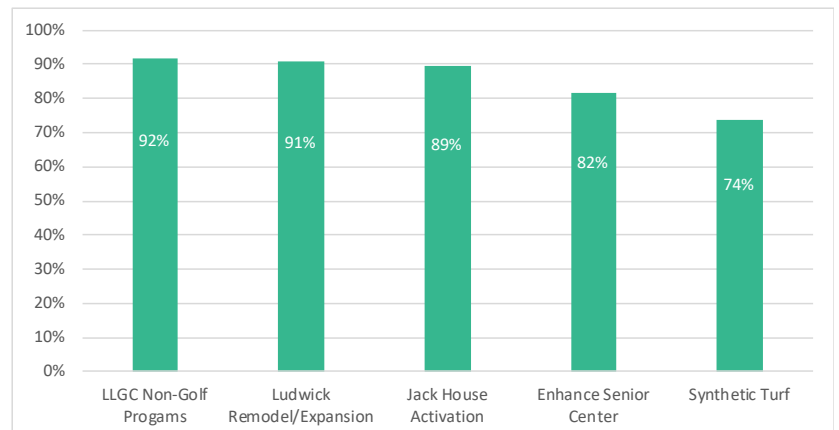


Figure 3-6

SUPPORT FOR OTHER FIELD AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS



NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

ETC Institute administered a parks and recreation needs assessment survey for the City of San Luis Obispo during late summer/early fall of 2018. The survey was administered as part of a comprehensive update to the City's Parks and Recreation Plan. According to the survey, the Parks and Recreation Department is doing an excellent job providing services to the community. Most survey respondents (79%) are either "very satisfied" or "satisfied" with the overall value their household

receives from the City of San Luis Obispo's Parks and Recreation Department. This is **significantly higher** than the national average of 59%.

The types of programs that households have the most need for are: community special events, recreation swimming, and lap swimming. These are also the programs that are the most important to survey respondents.

The types of amenities with the highest level of unmet need in the City are: swimming pools, nature

parks/botanical gardens, adventure areas, and shaded areas. The types of amenities that are the most important to households are: open space trails, park trails, swimming pools, and passive enjoyment of open space.

The amenities that should be the City's highest priorities are: swimming pools, open space trails, park trails, passive enjoyment of open space conservation areas, shaded play areas, dog parks, and nature park/botanical gardens.

Figure 3-7

LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH FACILITIES

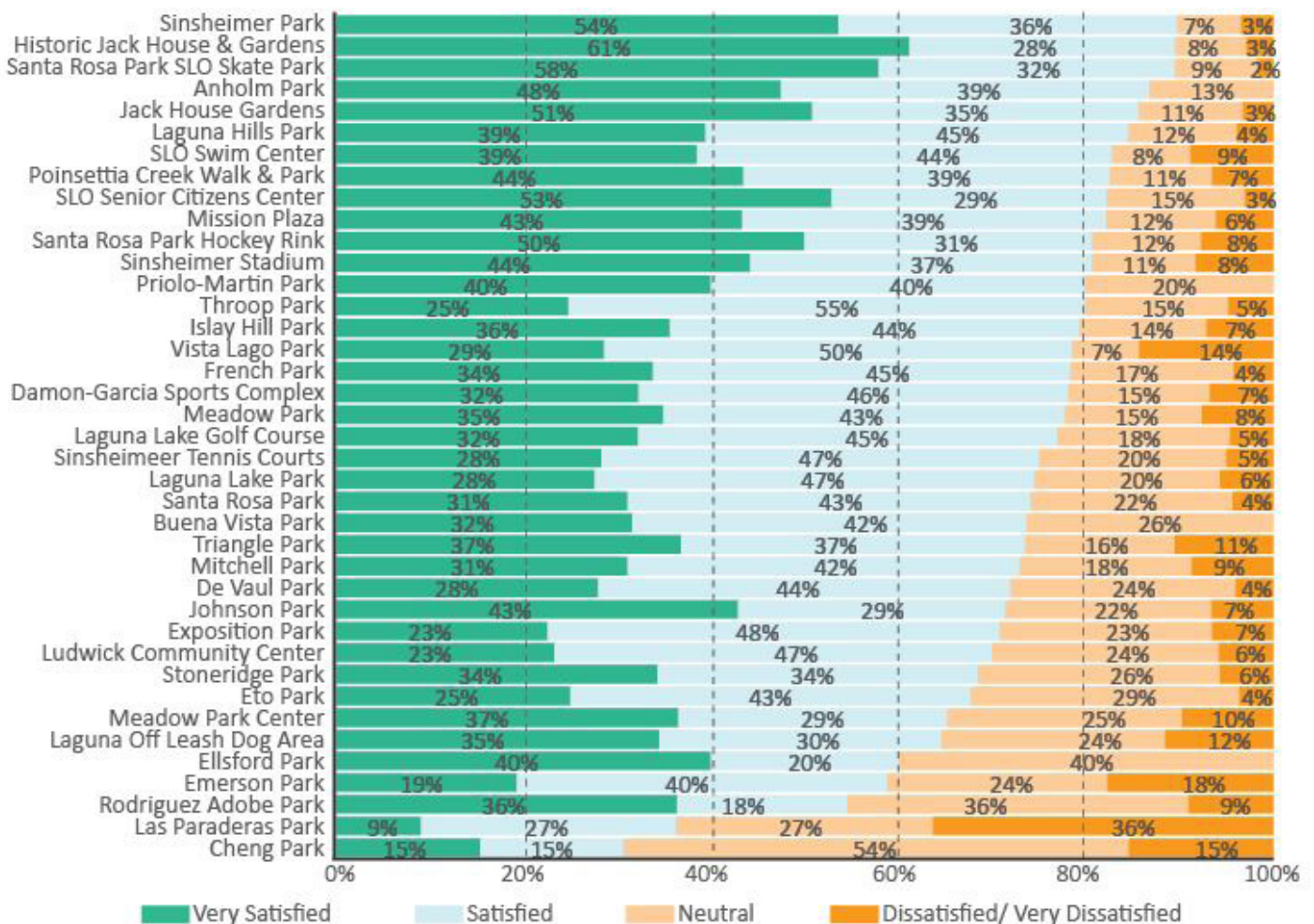


Figure 3-8

PRIORITIES FOR IMPROVING, REPURPOSING, OR EXPANDING PARKS AND FACILITIES

by percentage of respondent households that selected the items as one of their top four choices

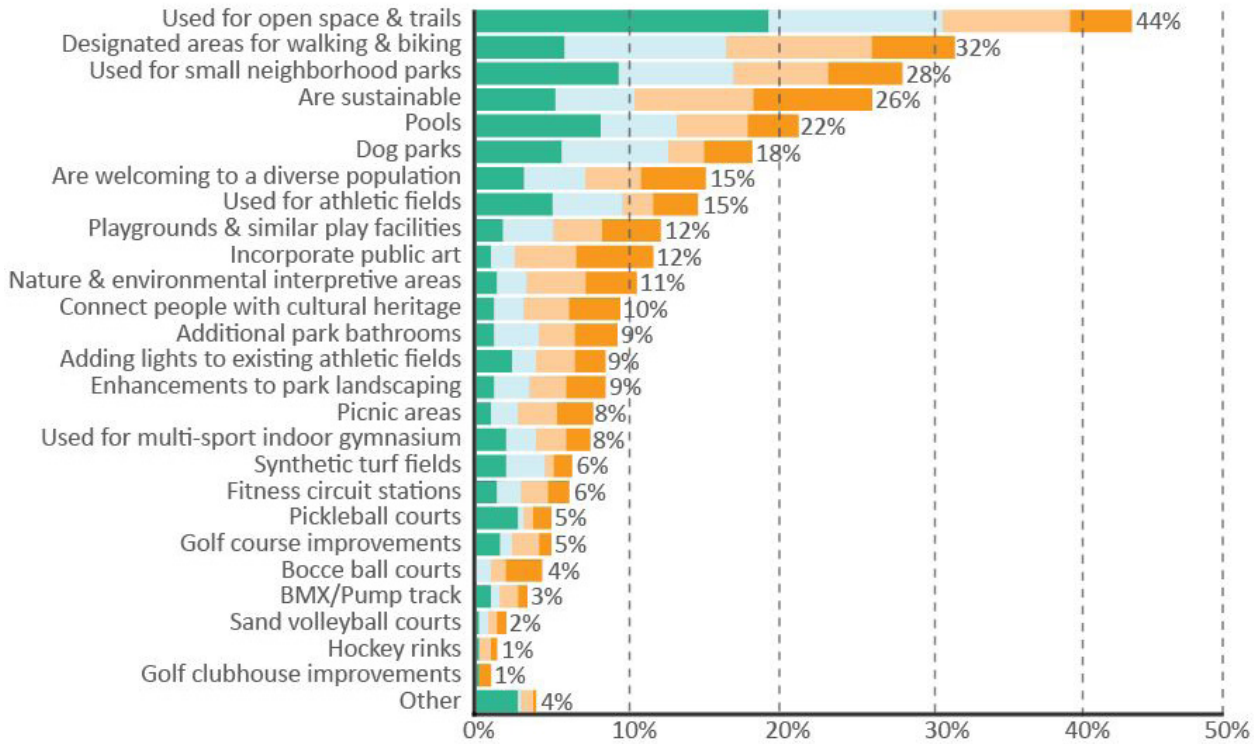
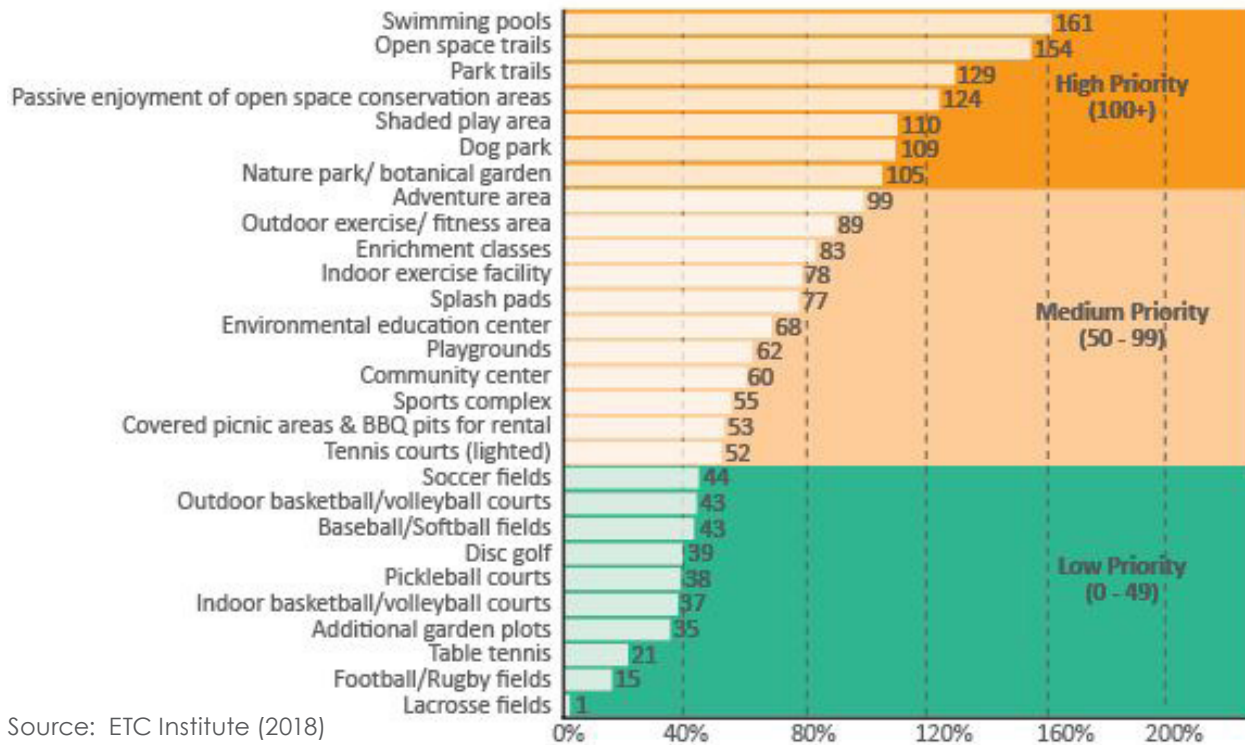


Figure 3-9

PRIORITIES FOR INVESTMENT IN RECREATION AMENITIES

based on the Priority Investment Rating



Source: ETC Institute (2018)





GOALS & POLICIES

SYSTEM-WIDE GOALS

Policies are presented in five categories: one for each of the Plan goals. In many cases, realizing these policies have the potential to advance multiple goals at once, and this should be the City's aim. In total, there are 53 Policies to achieve these five goals.



BUILD COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS

City Parks and Recreational facilities should build and connect community through inclusive and diverse amenities and programming



MEET CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

Leverage regionalism and creatively increase the number of City parks, recreational facilities and amenities, to meet user needs.

IN THIS CHAPTER

System-wide Goals

Building Community and Neighborhoods

Meet Changing Needs of the Community

Sustainability

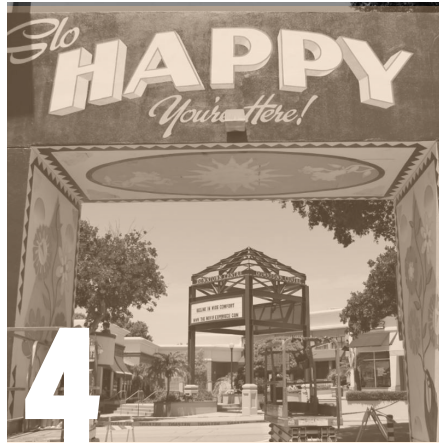
Maximize Resources

Safety



SUSTAINABILITY

The City's Parks and Recreation facilities will be vibrant, resilient, and sustainable.



OPTIMIZE RESOURCES

Establish, maintain, and operate parks, facilities, and programs in a manner that is cost effective and manageable while engaging the community in a manner that optimizes involvement and support.



SAFETY

Provide safe, accessible, inclusive and well-maintained City parks, recreational facilities and amenities.

1

BUILD COMMUNITY AND NEIGHBORHOODS

1.1 Park Classification.

This Plan classifies San Luis Obispo’s parks and recreation facilities by type, as Community Parks; Neighborhood Parks; Mini Parks; Downtown Public Spaces; Recreational Facilities; and Special Features. Each of these park types is defined in Chapter 2. This classification represents an adjustment from the system used in the 2001 Parks and Recreation Plan and should be used consistently by the City in all planning, analysis, and reporting. The new system allows the City to distinguish small urban public spaces in the densifying downtown core from “mini parks” in residential neighborhoods and create a distinction between traditional recreation facilities such as gyms and recreation centers and “special features” like community gardens and historic sites.

1.2 Park Acreage Standards.

San Luis Obispo shall continue to develop a park system at the rate of ten acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Aspirational standards for each park and facility type are as shown in Table 4-1. The City has demonstrated that a high-quality park system can be achieved within a smaller footprint but seeks to achieve this goal over time.

1.3 Park Access Standards.

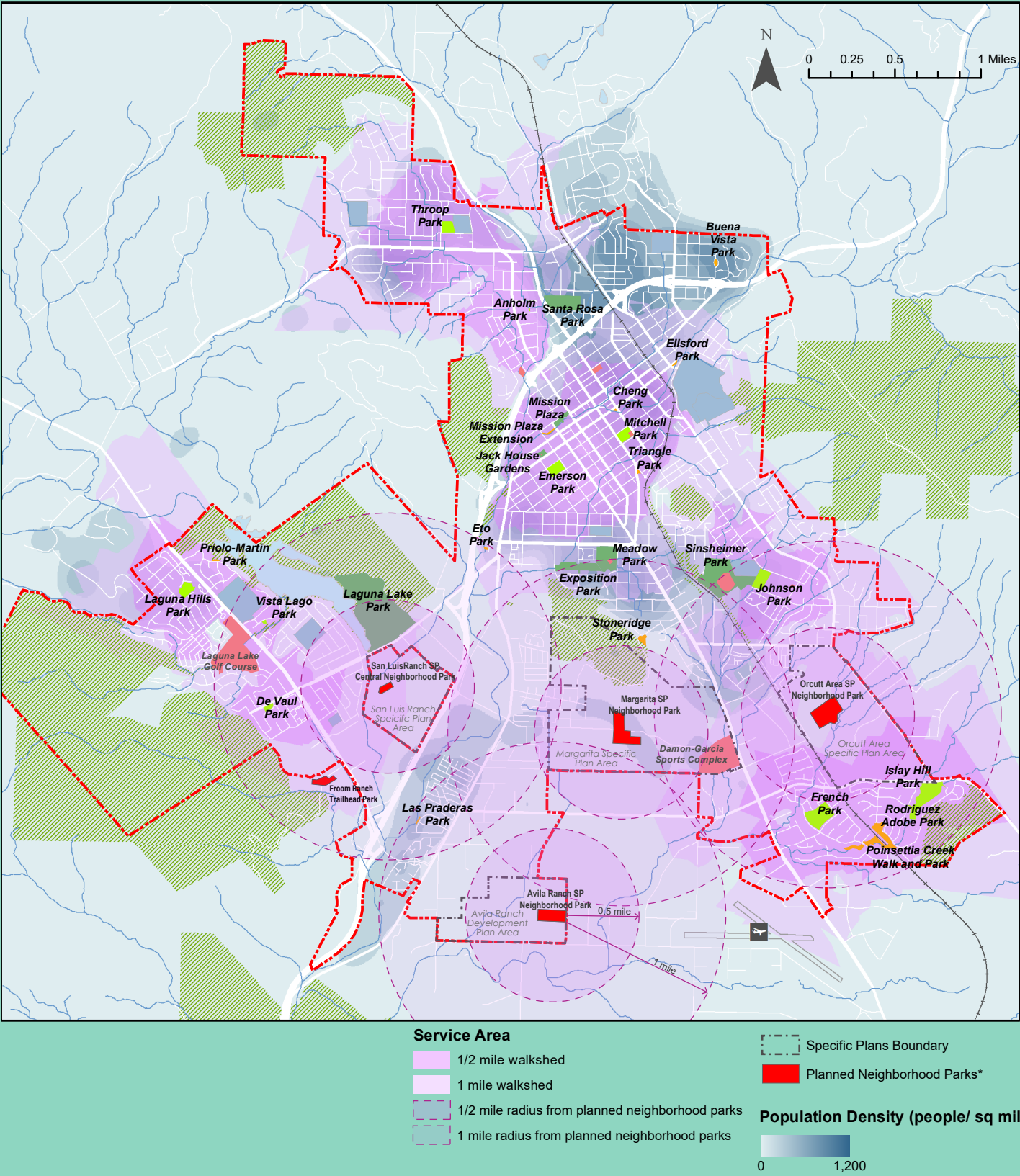
The City shall seek to provide a neighborhood or community park within a half-mile, or ten minute, walk of all residents along streets and paths. In park-deficient areas where providing a new neighborhood park is not feasible, access improvements to existing parks and the creation of mini parks will be prioritized.

Note: Figure 4-1 shows walksheds to neighborhood parks only.

Table 4-1
PARK ACREAGE AND ACCESS STANDARDS

PARK TYPE	ACREAGE STANDARD (ACRES/1,000 POPULATION)	ACCESS STANDARD (WALKING DISTANCE ALONG STREETS AND PATHS)
Community Parks	3	½ mile to a neighborhood or community park
Neighborhood Parks	4	
Mini Parks	NA	Provide in areas where meeting Community/ Neighborhood Park access standard is not feasible.
Downtown Public Spaces	NA	
Recreation Facilities	2	NA
Special Features	NA	NA
Total	10	NA

Figure 4-1
PARK ACCESS



1.4 Improvements to Existing Parks and Facilities.

The City shall maintain and enhance existing parks and facilities to maintain a high-quality park experience and adapt parks, as needed, to better serve community needs.

The Plan summarizes improvement needs at each site and classifies park improvement needs as “critical” (maintaining what we have); “strategic” (improving what we have); or “visionary” (developing new opportunities.) See Chapter 5.

1.5 Park Amenity Standards.

The City will seek to provide park amenities at daytime population-based levels of service shown in Table 4-2. Recognizing that the City’s amenities serve City residents as well as people who work in San Luis Obispo but live elsewhere, daytime population is used to calculate appropriate service levels. In addition, Cal Poly recreation amenities available for community use are taken into account.

These targets are informed by the standards set in the previous Plan, and updated to reflect participation rates, National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, and current needs.

Table 4-2

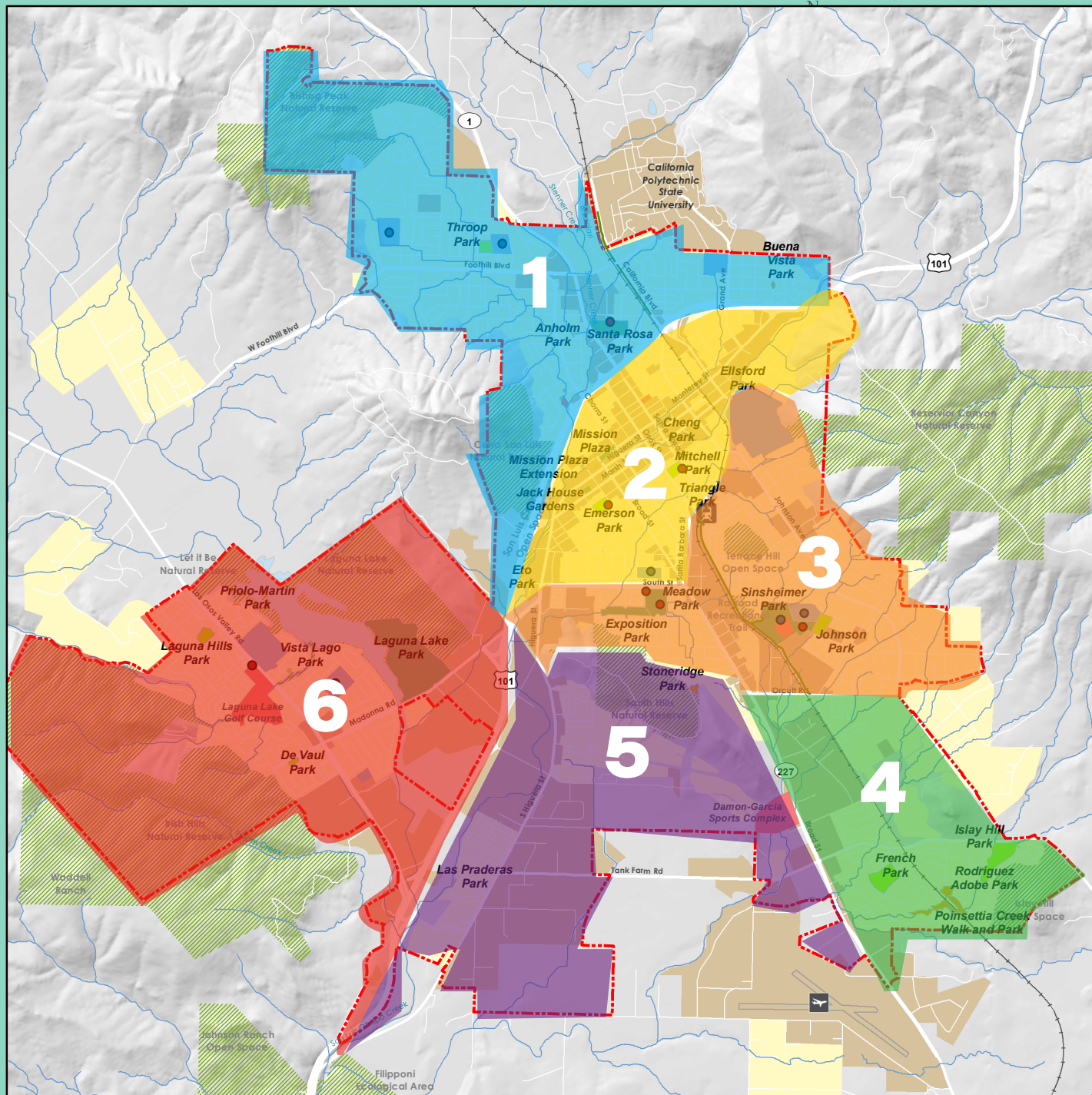
PARK AMENITY STANDARDS

RECREATION COMPONENT	2020 SAN LUIS OBISPO INVENTORY	2020 CAL POLY INVENTORY	RECOMMENDED SERVICE LEVELS			MEETS STANDARD/ NEEDS EXIST
OUTDOOR AMENITIES						
Diamond Athletic Fields: Youth	4		1	field per	12,000	Need Exists
Diamond Athletic Fields: Youth/Adult	1		1	field per	15,000	Need Exists
Diamond Athletic Fields: Adult	1	1	1	field per	25,000	Need Exists
Rectangle Athletic Fields	4	3	1	field per	10,000	Need Exists
Disc Golf Course (18 hole)	2		1	site per	50,000	Meets Standard
Playground/Tot Lot	26		1	site per	2,000	Need Exists
Dog Park/Off-Leash Dog Area	1		1	site per	25,000	Need Exists
Tennis Court	8	2	1	court per	5,000	Need Exists
Pickleball Court	3		1	court per	6,000	Need Exists
Outdoor Basketball Court	6	2	1	court per	7,500	Need Exists
Group Picnic Areas	9	1	1	site per	5,000	Need Exists
Swim Centers	1		1	pool per	50,000	Need Exists
Skate Park	1		1	site per	50,000	Need Exists
Bike Pump Tracks	0		1	site per	50,000	Need Exists
Roller Hockey Courts	1		1	court per	50,000	Need Exists
Sand Volleyball Courts	4	2	1	court per	10,000	Need Exists
Golf Courses	1		1	course per	50,000	Need Exists
INDOOR FACILITIES						
Indoor Recreation/Multi-Generational Community Centers	17,400	7,925	1.5	SF per	Person	Need Exists
Senior Centers	5,800		0.1	SF per	Person	Meets Standard

Assumes daytime population of 72,770 in 2020.

While the City does not have jurisdiction over decision-making authority over Cal Poly recreation facilities/amenities, the inventory assessment assumes they are accessible to an estimated 35% of the City’s daytime population, and are exclusive to students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Therefore, the inventory assumes that only approximately one third of Cal Poly amenities are accessible to the City’s daytime population (refer to Appendix D).

Figure 4-2
SAN LUIS OBISPO SUB-AREAS



1.6 Park Amenities Per Area Standard.

The City shall seek to provide the six identified sub-areas of San Luis Obispo a common set of recreational amenities within accessible walking distance including:

- Basketball Courts (Lighted/Non-Lighted)
- Pickleball Courts (Lighted/Non-Lighted)
- Tennis Court (Lighted/Non-Lighted)
- Sand Volleyball Courts
- Roller Sports Court or Facility
- Turf Fields (Diamond, Rectangular, Lighted/Non-lighted)
- Dog Parks
- Outdoor Gathering and Picnic Areas (Shaded/Unshaded), including neighborhood-based gathering areas (i.e. gazebo/stage)
- Playgrounds (Shaded/Unshaded), inclusive of both natural and engineered shade

See Figure 4-2 for sub-areas.

1.7 New Parks and Park Access in Existing Neighborhoods.

The City shall seek to create new parks and/or improve access to existing parks in neighborhoods where there are gaps. The City should pursue the following specific opportunities, also shown generally on Figure 4-2:

- Create a new neighborhood or mini park to better serve the City's northeast neighborhoods (Sub-area 1);
- Create a new neighborhood park or improvements to existing park amenities to better serve neighborhoods along Johnson Avenue (Sub-area 3);
- Improve Stoneridge Park to provide amenities typically found in a neighborhood park (Sub-area 4);

- Create a new neighborhood or community park in the South Higuera corridor (Sub-area 5);
- Provide neighborhood park amenities and a new creek crossing and signalized pedestrian crossing of Santa Rosa Street to provide access to Santa Rosa Park from the neighborhood to the west (Sub-area 1);
- Provide a railroad crossing to enhance access to Sinsheimer Park from the neighborhood to the west (Sub-area 3);
- Make access and design enhancements to joint-use school athletic fields so that they also serve as parks and playgrounds for neighborhood residents during non-school hours, with a focus on neighborhoods with park access gaps;
- Provide joint use of County of San Luis Obispo Cuesta Park;
- Add play areas/playground to Damon-Garcia Sports Complex based on consideration of maintenance of fields, preventing damage to fields, and protection during field renovation; and
- Improve Las Praderas mini-park based on neighborhood input.

1.8 New Parks in Specific Plan Areas.

The City shall guide the completion of parks planned as part of adopted Specific Plans, including Avila Ranch within the Airport Area Specific Plan, Margarita Area, Orcutt Area, Froom Ranch, and San Luis Ranch, ensuring that parks are developed to meet City needs and expectations.

1.9 New Parks with Future Development.

The City shall continue to require that future Planned developments and annexations dedicate ten acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Of this amount, five acres shall be dedicated as a neighborhood park. The remaining five acres required under the ten acres per 1,000 residents

in the residential annexation policy may be located anywhere within the City's park system in a way that helps to fulfill the goals and policies of this Plan, as directed by the Parks and Recreation Commission. The City's in-lieu fee program may be offered as an alternative for smaller development projects at the City's discretion.

1.10 Athletic Fields.

The City should continue to work to make the Damon-Garcia Sports Complex function optimally, and provide additional soccer and multiuse fields to meet demand for game and practice play. New fields may be accommodated at future parks, at existing parks (Laguna Lake, French, or Meadow), or potentially as part of a new complex of fields large enough to support tournaments. Consider renovations to increase usability, such as synthetic turf.

1.11 Multipurpose Recreation Center.

The City will explore developing a new versatile facility that may include fitness and community classrooms, a gym to meet demand for indoor basketball and volleyball, rentable spaces, and on-site childcare. A climbing wall, indoor soccer, and most notably aquatics could also be vital additions.

1.12 SLO Swim Center Enhancement.

Significant improvements are needed to make the SLO Swim Center more usable by diverse segments of the community including seniors, adults, youth, and children, and make the facility a great community place. Resolution of parking for the Swim Center is also a priority (see also Sinsheimer Park policy.) The City will fund and deliver needed Swim Center improvements and explore either expanding the Swim Center to provide more capacity and/or developing a new facility.

1.13 Senior Center Enhancement.

The City shall make improvements to relocate or expand the Senior Center to enable more flexible programming, with a focus on more successfully reaching younger more active seniors. Improvements will be done in connection with the City's vision for Mitchell Park.

1.14 Park Trails.

Community members have communicated the value they place on park paths and trails that allow people to take good walks of an hour or less close to home. The Parks and Recreation Department will prioritize the creation of (paved and unpaved) walking trails and loops within community parks, including at Laguna Lake and Sinsheimer Park.



1.15 Sustainable Transportation Access.

Support implementation of the Active Transportation Plan and provision of sustainable access to parks and recreational facilities. Evaluate the potential for interconnected paths citywide.

1.16 Shaded Play Areas.

In addition to shading play areas—a high priority for the community—trees and shade structures can also contribute to distinctive identity and sustainability. Existing play areas will be assessed for need, and enhancements to both play equipment and shade will be scheduled. The City should strive for shaded play areas within a short walk (1/2-mile) of all residents: this should be a core feature of all parks, including mini-parks.

1.17 Dog Parks and Dog Areas.

San Luis Obispo currently has one unfenced off-leash dog park, at Laguna Lake Park. Additional facilities are a clear community priority. Future dog facilities should be designed in a way that draws on community input and distributed to be accessible to residents in all parts of the City. Strive to provide accessible dog parks within the six sub-areas of San Luis Obispo. Investments in new dog areas should be paired with reinvestment in the existing facility to ensure equity and to balance use. Improvements could include a fenced area, more shade, and a better ground treatment. Potential locations include Laguna Lake Park, Sinsheimer Park, Santa Rosa Park, Emerson Park, Laguna Hills Park, Islay Park, and proximate to Damon-Garcia Sports Fields.

1.18 Quiet, Meditative Areas.

Many residents expressed the need for more quiet, meditative areas in parks. The City shall incorporate meditative areas in future parks and in existing parks as part of future projects.

1.19 Community and Educational Gardens.

San Luis Obispo has five community gardens operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. As the City develops a new park at the Broad Street community garden site, a new location

should be explored to provide this opportunity to residents of the north side. Meanwhile, a botanical or educational garden may also be a good match for environmental education and gardening programs for which there may be community demand.

1.20 Relationship to Regional Parks.

The City should maintain its agreement with San Luis Obispo County for first-priority use of the softball fields at El Chorro Regional Park in exchange for City support for improvements and maintenance.

1.21 Joint Use School Facilities.

The City of San Luis Obispo maintains a Joint Use Agreement with San Luis Coastal Unified School District (SLCUSD) which establishes the terms for District and City use at specified school sites and at Sinsheimer Park. The City should maintain its Joint Use Agreement with SLCUSD and seek to expand that agreement to additional sites, hours, and uses to the extent such changes would advance both City and District objectives. In addition, the City should explore opportunities to coordinate with the District on site Plans so that jointly-used sites can be designed to optimally support community use, including school age childcare services.

1.22 Maintain Focus on Youth.

The City will continue to focus on youth, and especially at-risk youth, in its recreational programming.

1.23 Art and Cultural Expression.

Parks and facilities should provide public art and other means of expressing local history and culture and accommodate a variety of potential programming ideas.



2

MEET THE CHANGING NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY

2.1 Meeting Demand for Facilities and Amenities.

The City shall develop facilities and amenities to meet community needs. High priorities identified in the statistically-valid survey conducted for the Plan Update include swimming pools; park trails; shaded play areas; dog parks; and a nature park/botanical garden. Medium priorities included adventure areas; outdoor exercise fitness areas; indoor exercise facility; splash pads; environmental education center; playgrounds; a community center; a sports complex; covered picnic areas and BBQ pits; and lighted tennis courts.

Community engagement also identified several of these priorities, while also highlighting pickleball and facilities for diamond and field sports. The City will prioritize these improvements and will periodically refresh analysis of San Luis Obispo's recreational needs.

2.2 Community-Desired Park Elements.

Parks and facilities should be planned and designed to support community needs. For neighborhood and mini parks, this should involve consideration of the specific goals of neighborhood residents; for community parks, recreation facilities and special features, citywide needs take precedence.

2.3 Sinsheimer Park.

Sinsheimer Park is an important and favorite park for many San Luis Obispo residents. A new Planning process for Sinsheimer Park should illustrate how the park's elements can be tied together to create synergy; how space can be used to accommodate additional use; how access can be improved for all modes of travel; and how parking issues can be

resolved. The park should be evaluated in relation to the adjacent residential neighborhood, school district bus yard, Johnson Park, the Railroad Safety Trail and the creek. See Chapter 5 for more detail.

2.4 Laguna Lake Park.

Laguna Lake Park has untapped potential, and may be able to accommodate additional recreational facilities, events, and enhancements that support enjoyment of the water and the open space preserve. These should be detailed through a Plan process. See Chapter 5 for more detail.

2.5 Mitchell and Emerson Parks.

The City shall undertake a focused project planning effort for Mitchell and Emerson parks. These parks should function more successfully to serve their neighborhoods while also being part of an ecosystem of downtown-area parks that support family friendly events and public art. Consider areas for a senior center expansion (indoor and outdoor) and re-distribution of the playground area. Programming may be a critical element to maintain a feeling of comfort and security for neighborhood residents. Consider multiple plans to meet the needs for different groups, levels of activity, and recreational needs for our senior community.

2.6 Accessing and Evaluating the Golf Course.

Continue to manage the golf course for its primary use while exploring opportunities for broader community use, potentially including a fully immersed golfing experience including mini-golf, disc golf, and foot golf, a walking loop, community space, redevelopment of the pro-shop, as well as more revenue capture opportunities. Consider alternative

programming such as community use of the golf course for gatherings and picnics for specified days and hours.

2.7 Jack House and Jack House Gardens.

Manage the Jack House and Gardens in a way that preserves the historic resource, makes the site more visible and welcoming, and more fully realizes its revenue-producing potential. This may mean extending open hours, adding signage and safe crosswalks, and evaluating facility rental offerings and fees. Explore opportunities for private management of the Jack House, and the City's continued management of the Gardens.

2.8 Expand Programs and Services in the Areas of Greatest Demand.

Ongoing analysis of the participation trends of programming and services in San Luis Obispo is significant when delivering high quality programs and services. The City will focus its efforts on the programs and services of the greatest need and reduce or eliminate programs and services where interest is declining. Based on the Community Needs Assessment and communications received from the public, Recreational Swimming, Lap Swimming, Swim Lessons, Yoga, Personal Training and Fitness Classes, Tennis programs, and Enrichment Childcare for school-aged children should all be expanded.

2.9 Program Evaluation and Adaptation.

The Parks and Recreation Department will implement a program assessment and evaluation tool. The tool will be used to help the City ensure that programs reflect priorities. During the Plan process, certain programs were identified as being important to



evaluate, including Gymnastics, Lifeguard Training & Junior Guards, Golf, Drop-in Sports, LEGO Camps, Junior Ranger Activity Camps, Junior Giants, Youth Futsal, Tennis Lessons, Ultimate Pick-up, Surfing Lessons, and Youth Fitness & Wellness programs. These programs may have a limited, targeted audience and may be ideal to offer strategically in terms of frequency, days of week, times of day and time of year.

2.10 Continue to Support Community based Enrichment Childcare.

Youth Services provides inclusive child care to families, most of whom need child care while they work or attend school. The Sun n Fun and Club Star programs are critical for parents and youth, and this program or a similar program shall continue to be managed by the Parks and Recreation Department. Programs focus on the healthy and positive development of children through anti-

bias curriculum and a variety of activities, social experiences, and opportunities that promote learning, awareness of community, fitness and health, academic support and fun. The Department shall continue to make these high priorities to serve and support the community.

2.11 Active Recreation for Seniors.

The Parks and Recreation Department will grow to successfully meet the evolving recreational needs of active seniors. Focus and engage programs on multiple senior age groups to develop a sense of community. Providing enriching programs for seniors at a centralized location. Offering generation-specific activities that serve unmet needs of active adults (50+). Create and implement new programs as needed to provide inclusive amenities and activities for multiple senior age groups and activity levels.



2.12 Inclusive and Accessible Parks.

The Parks and Recreation Department will work to make parks and facilities feel inclusive for all members of the community. This may involve:

- › Cultural representation through signage, artwork and murals;
- › Play equipment that is usable by people with cognitive and physical disabilities;
- › Gender-neutral restrooms and changing rooms;
- › Programming that meets the needs of diverse users;
- › Other elements that remove barriers that may deprive some people of the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of parks and recreation.

San Luis Obispo will strive to create parks that enable diverse users to interact and recreate together.



SUSTAINABILITY

3.1 Access by Foot and Bike.

New parks and facilities should be located centrally to their service population, integrated with their community context, and easily accessed on foot and by bike. Where feasible, new parks should:

- Be accessible from multiple points;
- Face directly onto public streets;
- Be accessible from transit and active transportation network;
- Be located adjacent to other community uses like schools, libraries, and commercial districts;
- Be located adjacent to multifamily housing.

3.2 Natural Features.

Parks and facilities should preserve and incorporate existing vegetation and natural features onsite and, where feasible, be designed to relate or connect with larger open space systems.

3.3 Creek Integration and Creekside Trails.

The creeks that flow through San Luis Obispo are a great potential asset that has been partially realized at Mission Plaza but could become more fully integrated into the city's park

and open space system. The City will study how to address natural resource preservation and use of the creek by people experiencing homelessness, and how to successfully integrate the creek, park space, and downtown activity.

3.4 Design and Maintain for Carbon Neutrality.

Existing parks will be evaluated by 2023 for their current resource use including on-site facility and building energy use and fleet vehicles and equipment required for operations and maintenance. The City will strategically phase out fossil fuel use (natural gas in buildings and gasoline and diesel fuel in vehicles and equipment) and by 2030 and will pursue energy management and sustainability features where feasible such as onsite renewable energy, battery storage, and public electric vehicle chargers. New buildings and facilities shall not include fossil fuels and shall be designed to support electric or alternative fueled fleet vehicles and maintenance equipment.

3.5 Park and Recreation System Resilience.

The City faces a rapidly changing climate where extended heat waves, drought, wildfire smoke, and floods are increasingly common and severe. Existing and new parks should be designed for resilience to the new impacts of climate change concurrent with the Resilient SLO planning effort. Parks and recreation facilities will also be places of refuge in increasingly disruptive conditions. Facilities should be planned to accommodate the public, especially vulnerable populations, for extended periods of natural disaster.

3.6 Water Efficient Initiatives.

Stormwater systems should be designed into parks, especially where there is room for treatment, detention and storage of stormwater. Working landscape features can be incorporated into existing and proposed parks to help filter pollutants and capture stormwater. Low water use planting and xeriscaping should be incorporated into new and existing parks where turf is not needed in order to decrease water use. Gray and recycled water systems should be explored

and expanded. The details of these practices should be further developed in the Plan.

3.7 Reduce and or Eliminate Chemical Use.

In landscape areas, replace chemical herbicides, pesticides, and fertilizers with non-toxic treatments, including Low Impact Development (LID) practices for improving soil health where feasible and in consultation with the Department of Public Works. Support use of Integrated Pest

Management (IPM) which focuses on pest prevention through biological control (such as the introduction of a natural predator), habitat manipulation, and modification of cultural practices including site monitoring, cleanliness, routine maintenance, installing pest barriers, physical removal of pests, and as a last resort chemical control. In facilities, replace chemical cleaning products with non-toxic alternatives, when feasible, and when protection of public health can be ensured.

3.8 Tree Selection.

Parks are places for grand trees that cast shade and provide long-term value. Many attributes are considered when selecting trees for parks, including habitat value, benefit to pollinators, and natural or native and cultural influences.

Trees should also be selected for future climate conditions and for maximum carbon sequestration.

Human allergies are another factor to consider, especially around special needs populations or in balance with other trees



that may have higher biogenic emissions. Examples of low- and moderately-rated trees from a list of low-allergen trees developed by Cal Poly include Crape myrtle (*Lagerstroemia indica*), Paradox walnut (*Juglans x paradox*), Evergreen ash (*Fraxinus uhdei*), Camphor tree, Allee Chinese elm (*Ulmus parvifolia 'Allee'*), and Catalina ironwood (*Lyonothamnus floribundus subsp. Aspleniifolius*).

Additional care must be taken to determine the appropriate tree for a particular park and planting condition.

3.9 Recycled Materials.

Use recycled materials where possible in recreation equipment, and avoid or minimize waste when replacing park materials and equipment.

3.10 Green Waste and Recycling Bins and Services.

Consistent with SB 1383, San Luis Obispo will include green waste and recycling bins and services, and signage to make sure they are used correctly.

3.11 Public Education and Sustainability.

Showcase sustainability in parks in a variety of ways including information kiosks, demonstration projects, and equipment consistent with climate goals.



4

OPTIMIZE RESOURCES

4.1 Downtown Public Spaces.

A successful downtown is connected to the City's success in preserving open space around the edges, and both these qualities are part of San Luis Obispo's DNA. The City shall create new urban public spaces that support interaction in a highly walkable, mixed-use downtown, consistent with the Downtown Concept Plan.

The farmers' market, the creek, privately-owned public open spaces, roof gardens, parklets, and temporary plazas, can be leveraged as part of the park system and be recognized as "park equivalencies."

4.3 Park Activation.

Parks and facilities should accommodate a variety of potential programming ideas. The Department will activate parks with food truck pods, community picnics, fitness classes, yoga in the park, and other temporary features as a way to bring new energy to parks and ensure that parks feel welcoming to all.

4.4 Community Events.

San Luis Obispo residents have shown a clear interest in more community events in parks. The City shall focus on four parks as good sites for events: Mission Plaza, Laguna Lake, Mitchell and Emerson. Plans for these parks should identify a niche for each site and specific facility needs to support events.

Partnerships with School Districts. Collaborate with the school district and optimize resources and available space when new schools or school indoor/outdoor facilities are built. Use and prioritize resources and partnerships, including joint use agreements.

4.5 Publicize Recreational Opportunities.

The Parks and Recreation Department will continue to adjust its communications to reach San Luis Obispo residents of all ages, and work to ensure that class and event registration and facility rental are user-friendly.

4.6 Coordinate with Other Recreation Program Providers.

The Department will continue to monitor other organizations' recreation offerings, coordinate as appropriate, and adapt the City's offerings to clearly match goals while not replicating services.

4.7 Maintain High-Quality Programs.

The Department shall remain committed to a high standard in its recreation services by ensuring that Staff are skilled and well-trained and courses are calibrated to community demand.

4.8 Implement a Work Order Management System.

The work order system should be enhanced in consultation with the Public Works Department and be used to track maintenance requirements that are tied to daily, weekly, monthly, seasonal and annual work orders based on the established maintenance standards. This will assist staff in staying on top of the preventative maintenance of both the built (playgrounds, structures, infrastructure, etc.) and natural (turf, trees, etc.) assets of the park system. Further, utilizing a work order management system will provide staff the necessary "actual cost" data for work being performed.

4.9 Systematic Approach to Contracting Services.

Through the development of management processes, the Department must continually evaluate the private sector to determine if the financial resources dedicated to parks maintenance are sufficient as well as used effectively and efficiently. It should be expected that the cost for third-party contracted services will rise in the future.

4.10 Management of Contract Services.

Continue to provide the necessary resources for the management and oversight of all third-party contractors that provide maintenance services for the City of San Luis Obispo's parks and grounds.

4.11 Update Work Plans Based on Maintenance Standards.

SLO's maintenance standards follow best practices as established by the National Recreation and Park Association. Still, the Department should continually update and customize the standards based on the park and recreation values of the San Luis Obispo community. These standards need to be implemented regardless of whether work is performed by City staff or third-party contractors.



5

SAFETY

5.1 Enhance Public Safety in Public Parks.

The City shall continue to enhance public safety in public parks through collaboration with community partners and volunteer organizations and ongoing parks and facility improvements and maintenance. This may include the following:

- Explore partnerships and programs to provide information and referrals about mental health, drug abuse, and homeless services.
- Identify and implement increased resources to deter and mitigate impacts of illegal activities on park use and removal of trash and debris from illegal camping.
- Create formal neighborhood volunteer programs, neighborhood park watch, park ambassador program, and adopt-a-park programs.
- Implement Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design practices in public parks and facilities, including incorporation of Dark Sky compliant safety lighting, maintenance of vegetation, and increased safety sightlines.
- Incorporate adaptability in response to public emergencies when planning for designing elements for new parks, facilities, and amenities.

5.2 Safe Access to Parks by Sustainable Transportation.

The City shall continue to develop a robust system of multiuse trails a pedestrian/bike priority network, and transit network, following the guidance of the Active Transportation Plan. The Parks and Recreation Department will focus on the following recreational priorities:

- Complete the network of shared use paths including the Bob Jones Trail and the Railroad Safety Trail.
- Encourage and collaborate with the County to complete Bob Jones Trail connections.
- Create bicycle and pedestrian connections between these mainline trails and the City's community parks (e.g. Sinsheimer, Laguna Lake, Santa Rosa, Meadow) and major recreation facilities (e.g. Damon-Garcia).
- Create safe and clear bike and pedestrian connections to trailheads, promoting non-motorized access to the City's open spaces.
- Coordinate with a support safe routes to schools as a means to improve access to joint use recreation facilities.







5

IMPLEMENTATION

The Implementation chapter lays out what San Luis Obispo needs in terms of recreation amenities, provides a framework for locating those amenities in existing and future parks, and identifies near-term, mid-term, and long-term projects.

IN THIS CHAPTER

- *Park Amenity Needs*
- *Framework for Park Improvements*
- *Park-by-Park Needs and Priorities*
- *Future Parks*
- *Understanding the Cost of Parks*
- *Funding Strategy*

This chapter provides the bridge from goals and policies to actions. Here, we apply the intentions of the Plan to propose specific improvements to our parks system.

The chapter starts with translating our recreation amenity standards to projected need for additional amenities in the years ahead.

A framework is identified for linking needed park amenities with park sites where those amenities would be best-suited to fit local needs.

Next, the chapter defines three types of park improvements, and documents potential improvements at each park where “visionary”

changes are needed.

The chapter then reviews how much new park land San Luis Obispo would need, and where we should look for additional future park sites.

Finally, we look at the costs of park improvements, and a funding strategy to achieve our goals. The funding strategy applies not just to capital improvements but also to programming, maintenance and operations.

HIGHLIGHTS OF OUR PROPOSED PARK IMPROVEMENTS

The parks and facilities we consider most important and our highest priority to improve include the following, with a focus on realizing unmet potential for recreational use in existing parks, activating parks, and building community.

- + Re-envisioning and developing unmet potential for recreation at Laguna Lake Park;
- + Successfully activating our Downtown parks including Emerson and Mitchell parks and the SLO Senior Center;
- + Creating a multi-functional community/indoor recreation center to replace the Ludwick Center;
- + Updating and enriching Meadow Park;
- + Improving the condition and functionality of Sinsheimer Park as a whole, including the SLO Swim Center, Sinsheimer Stadium, connections to the Railroad Safety Trail, and potential opportunities on land currently used for bus parking.

PARK AMENITY NEEDS

This Plan provides new population-based standards for an array of amenities, to ensure that we are serving the recreation needs of the community. The standards are based on a range of factors, from national and regional best practices to demonstrated local demand. The standards are measured using the estimated daytime population, recognizing that both residents and people who work or study here but live outside the City use our parks. This section summarizes how many additional amenities of each type would be needed to meet the needs of the daytime population both today and in 2035, assuming that

the parks currently being planned will have been completed.

Priority and location characteristics for each amenity are also outlined. All active recreation amenities would be located within urban areas, and shall not be located within City Open Space. Our prioritization is informed by analysis of needs, lifecycle costs, and public testimony and correspondence provided throughout the Plan Update process, and is presented in near-term (0- to 5-year), mid-term (5- to 10-year), and long-term (10- to 20-year) timeframes.

Finally, location recommendations

are informed by our goal to have a good range of recreation amenities in each of San Luis Obispo's six districts.

A summary table of recreation amenity needs is provided as Appendix D.

CAL POLY FACILITIES

While the City does not have jurisdiction over decision-making authority over Cal Poly recreation facilities/amenities, the inventory assessment assumes they are accessible to an estimated 35% of the City's daytime population, and are exclusive to students, faculty, alumni, and staff. Therefore, the inventory assumes that only approximately one third of Cal Poly amenities are accessible to the City's daytime population (refer to Appendix D).



ATHLETIC FIELDS

DIAMOND ATHLETIC FIELDS

Inventory

Today, San Luis Obispo has four diamond athletic fields for youth, one for adults, and one for that serves both youth and adults. Youth fields are located at French, Meadow, Sinsheimer and Throop parks. An adult field is located at Sinsheimer Park. A field used by both youth and adults is located at Santa Rosa Park. One youth baseball field is planned for the future neighborhood park at Avila Ranch.

Additional Need

To meet the standards of this plan, the City needs two more youth baseball fields, two more adult fields, and four more fields that serve both groups. In 2035, taking population growth and planned fields into account, the City would need two fields for youth, three for adults, and five that can be used by both groups. Lighted fields should be provided where compatible with surrounding uses.

Access Gaps

As of 2020, youth baseball fields are absent in Sub-areas 2 (Central) and 6 (West). Adult fields are absent in Sub-areas 2 (Central), 4 (Southeast), 5 (Southwest), and 6 (West).

Fields for both youth and adults are absent in all parts of the City except Sub-area 1 (North).

Priority

Diamond athletic fields are currently needed at all levels, and have been identified by Parks and Recreation Commissioners as a near-term (0-5 years) and mid-term (5-10 years) priority. Improvements are likely to be included in each phase of implementation.

RECTANGLE ATHLETIC FIELDS

Inventory

Today, San Luis Obispo has four soccer/multi-use fields, at Damon-Garcia Sports Complex. Four fields are planned, including three as part of the Righetti development (Orcutt Specific Plan) and one at Avila Ranch.

Additional Need

Four additional fields are needed to serve the population today. Two fields will still be needed in 2035, assuming planned fields are developed. Lighted fields should be provided where compatible with surrounding uses.

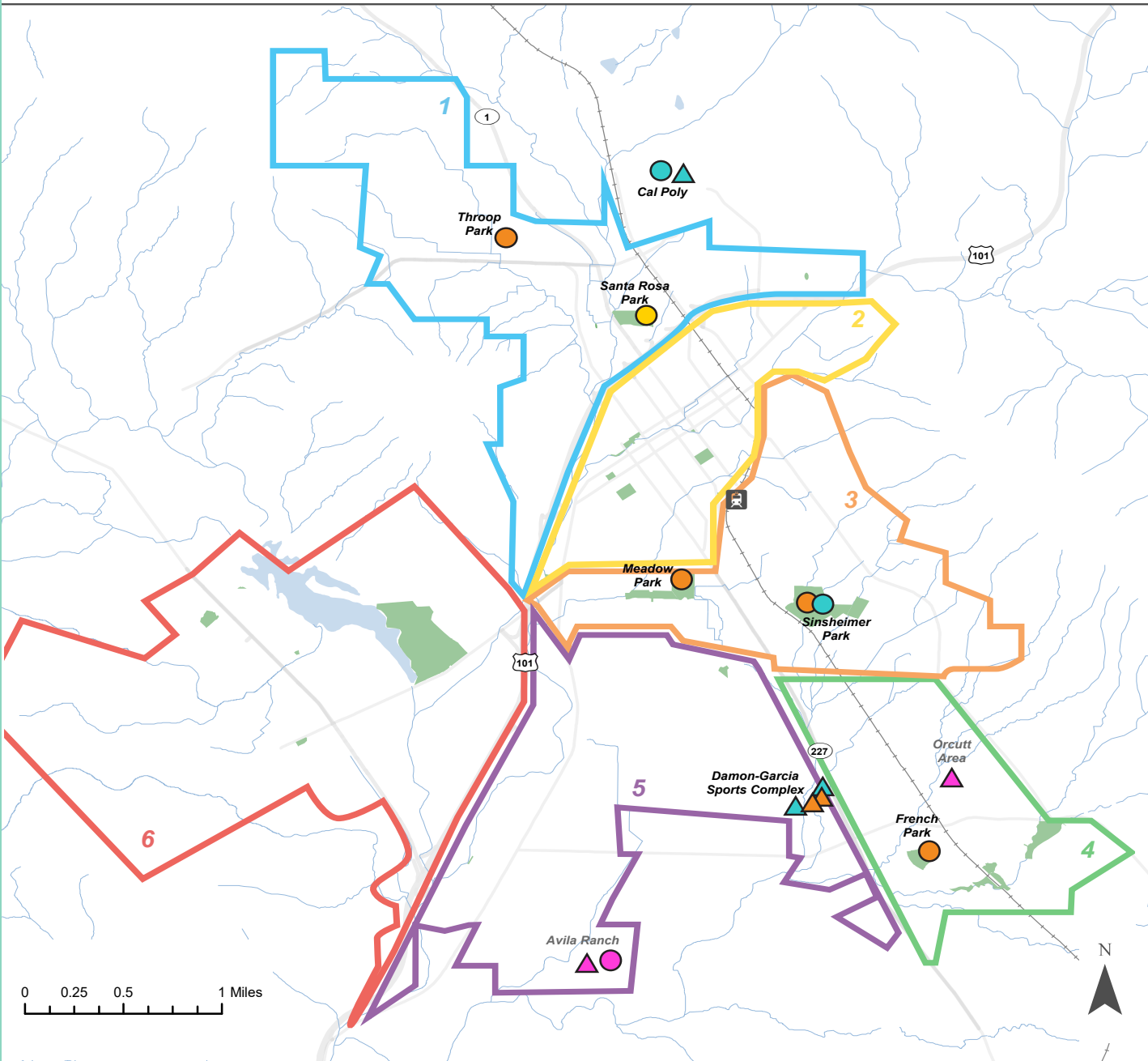
Access Gaps

Sub-areas 2 (Central), 3 (South), and 6 (West) do not have existing or planned rectangular athletic fields.

Priority

Rectangular athletic fields are currently needed, and have been identified by Parks and Recreation Commissioners as a near-term (0-5 years) priority. Improvements may be included in each phase of implementation.

Figure 5-1
DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING AND PLANNED ATHLETIC FIELDS



Baseball Fields		Soccer Fields	
	Youth		Youth
	Adult		Adult
	Youth/Adult		Youth/Adult
	Planned		Planned

SPORTS COURTS

BASKETBALL COURTS

Inventory

Today, San Luis Obispo has six outdoor basketball courts, with courts at De Vault, Emerson, French, Islay Hill, Johnson, and Meadow parks. Basketball courts are planned for Avila Ranch, San Luis Ranch, and the Righetti development (Orcutt Area Specific Plan.)

Additional Need

Six additional courts are needed to serve the population today, and three will still be needed in 2035 even if the planned courts are developed. Lighted courts should be provided where compatible with surrounding uses.

Access Gaps

Existing and planned basketball courts are distributed in all parts of San Luis Obispo.

Priority

While the need exists for more outdoor basketball courts, this is not seen as a high priority. Basketball courts may be included at each stage of implementation.

TENNIS

Inventory

San Luis Obispo has eight tennis courts in 2020, including six at

Sinsheimer Park, and one each at French and Islay Hill parks. Additional courts are planned as part of the Righetti (4 courts) and Avila Ranch (2 courts) developments.

Additional Need

Seven additional tennis courts are needed to meet the City's standard today, and five will still be needed in 2035 in addition to those planned. Lighted courts should be provided where compatible with surrounding uses

Access Gaps

There are no existing or planned tennis courts in Sub-areas 2 (Central) or 6 (West).

Priority

Additional tennis courts are needed today, and have been identified as a near-term (0-5 year) priority by Parks and Recreation Commissioners. Tennis courts may be added at each stage of implementation.

PICKLEBALL

Inventory

Today, SLO has three pickleball courts, all at French Park. Eight more are planned, including six at the Righetti development and two at Avila Ranch.

Additional Need

Nine additional pickleball courts are needed to meet demand today, and four are expected to be needed in 2035 in addition to those already planned. Lighted courts should be provided where compatible with surrounding uses

Access Gaps

Existing and planned pickleball courts are all in Sub-areas 4 (Southeast) and 5 (Southwest). Additional courts should be placed in other parts of the City.

Priority

Additional pickleball courts are needed today, and have been identified as a near-term (0-5 year) priority.

SAND VOLLEYBALL

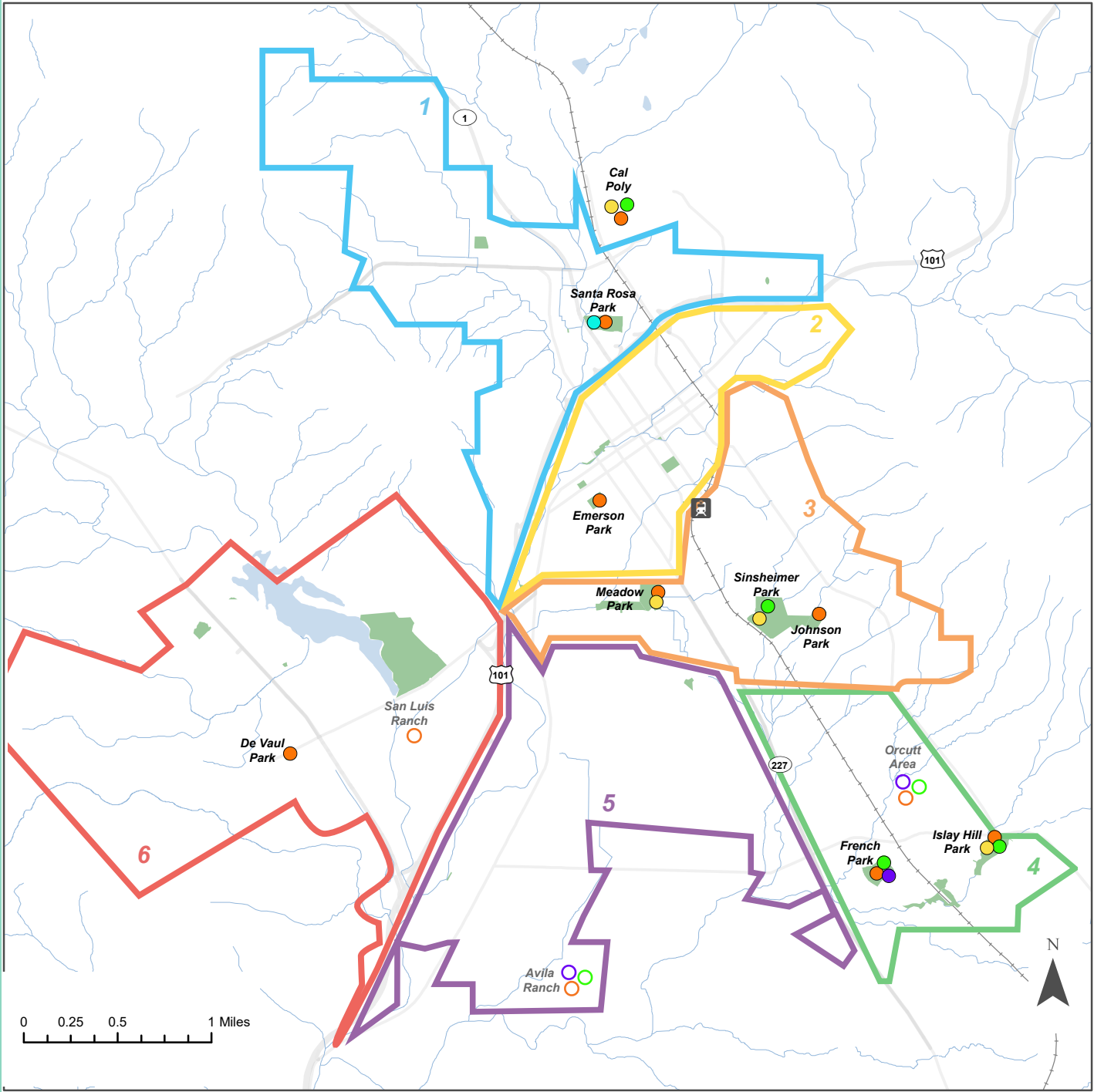
Inventory

Today, SLO has four sand volleyball courts, including two at Meadow Park and one each at Islay Hill and Sinsheimer, with no additional courts planned.

Additional Need

Three more sand volleyball courts are needed to meet demand today, and five would still be needed in 2035. Lighted courts should be provided where compatible with surrounding uses.

Figure 5-2
DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING AND PLANNED SPORTS COURTS



Access Gaps

Future sand volleyball courts should be located in Sub-areas 2 (Central), 5 (Southwest), or 6 (West), for good distribution.

Priority

Additional sand volleyball courts are needed today, and may be phased in throughout the implementation period.

ROLLER SPORTS

Inventory

Today, SLO has one multi-use roller sports court at Santa Rosa Park, which can also be used for basketball. No additional courts are planned.

Additional Need

One additional court is needed today, and two will be needed in 2035.

Access Gaps

Roller sports courts are absent from all parts of SLO except for Sub-area 1 (North).

Priority

Additional roller sports courts, designed for persons of all abilities, may be considered a long-term (10-20 years) priority.

INDOOR FACILITIES

Inventory

Today, SLO has one indoor recreation/multi-generational community center—the Ludwick Center—with 17,400 square feet of space. The 5,800-square foot SLO Senior Center serves older adults in the city. No additional indoor recreation space is currently planned.

Additional Need

Some 25,000 square feet of indoor recreation/community center space and 2,000 square feet of space devoted to seniors is needed to meet today's needs. By 2035, this need is expected to rise to 43,000 and 3,000 square feet, respectively.

Priority

There is a present need for more indoor recreation space, and a recognition that a decision needs to be made about renovating or reconstructing the Ludwick Center on-site or in a different location. Other parks may also be appropriate locations for indoor recreation space as part of a Planning process. Because of the time and resources needed for this effort, this is seen as a mid-term (5-10 years) or possibly long-term (10-20 years) priority.

DOG PARKS AND OFF-LEASH DOG AREAS

Inventory

Today, SLO has one off-leash dog area, at Laguna Lake Park. Dog parks are planned for Avila Ranch and the Righetti development.

Additional Need

Six additional dog parks or off-leash dog areas are needed to meet demand today, and five would still be needed in 2035 in addition to those already planned.

Access Gaps

SLO's existing off-leash dog area is in Area 6 (West), and planned dog parks are in Areas 4 (Southeast) and 5 (Southwest). Additional dog parks and off-leash areas should be placed in other parts of the City.

Priority

Additional dog parks and off-leash areas are needed today, and have been identified as a near-term (0-5 year) priority. There is also strong support for improvements to the existing off-leash dog area at Laguna Lake Park.

PLAYGROUNDS

Inventory

San Luis Obispo has 12 playgrounds and 14 child tot lots, at parks distributed in most of the city's neighborhoods. Twelve play areas and child lots are currently being planned at Avila Ranch, San Luis Ranch, WestCreek and Righetti.

Additional Need

Ten additional play areas are needed to meet demand today, and six would still be needed in 2035 in addition to those already planned.

Access Gaps

Existing playgrounds are located in all areas of the City except for Area 5 (Southwest), though Avila Ranch development will help fill this gap.

Priority

Additional play areas are needed today, and should be developed during all phases of implementation. Amenities for families and small children have been identified as a high priority by Commissioners and members of the public.

OUTDOOR GATHERING AND PICNIC AREAS

Inventory

Today, SLO has nine group picnic areas, including two each at Santa Rosa and Laguna Lake parks and one each at French, Johnson, Meadow, and Sinsheimer parks and one at Laguna Lake Golf Course. 27 BBQ facilities are present at parks or other facilities, including 12 at Laguna Lake Park, five each at Santa Rosa and Sinsheimer, one each at French, Johnson, Meadow, and Mitchell parks, and one at Jack House Gardens. One group picnic area is planned for the Orcutt Area, while BBQ facilities are planned at future parks at Avila Ranch.

There are nine informal/multiuse fields located in eight San Luis Obispo parks.

Additional Need

Six additional group picnic areas are needed to meet demand today, and eight would still be needed in 2035 in addition to those already planned. This Plan does not set specific standards for BBQ facilities or informal/multiuse fields.

Access Gaps

Areas 2 (Central) and 5 (Southwest) do not have group picnic areas, nor are any currently planned. Informal/multiuse fields are also missing in Area 5.

Priority

Consideration of amenities for families and small children and community-based park activation are considered near-term (0-5 year) priorities. Outdoor gathering and picnic areas will be part of park development at all stages of plan implementation.

Figure 5-3
DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING AND PLANNED PLAYGROUNDS

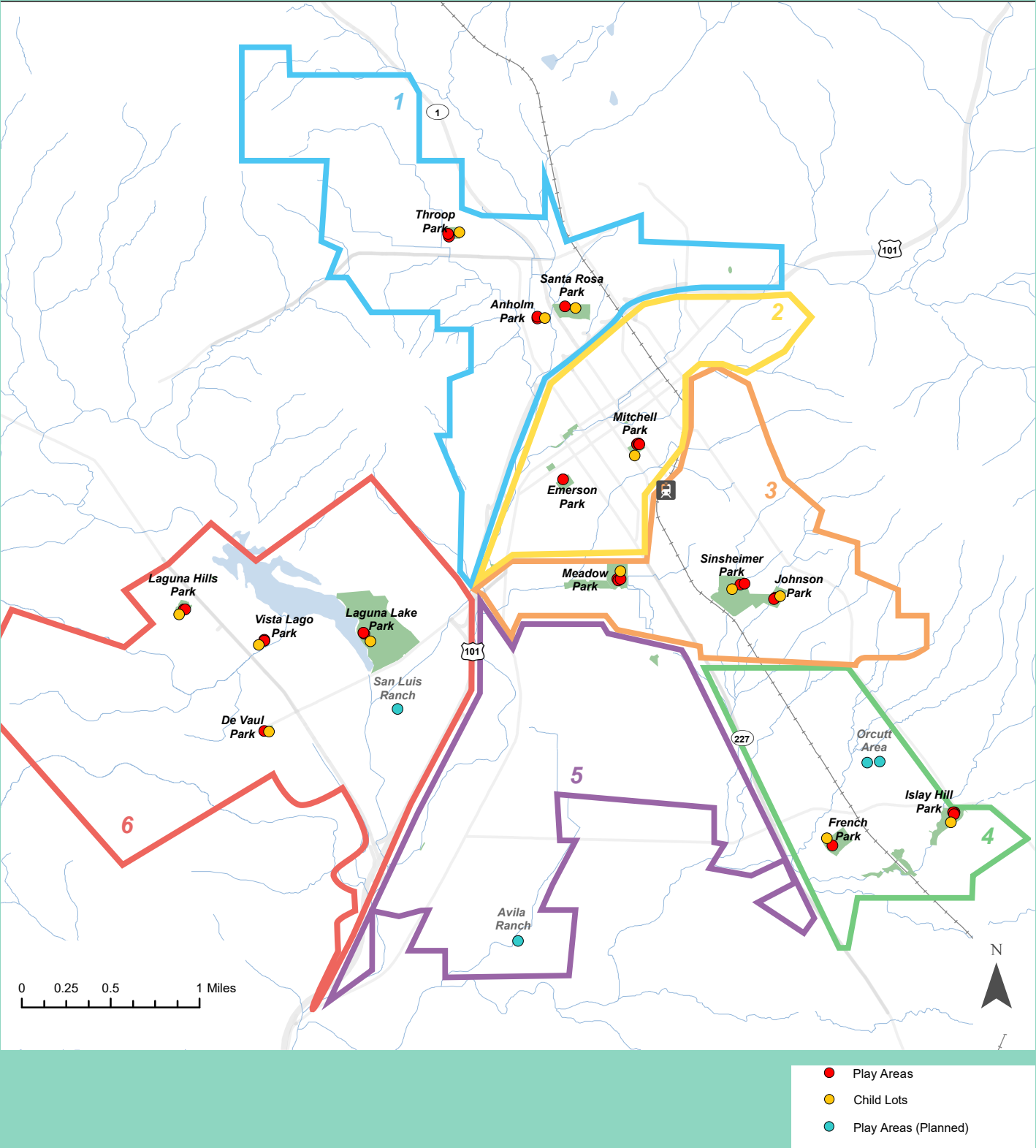
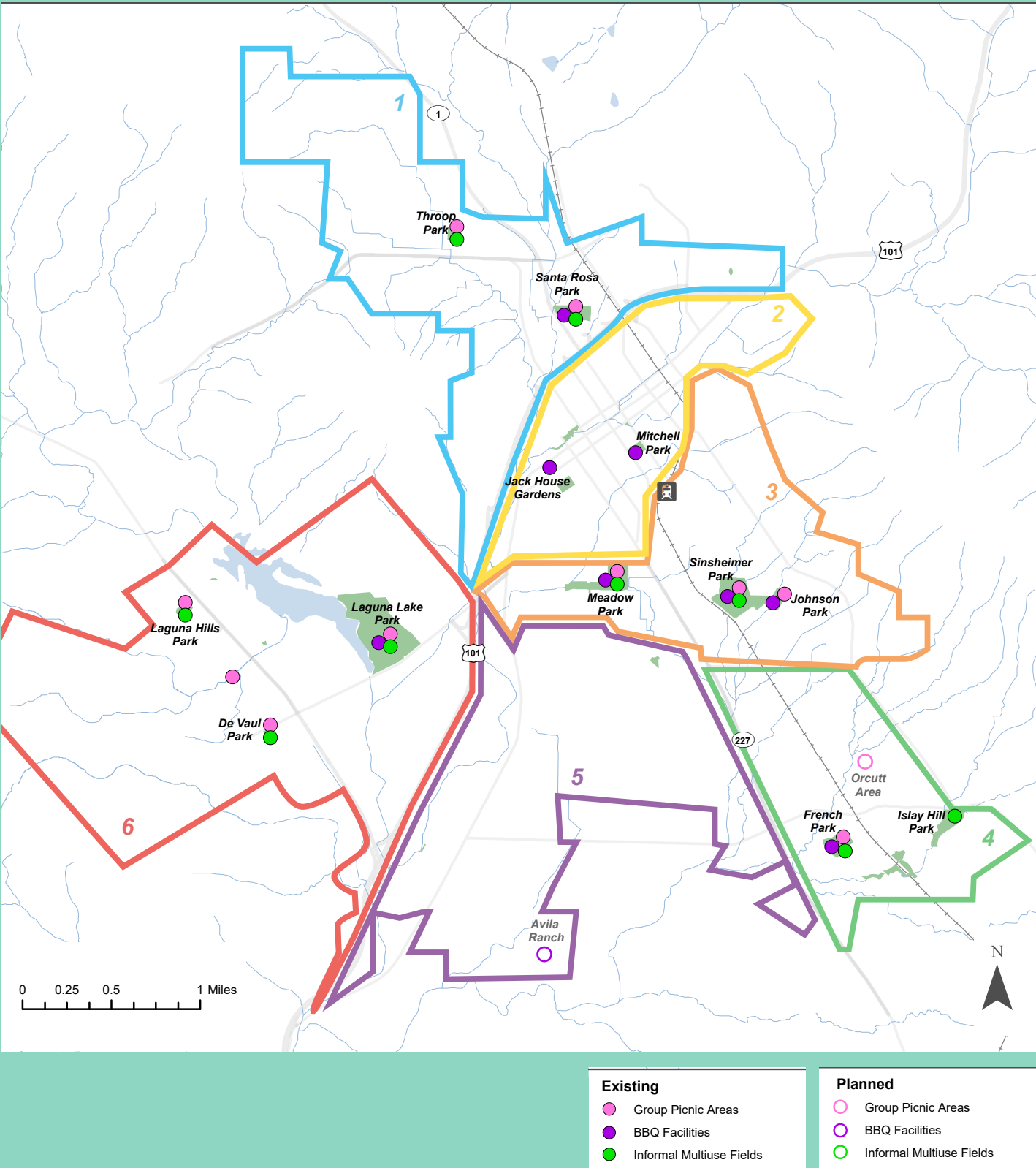


Figure 5-4
DISTRIBUTION OF EXISTING AND PLANNED OUTDOOR GATHERING AREAS



SPECIAL RECREATION FACILITIES

DISC GOLF COURSES

Inventory

Today, SLO has two disc golf courses, at Laguna Lake and Sinsheimer parks. No additional courses are currently planned.

Additional Need

Based on this Plan's standards, no additional disc golf courses are needed.

GOLF COURSES

Inventory

Laguna Lake Golf Course is the City's single public golf course. No additional golf courses are planned.

Additional Need

San Luis Obispo would need one additional golf course by 2035 to meet standards.

Access Gaps

Laguna Lake Golf Course is in Area 6 (West). Any future course should be in a different part of the city.

Priority

Providing an additional golf course may be considered a long-term (10-20 year) priority, subject to land availability.

SWIM CENTERS

Inventory

The SLO Swim Center serves the City's aquatics needs. No additional swim facilities are currently planned.

Additional Need

Swim center expansion is needed to meet current demand. One additional pool would be needed to meet demand in 2035.

Access Gaps

Swimming is a special recreation amenity that is not expected to be distributed throughout the City.

Priority

Expansion of the SLO Swim Center is a mid-term (5-10 year) priority. An additional pool is a long-term (10-20 year) priority.

SKATE PARKS

Inventory

Today, SLO has one skate park, at Santa Rosa Park. No additional skate parks are planned.

Additional Need

SLO will need one additional skate park to meet demand in 2035.

Skate parks are special recreation

amenities that are not expected to be distributed throughout the City.

Priority

An additional skate park may be considered a long-term (10-20 year) priority.

BIKE PUMP TRACKS

Inventory

SLO does not have a bike pump track, nor is one currently planned.

Additional Need

Two bike pump tracks would be needed to meet this Plan's standards today, and three will be needed by 2035 as the population grows.

Priority

A bike pump track has been identified as a near-term (0-5 year) priority for the City. A second track may be considered a long-term (10-20 year) opportunity.



A FRAMEWORK FOR PARK IMPROVEMENTS

WHAT IS THE RIGHT FIT BETWEEN AMENITIES AND PARKS?

The discussion above identifies general locational characteristics for new amenities, based on a district-by-district analysis of amenity gaps. This will be an important factor as the City determines the best location for future amenities. What other criteria can help us place future amenities? How do we match amenities with parks?

We identify the following considerations:

- + Limited access to the amenity type in the district where the park is located.
- + Capacity of park site to accommodate additional amenities.
- + Opportunity to enhance or activate a park site by reenvisioning with different amenities.
- + Interface between park, the amenity and the residential neighborhoods around it, and the specific feel, accessibility, and sense of ownership by the neighborhood.
- + Amenities that serve the larger community, ease of access should be easy to access without a vehicle.
- + Larger-footprint, active recreation facilities (e.g. athletic fields) are a good fit for community parks that serve as destinations with a citywide draw.
- + Smaller-footprint amenities (e.g. bocce ball) are a good fit for smaller parks.
- + Potential future locations for a multiuse community center and for a senior center, which may replace current facilities, would be well-suited to a centrally-located park.



Tier 1



Tier 2



Tier 3

THREE TIERS

Park and facility improvements can be understood in three “tiers”. The first tier is focused on maintenance, the second on strategic enhancements, and the third on new or wholly transformed parks, as described further below.

TIER 1: CRITICAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS - MAINTAINING WHAT WE HAVE

Tier 1 includes park improvements critical to keep the park system functioning. They include routine maintenance, repairs, repainting, replanting, lifecycle replacement, and replacement of inaccessible amenities with accessible amenities to remove barriers to access for people with disabilities. The intention of this category is to make the most of existing resources with the primary goal being for the department to maintain services.

The actions associated with this category are expected to be funded through tax dollars. Lifecycle replacement is considered an annual value to be included in San Luis Obispo’s budget. Total replacement value is amortized over the life of the facility.

TIER 2: STRATEGIC PARK IMPROVEMENTS - IMPROVING WHAT WE HAVE

These park improvements are characterized as being strategic to make measured park enhancements to the existing system. Strategic improvements and redesign may include site, amenity, and facility upgrades. This includes strategically enhancing existing programs, beginning new alternative programs, adding new positions, or making other strategic changes that would require additional operational or capital funding.

The City would evaluate and analyze potential sources of additional revenue for these improvements, including but not limited to capital bond funding, partnerships, program income, grants, and existing or new taxes.

TIER 3: “VISIONARY” PARK IMPROVEMENTS - DEVELOPING NEW OPPORTUNITIES

Visionary park improvements include comprehensive park renovations, acquisitions, and the creation of new parks. This category represents the complete set of services and facilities desired by the community. It is fiscally unconstrained but can help provide policy guidance by illustrating the ultimate goals of the community, and by providing a long- range look to address future needs and deficiencies. Typically, Tier 3 improvements start with a park or facility-specific Plan to analyze conditions, explore the needs of the community, and design a new park. Funding for visionary projects would be derived from partnerships, grants, private investments and new tax dollars.



PARK-BY-PARK NEEDS AND PRIORITIES

San Luis Obispo Staff and our Consultant team conducted a park-by-park assessment, identifying the general physical condition of each site; any relevant issues pertaining to site access and use; and park-specific needs, wants, and aspirations communicated by members of the public and the Parks and Recreation Commission during the Plan Update process.

The resulting Plan identifies near-term (0- to 5-year) mid-term, (5- to 10-year) and long-term (10- to

20-year) time frames, and identifies park improvement priorities. On the following pages, we present a program of improvements for each park and facility where Tier 3 (visionary) improvements are planned; the identified parks and facilities are presented in order of park classification and alphabetical order. These are summarized in Table 5-1, by phase. Planned improvements for all of the City’s parks are provided in table format in Appendix E.



LAGUNA LAKE PARK



PARK TYPE
Community
AREA
40 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near term (0-5 Years)
Mid-term (5-10 Years)



ISSUES

- + Inadequate bike access

+ Not enough shade or greenery

+ Lake utility for recreation is diminished during periods of prolonged drought and/or periodic water quality impairment
- + Some amenities (barbecue, picnic tables) are in need of repair

+ Unmet potential to serve additional recreation needs

+ Comprehensive redevelopment
- would require removal or relocation of existing uses and amenities

+ Area is subject to persistent winds



PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Complete a comprehensive update to the Laguna Lake Plan. Plan will identify enhancements to natural aquatic and upland functions; add sports fields and other active uses; add amenities including fencing, shade, and ground treatment to the off-leash dog area; and include facilities to allow the park to better accommodate community events.
- + The plan shall clearly identify any uses that may be discontinued or replaced as a result of redevelopment. The park-specific plan should address and consider site issues include lake utility, improvements to and/or replacement of the boat dock, persistent winds, provision of natural and man-made shade, public views of Laguna Lake, ecology within and surrounding the lake, park safety, compatibility with proximate residential development, current parking limitations, sustainable transportation access, accessibility, and compatibility with San Luis Obispo Regional Airport operations (e.g. overflight noise, lighting).
- + Evaluate this site for a future

community center with both indoor and outdoor activity areas and architecture and/or as a site for a second pool or aquatics center. Consider incorporation of a nature center, youth day camp programming, and educational materials, presentations, docent walks, and concessions. Plan and park development will be supported by dedicated funding available through development agreements.

- + Incorporate more active uses, such as basketball courts, pickleball courts, a bike pump track, adventure playground/obstacle course, exercise walking path, and lighted or unlighted multi-use sports fields and courts. A botanical garden was also well-supported as a passive use.
- + Implement Phase 1 of Laguna Lake Park Plan, which should include lighted and/or unlighted sports fields (these may be diamond, rectangular, or multi-use fields).
- + Phase 1 should also include fencing, shade, and ground treatment for the Laguna Lake Dog Area

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Implement Phase 2 of Laguna Lake Park Plan, which may include other uses envisioned in the Plan

Note: the question of how to address indoor recreation needs will be addressed by a separate planning process. See Ludwick Center summary.

MEADOW PARK AND MEADOW PARK CENTER



PARK TYPE
Community & Recreation Center
AREA
16 acres
CONDITION
Good (park); Poor (recreation center)
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Mid-term (5-10 years), Long-term (10-20 years)



ISSUES

- + Minimal shade at Meadow Park Center
- + Antiquated community center
- + Insufficient restroom facilities at Meadow Park Center
- + Parking lot in poor condition
- + Potential safety concerns noted by public
- + Shared use paths serve active transportation and need maintenance focus
- + Unmet potential in Meadow Park

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Complete a comprehensive Plan. Plan should expand field use by extensive programming and/or installing synthetic turf (softball and soccer); reconfigure multi-use fields; improve walking paths and fitness equipment within Exposition Park (located adjacent to Meadow Park); expand the playground footprint and add an enclosed tot lot; incorporate a dog park; consider this site for a second aquatics/pool facility; reprogram and rebuild areas around the Meadow Park Center as part of that facility improvement planning such as outdoor shade structures for picnic rental, platforms for classes, parking lot redesign to create shared space/mini plazas for special events. Incorporate a teen, senior, or multi-generational center into the park. The park-specific Plan should also address use and long-term maintenance of the shared paths within the park.
- + Implement Phase 1 of comprehensive Plan. This should include reprogramming and rebuild areas around the Meadow Park Center.

Long-Term (10 to 20 Years)

- + Implement Phase 2 of comprehensive Plan.

SINSHEIMER PARK



PARK TYPE
Community
AREA
21.7 acres
CONDITION
Good
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near-term (0-5 years), Mid-term (5-10 years)



ISSUES

- + Parking concerns around accessibility and safety
- + Poor connection to Railroad Safety Trail and across railroad
- + Outdated and inadequate restroom capacity, lack of restroom availability during Stadium usage.
- + Unmet potential

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Complete a comprehensive Plan to identify new and expanded park programs. Park should include lighted or additional unlighted tennis courts, pickleball courts, a bike pump track, remodeled restrooms, and new pathways. The plan should address parking, accessibility, and improvements that enable efficient and effective long-term operations.
- + Implement Phase 1 of Plan, which should include:
 - Address parking issues

- Add bike pump track along Railroad Safety Trail
- Add dog park or dog area

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Implement Phase 2 of Plan, which may include other amenities in Plan:
 - Adding new park amenities
 - Adding lighting at tennis courts
 - Adding lighting at Stockton

Field

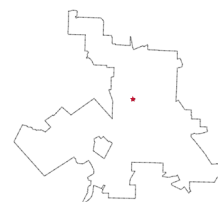
- Remodeling restrooms
- Explore potential of land acquisition to relocate San Luis Coastal Unified School District bus depot
- Potentially, an indoor recreation/multi-generational community center

Note: the question of how to address indoor recreation needs will be addressed by a separate planning process. See Ludwick Center summary.

EMERSON PARK



PARK TYPE
Neighborhood
AREA
3.3 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near Term (0-5 Years), Long-Term (10-20 Years)



ISSUES

- + Poor lighting on some areas
- + Activated spaces needed to improve safety
- + No public restrooms
- + Unmet potential

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + The Emerson Neighborhood Park Revitalization Project includes activation and enhancement of Emerson Park, based on public input through targeted public outreach meetings surrounding the SPP grant opportunity. Key project amenities includes the construction of restrooms, resurfacing of the black top, expansion of the current basketball court to a multi-purpose court and adding a half court, expand and revitalize the current playground, creation of a fenced dog park, installation of an educational garden featuring drought tolerant

landscaping, installation of compost bins, installation of shade structures, additional drought tolerant landscaping, update and relocate the bocce court, updated perimeter fencing, the installation of safety lighting along walking paths and on the multi-purpose court, installation of additional hydration stations, and installation of solar panels on the restrooms.

Long-Term (10 to 20 Years)

- + Consider this an alternative location for a senior center.
- + This site may also be suitable for a dog park.

MITCHELL PARK



PARK TYPE
Neighborhood Park
AREA
3 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near, Mid, and Long-Term



ISSUES

- + Limited lighting
- + Activated spaces needed to improve safety
- + Unmet potential to integrate Senior Center

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Convene a small-scale neighborhood discussion to explore concerns about security and how park programs might create a safer park for everyone.
- + Launch a branded event series that features pop up programming to encourage neighbors and local residents to enjoy the park. Events and programming could include music, beer gardens, food trucks, coffees, night lighting, art shows, yoga and fitness classes, temporary street closures, movies in the park, and other similar community building activities.

- + Construct pickleball courts for neighborhood use.

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Complete a comprehensive park Plan to identify new and expanded park amenities and programming that supports multi-generational activation and community gatherings. The plan should define physical improvements that encourage appropriate daily park use by seniors, neighbors and downtown residents.

Long-Term (10-20 Years)

- + Implement Mitchell Park/SLO Senior Center Plan

CHENG PARK



PARK TYPE
Mini Park
AREA
0.3 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Mid-Term (5-10 Years)



ISSUES

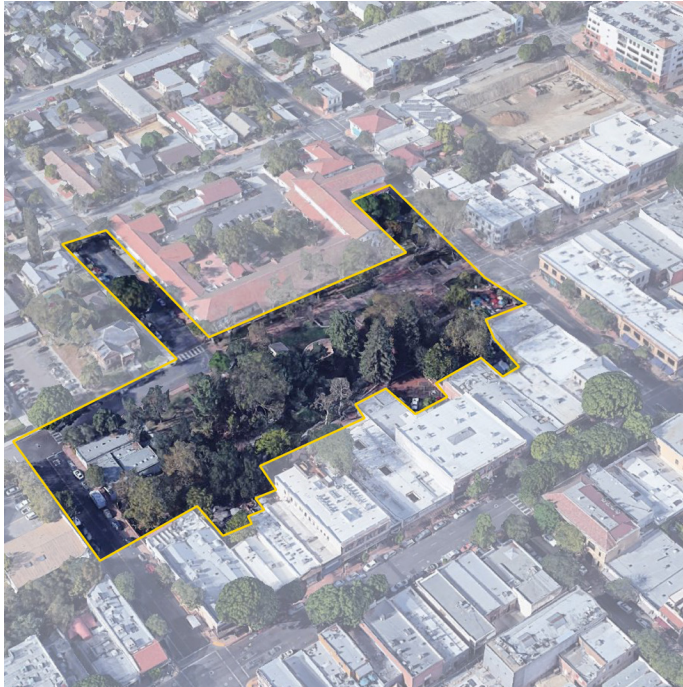
- + No bike racks, trash cans, water fountains
- + Poor visibility due to large vegetation

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Provide a spatial redesign that enhances safety, visibility and activation
- + Integrate the park into downtown activation and programming

MISSION PLAZA



PARK TYPE
Downtown Public Space
AREA
3 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near Term (0-5 Years)



ISSUES

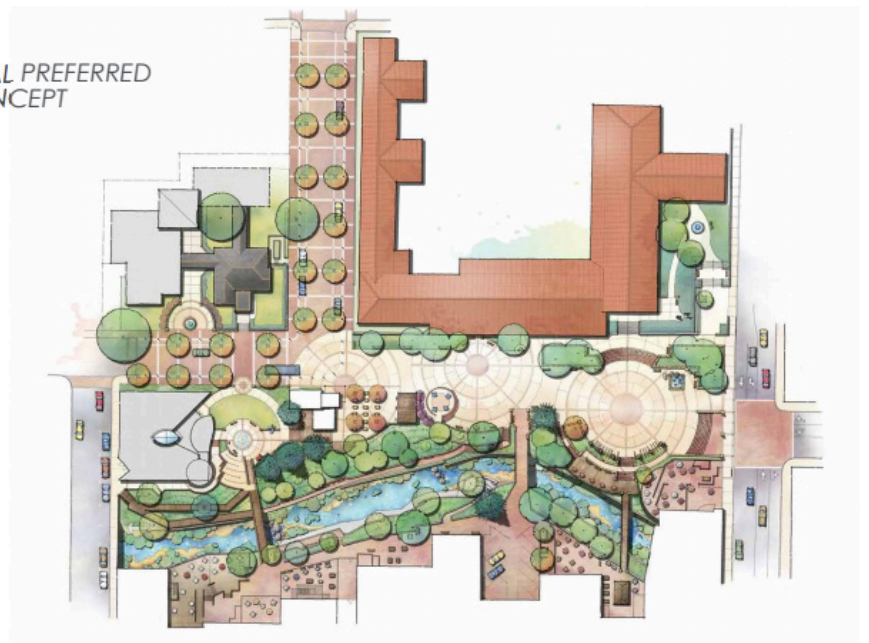
- + Activated spaces needed to improve safety
- + Ongoing maintenance and operational issues need to be addressed

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

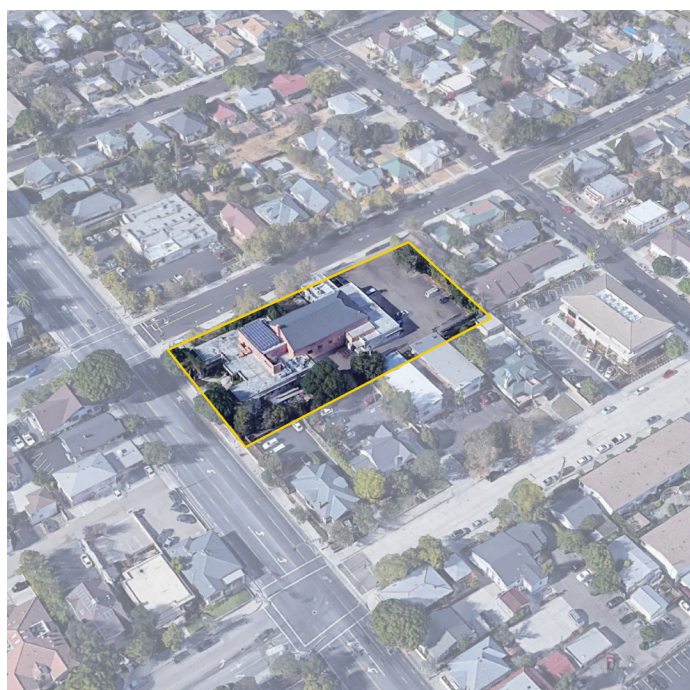
Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Implement Mission Plaza Concept Plan
- + Ongoing programming and activation

FINAL PREFERRED CONCEPT



LUDWICK COMMUNITY CENTER



PARK TYPE
Recreation Center
AREA
1 acres
CONDITION
Poor
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near-term (0-5 years), Mid-term (5-10 years)



ISSUES

- + Space does not accommodate full range of indoor recreational needs
- + Building requires significant renovation

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Undertake Plan to accommodate indoor recreation needs and achieve vision for multi-generational recreation/ community center. Plan will consider complete replacement of building on-site, or relocation to alternative site, potentially at Laguna Lake Park or Meadow Park.
- + Consider renovation for staff offices and/or relocation of the Senior Center.
- + Explore after-school childcare site at this location.

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Complete replacement of the program to create multi-generational community center

SINSHEIMER STADIUM



PARK TYPE
Community & Recreation Center
AREA
16 acres
CONDITION
Good (park); Poor (recreation center)
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Mid-term (5-10 years), Long-term (10-20 years)



ISSUES

- + Stadium needs to incorporate updated ADA standards (access, seating, restrooms, concessions)
- + Stadium seats are in need of repair or replacement
- + Side paneling is in need of repair
- + Water fountains and fencing need repair
- + Outdated and inadequate restroom capacity, lack of restroom availability during Stadium usage.
- + Single-use facility has unmet potential

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Prepare a park Plan for Sinsheimer Park and its facilities (see Sinsheimer Park summary)
- + Begin phased improvements, which may include replacing and upgrading current lighting conditions and updating the play surface to artificial turf (Phase 1)
- + Multi-use playing field for year-round programming

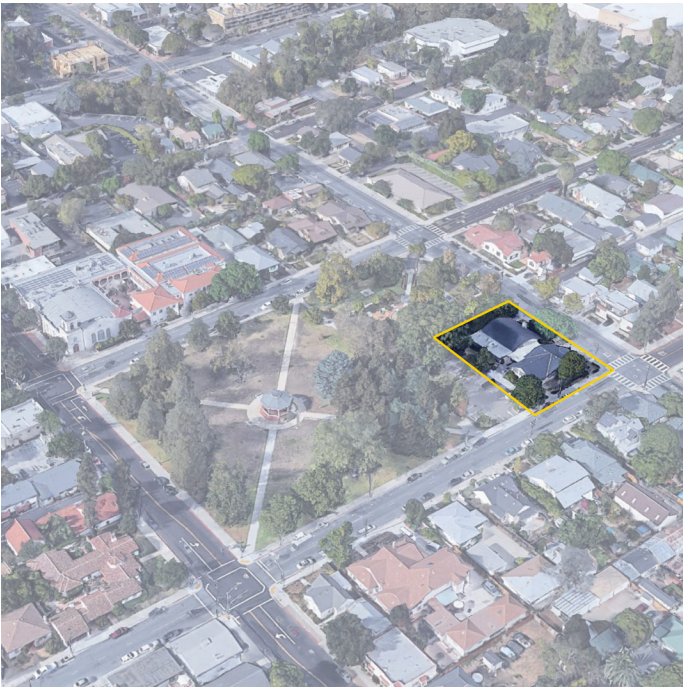
Mid-Term (5-10 Years)

- + Complete renovation or demolition and new construction of the facility to support multi-use sports and community events.
- + Continue phased Improvements, which may include replacing the current structure (Phase 2).

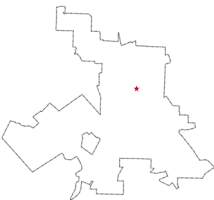
Long-Term (10 to 20 Years)

- + Continue phased Improvements, which may include improving and expanding seating (Phase 3); and creating an auxiliary space (Phase 4). Potential for private funding.

SLO SENIOR CENTER



PARK TYPE
Recreation Center
AREA
0.1 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Mid-term (5-10 years), Long-term (10-20 years)



ISSUES

- + Existing facility has program limitations
- + Unmet potential to integrate with Mitchell Park

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Re-envision SLO Senior Center in the context of Mitchell Park through Planning process. Goals will include creating a strong linkage between the park and the center; and considering potential renovation or replacement of the Senior Center to achieve multi-generational use of the facility

Long-Term (10 to 20 Years)

- + Renovate, relocate or replace to achieve multi-generational use of facility and accommodate diverse programming.
- + Facility improvements should address multifunctionality, ease of maintenance, security, storage, food handling, ADA, outdoor spaces.
- + With facility expansion, child and youth activities should be considered to augment senior activities, with emphasis on similar and compatible activities such as tutoring, music, crafts, and reading.

- + Rentability should be considered as a way to augment operating budget.

SLO SWIM CENTER



PARK TYPE
Recreation Center
CONDITION
Good
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near, Mid, and Long-Term



ISSUES

- + Limited/inadequate capacity to meet community needs
 - + Need to incorporate current ADA standards, including but not limited to restrooms, bathhouse area, path of travel, pool deck, and bleacher area
- + No shade structures
 - + No separate area for kids
 - + Parking capacity and access

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Conduct Plan and SLO Swim Center redesign, in concert with Planning process for Sinsheimer Park
- + Address parking needs (see Sinsheimer Park)

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Implement Phase 1 SLO Swim Center redesign/expansion, which may include:
 - Deck replacement
 - Upgrade to current ADA requirements including but not limited to restrooms, bathhouse area, path of travel, pool deck, and bleacher area

Long-Term (10 to 20 Years)

- + Implement Phase 2 SLO Swim Center redesign/expansion, which may include:
 - Shade structures
 - Lockers and bleachers
 - Expanded therapy pool
 - New pool
 - Expanded programming

See Building Assessment Plan for preliminary concepts.

BROAD STREET COMMUNITY GARDENS (FUTURE BROAD STREET PARK)



PARK TYPE
Special Feature to become Neighborhood Park
AREA
0.9 acres
CONDITION
NA
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near-Term (0-5 Years)



ISSUES

- + Location in neighborhood that lacks park

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Complete design and construct the North Broad Street Neighborhood Park (planned 2021), which will incorporate community gardens, a small playground, and passive use areas

LAGUNA LAKE GOLF COURSE



PARK TYPE
Special Feature
AREA
27 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near, Mid, and Long-Term



ISSUES

- + Lateral erosion is occurring along the creek
- + No paths for golf carts
- + Failing irrigation infrastructure

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Enhance community events and uses of the property to support ongoing course operation
- + Conduct golf operations study to assess the finances of the course as a City resource
- + Consider alternate uses for the property with value and cost documented. Alternate programming could include nature park with restored creek, trails and nature play; natural park with disc golf, foot golf, play, and other active and passive uses.
- + Prepare and implement creek rehabilitation program restore aging safety netting

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Create a Plan, addressing issues identified in facility condition assessment and implementation guidance on the rehab of irrigation, utilities, grounds, and clubhouse, and/or responding to potential change of program

- + Implement Plan

Long-Term (10 to 20 Years)

RAILROAD SAFETY TRAIL



PARK TYPE
Special Feature
AREA
10 acres
CONDITION
Fair
IMPROVEMENT TIER
3
PHASING
Near, Mid, and Long-Term



ISSUES

- + Improve connections to nearby parks
- + Limited programming
- + Exposure and potential conflicts with the railroad

PLANNED IMPROVEMENTS

Near-Term (0 to 5 Years)

- + Complete design of improvements including addition of a bike pump track, park connections, railroad overcrossing bridge, railroad fencing.
- + Phase 1 improvements, potentially including bike pump track, improved park connection
- + Add railroad fencing to address safety issues

Mid-Term (5 to 10 Years)

- + Railroad overcrossing bridge, other trail connection improvements consistent with the Active Transportation Plan



Table 5-1

PHASING OF TIER 3 PARK IMPROVEMENTS

PARK / FACILITY	NEAR-TERM (0-5 YEARS)	MID-TERM (5-10 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (10-20 YEARS)
Laguna Lake Park	Dog area improvements	Phase 2 improvements potentially including multi-generational recreation center and enhanced aquatic and upland natural areas	-
	Park Plan	-	-
	Phase 1 improvements including diamond and/or rectangular athletic fields	-	-
Meadow Park + Meadow Park Center	-	Park Plan	Phase 1 improvements including expanding field use; reconfiguring multi-use fields; improving walking paths and fitness equipment in Exposition Park; expanding playground; incorporating dog park
	-	Phase 1 improvements, focused around Meadow Park Center	-
Sinsheimer Park	Park Plan	Phase 2 improvements, potentially including new park amenities; lighting at tennis courts; lighting at Stockton Field; remodeling restrooms; exploring acquisition of SLCUSD bus depot; and potentially an indoor recreation center	-
	Phase 1 improvements including parking, bike pump track, dog park or dog area	-	-
Emerson Park	Implement the Emerson Neighborhood Park Revitalization Project, including activation and enhancement of Emerson Park, based on public input through targeted public outreach meetings surrounding the SPP grant opportunity.	-	Potential alternative location for Senior Center
			Potential dog park
Mitchell Park + SLO Senior Center	Neighborhood discussion to explore concerns about security and how park programs might create a safer park for everyone	Park Plan (including SLO Senior Center)	Implement Plan, with focus on Park/Center integration and potential program change for Center
	Branded event series of pop-up programming	-	-
	Construct pickleball courts for neighborhood use		

PARK / FACILITY	NEAR-TERM (0-5 YEARS)	MID-TERM (5-10 YEARS)	LONG-TERM (10-20 YEARS)
Cheng Park	Provide a spatial redesign that enhances safety, visibility and activation		-
	Integrate the park into downtown activation and programming		-
Mission Plaza	Implement Mission Plaza concept plan		
	Ongoing programming and activation		
Ludwick Center	Plan to meet indoor recreation needs and achieve goal for multi-generational center	Complete replacement of the program to create multi-generational community center	-
	Consider renovation for staff offices and/or relocation of the Senior Center		
	Explore after-school childcare		
SLO Swim Center	Plan and redesign, in concert with Plan for Sinsheimer Park	Implement Phase 1 improvements	Implement Phase 2 improvements
	Address parking needs	-	-
	Expand programming	-	-
Broad Street Community Garden (future Neighborhood Park)	Develop neighborhood park based on current plan	-	-
Laguna Lake Golf Course	Conduct golf operations study	Depending on near-term studies, conduct Plan	Implement Plan, if desired
	Explore alternate uses, including nature park	-	-
	Prepare and implement creek rehabilitation program restore aging safety netting		
Railroad Safety Trail	Improve connection to Sinsheimer Park and new bike pump track	Plan/conceptual design for improved connections	Railroad overcrossing bridge, other trail connection improvements
	Add railroad fencing to address safety	-	-

FUTURE PARKS

PARKS IN SPECIFIC PLAN AREAS

As of this writing, some 53 acres of new park land is planned as part of the development of four specific plans: Avila Ranch, San Luis Ranch, Froom Ranch, and Orcutt Area (including the WestCreek and Righetti developments.) These park sites will range from quarter-acre pocket parks to fitness loops and linear parks, to neighborhood and larger community parks. These parks are summarized in Chapter 2.

DOWNTOWN PARKS AND PLAZAS

The Downtown Concept Plan also provides a template for the creation of a network of plazas, paseos, and pocket parks to serve a growing and vital downtown area (see Chapter 2).

OTHER FUTURE PARKS

If the San Luis Obispo's park acreage standards were to be met citywide, we would need to create some 308 acres of new parks, in addition to those already planned, including some 62 acres of community park, 169 acres of neighborhood park, and 88 acres of recreation centers/facilities.

Over the course of the planning period, the City will pursue land acquisition and park development opportunities, focusing on areas of the City that are not currently well-served by parks because they are more than ½ mile from an existing neighborhood or community park. Our first new park site will be the Broad Street neighborhood park, filling an access gap in the North Broad Street neighborhood.

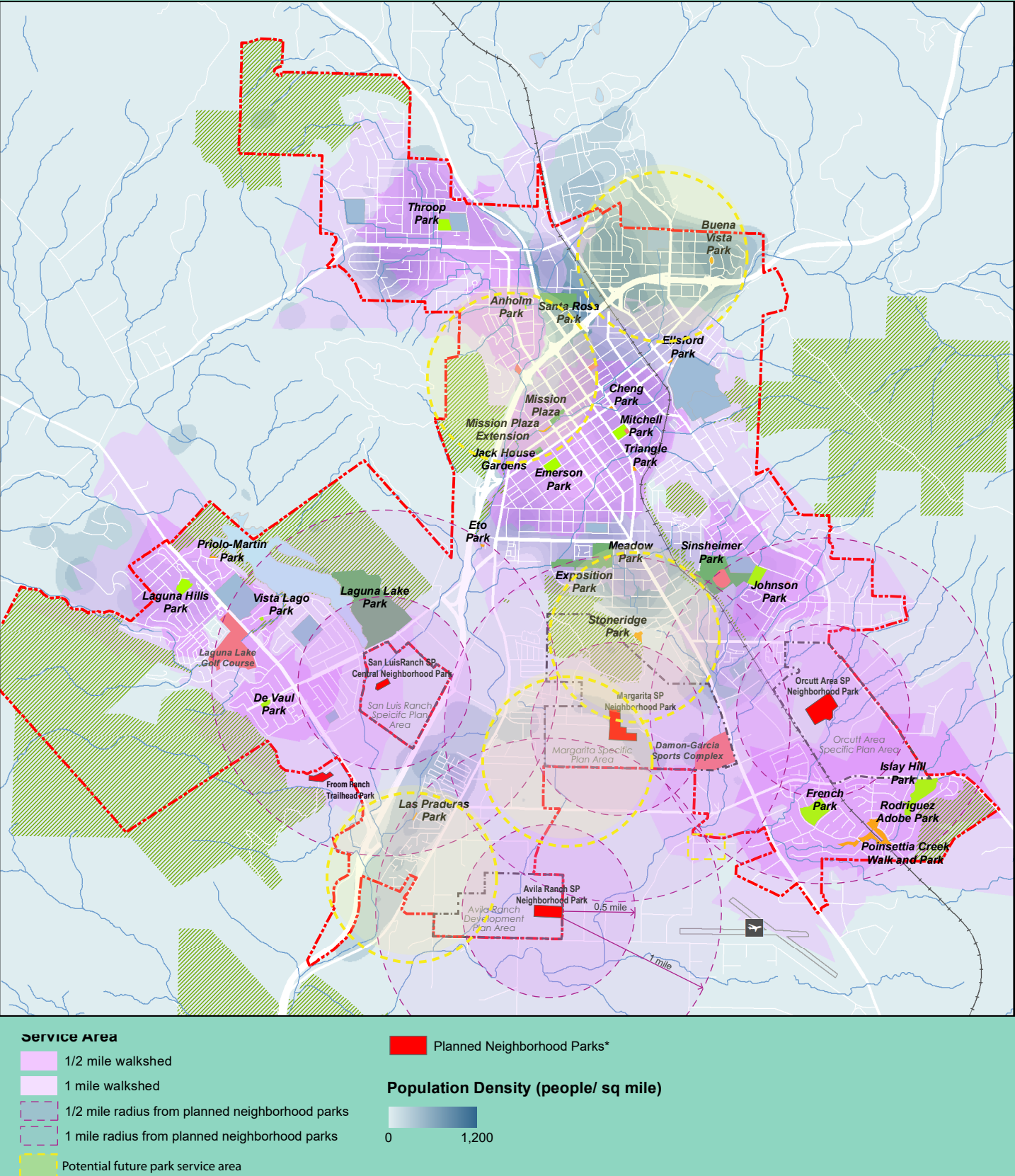
Future park opportunities should be sought, in particular:

- + In District 1 (North) in the vicinity of Grand Avenue, potentially through agreement with San Luis Coastal Unified School District;
- + In District 2 (Central) along the Johnson Avenue corridor south of the high school;
- + In District 3 (South), potentially through expansion or amenitization of Stoneridge Park;
- + In District 5 (Southwest) along the South Higuera corridor;
- + At the Laguna Lake Golf Course property in District 6 (West), as part of potential site reuse.

Amenities for these future parks should reflect local needs and desires through the park planning process, and be informed by citywide amenity needs and priorities.

Park access gaps and areas of need are shown on Figure 5-5.

Figure 5-5
PARK ACCESS GAPS AND POTENTIAL FUTURE PARK SITES



UNDERSTANDING THE COST OF PARKS

Capital Improvement Costs

In this section, a rough order of magnitude costs for each proposed park amenity is intended to assist the City with planning and prioritizing future park and recreation improvements. Unit cost placeholders were determined based on public bid results from park projects within San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties, as well as recent, local park experience. These probable costs may rise or fall based on a variety of factors, including, but not limited to final finish selections, unique site conditions, and coordination with comprehensive park improvements. For the purposes of an “à la carte menu,” each amenity was studied with minimum core components included, as well as allowances for soft costs and general construction preparations that would likely be needed to take a project from concept design to opening. Due to the varying scale and complexity of each amenity item, these allowances range from 10% - 50% of costs for “Permitting / Consulting” and “General Site Prep / Supervision.”

“Permitting / Consulting” includes:

- + Permitting fees and processing
- + Consultant services and contract drawings
- + Project management

- + Public outreach and engagement
- + Environmental review pursuant to the California Environmental Quality Act

“General Site Prep / Supervision” includes:

- + Clearing and grubbing
- + Fine grading and drainage improvements
- + Stormwater management (SWPPP required for projects impacting one acre or more in area)
- + Site protection, fencing, security, and signage
- + Mobilization and supervision
- + Contingency

Depending on final site selection and construction climate, the following items may also add to the cost of each amenity item. The following list identifies potential exclusions, however exclusions for future project implementation are not limited to these items:

- + Temporary utilities
- + Permanent utility services
- + Offsite improvements
- + ADA access improvements
- + Retaining walls
- + Subgrade replacement
- + Land acquisition
- + Site furnishings (except where

noted)

- + Demolition
- + Lighting and electrical
- + Performance bonds
- + Trees, shrubs, and groundcovers
- + Maintenance and establishment

Future estimated cost projections- Construction costs typically increase 4% each year. In addition, the City may or may not want to add a 15% contingency to each line item to acknowledge cost variations and increases due to pandemics, natural disasters, adaption to climate change, and other events that may affect the cost of equipment and materials.

Annual Park Operation and Maintenance Costs

It is critically important to view the financial sustainability of the Parks and Recreation System through the concept of “Total Cost of Ownership” as shown in the graphic below.

The Parks and Recreation Department will need to closely monitor resources to ensure that the assets of the park system reach the anticipated lifecycles. The City Parks and Recreation and Public Works Department maintenance funding

should grow to accommodate new park and facility development in the future.

As the system grows, the following guidelines should be utilized to identify annual operational funding required to maintain additional park acreage:

- + Athletic Field Parks:
 - \$12,000 - \$15,000 per rectangular field;
 - \$18,000 - \$20,000 per diamond field;
 - \$5,000 general acreage
- + Community Parks: \$7,500 - \$9,000 per acre
- + Neighborhood Parks: \$8,500 - \$10,000 per acre
- + Open Space: \$300 - \$600 per actively managed acre
- + Pocket Parks: \$10,000 - \$12,000

per acre

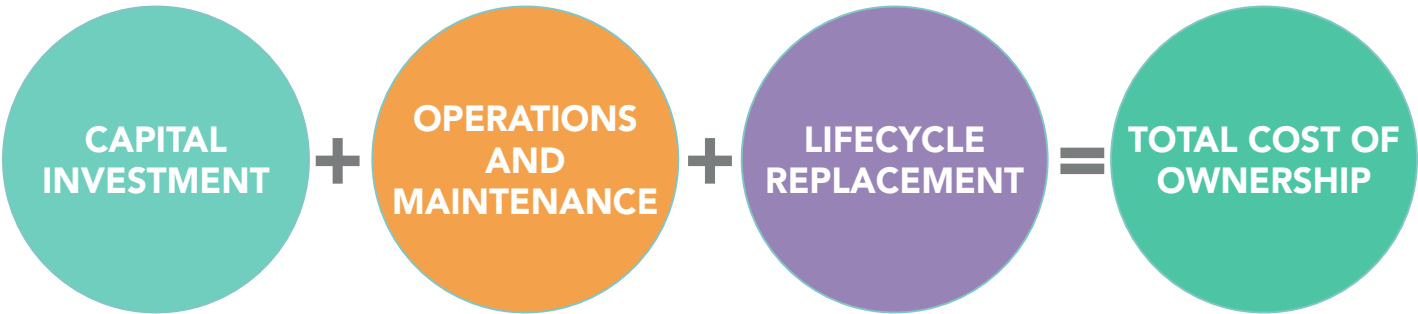
- + Special Use Parks: Costs varies dependent upon amenities
- + Recreation Corridors/Trails: \$5-\$5,500 per acre
- + Regional Parks: Costs varies dependent upon amenities

*Please note, maintenance costs typically increase 2-3% annually.

Maintenance Standards

Maintenance standards are based on a Level 1, 2 and 3 modes (tasks and frequencies of each task) and follow best practices as established by the National Recreation and Park Association. The division can customize the standards based on the park and recreation values of the community and need to be adopted and implemented by staff and followed regardless of whether

work is performed by City staff or third-party contractors. It is recommended that the City strive for Level 2 maintenance standards.



FUNDING STRATEGY

Adequate, steady, sustainable funding sources are essential to implementing a capital improvement plan. In order to continue to build and maintain San Luis Obispo's parks and recreation system, a funding strategy is needed.

The City funding sources for parks and recreation include development impact fees, the general fund, grants, revenues from services provided, and picnic and facility rentals.

Development impact fees are collected by the City and are intended to be used only for the purpose of acquiring necessary land and developing new or rehabilitating existing park or recreational facilities reasonably related to serving the development.

External Funding. Potential external funding sources could include a "friends of parks" organization; corporate sponsorships; crowdfunding; partnerships with other agencies; gifts from non-profit foundations; private donations; irrevocable remainder trusts; volunteerism; and fundraisers.

Capital Fees can include fees added to the cost of revenue-

producing facilities; land dedication; in-lieu development fees; and impact fees.

User Fees may include recreation service fees; ticket sales; permits for special use; reservation fees; and equipment rental fees.

Grants. The City may be eligible for grants through the Partnership Enhancement Monetary Grant Program and the federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. An affiliated land trust may be helpful in attracting grant funding.

Tax Support, through property, sales, or parcel taxes or through the creation of special improvement districts.

Franchises and Licenses. Catering permits, concession management, naming rights, utility easements, and interagency agreements are all potential sources of funding.

The City currently charges a development impact fee for parks and recreation capital facilities, pursuant to the Mitigation Fee Act and Government Code Section 66000 et seq. The City currently charges parkland in-lieu fees which are consistent with the Quimby Act

(Government Code Section 66477).

The parkland in-lieu fee and parks and recreation development impact fees are used to acquire parkland consistent with the City's parkland service standards and to improve new and existing parks to meet the demand of future residential growth in the City. These fees do not apply to all areas in the City, so the additional fee revenues are dependent on the geographic location of new development. For example, all new development under the Margarita Area Specific Plan and Orcutt Area Specific Plan will continue to be subject to the existing, established standards/requirements of those Specific Plans. In addition, the Avila Ranch and San Luis Ranch requirements are addressed in their respective Development Agreements. For example, San Luis Ranch will be paying a parkland in-lieu fee that will support improvements at Laguna Lake Park, consistent with the terms agreed upon in the development agreement.

There is untapped potential for increasing funding and revenues for the parks and recreation system while still providing affordable recreation opportunities.

