

3.1.10 Recreation

3.1.10.1 Existing Conditions

Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities

The County Parks and Recreation Department provides parks and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. There are more than 48,000 acres of recreational facilities within the County including local and regional parks (active and passive), campgrounds, 350 miles of trails, fishing lakes, recreation centers and sports complexes, ecological preserves, and open space preserves.

The closest public parks/preserves to the Project site include the 774-acre DDHP and the associated 784-acre EFRR. These large open space reserves contain a total of approximately 1,558 acres (including the Olivenhain dam and reservoir) with an associated 9 miles of trails. These trail areas are located within 0.3 mile at their closest point (the Del Dios Highland Trail in DDHP, which abuts the Project southern and southeastern boundary) and are connected to the Project by an existing rugged primitive trail (County trail nomenclature) that extends to the Del Dios Highlands Trail. Del Dios Community Park (on Lake Hodges, with open space and views to the lake) is approximately 1.3 miles to the southeast.

Two recreational facilities are currently under construction as part of Phase 1 of the HGV project. South Creek Park will be a 2.9-acre public community park south of Harmony Grove Road with active play/turf areas, and a landscape palette incorporating vegetative references to the creek (including native oaks and sycamores). A 2.8-acre public day use equestrian park will be located just east of the community park and north of the creek on the southwest side of the Harmony Grove Road and Country Club Drive intersection. These two facilities are within approximately 1,000 feet and 400 feet of the Project boundary, respectively. These parks will be open to the public prior to Project occupancy.

Additional public parks within 3 miles of the Project site are located within the City of San Marcos and include: (1) Jack's Pond Park (23 acres), located approximately 2.3 miles north of the Project site, which is developed with a trail, picnic area, restroom, tot lot and nature center; (2) Montiel Park (8 acres), which is located approximately 2.4 miles northeast of the Project site and is developed with a dog run, basketball half-court, picnic tables, open play grass area, nine-hole disc golf course, and portable restrooms; and (3) Knob Hill Park (2.8 acres), located approximately 2.9 miles northeast of the Project site, which is developed picnic facilities, restrooms, a tot lot and turf play area.

In addition, the Ridgeline Trailhead is also located approximately 3 miles northwest of the Project site in San Marcos, and a circuit-training trail is open to the public in the vicinity of the Palomar Hospital medical center in Escondido, approximately 1.5 miles to the north.

Future parks are planned in conjunction with the development of nearby HGV. Finally, although not necessary to address recreational needs of the Project, following development, the approved and adjacent private HGV Equestrian Ranch would be expected to host equestrian events open to the public that could be attended by future Project residents and would be accessible via Project-connecting trails and a pathway.

Known planned trails under construction include mixed-use trails (pedestrian, bike and equestrian) under construction by HGV, located north and west of the Project. That project is constructing multi-use fenced trails along Country Club Drive (part of County Trail 04 in Harmony Grove, to the vicinity of Mt. Whitney Road on the north), and extending southerly along Country Club Drive to the Equestrian Ranch sited just west (across the street) from the Proposed Project. A similar trail is being constructed by HGV along Harmony Grove Road project footage, north of Escondido Creek.

Regulatory Setting

Quimby Act

The Quimby Act of 1975 (California Government Code Section 66477, adopted 1975 and amended 1982), part of the Subdivision Map Act, was intended to require developers seeking subdivision approvals to assist in mitigating the potential impacts resulting from improvements that may directly or indirectly increase the need for recreational facilities or park lands within a given city or county. In 1982, the Quimby Act was amended to allow local governments to be held accountable for imposing park development fees. The 1982 amendment to AB 1600 requires that agencies demonstrate a reasonable relationship between the public need for a recreational facility or park land and the development upon which the fee is being imposed. Cities and counties were required to show a strong direct relationship (or nexus) between park fees imposed and a proposed development. As a result, local ordinances are required to include specific standards for identifying the percentage of a subdivision to be dedicated and/or the relative fee that is required based on standards for local jurisdiction park lands. The Act establishes a maximum of 3 acres of park land dedication/fee per 1,000 residents unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community park land exceeds that limit (at the time of adoption). If the 3 acre per 1,000 residents standard is exceeded, a greater standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents may be adopted by the jurisdiction in order to meet anticipated park land needs.

County General Plan

The Project site is located within the boundaries of the San Diego County General Plan. The Land Use Element (Chapter 3) and the Conservation and Open Space Element (Chapter 5) of the General Plan provide background information, policies, and measures aimed at the acquisition, provision, and maintenance of public recreational resources within San Diego County. Goals and policies given in the Land Use Element (LU-Chapter 7) and Conservation and Open Space Element (COS-Chapter 5) of the General Plan are applicable to the proposed Project with regard to recreation and are each addressed in Section 3.1.6 of this EIR. The General Plan contains additional policies, goals, and implementation measures that are more general in nature and not specific to development such as the Project.

Goal COS-21: Park and Recreational Facilities states that park and recreation facilities that enhance the quality of life and meet the diverse active and passive recreational needs of County residents and visitors, protect natural resources, and foster an awareness of local history, with approximately 10 acres of local parks and 15 acres of regional parks provided for every 1,000 persons in the unincorporated County. Policies addressing diversity of facilities, their location in the heart of the community, relation to community character and identity, connections to

pedestrian and bicycle networks, co-location with preserve areas where compatible and availability to the public, are each addressed in Section 3.1.6 of this EIR.

Per the County General Plan EIR (County 2011a), the current estimated population for the unincorporated County area is 678,270; therefore, the General Plan requirement would be satisfied by approximately 6,780 acres of local park land and 10,170 acres of regional parkland. (County park demand increases as the County residential population increases.)

Zoning Ordinance Section 4900 – Usable Open Space Regulation

These regulations promote the availability of outdoor areas for leisure and recreation throughout San Diego County by establishing requirements for minimum areas of usable open space for residential developments with three or more dwelling units per lot or building site. The provisions for usable open space include standards for surfacing, location, size and shape, accessibility, openness, screening, and maintenance of the required usable open space.

Community Trails Master Plan (Subdivision Ordinance Sec. 81.706.1 through 81.707 and Regulatory Code Sect 812.201 et. seq.)

The Board of Supervisors adopted the County Trails Program (CTP) on January 12, 2005 and incorporated the CTP into the General Plan. The CTP has various components, including the Community Trails Master Plan (CTMP). The CTMP contains the 22 individual community trail and pathway maps. The Project is located in the Eden Valley/Harmony Grove area.

A number of proposed community trails are located along public rights-of-way and over private property in the vicinity of, or on, the Project, consistent with the CTMP (County 2005). These facilities are designed to be located in close proximity to residents, and to provide transportation, recreation, access, infrastructure, linkages and safe routes throughout a community. As shown on Figure 1-17, in the immediate vicinity of the Project, the County has identified four proposed trails, three of which are identified as “first priority,” as indicated by asterisks below:

1. *Country Club Drive Trail (04), extending along that roadway from roughly the northern extent of HGV, southerly to cross Harmony Grove Road and enter the Project where Country Club Drive begins to trend toward the west;
2. *Lake Hodges Trail (11), extending across the Project approximately 0.5 mile from Country Club Drive east to the County/Escondido line;
3. *Summit Trail (12), extending southerly approximately 0.2 mile from the Lake Hodges Trail into the heart of the Project; and
4. Elfin Forest Trail (13), trending west and then south from the Summit Trail along the western Project boundary to the County/Escondido line.

Each of the trails connecting into Escondido continues into that jurisdiction, and on to the trail destination point or to another connection. In addition, the CTMP identifies the Escondido Creek Trail (14), just north of the Project, trending along the Escondido Creek drainage. This trail is identified as approximately 2.2 miles long; no priority is identified.

County of San Diego Park Land Dedication Ordinance

Section 66477 of the Government Code enables local governments to require the dedication of land or the payment of an in lieu fee, or a combination of both, for neighborhood and community park or recreational purposes. The PLDO (County Code sections 810.101 through 810.114) provides the mechanism for implementing Section 66477 of the Government Code in San Diego County. It is the intent of this ordinance to ensure the construction of recreational facilities to adequately serve the residents of the County as well as ensure consistency with the Quimby Act.

The Project would be subject to the requirements of the PLDO, for the Escondido Local Park Planning Area (LPPA), which specifies a minimum of 373.74 s.f. of park space per DU for developments of 50 DUs or more. The PLDO establishes several methods by which developers may satisfy their park requirements. Options include the payment of park fees, the dedication of a park land, or a combination of these methods. PLDO funds from payment of in-lieu fees must be used for the acquisition, planning, and development of local parkland and recreation facilities. Up to 50 percent of the total acreage of private active recreation areas provided by a development may be used to satisfy up to 50 percent of the PLDO public park land requirement for a development. The balance of the PLDO requirement would need to be satisfied by payment in-lieu if the combination of public and private acreage does not satisfy the requirement.

All PLDO-required parks must be large enough and physically suitable to accommodate amenities typically associated with neighborhood parks and “active recreational uses” as defined in Section 810.102(a) of the PLDO. They must provide adequate off-street parking, restroom facilities, maintenance facilities, and other infrastructure such as utility connections and storm water drainage. Parking lots, retention/detention basins and slopes do not count toward the PLDO acreage requirements.

All park sites must be fully developed to comply with PLDO dedication requirements, and require identification of ownership and maintenance responsibilities and related funding mechanisms. Park design and amenities must reflect County development standards.

3.1.10.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant impact to recreation would occur if the Project would:

1. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
2. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Guidelines Source

The identified guidelines are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines, and are intended to ensure that adequate parks and recreational facilities are available for local residents.

Analysis

The Project proposes a combination of public and private parks, trails, and improvements to existing trails, which would provide recreational opportunities for new and existing residents. Recreational amenities proposed by the Project are described below, followed by an analysis of PLDO requirements.

Proposed Project Recreational Amenities

Thirteen parks (approximately 4.1 acres) are planned to be developed in HGV South (refer to Figures 1-6a and 3.1.10-1, *Proposed Public and Private Park Locations*, as well as to conceptual layouts/landscaping plans presented in Figure 1-20b and 1-20c). Parks would be funded through mechanisms described in the Project Specific Plan on Table 7. All Project parks except for the facilities provided at the Center House or with underlying detention basin uses/wet weather storage accommodated in underground vaults would be public parks.

Seven public parks are planned, which would total 1.86 acres and range from approximately 0.08 to 0.54 acre in size. A dog park is planned to be developed within the community as well as a basketball court adjacent to the Center House. Other public park uses are anticipated to include a horse shoe pit, barbeque areas, picnic tables, and/or informal play areas. A fitness circuit consisting of various exercise stations would connect the parks both within HGV South and HGV. Public parks would be dedicated to the County for park and recreation purposes only.

HGV South also includes six private parks, which would total 2.23 acres and range from approximately 0.1 to 0.82 acre in size. The Center House property would include an approximately 0.82-acre private park with a private clubhouse facility. The park may contain a reinforced and relocated chimney, restored to act as an outdoor wood burning fireplace. Other currently planned elements include a barbeque/picnic area, a play field, and restrooms. Other private parks would be developed as dual use (subsurface vault) storm water storage and treatment areas or wet weather storage under recreational areas and community gardens. Private parks would be operated and maintained by the HOA.

In addition to the park facilities described above, the Project proposes approximately 71 acres of other open space. A system of public/private trails would link key open space features of the Project site and connect to off-site areas and planned public trails (Figure 1-17). Public multi-use trail easements would be dedicated to the County; private trails internal to the Project would be maintained by the Project HOA. Note that although many Project trails would be open to the public, the associated acreage would not be counted towards PLDO requirements.

The primary public multi-use trail on site would connect to the future HGV multi-use trail. At the southern Project entry, the trail would cross over Country Club Drive and end on the Project at another trail intersection (Trail 13). A 5-foot pathway would be provided by the Project along the east side of Country Club Drive, from Harmony Grove Road to the southern Project entry. This Project element would provide off-road connections to HGV residential and commercial uses, as well as to Community/Equestrian park uses west of Country Club Drive, supporting the goal of a “walkable” community.

On-site portions of two County trails (Trails 11 and 13), would be built as 6- to 8-foot trails, as depicted on Figure 1-17. These trails would be variously located along internal Project streets, adjacent to planned community gardens in non-BOS open space, and along the western Project boundary within the overall development-modified footprint. These trail segments would include portions of the:

- Lake Hodges Trail (11), extending across the Project approximately 0.5 mile from Country Club Drive east to the County/Escondido line.
- Elfin Forest Trail (13), trending west and then south from the Summit Trail along the western Project boundary to the County/Escondido line.¹

Beyond the residential development footprint, the route identified for Trail 12 would enter open space, and would be retained in its current (undeveloped) condition. Trail 13, also largely located within the Project parcel in open space, is routinely used by the existing local community and would be retained within a 20-foot trail easement. This currently unimproved primitive trail (County trail nomenclature) continues south to meet the east-west trending Del Dios Highlands Trail in the DDHP. It would be improved by the Project from its current 2-to-6 foot width to 4 to 6 feet in width to the DDHP boundary, as necessary; and dedicated to the County.

Park Land Dedication Ordinance Compliance

The Project would include a maximum of 453 residences. As noted above, the Project would be subject to the requirements of the PLDO, as amended, for the Escondido LPPA. This ordinance specifies a minimum of 373.74 s.f. of park space per DU for developments of 50 DUs or more. This would require that the Project provide approximately 3.9 acres of parkland for the use and benefit of members of the public and future Project residents within an effective service radius (considered to be a maximum of 0.25 mile for pocket parks, and a maximum of 0.5 mile for neighborhood parks).

To fulfill the requirements of the PLDO, HGV South proposes approximately 1.86 acres of public parks and 2.23 acres of private parks within the Project site, for a total of 4.1 acres of proposed park space. Because private park acreage totals are calculated at 50 percent for purposes of PLDO satisfaction, the 2.23 acres of private parks would satisfy 1.12 acres of the required acreage. Combined with the public parks, 2.98 acres of the PLDO-required acres of park would be provided on site. The remaining PLDO requirement would be satisfied through the payment of in lieu fees.

With the provision of the new parks and recreational facilities to serve the Project and the public, combined with the additional PLDO payment, the Project would not increase the use of existing neighborhood parks, regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of these facilities would occur or be accelerated.

With regard to Threshold 2, the new recreational facilities constitute Project features that are analyzed as part of the Project footprint throughout this EIR. As discussed in Chapter 2.0 of this

¹ The Trails Master Plan also identifies the Escondido Creek Trail (14), just north of the Project, trending along the Escondido Creek drainage for approximately 2.2 miles. That trail is off site, and no modifications are planned.

EIR, the “footprint” impacts associated with Project features, including new recreational facilities, would be mitigated. The proposed facilities would result in minimal construction activities beyond that already proposed as part of the overall Project, and would serve the local residents, already on the local roads. Therefore, the new recreational facilities would not have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Taking all of the above into consideration, recreation demands generated by the Project would be satisfied through the inclusion of on-site private recreational facilities, dedication of on-site public park land and recreational amenities, and payment of PLDO fees. Impacts to recreation would be **less than significant**.

3.1.10.3 Cumulative Impact Analysis

Several related cumulative development projects have been recently completed or are planned for development in the vicinity of the Proposed Project, as listed in Table 1-3. These future projects include residential developments totaling approximately 15,494 DUs, as well as other types of development, such as industrial, commercial, office space, medical facilities, group housing, and others. Cumulative impacts to recreation of these development projects are discussed below. The significance guidelines used to evaluate Project-specific impacts, described above in Section 3.1.9.2, also are applicable here.

Regarding use of existing parks, it was determined that implementation of the Proposed Project would not have a significant impact on parks and recreational facilities because it would conform to the PLDO, as do other projects in the County. Similar to the Proposed Project, the cumulative projects would be required to comply with the PLDO in proportion to their potential impact on the demand for parks and recreational facilities, as required by the County (or similar requirements of other corresponding jurisdictions). Since mitigation for potential project effects would be required prior to granting of building permits for all cumulative projects approved by area lead agencies, and a number of mitigation avenues exist (e.g., payment of park fees, the dedication of park land, or a combination of these methods), the cumulative projects would not increase the use of existing neighborhood parks, regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of these facilities would occur or be accelerated. No cumulative regional impact would occur. As noted above, the Project contribution to any regional effect also would be addressed through design and PLDO consistency. Resulting contributions to the less than significant cumulative effect would be less than considerable, and therefore less than significant.

The adverse impacts of any new or expanded recreational facility required for the cumulative projects would be location specific and associated with the companion development, and impacts would be analyzed and mitigated separately in a project-level CEQA analysis. Therefore, the Project’s new recreational facilities would not contribute to a cumulative recreational impact.

As a result, cumulative parks and recreation impacts would be **less than significant**.

3.1.10.4 Significance of Impacts

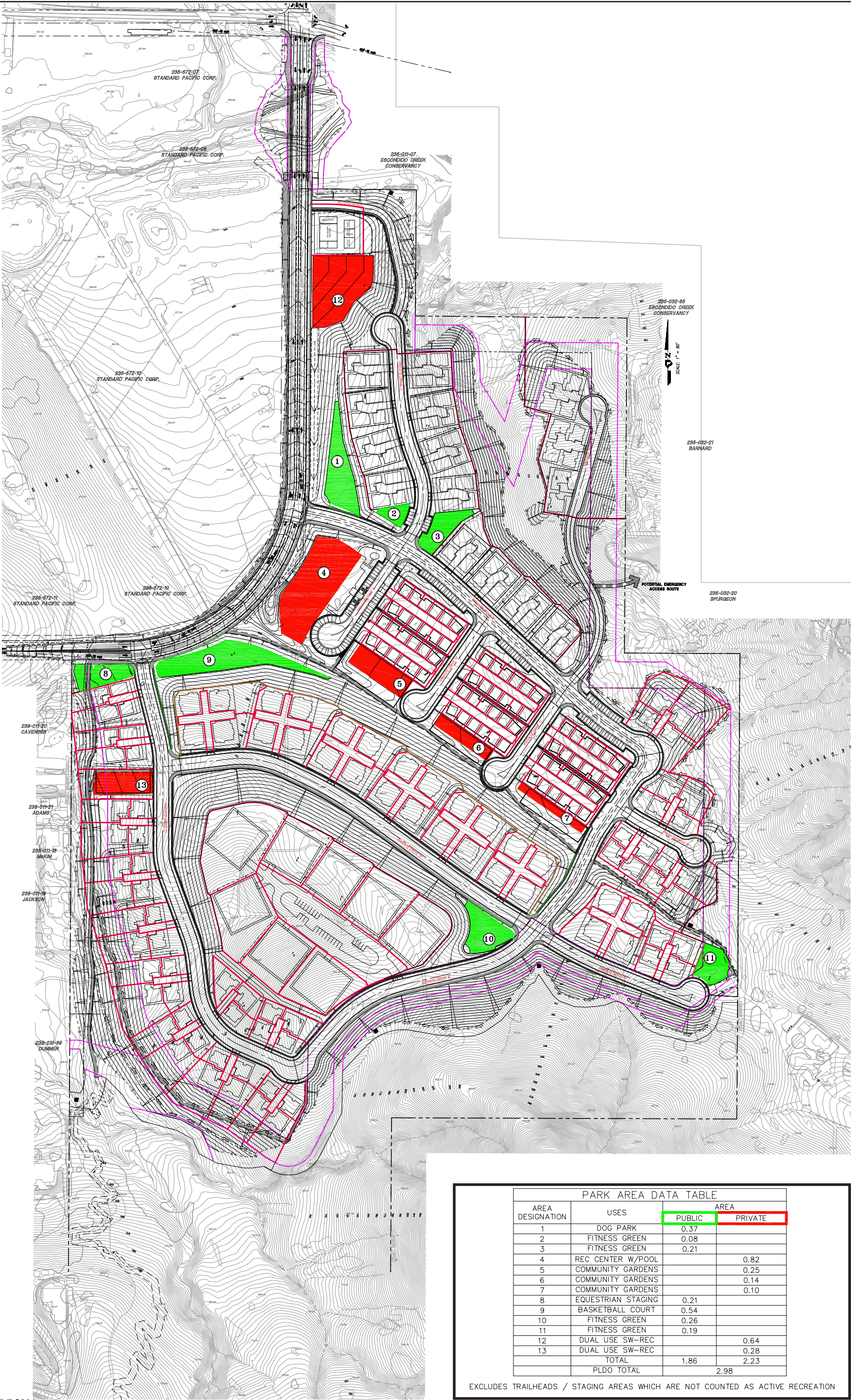
Based on the analysis provided above, the Proposed Project would have less than significant impacts related to parks and recreation.

3.1.10.5 Conclusion

Based on the analysis provided above, no significant Project-specific or cumulative impacts related to recreation would result from implementation of the Project.

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Source: PDC 2016



Proposed Public and Private Park Locations

HARMONY GROVE VILLAGE SOUTH