

3.1.6 Recreation

3.1.6.1 Existing Conditions

Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities

County Parks and Recreation Department provides parks and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors in the vicinity of the Proposed Project. The more than 40,000 acres of recreational facilities within the County include local and regional parks (active and passive), campgrounds, 300 miles of trails, fishing lakes, recreation centers and sports complexes, ecological preserves, and open space preserves.

The closest public parks to the Proposed Project site are in the City of San Marcos, and include: (1) Jack's Pond Park (23 acres), located approximately 0.3 mile north of the Project site, which is developed with a trail, picnic area, restroom, tot lot and nature center; (2) Montiel Park (8.0 acres), which is located approximately 1.25 miles northeast of the Project site and is developed with a dog run, basketball half-court, picnic tables, open play grass area, 9-hole disc golf course, and portable restrooms; (3) Knob Hill Park (3.0 acres), located approximately 1.3 miles northeast of the Project site, which is developed picnic facilities, restrooms, a tot lot and turf play area; (4) Hollandia Park (30 acres), located approximately 1.5 miles north of the Project site, which is developed with two lighted softball fields, a lighted multi-purpose field, a lighted skate park, an off-leash dog park, an adventure playground with climbing wall, picnic areas, horseshoe pits, an amphitheater, and multi-use trails; (5) Mulberry Park (4.0 acres), which is developed with a tot lot, water play area, picnic tables, restrooms, and an open play grass area; and (6) the Civic Center Recreation Area (1.0 acre), located approximately 1.3 miles northwest of the Project site, which is developed with a tot lot, lighted sand volleyball court, and basketball half-court, adjacent to a 30,000 square-foot Civic Center (refer to Figure 3.1.6-1, *Parks in the Project Vicinity*).

Other public parks/preserves near the Proposed Project site include: (1) Escondido Creek, Del Dios Highland Preserve, and the associated Elfin Forest Recreational Reserve, a habitat/recreation reserve that includes approximately 784 acres (including the Olivenhain dam and reservoir) located approximately 1.2 miles south of the Project site; and (2) the Ridgeline Trailhead, located approximately 1.6 miles west of the Project site (refer to Figure 3.1.6-1). Additionally, future parks are planned in conjunction with the development of nearby Harmony Grove Village. The amount of park land planned for Harmony Grove Village is based on the proposed density of that development.

Regulatory Setting

The County General Plan recreational facilities standard is approximately 10 acres of local parks and 15 acres of regional parks provided for every 1,000 population in the unincorporated County. New development is required to provide a portion of this requirement. The standard is 3 acres per 1,000 persons. State law allows for up to five acres per 1,000 population, if the current active park acreage exceeds the 3-acre level.

Per the County General Plan EIR (County 2011d), 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. Park demand increases as the residential population increases in the County. The Project would be subject to the requirements of the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 8, Division 10, Section 810.101 (PLDO), and 810.106(f) Table 1, for the Escondido Local Park Planning Area (LPPA), which specifies a minimum of 373.74 square feet of park space per du for developments of 50 du or more. The PLDO is the mechanism that enables the funding or dedication of local parkland in the County. The PLDO establishes several methods by which developers may satisfy their park requirements. Options include the payment of park fees, the dedication of a public park, the provision of private recreational facilities, or a combination of these methods. PLDO funds 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.

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 the County Code of Regulatory Ordinances, Title 8, Division 10, Section 810.102(a). They must provide adequate off-street parking, restroom facilities, maintenance facilities, and other infrastructure such as utility connections and storm water drainage, but parking lots, retention/detention basins and slopes would not count toward the acreage requirements.

All parks 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.

3.1.6.2 Analysis of Project Effects and Determination as to Significance

Guidelines for the Determination of Significance

A significant impact to recreation would occur if the Proposed 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.

Guideline Source

The identified guidelines for significance 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

As described in Chapter 2, recreational opportunities for the Proposed Project would include a neighborhood park, multi-use trail and trail head park, all of which would be open to the public, as well as two private community parks.

Public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area

The 2.7-acre public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area, located in the southeast portion of the Plan Area adjacent to Country Club Drive, would include amenities such as an open lawn area, seating, picnic facilities, a shade structure, a horse hitching station, half-court basketball, community garden, and children's play area with age separated activities. It would also include support facilities such as off-street parking, restroom facilities, maintenance facilities, and utility connections. Any storm water retention/detention facilities required due to natural drainage patterns would not be counted for PLDO credit. The approximate net acreage of the public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area (not counting the SDGE Easement, parking lot, drainage areas, and slopes) would be approximately 1.4 acres, 100 percent of which would count toward PLDO requirements.

The Public Multi-Use Trail (refer to description below) is designed to run through the public Neighborhood Park, and pedestrian access would be provided from the park as well as the surrounding neighborhoods.

Public Multi-Use Trail

A 10-foot-wide, 2.65-mile-long public multi-use trail for non-motorized use (including equestrian use, hiking, biking, and jogging) would run along the entire length of the community parkway, in addition to connecting with parks, key open space features and a planned off-site public trail in the Harmony Grove Village Specific Plan Area to the west of the Proposed Project's Neighborhood 5. Smaller private pedestrian trails within the Project site would connect the public multi-use trail to the residential neighborhoods. Although this trail would be open to the public, the associated acreage cannot be counted toward PLDO requirements.

Trail Head Park

A private Trail Head Park is proposed in the eastern portion of the Proposed Project site (east of Neighborhood 2), which would provide Eden Valley residents in the Project area with convenient access to the trail system. The Trail Head Park is anticipated to have benches, picnic tables, horse tie-up and a trail map/area information kiosk. There would be no vehicular access to this park. The approximate net acreage of the Trail Head Park would be 0.5 acre, but because the Trail Head Park would not include serve a local park function, this acreage is not proposed to be counted toward PLDO requirements.

Private Central Oak Park

Located along the Community Parkway and connected to neighborhood walks and the public multi-use trail, the private Central Oak Park would include an existing grove of mature oaks, lawn area, picnic areas and two exercise stations. The approximate net acreage of the Central Oak Park would be 1.2 acres. Fifty percent of this acreage would be counted toward PLDO requirements.

Private Recreation Facility

The 2.3-acre private Recreation Facility, located off of Mt. Whitney Road (near Neighborhood 1), would be a private facility for residents. It would include a small community building, swimming pool, picnic areas, lawn area and children's play area, as well as restroom facilities, maintenance facilities, utility connections and storm water drainage. Limited on-street parking would be provided. The approximate net acreage of the private Community Park would be 2.3 acres, 50 percent of which would count toward PLDO requirements.

~~Private Equestrian Facility~~ Staging Area (Open to the Public)

~~Portions of the existing equestrian complex previously used in association with the Harmony Grove Equestrian Center, located in the southern portion of Neighborhood 5, would be retained, open to the public and privately maintained by the HOA. Portions of the existing equestrian training and boarding facility would accommodate horse boarding. The 1.2 acre site would be reconfigured to allow public horse trailer parking, use of the equestrian exercise ring, and access the multi-use trail. The approximate acreage of the Equestrian Facility would be 1.2 acres, none of which would count toward PLDO requirements.~~

North Trail Turnaround

Located at the north end of the multi-use trail in Neighborhood 4, a turnaround would be provided and would include amenities such as shade trees, benches, trash receptacle and trail signage. The turnaround would be maintained by the HOA.

In summary, the Proposed Project would provide 1.4 net acres of public recreation facilities, consisting of the Public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area. In addition, the Proposed Project would provide 1.8 net acres of private recreation facilities, consisting of the private Recreation Facility and the Central Oak Park. The Public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area acreage would be eligible for 100 percent PLDO credit and the private Central Oak Park and Recreation Facility would be eligible for 50 percent PLDO credit.

The Proposed Project would include a maximum of 326 residences, which would increase the demand for recreational facilities by approximately 945 new residents. As noted above, the Proposed Project would be subject to the requirements of the PLDO, as amended, for the Escondido LPPA, which specifies a minimum of 373.74 square feet of park space per du. This would require that the Proposed Project provide approximately 2.8 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), and to avoid overburdening other parks in the Project vicinity.

As noted above, up to 50 percent of the total acreage of qualifying 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. In the case of the Proposed Project, fifty percent of the private Recreation Facility and Central Oak Park acreage (i.e., 50 percent of 3.5 acres, or 1.8 acres) may contribute to satisfying the Project's PLDO requirement. The public Neighborhood Park and Staging Area net acreage (1.4 acres) plus the allowable private acreage (1.8 acres) would total 3.2 acres, exceeding the Project's 2.8-acre PLDO park lands requirement, and all facilities would include appropriate amenities and infrastructure. With the provision of these new parks and recreational facilities to serve the Project and the public, in compliance with the PLDO, 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 (Threshold 1).

With regard to Threshold 2, the new recreational facilities constitute Project features that are analyzed as part of the project as a whole throughout this EIR; As discussed in Section 2, the impacts associated new or expanded recreational facilities for the Project would be mitigated, with the exception of air quality due to cumulative increases in housing inconsistent with the RAQs and SIP, as well as cumulative construction and operational (traffic) air quality impacts. The proposed new recreational facilities would not involve housing and therefore would not be inconsistent with the RAQS and SIP; the proposed facilities would result in minimal construction activities; and would serve the local residences, resulting in minimal increases in traffic. Therefore, the new recreational facilities would not have an adverse physical effect on the environment (Threshold 2). Therefore, **Project-level parks and recreation impacts would be less than significant.**

3.1.6.3 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 1-5. These future projects include residential developments totaling approximately 15,168 du, 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 3.1.7, also are applicable here.

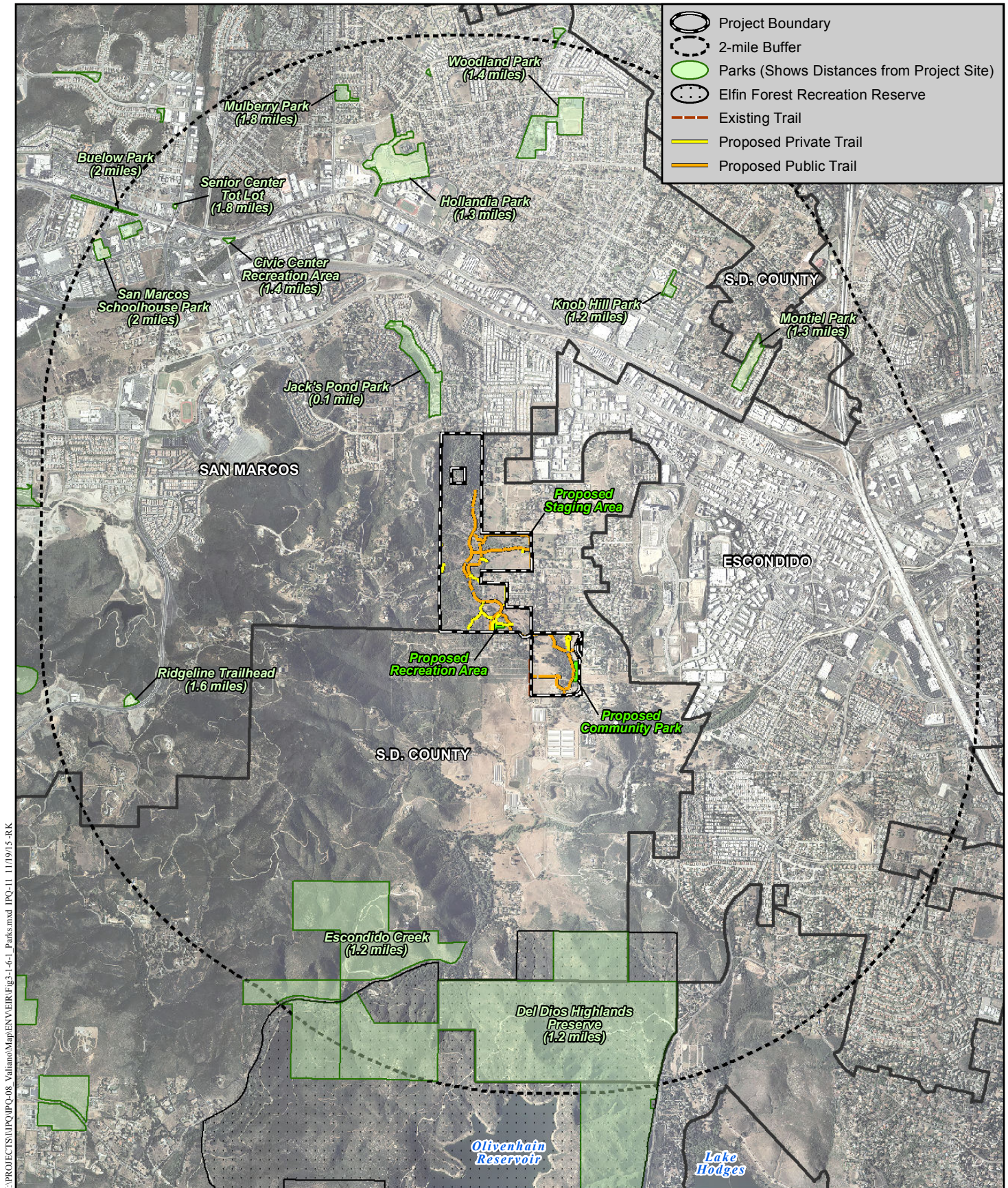
Pursuant to Threshold 1, it was determined that implementation of the Proposed Project would not have a significant impact on parks and recreational facilities because it conforms to the PLDO as do other projects in the County. Similar to the Proposed Project, the cumulative projects would be required 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 a public park, the provision of private recreational facilities, or a combination of these methods), the Project in combination with 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 (Threshold 1).

With regard to Threshold 2, 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 (Threshold 2). Therefore, **cumulative parks and recreation impacts would be less than significant.**

3.1.6.4 Significance of Impacts

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



Parks in the Project Vicinity

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