

4.13 PARKS AND RECREATION

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**SECTION 4.0**

## 4.13 PARKS AND RECREATION

This Draft Environmental Impact Report (Draft EIR) analysis section considers the potential for the North Canyon Ranch residential project and the Required Island Annexations (together forming the whole project for the purposes of this Draft EIR) to result in impacts to parks and recreation resources and identifies opportunities to avoid, reduce, or otherwise mitigate potential significant impacts to recreation resources, where warranted.

This analysis consists of a description of the existing conditions at the proposed project site and surrounding area, a summary of the regulatory framework that guides the decision-making process, thresholds for determining if the proposed project would result in significant impacts, anticipated impacts (direct, indirect, and cumulative), mitigation measures, and residual impacts (i.e., level of significance after mitigation). The significance of project impacts has been determined in accordance with Appendix G of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) Guidelines, and additional regulatory agency requirements, where they apply. Sources used in the analysis are cited herein where relevant to the analysis; a comprehensive list of references is provided Section 7.0, Organizations and Persons Consulted and References, of this Draft EIR.

### 4.13.1 Existing Conditions

The environmental setting and regulatory setting, below, establish existing conditions relevant to the project. The analysis of project impacts is based upon these baseline conditions.

#### Environmental Setting

The environmental setting is a description of the physical environmental conditions on and in the vicinity of the project site.

#### *North Canyon Ranch*

The proposed North Canyon Ranch residential development project site is located within an approximately 160-acre undeveloped property in unincorporated Ventura County, adjacent to the City boundary of the northwestern portion of the City. The project site property is located within the City's Sphere of Influence and City Urban Restriction Boundary area, and the project is requesting that the project site be annexed to the City. Existing land uses adjacent to the proposed development area consist of multi-family residences and commercial retail stores associated with the Simi Valley Town Center Mall to the south, single-family residences to the east, and open space to the north and west. The southwestern corner of the development area is located at the northern terminus of First Street, and the eastern side of the development area is located at the western terminus of Falcon Street, which the project would extend westerly through the project site to connect with First Street. There are multiple park and recreational facilities located near the proposed project site that fall under the jurisdiction of the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District (Park District), as described further below.

#### *Required Island Annexations*

The project would also include the annexation of nine unincorporated County Island Areas into the City. The Annexation Areas are located within the City limits boundary, although currently they are excluded from the City's jurisdiction, and consist of parcels that are mostly developed for residential use (consisting of single-family homes and several duplexes). A total of approximately five undeveloped lots within these unincorporated areas, which are located adjacent to existing development, could potentially be developed with five dwelling units. For the purposes of CEQA, the only action for this part of the project is for the Ventura County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to approve annexation of the Island

properties to the City, and no physical changes in land use or infrastructure within these properties is proposed as part of this project.

### ***Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District***

All portions of the project are within the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District service boundaries.<sup>1</sup> The Park District is a special district that owns, operates, and maintains parks and open space areas in the City of Simi Valley and community of Oak Park, and other unincorporated areas in the vicinity.<sup>2</sup> It serves an area of approximately 113 square miles and an estimated population of 141,000 residents. The Park District maintains 1,212.3 acres of parklands within the City of Simi Valley and preserved over 5,000 acres of open space that is now used for hiking, biking, horseback riding and wildlife preservation.<sup>3</sup> As described in the Simi Valley General Plan EIR, there are five main types of parks within the area: community, neighborhood, special use, natural, and mini parks. These are generally described as follows:<sup>4</sup>

- **Community** – Community parks are major recreational facilities that range in size from about 20-45 acres. They are generally centers of activity where individuals can find a variety of recreational activities, and generally serve a population of 15,000 to 25,000 people living within a 2-mile radius.
- **Neighborhood** – Neighborhood parks are designed to provide aesthetic value and allow active or passive recreation. They typically range from 2-20 acres and are intended to serve a population of 2,500-5,000 residents living within a 0.5-mile radius.
- **Special Use** – Special Use parks are provided for single purpose recreation activities, such as a golf course or equestrian center.
- **Natural** – Natural parks aim to preserve natural resources and provide space for informal play and passive enjoyment, such as hiking, biking, or equestrian use.
- **Mini** – Mini parks are generally less than an acre in size and are designed to serve a limited group or population living within a very short distance.

The Park District owns 124.4 acres of community parks, 204.7 acres of neighborhood parks, 577 acres of natural parks, 304 acres of special use parks and 1.7 acres of mini parks in Simi Valley, totaling 1,212.3.<sup>5</sup> Table 4.13-1 summarizes the parks and facilities provided by the Park District within approximately 2.0 miles of the North Canyon Ranch project site, for a view of the closest parks to that larger portion of the proposed project. A listing of nearby parks, along with the address, amenities and distance from North Canyon Ranch site, are provided in **Table 4.13-1, Simi Valley Recreation and Parks Facilities Near North Canyon Ranch.**

The Park District provides a variety of recreational facilities, with areas available for organized sports, including baseball/softball diamonds, basketball courts, golf courses, soccer fields, tennis courts, and volleyball courts. The parks offer places for informal recreational activities including an amphitheater, barbecues, hiking and equestrian trails, bike paths, picnic pavilions, handicap accessible playgrounds, shuffleboard courts, and horseshoe pits. There are over 250 year-round recreation programs and classes offered to residents. Multiple community centers are also available for public use and contain amenities

<sup>1</sup> LAFCo, Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District map, Accessed February 9, 2024 at: [https://www.ventura.lafco.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Rancho\\_Simi\\_Recreation\\_and\\_Park\\_District\\_8.5x11-1.pdf](https://www.ventura.lafco.ca.gov/wp-content/uploads/Rancho_Simi_Recreation_and_Park_District_8.5x11-1.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Rancho Simi Recreation & Park District, Facts About Us, Accessed on September 20, 2022, at: [http://www.rsprd.org/about\\_us/index.php](http://www.rsprd.org/about_us/index.php).

<sup>3</sup> Simi Valley General Plan EIR, Volume I, Chapter 4.15, Recreation, June 2012.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

such as swimming pools, multipurpose rooms, and tot lots. Additionally, the Park District maintains a system of hiking and equestrian trails and bikeways within the City’s jurisdiction and beyond.<sup>6</sup>

**Table 4.13-1**  
**Simi Valley Recreation and Parks Facilities Near North Canyon Ranch**

Name	Address	Amenities	Distance from North Canyon Ranch Site
Mayfair Park	2550 Caldwell Ave.	Basketball court, handball court, playground, softball field, picnic tables	0.6 miles
Atherwood Park	2271 Alamo St.	Picnic tables, playground	0.8 miles
Citrus Grove Park	2100 N. Marvel Ave	Picnic tables, playground, walking path	1.1 miles
Willowbrook Park	1786 Willowbrook Ln.	Park benches, picnic tables	1.4 miles
Berylwood Park	1955 Bridget Ave.	Basketball court, picnic tables, playground, restrooms, volleyball court	1.5 miles
Big Sky Park	2151 Los Canyons Dr.	Basketball court, picnic tables, playground, restroom, softball field	1.6 miles
Arroyo Park	2105 Socrates Ave.	Playground, picnic tables, restroom	1.7 miles
Simi Dog Park	2251 Los Canyons Dr.	Gated areas for dogs, picnic tables, portable restrooms	1.8 miles
Frontier Park	2163 Elizondo Ave.	Park benches, playground	1.9 miles
Strathearn Historical Park	137 Strathearn Pl.	Museum, historical park grounds, restrooms	2.0 miles

Source: Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District, Simi Valley Facilities, Accessed on September 20, 2022, at: [https://www.rsprd.org/parks/simi\\_valley/parks/index.php](https://www.rsprd.org/parks/simi_valley/parks/index.php)  
List includes those parks local, or close to, (selected as within 2.0 miles) the North Canyon Ranch site, which is the only portion of the project proposed to add population beyond existing conditions.

According to the City’s General Plan EIR, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) established a standard of five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents of “local or close to home open space.”<sup>7</sup> The City was home to 129,148 residents as of 2022 (see Section 4.11, Population and Housing). Further, the California Quimby Act requires 3-5 acres of park area per 1,000 persons residing within a jurisdiction. As shown in **Table 4.13-2, Existing Parkland Ratio in Simi Valley**, the current ratio of parkland to residents in the City is 9.39 acres per 1,000 residents, which is substantially more parkland than the stated standards from NRPA and the Quimby Act.

**Table 4.13-2**  
**Existing Parkland Ratio in Simi Valley**

Population (2022) <sup>a</sup>	Parkland (acres) <sup>b</sup>	Parkland per 1,000 Residents
129,148	1,212.3	9.39 acres

<sup>a</sup> SCAG, Connect SoCal 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Table 13 and Table 14, Adopted September 3, 2020.  
<sup>b</sup> Simi Valley General Plan EIR, Volume I, Chapter 4.15, Recreation, June 2012.

Note: Population data for the year 2022 within the City was calculated based on a linear interpolation of the 2016 to 2045 projections in SCAG’s 2020-2045 RTP/SCS (see Section 4.11, Population and Housing).

<sup>6</sup> Simi Valley General Plan EIR, Volume I, Chapter 4.15, Recreation, June 2012.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

## Regulatory Setting

### *Federal*

There are no federal policies that are directly applicable to this analysis of parks and recreation services within the City of Simi Valley.

### *State*

#### Quimby Act

The Quimby Act was enacted by the California legislature in 1965 to provide parks for the growing communities in California. The Act authorizes cities to adopt regulations addressing parkland and/or fees for residential subdivisions for the purpose of providing and preserving open space and recreational facilities and improvements. The Act requires 3-5 acres of park area per 1,000 persons residing within a jurisdiction, unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community park area exceeds that limit, in which case the City may adopt a higher standard not to exceed five acres per 1,000 residents. The Quimby Act also specifies acceptable uses and expenditures of such funds.

### *Regional and Local*

#### Simi Valley Municipal Code Chapter 9-68

Simi Valley Municipal Code (SVMC) Title 10 (Parks and Recreation) applies to all public schools and open space areas which are now or which may hereafter be within the City, including all grounds, roadways, avenues, parks, buildings, campgrounds, swimming pools, equestrian trails, bicycle trails, hiking trails, school facilities when they are in use as recreational or educational facilities, and areas under the control, management, or direction of the Simi Valley Unified School District or the Rancho Simi Recreation and Park District. The regulations of this Chapter govern the use of all such public school facilities and recreation and park areas, and the observance of such provisions is a condition under which the public may use such recreation and park areas.

SVMC Chapter 9-68 (Dedication of Land for Park and Recreation Purposes) requires that for all developments requiring a tentative map, approval are required to dedicate land and/or payment of fees to the Rancho Simi Park and Recreation District for recreational purposes. The amount of land dedicated or amount of fee in lieu of dedication is determined based on the population generated and computed based on five acres per 1,000 persons.

### 4.13.2 Thresholds of Significance

The potential for the proposed project to result in impacts related to recreation has been analyzed in relation to the thresholds below, as established in the CEQA Guidelines Appendix G Checklist. The proposed project would be considered to have a significant impact to recreation resources when the proposed project has potential to (short title for impact headings shown in parentheses):

- Result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service rations, response times or other performance objectives for parks. (Use of Parks and Recreation Resources).
- 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. (Use of Parks and Recreation Resources).

- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. (Construction of Recreational Facilities).

### 4.13.3 Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures

#### 4.13.3.1 Use of Parks and Recreation Resources

The proposed project would potentially have a significant impact to parks if it would result in substantial adverse physical impacts associated with the provision of new or physically altered government facilities, need for new or physically altered governmental facilities, the construction of which could cause significant environmental impacts, in order to maintain acceptable service rations, response times or other performance objectives for parks. Similarly, the project’s impact would potentially be significant if recreation resources of the project would 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. For purposes of this analysis, a determination of an adverse increase in use of existing parks and recreational resources will be based on the ratio of five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The project’s impact on parks within the City is evaluated, as the largest impact would occur locally, and if the project would have a less than significant impact on the City’s sub-set of Park District resources, then the project would have even less of an impact Park District-wide.

#### North Canyon Ranch

As discussed in Existing Conditions, the current ratio of parkland to residents within the City is 9.62 acres per 1,000 residents, which is far above the District and City’s minimum parkland standard of five acres per 1,000 residents. The proposed 157 single-family units and 50 multi-family units would result in an increase of 207 additional residential units and an estimated population increase of 617 people based on the City’s average owner-occupied household size, as shown in the General Plan. Although the average household size for renter-occupied units is lower, the average household size for owner-occupied units of 2.98 people was used for a conservative, worst-case scenario projection.<sup>8</sup> **Table 4.13-3, Project Parkland Ratio in Simi Valley** shows the parkland ratio per 1,000 residents for the existing population in the City plus the population increase added by the project.

**Table 4.13-3  
Project Parkland Ratio in Simi Valley**

Population (2022) <sup>a</sup> + Project	Current Parkland (acres) <sup>b</sup>	Parkland Ratio per 1,000 Residents
129,765	1,212.3	9.34 acres
<sup>a</sup> SCAG, Connect SoCal 2020-2045 Regional Transportation Plan/Sustainable Communities Strategy, Demographics and Growth Forecast Technical Report, Table 13 and Table 14, Adopted September 3, 2020. <sup>b</sup> Simi Valley General Plan EIR, Volume I, Chapter 4.15, Recreation, June 2012.  Note: Population data for the year 2022 within the City was calculated based on a linear interpolation of the 2016 to 2045 projections in SCAG’s 2020-2045 RTP/SCS (see Section 4.11, Population and Housing).		

As shown in Table 4.13-3, the anticipated population increase would result in an updated ratio of 9.34 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, which would not substantially alter the ratio of parkland per resident within the City, and the parkland standards would still be met and exceeded. The impact on the total acres of parks Park District-wide would be even less. Additionally, pursuant to applicable law, development projects requesting tentative map approval are required to dedicate land or provide development fees to the Park District to offset potential increases in use of recreation resources. Park fees shall be deposited with the

<sup>8</sup> City of Simi Valley, Simi Valley General Plan, Housing Element, Table H-9, Household Characteristics, May 2023.

Park District prior to approval of the Parcel Map. As the project would not cause an increase in population that could result in a deficiency of parkland resources, and the project would provide onsite recreation resources, the project's potential environmental impacts regarding provision of recreation resources would be less than significant.

### ***Required Island Annexations***

The Islands are existing developed areas, where development is not proposed to be changed. For the majority of these areas, the existing housing and number of residents are assumed to remain the same as under current conditions. The existing development within the Islands is included in the current County population and housing projections, and not the City population and housing projections. With annexation, these units would be removed from unincorporated County counts and added to the City counts. However, as the development is an existing condition and not new development, this change would be jurisdictional only and does not have a significant environmental impact in terms of parks and recreation use. Thus, for the developed portions of the islands, impacts with regard to a parks and recreational use would be less than significant impact.

The Islands also include approximately five vacant/undeveloped lots that could potentially be developed with five single-family dwelling units. Assuming an average of 2.98 persons per single-family household and rounding up, these five lots would potentially add 16 persons to the City's population, which would not result in a significant increase of the projected City and County household and population projections. Added to the existing plus North Canyon Ranch population numbers from Table 4.13-3, the small population increase would result in only a small fraction of a change in the ratio (i.e., less than a 100<sup>th</sup> of an acre per person), which would remain at 9.57 acres per 1,000 people, which again is better than the City's goal of five acres per 1,000. As such, the Island Annexations would not result in an increase of population that would result in a deficiency of parkland resources, and the project would have a less than significant impact.

### ***Mitigation Measures***

Impacts would be less than significant, and therefore no mitigation is required.

### ***Residual Impacts***

Impacts would be less than significant before mitigation.

#### ***4.13.3.2 Construction of Recreation Facilities***

The proposed project would potentially have a significant impact to recreation resources if the project would include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

### ***North Canyon Ranch***

The current ratio of parkland to residents within the City far exceeds the above-stated standard, and the proposed project would not result in the need to construct additional offsite recreational facilities. In addition, the project would provide recreational amenities within the project site consisting of 70.82 acres of open space, two pocket parks totaling 0.43 acres, and additional landscaping amenities, which would reduce the need for future residents to utilize offsite recreational facilities. Provision of these open space areas within the proposed project would not result in adverse physical effects on the environment. Therefore, potential impacts related to construction of recreation facilities would be less than significant.

### ***Required Island Annexations***

The Islands are existing developed areas, where development is not proposed to be changed. For the majority of these areas, the existing housing and number of residents are assumed to remain the same as under current conditions, except it's assumed that approximately five single-family lots could be developed in the future, though there are no known plans for their development. The existing development within the Islands would not constitute new development and would therefore not require the construction or expansion of additional recreational facilities. These five lots would potentially add five dwelling units to the housing count and 16 persons to the City's population, which would not result in a significant increase of the projected City and County household and population projections, and therefore not require the construction or expansion of additional recreational facilities. The Islands would have a less than significant impact.

### ***Mitigation Measures***

Impacts would be less than significant, and therefore no mitigation is required.

### ***Residual Impacts***

Impacts would be less than significant before mitigation.

## **4.13.4 Cumulative Impacts**

Continued development and growth throughout the City would contribute to greater demand for parks and recreational facilities. Based on Section 3.0, Cumulative Development, which includes projects that are approved and awaiting approval, there are numerous residential projects approved for construction also located near the project site. However, the current supply of parkland resources provided by Park District exceeds the standard of five acres per 1,000 persons by a substantial margin (see Existing Conditions). With the current level of parkland inventory, the Park District would continue to meet its parkland resources standard even if cumulative development (beyond the proposed project) were to result in an additional 100,000 residents, which is more than the County projected increase Countywide by 2028 (see Section 4.11, Population and Housing) (at that point the ratio would be 5.35 acres per person). At the 2.98 average household size, that many added residents would assume an additional 32,786 dwelling units, which is above the projected Countywide growth by 2028. If the project's cumulative impact on a City level is less than significant, the impact Park District-wide would be even less.

As shown in Section 3.0, the related projects would add only a fraction of that number of units, and thus the City would continue to meet the parkland provision standards. The project would not result in a cumulatively considerable contribution to substantial recreation facility impacts. In addition, the City requires future developers proposing subdivisions requiring a tentative map approval within the City to either dedicate land for park facilities or pay a fee in lieu of providing parkland in the form of Quimby fees, which would offset recreation impacts of individual projects. Therefore, potential cumulative impacts regarding the City's provision of parkland would be less than significant.