

3.13

PARKS AND RECREATION

This section of the EIR addresses existing park and recreational facilities within the County of San Benito, as well as planned park facilities within the Fairview Corners project. The project's potentially significant impacts related to existing park and recreational facilities, as well as any significant impacts resulting from the construction and use of proposed facilities within the project, are evaluated and feasible mitigation measures are included, where applicable. The following analysis is based on information supplied by the San Benito County Planning Department and the City of Hollister, other technical documents, and on information from the project application materials.

3.13.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The County of San Benito provides park and recreational facilities and services to County residents. The principal County park in the project vicinity is the 35-acre Veterans Memorial Park, located approximately 2 miles from the project site at Hillcrest Road and Memorial Drive. This park includes a tot-lot, lighted baseball and softball fields, basketball courts, soccer fields, and picnic areas. There are no neighborhood parks or school playgrounds in the immediate vicinity of the project site.

Valley View Park, a City of Hollister park, is the nearest public park to the project site, located approximately one mile away near the intersection of Enterprise Road and Valley View Road. This park is currently 2.5 acres in size, with agreements in place to expand to five acres. Other public recreational areas of regional importance include Pinnacles National Monument (approximately 35 miles south of the project site), Fremont Peak State Park (approximately nine miles southwest of the project site), Hollister Hills State Vehicular Recreation Area (approximately five miles southwest of the project site), and Bolado Park (approximately five miles southeast of the project site), which is operated by the State of California 33rd Agricultural District and includes the County fairgrounds and a nine-hole golf course. The County Historical Park is located adjacent to Bolado Park.

3.13.2 REGULATORY SETTING

San Benito County General Plan

Parks and recreational facilities in San Benito County are addressed in the County of San Benito General Plan. The following policies from the General Plan are relevant to the project's park and recreational facilities:

Open Space and Conservation Element

Policy 45: Private recreation facilities. It will be the County's policy to utilize land use ordinances to encourage land owners to provide private recreational facilities and open space areas. It will also be the County's policy to allow for an economic return on land while it is being used as open space.

Policy 46: County and City bike plans. It will be the County's policy to require new development to provide easements for trails/bikeways identified in the City of Hollister Parks and Recreation Master Plan and to be consistent with the San Benito County Bike Plan.

Policy 47: Parks master plan. Develop a county-wide parks master plan to identify long-range recreational needs of the county, potential trail corridors, and areas for potential recreational tourist services/programs.

Policy 48: Park funding. Provide the optimum level of cost effectiveness and public use level at each park, recognizing that each facility has a different mission and a unique set of operating conditions associated with the natural or other available resources.

Policy 55: Recreation and open space provide for recreation. It shall be the County's policy to acquire, develop, operate and maintain a comprehensive...system of open space land uses and recreational facilities to provide for the low-intensity trails, picnicking, informal sports, park benches, and active recreational needs (sports fields for youth and adult leaguer play) of the County population.

Policy 56: Ratio of parks to population. Recreational facilities for existing and new development in the unincorporated areas of the County shall be provided to meet the needs of the population based on a ratio of five acres of park land per 1,000 persons.

3.13.3 STANDARDS OF SIGNIFICANCE

The following thresholds for determining the significance of the project's impacts on park and recreational facilities are based on Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines and applicable local County CEQA standards. Impacts may be considered significant if implementation of the project would result in either of the following:

- An increase in the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities as a result of the project such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities as a result of the project would occur or be accelerated.
- Construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.13.4 PROJECT IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Demand for Park and Recreational Facilities

Impact REC-1: The proposed project would construct up to 220 new residences, which would result in additional demand on existing park and recreational facilities, which as a result, could lead to the occurrence or acceleration of substantial physical deterioration of those facilities. This is considered a **potentially significant impact**.

The proposed project would result in an increase in the County population. The project's residential population is estimated to be approximately 678 persons based on the proposed 220 residential units with an average of 3.081 persons per household (Department of Finance 2010). The County General Plan requires that recreational facilities be provided at a ratio of five acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. Based on the estimated project-related population of 678 residents, 3.4 acres of parkland is required.

The Specific Plan proposes to include parkland and open space to serve the project's residents, as well as to facilitate connections with the adjacent Gavilan College San Benito Campus. Specifically, the project would meet the County's park and open space requirement, which mandates the provision of five acres of parkland per 1,000 new residents. Assuming the maximum build-out of 220 units (678 residents at 3.081 persons per unit), the project would need to provide at least 3.4 acres of open space and parks on-site, which are sufficiently improved to qualify as park facilities or recreational open space facilities as defined in the County's Parks Master Plan. As an alternative, the developer may pay the applicable in-lieu fee in accordance with the County's park requirements (County Code § 23.15.008) — particularly given the close

proximity of extensive park and open space features planned on the adjoining Gavilan College San Benito Campus site — which the County could then use to help fund park and open space facilities in other areas in the County. As shown in Figure 13, Open Space Diagram (Section 2.0), it is anticipated that the proposed project would provide parks and open space on the project site.

The project’s active parks could take the form of “pocket parks” located strategically throughout the neighborhoods. Passive and/or active open space uses could occur in certain areas of the project site that would otherwise be reserved for the geologic fault area (near the 35-foot Tres Pinos Fault) as well as a potential seven-acre habitat conservation area near the former stock pond (located in the northeastern corner of the site), depending on the resource agency requirements and the ultimate site plan. As indicated by Figure 13, it is anticipated the project would include an open space and park trail system in a loop configuration around the outer boundaries or within the interior of the project site, designed to interconnect the residential neighborhoods with each other and the adjoining Gavilan College San Benito Campus. In addition, to allow useful recreational areas within private parcels, a minimum open space area is required, as described more fully in the Specific Plan, Section 2.4.

The ultimate design of the proposed park and open space features would be finalized as part of the application process for the first tentative or parcel map (as the case may be), as reflected in an approved Open Space and Parks Master Plan. The developer also proposes to construct a series of streets with bicycle lanes and pedestrian walkways, consistent with the County’s Bicycle Master Plan. In addition, it is anticipated that an open space trail system in a loop configuration around the perimeter of or within the project site, which would connect to the adjoining Gavilan College San Benito Campus, would be built as part of the project. Pedestrian circulation routes would be separated from vehicular traffic on all streets, which would contain sidewalks or pedestrian paths. See Figure 18, Bicycle and Pedestrian Connectivity Plan (Section 2.0).

In addition to policy provisions to protect and manage natural resources (Article 5.0) and to promote pedestrian and bicycle connectivity (Article 3.0), the Fairview Corners Residential Specific Plan contains a number of additional policies addressing the provision of park and recreational facilities that would be implemented as part of the project (refer also to the discussions in Section 3.1, Aesthetics, Section 3.4, Biological Resources, and Section 3.14, Traffic and Circulation, of this EIR). The Specific Plan contains the following policies that address potential impacts to parks and recreation.

Policy LU-6.1. Provide passive and active open space on-site or off-site, or by paying in lieu fees commensurate with park requirements.

1. The master developer and/or neighborhood developer(s) shall provide land for passive and active open space, consistent with the

Specific Plan and in accordance with County standards for the provision of parkland. The master developer shall conceptually design the open space and park areas, and the connections within the Plan Area by creating an Open Space and Parks Master Plan for the County's approval. [LEED ND NPD Credit 9/10; Homes LL-6]

2. The master developer and/or neighborhood developer(s) shall prepare final designs, finance, and construct the open space and park areas within the Plan Area concurrently with the development of the neighborhood phase in which they are located (prior to the issuance of a building permit for the last home in the neighborhood phase), and in accordance with the applicable County standards, and the approved Open Space and Parks Master Plan. Parks shall be designed to facilitate surveillance by adjoining residents and police services. If the number of residential dwelling units is less than the maximum of 220, the open space and park area requirement for the Plan Area will be based on the number of residential dwelling units built, to be calculated as required under the County Code.

3. If the open space and park area standard is not met within the Plan Area and/or on the adjacent Gavilan College San Benito Campus, in lieu of the development of on-site parks and open space, the master developer shall pay fees to the County as allowed under the County Code, and in accordance with the Development Agreement.

Policy LU-7.1. Interconnect open space and park areas.

1. The open space and park trail system will consist of a loop configuration around or within the Plan Area that interconnects with the residential neighborhood and the Gavilan College San Benito Campus recreational facilities. [LEED ND NPD Credit 9/10; Homes LL- 6]

2. Development plans for the open space and park trail system shall be included in the Open Space and Parks Master Plan, prepared by the master developer and approved by the appropriate County staff in accordance with Article 7.0 (Plan Implementation).

3. Anticipated open space improvements and the cost for those improvements are estimated in Article 7.0, Plan Implementation, and are illustrated in [Appendix C](#), Open Space Categories (Lotting Program Example C).

Policy LU-8.2. Provide minimum yard areas for all residences.

Policy PF-6.1. Provide on-site parks and open spaces.

1. Utilize areas adjacent to any on-site biological conservation easement to provide opportunities for enjoyment of the open space.
2. Provide a small park/tot lot within 1,500 feet of each residential lot, if possible. [LEED ND NPD Credit 9/10; Homes LL-6]
3. Each park/tot lot shall have trash and recycling receptacles, seating, and shade trees.
4. To the extent feasible, pathways and trails shall be constructed with a smooth surface that is at least partly pervious to water, such as decomposed granite.
5. Pathways will be landscaped with shade trees to facilitate use on hot days.
6. Parks shall be open from dawn until dusk.

Policy PF-6.2. Park maintenance shall be self-funded.

1. Park development will be phased to occur concurrently with the development of the Plan Area, each individual neighborhood developer shall construct those components of the park system that is within its neighborhood or adjacent street frontage in accordance with the Parks Master Plan.
2. The master developer shall establish a funding mechanism or district, such as a CSA, CSD, CFD, or some other entity, to ensure that parks remain public and long-term park maintenance is funded without use of County general funds or parks funds. If park maintenance is funded by a private homeowner's association, the parks will be private.

Related policies are contained in Article 3.0 (Circulation Plan), Article 4.0 (Community Design) and Article 5.0 (Resource Management) of the Specific Plan. Related discussions are found in Section 3.1, Aesthetics, Section 3.4, Biological Resources, Section 3.9, Land Use and Planning, and Section 3.14, Traffic and Circulation of this EIR.

Therefore, while the project includes uses that would generate demand on existing facilities, it is anticipated that the project would provide new park and recreational facilities in accordance with the County's Parks Master Plan, which would meet County park standards. In the event

that adequate park acreage is not developed on-site, the developer would pay the applicable in-lieu fee that would be used to support park and recreational facilities in other parts of the County in accordance with County Code Section 23.15.008. In so doing, the increased demand would be offset and substantial physical deterioration of existing facilities would not occur or be accelerated. Nevertheless, to ensure adherence to relevant Specific Plan policies and applicable County statutes, the following mitigation measures are proposed:

MM REC-1a: Park and recreational facilities shall be generally constructed as shown in Figure 13 and Figure 17 and in accordance with all applicable policies within Article 2.0 (Land Use), Article 3.0 (Circulation Plan), Article 4.0 (Community Design) and Article 5.0 (Resource Management) of the Specific Plan, as well as the project's Open Space and Parks Master Plan (as may be amended). Timing of implementation shall be in accordance with Article 7.0 of the Specific Plan (Implementation Plan) and the approved Infrastructure Phasing Master Plan.

MM REC-1b: On-site park and recreational facilities shall be provided by the developer and designed consistent with applicable County standards for the provision of parkland and the County Parks Master Plan. In the alternative, the developer may pay the applicable in-lieu fee for park and recreational facilities as set forth in County Code Section 23.15.008.

MM REC-1c: The project's pedestrian and bicycle circulation network shall be developed in accordance with Article 7.0 (Implementation Plan) and the approved project's Infrastructure Phasing Master Plan as approved by the Public Works Department.

With implementation of the above mitigation measures and Specific Plan policies, adequate park and recreational facilities would be available to meet the demand of the residents of the project, minimizing the potential for impacts on existing parks and recreational facilities outside the project boundaries, resulting in a **less than significant impact with mitigation incorporated**.

Construction of New Park and Recreational Facilities

Impact REC-2: The proposed project may result in the construction of new parks and recreational facilities, which may have an adverse physical effect on the environment. This is considered a **potentially significant impact**.

Construction and Grading Impacts

Park construction generally involves significant earthwork, which can result in dust emission impacts from grading equipment, as well as construction noise impacts, to nearby sensitive land uses. As discussed in Section 3.3, Air Quality and Section 3.11, Noise, of this EIR, there are

existing uses in the immediate project vicinity that would be sensitive to dust, emissions, and noise impacts. Additionally, newly occupied dwelling units within the project could experience similar dust, emissions, and noise impacts should park development activities take place nearby. To ensure that park development impacts on existing and future residents of the project would be minimized, Mitigation Measure AQ-1 (Air Quality), addressing air quality impacts during construction, and Mitigation Measure Noise-1 (Noise), limiting the hours of construction, would also be applicable to park development activities. Therefore, the project's impacts related to construction and grading impacts associated with parks would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**

Operational Impacts

Because the park facilities would be developed within the project site, it is anticipated that environmental impacts outside the project boundaries associated with operation of the park facilities would be minimal. However, as discussed in the Noise Section of the EIR, there is the potential for noise impacts to the future project residents resulting from park activities; in particular, from amplified noise and landscape maintenance equipment. Mitigation Measure Noise-1 (Noise), however, prohibits the use of noise amplification equipment in the parks and limits landscape maintenance activities to less sensitive daytime hours. Therefore, noise impacts associated with park operation would be **less than significant with mitigation incorporated**.

The park facilities would require irrigation to maintain the landscaped areas, which would increase water demand. This demand has been accounted for in the water supply assessment (Sunnyslope 2008) prepared in connection with the project. The water supply assessment determined that adequate water supplies exist for the project, including irrigation uses. Additionally, recycled water lines (i.e., purple pipe) would be installed within the project site to allow for park and open space irrigation with reclaimed water, at such time as recycled water is made available to the project site. Therefore, operational parkland irrigation impacts on the water supply would be **less than significant**. Additional discussion is found in Section 3.15, Wet and Dry Utilities and Energy.

No mitigation is required.

3.13.5 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Regional Demand for Park and Recreational Facilities

Impact REC-3: The proposed project would result in the development of new residences, which could, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable, probable future projects, contribute incrementally to demand for park and recreational facilities. This is considered a **less than significant impact**.

The increase in population resulting from the project would contribute incrementally to the demand for park and recreational facilities in the Hollister Urban Area, as other planned projects that are developed along the eastern side of Fairview Road and within the City of Hollister. These additional projects include the approved Award Homes project on the east side of Fairview Road, the planned Gavilan San Benito College Campus, and the Santana Ranch project, as well as the other projects within the Hollister Urban Area as set forth in the cumulative projects list in Section 3.0 of this EIR. This additional incremental demand, in combination with the demand from other projects, could result in the deterioration of existing park and recreational facilities serving the area, as a result of increased use of the facilities. This incremental impact of the project, however, would be mitigated, either by the provision of adequate park and recreational facilities within the project site to serve its future residents or by payment of the applicable in-lieu fee to support park and recreational facilities in other parts of the County. Similarly, the other projects in the cumulative scenario would be required to satisfy the park requirements of San Benito County or the City of Hollister, as applicable, to mitigate impacts. Therefore, cumulative impacts to existing park and recreational facilities would be **less than significant**.

No mitigation is required.

Irrigation Demand for Parkland

Impact REC-4: The proposed project may include the operation of new park and recreational facilities, which could, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable, probable future projects, contribute incrementally to water supply impacts within the groundwater basin serving the project. This is considered a **less than significant impact**.

Operation of the proposed park and recreational facilities within the project could, in combination with other planned projects within the groundwater basin, contribute incrementally

to water supply impacts within the basin, due to the need to irrigate park landscaping. These additional projects include the approved Award Homes project, the planned Gavilan San Benito College Campus, the Santana Ranch project, as well as other projects within the Hollister Urban Area as set forth in the cumulative projects list in Section 3.0 of this EIR. The Water Supply Assessment prepared in connection with the project, however, indicates that adequate water supplies exist for the Fairview Corners project, including parkland irrigation needs, in combination with other existing and planned projects within the groundwater basin serving Fairview Corners. Similarly, the other projects identified in the cumulative scenario also would be required to provide evidence of adequate water supplies, including water supplies required for park irrigation, either through approval of a water supply assessment, a finding of consistency with the approved Hollister Area Urban Water Management Plan, and/or documentation of adequate water supplies through the subdivision map process. Therefore, the proposed park and recreational facilities within the project, in combination with other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable, probable future projects are not anticipated to result in a substantial cumulative impact on water supply, and impacts would be **less than significant**.

No mitigation is required.