

## **PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT**

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### I. INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

The Parks and Recreation Element is an optional general plan element which the City of Imperial has chosen to include in the revised General Plan. The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Element is to plan for the future recreational needs of the City of Imperial, based upon the City's projected future population. The future population of the City is projected to be 19,500 in the year 2015. The City will have a need to develop more park and recreational facilities in the future in order to serve a growing population.

The best measure of the quality of park and recreational services is in the ultimate enrichment of the lives of the people served. This is not readily measurable, therefore, other types of indices are necessary. The amount and location of available physical space is one of the most important factors in determining the adequacy of a single park or an entire park system to accommodate recreational demands and to adapt to changing needs. Indices of physical and locational characteristics include: acreage, acreage per thousand population, effective service radius (in both time and distance) and population within the effective service radius. Other common indicators of recreational service levels include: Expenditures for parks and recreation (total and per capita), recreation spending as related to total expenditure and the revenue base, number of park and recreational personnel (total and per capita), relative use of funds and personnel for property-oriented functions (e.g. property maintenance), and people-related services (e.g., recreation leaders).

#### Current Parkland and Recreational Facilities

In October 1988, the City of Imperial had +/-10 acres of dedicated public parkland,

+/-7.56 acres of which had been developed. The majority of the public parkland was included in the existing residential area west of Highway 86.

Table PR-1 illustrates the breakdown of public recreation facilities as of October 1988.

Another provider of large areas of parkland and recreational facilities in Imperial is the Imperial Unified School District. The Imperial Unified School District maintains three educational facilities in Imperial including Imperial High School, one intermediate school and one elementary school. These school facilities, although used during school hours, are left virtually unused during the late afternoon, evenings, weekends, and during the summer months. By associating City park facilities with school district facilities, the balance between need and accessibility of park and recreational facilities usually characterized by high cost and wide dispersment can be brought to a closer, more efficient level.

#### **Park and Recreation Goal 1**

**Provide the current and future residents of the City of Imperial with ample recreational open space land, and with a variety of recreational programs to encourage maximum beneficial use of leisure time.**

##### *Objective No. 1*

*Provide 5 acres of recreation open space land for every 1,000 residents of the City.*

##### Policy 1

1. Cooperate with the Imperial Unified School District to develop

joint use recreation plans for all recreational open space in the City, including property under the control of the School District.

2. Require developers of new subdivisions to dedicate parkland and/or pay fees for the improvement and expansion of existing park and recreation facilities.
3. Develop and implement a 5 year capital improvement plan for all parks within the City.
4. All parks within the City should have, as a minimum, the following facilities: picnic area with tables and cabanas, restrooms, child play area with playground equipment, and either an outdoor basketball court or horseshoe pits.
5. Develop lighted tennis courts within a centrally located park and encourage use of these facilities by all interested citizens.
6. Encourage public use of the swimming pool located at Imperial High School.

Objective No. 2

*Provide a variety of recreational programs for all age groups throughout the year.*

Policy 2

1. Encourage the formation of City sponsored baseball/softball teams for various age groups.

2. Encourage the formation of City sponsored youth soccer teams.
3. Encourage the formation of City sponsored horseshoe competition teams.
4. Develop a summer recreation program for youth that would include arts and crafts instruction sponsored by the City.
5. Develop and implement a summer recreational reading program for youth utilizing facilities of the Imperial Library.

#### Future Park and Recreation Needs

In addressing the task of providing park and recreation facilities to the residents of Imperial, it is necessary to recognize that three separate tasks exist for the City:

1. Make parkland provisions for future development as requirements of development project approval.
2. Bring the existing developed neighborhoods of the City up to City parkland standards.
3. To assess the park and recreation needs of Imperial, recreational activity models have been referenced. Those tables (Tables PR-2 and PR-3) illustrate various types of facilities and appropriate spacing and population requirements.

## Parks and Recreation Goal 2

Enhance the services currently provided in the existing park facilities while seeking expansion of described services through a variety of methods.

### Priority of Facilities

#### Objective 1

*Provide park and recreational facilities at a level which reflects the priority assigned to these facilities by City residents.*

#### Policy 1

1. The City should annually review and update, if necessary, the list of park and recreational facilities priorities.

### Location of Facilities

#### Objective 2

*Locate park sites and recreation facilities within the City in a manner that fosters orderly development.*

#### Policy 2

1. The City should develop a two-tier system of public parks devoted to meeting the recreational needs of its residents.
  - A. The two-tier system of park organization shall include

community, and neighborhood parks.

- B. The terms community and neighborhood shall include any area of land dedicated or bought for the public and improved for recreational use. These terms shall include land which provides improved recreational areas oriented along the border of a natural feature, or a street, provided that the park site is at least 80 feet in width.
  
- C. Community Parks: The following general standards should be used for the development of community parks:
  - 1. Community parks should be approximately 20 acres in size and be located to serve a population of 10,000 within a two-mile radius.
  
  - 2. Access should be provided in close proximity to public transportation or make provisions for public transportation.
  
  - 3. Community parks should be graded and improvements provided, including but not limited to, adequate drainage, drought-tolerant landscaping, concrete walkways and automatic irrigation systems.
  
  - 4. When possible, community parks should be located adjacent to school sites or other public

facilities.

5. Community parks should include a competition size swimming pool, play fields for such activities as softball, football, soccer, racquetball and volleyball courts, picnic areas, and a community recreational center providing multi-purpose assembly rooms. The type and number of facilities located in a community park shall be subject to the review and approval of the City Council upon recommendation of the Planning Commission.
6. Adequate parking facilities shall be provided to serve the uses at each park.

D. Neighborhood Parks: The following general standards should be used for the development of Neighborhood parks:

1. Neighborhood parks should be located to serve a population of 2,500 within a one-half mile radius.
2. Neighborhood parks should be 5 acres in size.
3. The service area of a neighborhood park should not be divided by natural or manmade barriers such as thoroughfares, irrigation canals, or drainage channels.



4. Neighborhood parks should be located centrally to the residential development served whenever possible.
5. Whenever possible, new neighborhood parks should be located adjacent to elementary schools.
6. The neighborhood parks should be graded and improvements provided, including but not limited to, adequate drainage, drought tolerant landscaping, concrete walkways, and automatic irrigation systems.
7. All improvements shall be reviewed and authorized by the City Council according to the following criteria:
  - a. The entire area shall be graded, landscaped, and provisions made for adequate drainage.
  - b. Foot paths shall be paved.
  - c. One two (2) acre site shall be planted and maintained as a grassy area.
  - d. Two of the following shall be provided in each neighborhood park:
    - i. Children's play area including tot-

lots at a rate of one per 2,500 population served.

- ii. Tennis Courts (at a rate of one for each 2,000 persons served).
  - iii. Baseball/softball and foot ball area (at a rate of one baseball diamond per 4,000 people; one softball diamond per each 4,000 people; one football/soccer field per each 1,500 people).
  - iv. Basketball/volleyball areas at one per 500 persons served.
  - v. Racquetball courts (at a rate of one per 2,000 persons served).
- e. The service area of a neighborhood park shall be examined to determine the demographic composition, i.e., seniors, families, etc., in order to design the most appropriate recreation facilities, i.e., multi-purpose courts, etc., in lieu of other standard improvements.
- f. Land dedicated for parks may be maintained through a landscape maintenance district or the City of Imperial,

at the option of the City. When said neighborhood parks are privately owned and maintained, public standards shall be applicable. Determination as to quality of maintenance shall be the responsibility of the City.

## Transportation Systems Management

### Objective 3

*Design park and recreation facilities to serve the recreation and social interaction needs of City residents of all ages, economic situations and physical conditions.*

### Policy 3

1. The City should develop the Imperial Community Park in conjunction with the Local Government Center. The Community Park portion will serve as the major facility for active recreation by City residents. The Park may include facilities such as play fields, playgrounds, tennis and racquetball courts, a swimming pool, and an outdoor assembly area.
2. The Community Park should provide for location of city-wide community activities and athletic events. Given this function and its general location, in conjunction with the Local Government Center activities will be concentrated at the center of the City and help define the identity of the City.

3. Neighborhood parks shall serve as the day-to-day recreational areas of the City. The facilities should include playgrounds, play fields, and grassy areas where local residents can enjoy the outdoors in a safe and refreshing environment.

#### Joint Use of Public Facilities

##### Objective 4

*Maximize opportunities for the joint use of public recreational facilities such as those of the schools, the California Midwinter Fairgrounds facilities, and areas under the jurisdiction of other public agencies that have available land for possible recreational usage.*

##### Policy 4

1. The City shall consider the feasibility of an agreement between the City and the Imperial Unified School District on the joint ownership, financing, usage, and maintenance of recreational facilities on or adjacent to school property.
2. The City should, whenever feasible, locate and develop public parks adjacent to school facilities to maximize recreational facilities provided in Imperial.

#### Financing Public Recreation

##### Objective 5

*The City should employ a multi-faceted approach in financing the*

*acquisition, development and maintenance of the City park lands. The approach should include, but not be limited to financing park land improvements through development impact fees, state and federal grants in aid, gifts and donations, benefit assessment districts, and the City's general fund.*

#### Policy 5

1. The City shall maintain appropriate ordinances to implement the Quimby Act (Government Code Sections 66477-66477.3) by requiring the dedication of land, payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination thereof, as a condition of residential development project approval.
2. The City shall require the dedication of land and/or payment of fees to be equivalent to 5 acres of park land per 1,000 population proposed in a residential development project.
3. The City shall pursue appropriate regional, state, and federal grant-in-aid programs to help finance City park and recreation programs and improvements.

#### Private Recreational Facilities

##### Objective 6

*The City encourages the development of private recreational facilities to fulfill a portion of the City's recreational needs.*

Policy 6

1. The City should maintain appropriate ordinances to encourage the provision of private recreational facilities.
2. Private recreational facilities can be used to reduce the total amount of land to be dedicated and/or fees paid-in-lieu to 50 percent of the requirement per residential development project.
3. The City shall maintain appropriate ordinances which state the acreage amount reduction for different types of private recreational facilities.
4. Private recreational facilities shall meet the standards for similar public facilities.
5. Private recreational facilities shall be maintained by the developer, owner, a homeowner's association, or an assessment district.
6. Adequate agreements shall be made to ensure that private recreational facilities remain available in perpetuity, or the residents and the City shall be compensated accordingly for the loss of the facility.

TABLE PR-1  
AVAILABLE PARKLAND: 1988

Public Recreational Facilities

Irving Park	2.07 Ac.
Eager Park	2.07 Ac.
White Park	2.07 Ac.
Evans Park	1.35 Ac.
Sunset Park	<u>5.25 Ac.</u>
	12.81 Ac.

TABLE PR-2

STANDARDS FOR RECREATION AREAS

<u>Type of Area</u>	<u>Acres per 1000 pop.</u>	<u>Size of Site</u>	<u>Radius of Area Served</u>
Playground	1.5	2 Ac.	0.5 mile
Neighborhood Parks	2.0	5 Ac.	0.5 mile
Playfields	1.5	10 Ac.	1.5 miles
Community Parks	2.0	20 Ac.	2.0 miles
District Parks	2.0	100 Ac.	3.0 miles

TABLE PR-3  
STANDARDS FOR RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Type of Recreational Activity	Space Requirements Population	Ideal Size of Space	Where Activity May Be Located
<b>Active Recreation</b>			
1. Children's Play Area (with equipment)	0.5 acre/1,000 pop.	1 acre	Playground-Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks, School Playgrounds
2. Field Play Areas for young children	1.5 acres/1,000 pop.	3 acres	Playground-Neighborhood Parks, Community Parks.
3. Older Children-Adult Field Sport Activities	1.5 acres/1,000 pop.	15 acres	Playfield-Community Park District Park
4. Tennis-Outdoor Basketball-Other Court Sports	1.0 acre/5,000 pop.	2 acres	Playfield-Community Park
5. Swimming	1 outdoor pool, 25,000	Competition size wading pool 2 acres	Playfield-Community Park
6. Major Boating Activities	100 acres/50,000	100 acres and	District Park-Regional Park
7. Hiking-Camping-Horseback Riding-Nature Study	10 acres/1,000 pop.	500-1,000 acres	Large District Park Regional Park
8. Golfing	1-18 hole course per 50,000 pop.	120 acres	Community Park-District Park
<b>Passive Recreation</b>			
1. Picnicking	4 acres/1,000 pop.	varies	All Parks
2. Passive Water Sports Fishing-Rowing, Canoeing	1 lake or lagoon per 25,000 pop.	20 acre water area	Community Park-District Park
<b>Other</b>			
1. Parking at Recreational Areas	1 acre/1,000 pop.	varies	Playfields, Community and District Parks
2. Indoor Recreation Centers	1 acre/10,000 pop.	1-2 acres	Community Park
3. Outdoor Theaters, Band Shells	1 acre, 25,000 pop.	5 acres	District Parks

Source: Urban Planning and Design Criteria, Joseph De Chiara and Lee Kopplemen, Third Edition