

4.12 RECREATION

Based on the County's Parks and Recreation Element and Quimby Ordinance parkland standard of three acres of neighborhood and community parkland per 1,000 residents, the estimated future population of 18,000 residents would generate a demand for 54 total acres of parkland. The proposed Community Plan includes 51.7 acres of designated Recreation (REC) land, and an additional 13.7 acres of PF/REC designated land, for a total of 65.4 acres related to recreational development. This is consistent with the Quimby Ordinance and General Plan standard, exceeding the projected community need by 11.4 acres.

The proposed LOCP recognizes that Los Osos needs more opportunities for "active" recreation, such as ball fields, children's play equipment, and recreation programs. It also recognizes that recreational opportunities could be incorporated into planned mixed use areas, and encourages continued joint use of public school facilities to meet future needs. The LOCP includes a policy framework and programs to address these needs. Because the LOCP programs include adequate parkland to address long-term buildout, and with future development paying required Quimby fees, impacts would be Less than Significant (Class III).

4.12.1 Setting

a. Physical Setting

Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities. Los Osos has only one community park, the 6.2-acre Los Osos Community Park, located at 2180 Palisades Avenue. The only County park with available indoor facilities, Los Osos Community Park is a popular venue for civic events, small festivals, birthday parties and wedding receptions. In addition to the Red Barn and Schoolhouse facilities, the park offers two reservable tennis courts, horseshoes, two children's play areas, two large turf areas, a first-come, first-served group area with barbeque (awaiting further development) and individual picnic sites. The Los Osos Skate Park, which is part of the community park, is a 0.4-acre facility for skateboarders, roller skaters, and rollerbladers of all ages. The Baywood Peninsula shoreline/beach access, while not a formally designated recreational facility, functions as a de facto community park. Notably, the shoreline access in the Baywood area is a unique coastal recreational amenity in the vicinity of Morro Bay and the Central Coast in general, offering calm water access free from hazards such as strong currents, motorboat traffic, and boat moorings.

Public school facilities augment the community's formal recreation facilities operated by County Parks. There are an estimated 10.5 acres of playgrounds at Los Osos elementary schools, and an additional 7.5 acres of athletic fields at the middle school, for a total of 18 acres of school-related recreational facilities (Estero Area Plan, Table 3-5). In all, there are 24.2 acres of public or school-related recreational facilities in Los Osos. It should be noted that not all playgrounds at schools are not all playgrounds in the traditional sense as may be found at County park facilities.

In addition, Los Osos residents have convenient access to various nearby regional or state parks, including Montana de Oro State Park, Morro Bay State Park, and El Chorro Regional Park. Other unique nature-oriented facilities within Los Osos provide passive recreational opportunities, including Sweet Springs Nature Preserve, Elfin Forest Natural Area (38.7 acres), Monarch Grove (18 acres), and Los Osos Oaks State Reserve.

b. Regulatory Setting. The following regulations set forth criteria and specific requirements to address parks and recreation issues.

Federal. There are no federal regulations that relate to parks and recreation issues.

State. The following discussion summarizes the key state regulations that relate to parks and recreation issues.

Quimby Act

The Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477) was established by the California legislature in 1965 to preserve open space and parkland in the rapidly urbanizing areas of the State. This legislation was in response to California's increased rate of urbanization and the need to preserve open space and provide parks and recreation facilities for California's growing communities. The Quimby Act authorizes local governments to establish ordinances requiring developers of new subdivisions to dedicate land for parks, pay an in-lieu fee, or perform a combination of the two.

The Quimby Act provides two standards for the dedication of land for use as parkland. If the existing area of developed parkland in a community is greater than 3 acres per 1,000 persons, then the community may require dedication based on a standard of up to 5 acres per 1,000 persons residing in the subdivision. If the existing amount of developed parkland in a community is less than 3 acres per 1,000 persons, then the community may require dedication based on a standard of only 3 acres per 1,000 persons residing in the subdivision. The Quimby Act requires a city or county to adopt standards for recreational facilities in its General Plan Recreation Element if it is to adopt a parkland dedication/fee ordinance.

The County collects Quimby Act in-lieu fees. These fees contribute to a fund that would be used to acquire properties for parkland. The County's standards for parkland dedication under the Quimby Act are provided in the discussion of local regulations below.

Local. County regulations pertaining to recreation issues are described below.

General Plan Parks and Recreation Element

The County of San Luis Obispo General Plan Parks and Recreation Element (adopted December 19, 2006) sets forth the County’s policies and detailed programs related to parks and recreation needs.

The Parks and Recreation Element of the County’s General Plan also identifies a goal of achieving a minimum of three acres of parkland per 1,000 population in each of the County’s unincorporated communities (including Los Osos).

San Luis Obispo County Quimby Ordinance

The County’s Quimby Ordinance (within Title 21 of the San Luis Obispo County Municipal Code [Real Property Division Ordinance]) establishes:

- (1) The County’s desired park-to-population ratio of 3 acres of neighborhood or community parkland per 1,000 new population generated;
- (2) Criteria for when new development shall pay a fee versus provide parkland; and
- (3) Criteria for obtaining a credit for private park or recreation proposed within a new residential development.

The County’s Quimby Fee is periodically reviewed and set by the Board of Supervisors. When a fee is to be paid in lieu of land dedication, the amount of the fee is generally based on the anticipated cost of acquiring new park acreage and/or developing a new park. The County’s current Quimby Ordinance fee is \$926 for a new single-family lot and \$705 for a new multifamily lot. Quimby fees are collected at the time a residential subdivision is recorded. The fee can only be used to expand, acquire, rehabilitate, or develop a new neighborhood or community-serving park. The fee may not be used for maintenance.

San Luis Obispo County Public Facilities Fee Ordinance

The County’s Public Facilities Fee Ordinance (within Title 18 of the San Luis Obispo County Municipal Code), which was adopted in 1991 and amended in September 2016, is intended to implement the County’s General Plan by collecting fees on new development to offset their potential impacts on a variety of public facilities, including parks. However, when an application is made for a new building permit where the Parkland fees (Quimby) have been paid at the time of recordation of the subdivision, the land portion of the park component of the Public Facility Fee shall not be collected at the time of the building permit. The development portion of the park component of the Public Facility Fee shall be collected.

With some exceptions as described in the Ordinance, project applicants shall pay to the County Department of Planning and Building any and all Public Facilities Fees imposed by resolution of the Board of Supervisors. Fees shall be paid by one of the following methods:

- (1) Prior to the issuance of any building permit, or prior to the granting of any earlier approval for any development project if the collection of the fees at such earlier time is permitted by law; or
- (2) Deferred Fees. Prior to the final building inspection consistent with the following:
 - (a) Prior to the issuance of the building permit the applicant shall enter into an agreement in a form approved by County Counsel, assuring that all fees will be paid prior to final inspection.
 - (b) Prior to issuance of the building permit, a deposit shall be collected, in the amount of 20 percent of the total amount of Public Facilities Fees owed as of the date of building permit issuance based on the fees currently in effect, together with the administrative fee set in the adopted fee schedule.
 - (c) Prior to final inspection, all Public Facilities Fees shall be paid in full, minus the amount paid as a deposit prior to permit issuance pursuant to Section 18.04.010a(2)(b). The amount of the total Deferred Fees due and owed prior to final inspection shall be calculated according to the fees in effect at the time the Deferred Fees are paid in full.

Estero Area Plan

Chapter 4. Land Use Policies and Programs; V. Los Osos Land Use Policies

The Estero Area Plan describes, in a general sense, the kind of new recreational facilities that should be contemplated as the Los Osos community grows. The timing and thresholds of need for these facilities is not established in the area plan, but they include the following:

- *As the community grows, another community park with picnic facilities, walking paths through both landscaped and significant native vegetation areas, and similar facilities befitting the hilly terrain and capitalizing on the scenic overlook of Morro Bay should be developed in the Highland area;*
- *Neighborhood parks should be developed adjacent to future schools and Baywood Elementary School. This will provide recreation facilities throughout the community and allow for joint use of each facility.*
- *Additional neighborhood parks should be developed in the area west of 1st Street and south of Santa Ysabel Avenue and in the area south of the existing mobilehome parks south of Ramona Avenue.*
- *The development of a recreational trails system, providing routes for bicycle and pedestrian-oriented activities to link parks and other scenic area is essential.*
- *Significant tree groves of oaks, willows, pines, cypress, and eucalyptus within Los Osos should be studied for potential public park sites before private development occurs. Native and introduced trees include oaks, willows, pines, cypress, and eucalyptus. Use of such areas may range from small parkland areas with walking and bicycle access only to fully developed neighborhood or community parks.*

Section F., *County Parks, Los Osos and Vicinity*, establishes three specific programs for future recreational uses in Los Osos:

1. *Boat Launching Ramp. The county should work with the community toward acquisition and development of a site for a small boat launching ramp at Cuesta-by-the-Sea.*
2. *Parksite Reservation - Bayshore. The county should work with the community to identify and reserve a community park site for passive recreation along the south shore of Morro Bay.*
3. *Parksite Reservation - Los Osos The county should work with the community to develop neighborhood park facilities near Baywood Elementary School, Los Osos Junior High School and Baywood peninsula.*

4.12.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds.

Methodology. The analysis is based on a programmatic evaluation of the potential for future development under the LOCP to cause adverse impacts related to recreation, based on the proposed project's compliance with existing regulations that address the issue.

Significance Thresholds. In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, impacts would be significant if development under the Community Plan would result in any of the following:

- *Increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated;*
- *Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment; or*
- *Affect access to trails, parks, or other recreational opportunities.*

b. Impacts and Mitigation Measures.

Threshold: *Would actions under the Community Plan increase the use of existing neighborhood or regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?*

Threshold: *Would actions under the Community Plan include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

Threshold: *Would actions under the Community Plan affect access to trails, parks, or other recreational opportunities?*

Impact REC-1 Residential development and associated population growth resulting from future development under the LOCP would increase the demand for parks and recreational facilities. However, existing parks, in combination with planned recreational facilities and supporting policies in the LOCP, would ensure that programmatic impacts are Less than Significant (Class III).

Buildout under the Los Osos Community Plan would result to 1,861 new residential units within its 25-year planning horizon, which would generate an estimated 4,094 additional residents (based on an average household size of 2.2 persons). When added to the existing population of approximately 13,906, buildout under the Community Plan would increase Los Osos’s total population to an estimated 18,000 residents. This increase in population would lead to increased use of recreational facilities, and would contribute to the physical deterioration of these facilities.

Based on the County’s Parks and Recreation Element and Quimby Ordinance parkland standard of three acres of neighborhood and community parkland per 1,000 residents, the estimated future population of 18,000 residents would generate a demand for 54 total acres of parkland. The proposed Community Plan includes 51.7 acres of designated Recreation (REC) land, and an additional 13.7 acres of PF/REC designated land, for a total of 65.4 acres related to recreational development. This is consistent with the Quimby Ordinance and General Plan standard, exceeding the projected community need by 11.4 acres.

The planning area currently supports 129.0 acres of REC designation land, while the proposed plan only includes 65.4. Although it may appear that this could have an adverse impact on the development of

future recreational facilities, most of this difference was redesignated to Open Space (OS), in recognition of the fact that these were environmentally sensitive areas more suitable for more passive long-term uses, rather than formal park facilities.

Table 4.12-1 summarizes areas in Los Osos that would involve changes in land use designation, with respect to either Recreation or Open Space.

Table 4.12-1. Proposed Land Use Designation Changes involving Open Space or Recreation					
Reference Code Shown in Figure 2-4	Description of Area	APN	Existing Designation	Proposed Designation	Acreage
1	Elfin Forest	038-701-004, 008, 012, and 016	Uncertified ¹	OS	84.0
2	Sweet Springs	074-229-010 074-101-004	Uncertified	OS	24.9
3	Sweet Springs East	074-229-009	RSF	OS	2.5
4	Sweet Springs (Morro Palisades Co.)	074-229-014 074-229-015	Uncertified	REC	1.15
5	West of 3rd between Pismo and El Morro Aves.	038-262-001, 007, and 004; 038-341-001	OS	REC	3.81
6	Tract 1589 (Monarch Grove)	074-026-002; 074-026-003; 074-029-001 thru 015	RS (4.0 ac) RSF (22.65 ac)	OS (16.31 ac) REC (10.34 ac)	26.65
12	West of Western Fringe of West of Pecho area and Hotel site (State-owned)	074-011-010 and 074-011-012	REC	OS (Rural Estero)	64.7
13	East side Palisades Ave. adjacent to community park (county)	074-229-027	RMF	REC	1.65
17	Eastern Hillside, Morro Palisades	073-023-004, and 005	REC (32.0 ac) RS (79.0 ac) RSF (109.5 ac)	OS	220.5
22	Ptn. Tract 1646 west of Pecho Road, s/o Skyline	074-026-010	RSF	REC	2.4
26	TRI-W / Midtown	074-229-017	CR/OP	PF/REC	13.7
TOTAL ACREAGE SUBJECT TO LAND USE REDESIGNATION					446.0
<p>1. "Uncertified" refers to areas where the Coastal Commission currently has retained jurisdiction, because the County and the Coastal Commission could not agree on land use designations and standards. These areas would be redesignated as shown in the table.</p>					

Table 4.12-2 summarizes the proposed changes in terms of the total acreages within the plan area in either Open Space or Recreation. This is important because designated open space lands in many cases perform passive recreation opportunities, including walking trails through the Elfin Forest, Sweet Springs

and Monarch Grove. While not formal parklands, they perform a similar function, and should be considered as potential recreational opportunities for the community.

Table 4.12-2. Summary of Recreation and Open Space Land under the LOCP		
Land Use Designation	Existing Estero Area Plan	Proposed LOCP
Open Space (OS)	278.1	695.9
Recreation (REC)	129.0	51.7
Public Facility/Recreation (PF/REC)	0	13.7
Total OS and REC-related lands	407.1	761.2

As noted previously, public school facilities augment the community’s formal recreation facilities operated by County Parks. There are an estimated 10.5 acres of playgrounds at Los Osos elementary schools, and an additional 7.5 acres of athletic fields at the middle school, for a total of 18 acres of school-related recreational facilities (Estero Area Plan, Table 3-5). In all, there are 24.2 acres of public or school-related recreational facilities in Los Osos.

In addition, Los Osos residents have convenient access to various nearby regional or state parks, including Montana de Oro State Park, Morro Bay State Park, and El Chorro Regional Park. Other unique nature-oriented facilities within Los Osos provide passive recreational opportunities, including Sweet Springs Nature Preserve, Elfin Forest Natural Area (38.7 acres), Monarch Grove (18 acres), and Los Osos Oaks State Reserve.

Finally, the Baywood Peninsula shoreline/beach access, while not a formally designated recreational facility, functions as a de facto community park, as described on Page 4.12-1 of this section.

It should be noted that because the timing of future development cannot be determined at this time, the potential exists for new residential development to occur prior to the construction of adequate parkland to accommodate long-term buildout. Future applicants would be required to pay an in-lieu public parks fee. Payment of in-lieu park fees would result in funding equivalent to the provision of neighborhood and community parks in accordance with the County’s Quimby Ordinance standards. Following payment of Quimby Ordinance fees and applicable Public Facilities Ordinance fees, impacts to recreational resources, including the physical deterioration of existing facilities and the need for new facilities, would be Class III, less than significant.

It is not anticipated that future development will adversely affect access to public trails of recreational facilities because the nature of the proposed land use pattern suggests that access can be maintained.

However, future development will be evaluated on a case by-case basis as applications come forward to determine whether such development would comply with the programmatic requirement to maintain public access to such facilities.

Proposed LOCP Policies to Address Potential Impacts. Based on information in the Estero Area Plan, the proposed LOCP recognizes that Los Osos needs more opportunities for "active" recreation, such as ball fields, children's play equipment, and recreation programs. It also recognizes that recreational opportunities could be incorporated into planned mixed use areas, and encourages continued joint use of public school facilities to meet future needs. The LOCP includes a policy framework and programs to address these needs, as follows:

LU-5. Plan for a flexible combination of residential, service, office, and lodging uses at the Morro Shores Mixed Use Area.

- A. *Emphasize development of higher intensity residential development and encourage development of a multi-use business or commerce park.*
- B. *Require new development to provide convenient street, pedestrian and bicycle links to surrounding neighborhoods, commercial areas, the community center, schools, parks, and the bay.*

LU-9. Provide adequate parkland, open space, and recreation areas to accommodate Los Osos' anticipated population in 2035.

Program LU-1.1: **New parks and recreation Facilities.** *Develop new active parks and recreation facilities to accommodate the needs of existing and future populations.*

- A. **Expand Los Osos Community Park.** *County Parks should look into options for expanding Los Osos Community Park to accommodate sports fields, a playground, and a group picnic area.*
- B. **Funding and financing.** *If there is substantial community support for additional parks and recreational opportunities, the LOCS D should consider funding parks and recreational services through a benefit assessment and Proposition 218 vote.*
- C. **Additional parks and recreational projects.** *As funding becomes available (e.g. through a benefit assessment), the LOCS D and/or County Parks should pursue the development of desired parks and recreational facilities. The community has identified the following desired improvements:*
 - *A boat launch and park in the Back Bay or Cuesta Inlet areas*
 - *Additional sports fields*

- A new community park along the planned extension of Skyline Drive between Ravenna and Broderson Avenues
- A new community or neighborhood park in the Baywood Park area
- An aquatic center
- An off-leash dog park
- A series of “pocket parks” throughout the Baywood Park area

***Program LU-1.2: Multiple use of drainage basins.** The County should consider using existing and planned drainage basins for recreational purposes where feasible and if maintenance can be provided through a joint agreement between appropriate agencies/entities.*

***Program LU-1.3: Joint use of school facilities.** The County and the San Luis Coastal Unified School District should develop joint powers agreements that provide additional opportunities for public use of existing school facilities, as well as construction of new facilities.*

Program LU-1.4: Recreation program.

- A comprehensive recreation program and facilities should be established that targets children and young adults. A recreation coordinator could be hired, and recreation facilities could be built where needed. A joint use agreement between the San Luis Coastal Unified School District, the city of Morro Bay, the County, or the Los Osos Community Services District could help make recreation facilities available.*
- A recreation assessment could fund recreation and sports programs by a service charge through the Los Osos Community Services District. As an alternative, consider establishing a recreation district that includes the City of Morro Bay.*

These policies and programs adequately address a variety of recreation-related issues throughout the community. In the aggregate, they build on the existing state and County regulatory framework, and when applied to new development, will ensure sufficient long-term recreation opportunities within the community.

Impacts are therefore considered to be less than significant (Class III).

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are required, because impacts are less than significant.

c. Cumulative Impacts. The project-specific analysis evaluated potential communitywide impacts under the LOCP. For this issue, project-specific impacts are considered the same as cumulative impacts.

d. Subsequent Environmental Review for Future Development Projects in the Community Plan Area. Pursuant to CEQA Guidelines Section 15183, additional CEQA review is not required for projects that are consistent with the development density established by existing zoning, community plan or general plan policies for which an EIR was certified, except as might be necessary to examine whether there are project-specific effects which are peculiar to the project or its site. **Table 4.12-3** describes conditions under which future development in the study area would require additional CEQA review, pursuant to Section 15183.

Table 4.12-3. Conditions Under Which Future Development in the Community Plan Area Would Require Additional CEQA Review	
Condition	Impact to Address
<i>The future project is inconsistent with underlying General Plan and zoning designations.</i>	REC-1
<i>The future project is inconsistent with Community Plan policies, or would impede access to public facilities or trails that could otherwise be included in the proposed project design.</i>	REC-1
<i>The future project would result in an impact peculiar to the project or parcel in any issue area. An effect is not considered peculiar if uniformly applied development policies or standards previously adopted by the County would substantially mitigate the environmental effect.</i>	Impact that is peculiar to the project or parcel
<i>The future project would result in an impact or impacts not analyzed above, including off-site or cumulative effects.</i>	Impact other than REC-1
<i>The future project would result in an impact or impacts analyzed above, but at a higher level of severity as a result of substantial new information not known at the time the EIR was certified.</i>	Worsened REC-1, as applicable