

PARKS AND RECREATION PLAN

CURRENT PARK SHORTAGE IS APPROXIMATELY 165 ACRES

- CITY OF ORANGE -

Parks and recreation facilities are vital resources for the City. They provide residents with a broad range of health benefits, and the quality of these resources helps attract new residents and businesses to Orange. The City currently lacks adequate lands designated for public parks and open space to meet the recreational needs of its residents. Park facilities and recreation programs are essential to the health and economic well-being of Orange residents. The City has made improving its park system and recreational programs a high priority so that all residents can enjoy close access to a playground, a park, or a natural area.

Orange is presently deficient in improved recreational open space, according to standards established by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA).

Orange maintains and provides a wide range of specialized facilities such as game courts, athletic fields, and community buildings in existing parks. However, additional facilities are needed to meet future demands.

To calculate the parkland ratio per 1,000 residents, the acreage of currently developed City parks, City open space areas, and joint-use recreation facilities are combined for a total of about 251 acres. Given the City's estimated 2007 population of 138,640, this equates to a current ratio of 1.81 acres of current parkland per 1,000 persons, which is notably lower than the National Recreation and Park Association's recommendation of 3 acres per 1,000 population. According to this recommendation, the City has a current park shortage of approximately 165 acres.

Open spaces offer areas for passive and active recreation, and for horticulture. They provide habitat for plant and animal life. Used as parks, they house facilities for recreational and civic activities that are accessed by residents and visitors of all ages.

Striking a balance between the built environment and Orange's natural resources is vital to the long-term sustainability of the community. Such sustainability requires that growth occur in a responsible manner that allows natural resources to be preserved and enhanced for future generations.

WHAT IS THE PLAN?

Orange's *Vision for the Future* is described in the General Plan Introduction.

The Vision recognizes that the City's quality of life will be judged by how well we connect with our surroundings. The Vision includes the following objectives:

Define neighborhoods through the use of open space areas and a trail system that provides a source of aesthetic beauty and recreational opportunities. These open space areas support a healthy and active community.

Continue to protect our critical watersheds, such as Santiago Creek, and other significant natural and open space resources.

Strive to build a comprehensive system of parks, open space, equestrian areas, scenic resources, and undeveloped natural areas, as well as a full array of recreational, educational, and cultural offerings such as sports, entertainment areas, and play facilities.

Develop a connected multi-modal network for traveling from one end of town to the other that provides the option for residents from different neighborhoods to access parks, open spaces, and scenic areas by vehicle, transit, foot, bicycle or, where appropriate, by horse.

The City's active and passive recreational resources consist of designated parks, trails, and open space areas. Continued provision of recreational opportunities through preservation of open space, park maintenance and development, and the creation of new facilities will ensure improved quality of life for residents.

GOALS:

- Provide recreational facilities and programs that adequately serve the needs of residents.
- Maintain existing City parks at levels that provide maximum recreational benefit to City residents.
- Provide a range of high quality recreational facilities and programming to serve a broad cross section of residents, including youth, seniors, young adults, mature adults, and people with disabilities.
- Establish joint recreational use of open space land and facilities owned by school districts and/or the City.
- Develop new public parks and open space resources by establishing incentives to use creative techniques available to property owners and developers that support public-private open space partnerships.
- Explore and pursue new approaches to new park development and to providing a balanced mix of amenities and facilities.
- Identify areas within the City that are currently underserved by existing open space, and develop programs to purchase land and build park amenities at a minimum level of 3 acres per 1,000 persons and the goal of 5 acres per 1,000 persons.