



Chapter 6 Open Space and Recreation Element



Chapter 6

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6.1 INTRODUCTION

The Buena Park community recognizes the importance of open space, parks, and other recreational facilities and programs. Programs and services provide valuable opportunities to engage and enrich residents and visitors alike. Parks, greenways, trails, and other open space areas provide a variety of opportunities for recreation, social interaction, and community building. The Open Space and Recreation Element contains goals and policies that have been developed to take advantage of the City's natural



resources, to build upon existing recreation facilities and services, to help achieve an equitable balance of recreational resources, and to adapt to future open space and recreation needs. A well-designed and accessible open space and recreation system can improve the quality of life of residents, promote healthy activities and social interaction, and enhance the community's image.

6.2 AUTHORITY FOR THE ELEMENT

California State Government Code Section 65560(b)(3) stipulates that the General Plan address "...Open space for outdoor recreation, including but not limited to, areas of outstanding scenic, historical and cultural value; areas particularly suited for park and recreation purposes, including access to lakes shores, beaches, and rivers, and streams; and areas which serve as links between major recreation and open space reservations, including utility easements, banks of rivers and streams, trails, and scenic highway corridors..."

The City has expanded the Open Space Element to include parks and recreation.

6.3 SUMMARY OF EXISTING CONDITIONS

PUBLIC RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The City of Buena Park Recreation, Parks & Community Services Department offers a wide variety of recreation, sports and cultural activities, senior programs, services, and events for all age groups. The Department is also responsible for maintaining the parks and recreation facilities within Buena Park.

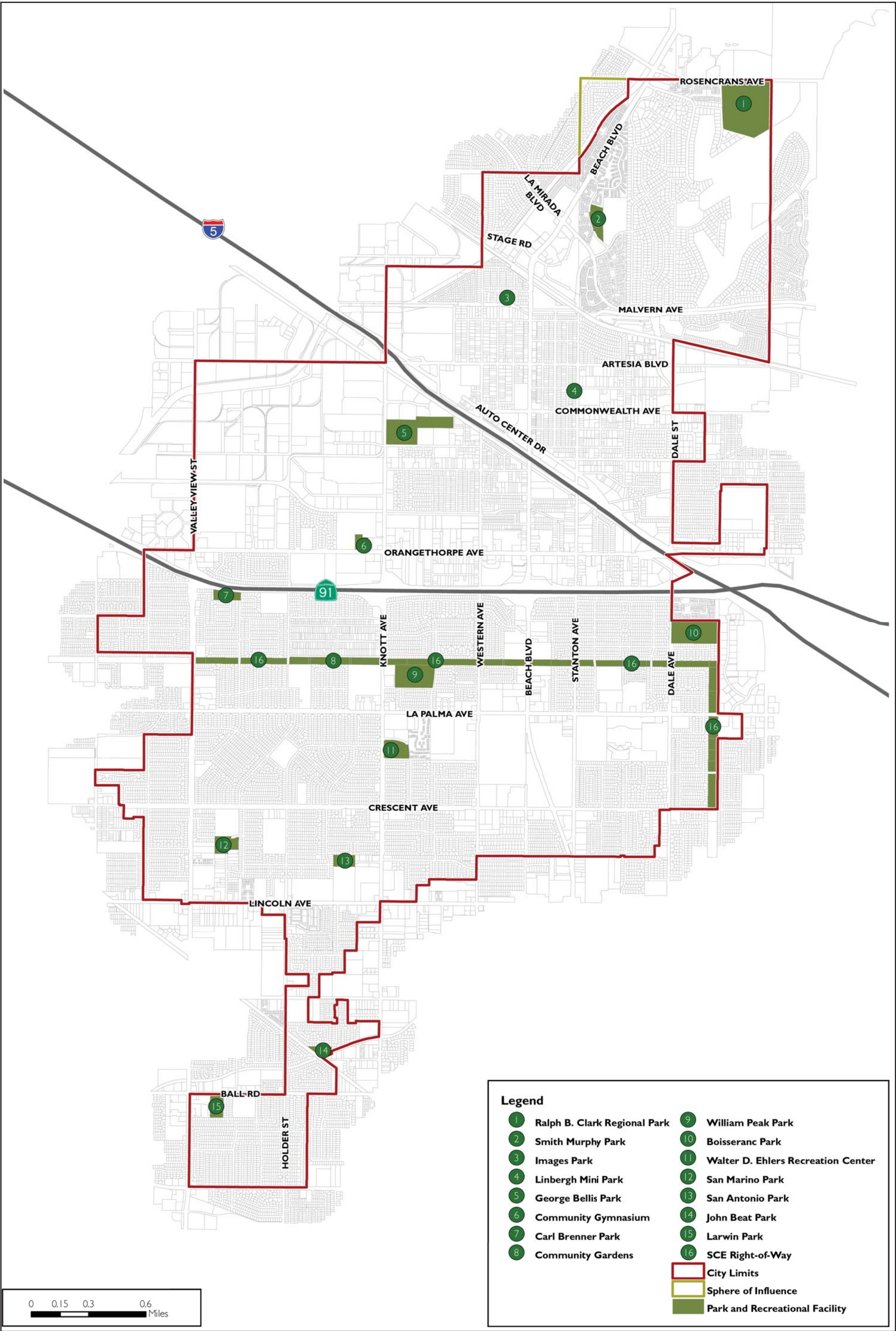
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The City currently has approximately 96.1 acres of parkland. The Department operates 11 parks, one Community Recreation Center and Senior Center, one Community Gymnasium, and a community garden; refer to [Table OSR-1, *Parks and Recreation Facilities*](#), and [Exhibit OSR-1, *Parks and Recreation Facilities*](#), for information on the facilities provided at each location.

Table OSR-1
Parks and Recreation Facilities

Facility Name/ Location	Acres	Ball Fields	Basketball Courts	Play Area	Community Center	Handball Racquetball	Horseshoes	Picnic Areas	Restrooms	Senior Center/ Shuffleboard	Swim pool	Tennis Courts	Volleyball	Skate Park	Dog Park
Smith-Murphy Park 5290 Cameron Drive	6.9			X		X		X	X						
George Bellis Park 7171 8 th Street	22.5	X		X	X	X		X	X			X			X
Carl Brenner Park 7373 San Rafael	4.5		X	X	X			X	X		X				
William Peak Park 7225 El Dorado Drive	15.8	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X			X	
Boisseranc Park 7520 Dale Street	20.0	X	X	X	X	X		X	X		X	X			
San Marino Park 6200 San Rolando Circle	6.0		X	X				X	X						
Larwin Park 6150 Ball Road	5.9		X	X	X				X						
John Beat Park 6600 Mt. Shasta Circle	2.0		X	X				X	X						
San Antonio Park 8810 San Francisco Drive	4.5	X		X					X						
Ehlers Community Recreation Center 8150 Knott Avenue	6.0				X				X	X					
Lindbergh Mini Park 4 th Street & Stanton Avenue	1.0			X											
Images Park Pacific & Rostrata Avenue	0.5			X											
Buena Park Junior High School Community Gymnasium 6931 Orangethorpe Avenue	1.0		X						X				X		

Source: City of Buena Park Website, accessed February 10, 2009.



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Facilities at these parks and recreation facilities include children's play areas, athletic fields, tennis courts, volleyball courts, basketball courts, swimming pools, handball courts, shuffleboard, a dog park, skate park, and other amenities. The public parks range from 0.50 acres to 22.5 acres in size and are generally located within residential neighborhoods distributed throughout the City. Ralph B. Clark Regional Park, located at 8800 Rosecrans Avenue, offers 105 acres of additional parkland including baseball fields, bike and hiking trails, playground, tennis courts, and volleyball courts.

In addition to the Ralph B. Clark Regional Park, regional recreational facilities in the surrounding area include La Mirada Regional Park, Craig Regional Park, and Cerritos Regional County Park. Cypress College, a community college west of Buena Park, also provides additional open space and recreational facilities to City residents. Within the City, elementary schools, junior high schools, high schools, and other small campuses provide supplemental recreational opportunities through playgrounds and athletic field areas. One notable site is the Community Gymnasium at Buena Park Junior High School where the City is currently offering various recreational activities and programs through a joint-use agreement, including adult sports leagues, drop-in sports, gym classes for kids, and a summer sports camp.

A number of private youth sports programs are offered in Buena Park including the Buena Park National Little League, Buena Park American Little League, Buena Park Youth Football, Buena Park Girls Softball, and AYSO soccer. Buena Park is also home to a number of clubs and service organizations. In addition, the City of Buena Park Cultural/Fine Arts Division oversees the Civic Theater, Youth Theater, student programs, concerts in the park, community chorus and other arts and cultural events.

The Buena Park Senior "Activity" Center, located at the Walter D. Ehlers Community Center, has established a mission to "provide the mature adult population in the community with a diverse offering of recreational, educational, social and human service programs in environments which promote a spirit of dignity and limitless potential for later life enrichment." In addition to other services, the Senior Center offers a variety of classes including dance, exercise, arts and crafts, quilting, bingo and basic computer.

OPEN SPACE

Aside from the City's public parks, there is limited open space in Buena Park. Existing open space consists of a linear easement owned by Southern California Edison (SCE) that is located north of La Palma Avenue. The 200-foot wide easement is currently retained as active and passive open space and supports some garden and nursery operations.

Flood control channels also serve as a form of open space for residents. Flood control channels within the City include the Brea Creek Channel, the Fullerton Channel, and the Coyote Creek Channel. The banks of these channels may provide potential use as hiking and biking trails.

PRIVATE RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

The City also provides other recreational uses along its entertainment corridor, which is centered on Knott's Berry Farm. Knott's Berry Farm is a themed amusement park, located along Beach Boulevard. The amusement park offers rides, shows, and architectural styles reminiscent of the

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Old West. It began as a roadside berry stand in the 1920s and has become one of the largest amusement parks in the United States.

Additionally, the City is served by the Los Coyotes Country Club. This private facility provides three nine-hole courses and associated amenities, including a pro shop, driving range, practice green, chipping area, clubhouse, and banquet facilities. Additionally, the Country Club includes six lighted tennis courts and a fitness center.



Promoting a Healthy Community

Buena Park can help to promote a healthy community by providing access to open space, walking and bicycling paths, parks, and recreation programs—and by encouraging community members to use these resources to become more physically active. Research shows that the use of parks and other recreation facilities can lead to better health, and that people with easier access to such facilities are more likely to use them.

The National Recreation and Park Association lists the following health-related benefits of parks recreation, and open space:

- Parks are the places that people go to get healthy and stay fit.
- Parks and recreation programs and services contribute to the health of children, youth, adults, and seniors.
- According to studies by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, creating, improving and promoting places to be physically active can improve individual and community health and result in a 25 percent increase of residents who exercise at least three times per week.
- A study by Penn State University showed significant correlations to reductions in stress, lowered blood pressure, and perceived physical health to the length of stay in visits to parks.
- Parks and protected public lands are proven to improve water quality, protect groundwater, prevent flooding, improve the quality of the air we breathe, provide vegetative buffers to development, produce habitat for wildlife, and provide a place for children and families to connect with nature and recreate outdoors together.

Open space can also be used to improve diets if it is used for community gardens or urban farms that become sources of locally grown produce. Current definitions of health go beyond physical health to include factors such as the strength of a person's social relationships; these aspects of health benefit from parks and recreation programs as well.

Source: "Why Parks and Recreation are Essential Public Services," National Recreation and Park Association.

The Conservation and Sustainability Element and the Mobility Element include goals and policies to help promote a healthy community.

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PARK AND OPEN SPACE STANDARDS



The current General Plan includes a standard of 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. Based on the January 2009 population of 83,385, the City is deficient by approximately 50 acres of parkland.

Ordinance No. 1416, adopted January 8, 2002, requires the dedication of parkland and/or payment of fees in lieu for dedication of parkland based on 3.0 acres per 1,000 persons for new residential development. One joint use agreement exists for the use of the Buena Park Junior High School gymnasium and a number of the schools allow youth leagues to utilize their fields.

There is a need for additional parkland in the northern portion of the City, specifically north of I-5 and south of Artesia. Acquiring large amounts of additional open space is unrealistic due to the built-out nature of the City and high cost of property in Orange County; however, the addition of smaller areas, preservation, and enhancements to existing open space amenities will work towards providing needed recreation and open space areas in the community.

6.4 PRINCIPLES, GOALS, AND POLICIES

PRINCIPLE: OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

Open space is a valuable and limited resource. Open space provides recreation opportunities, places for social interaction, and buffers for sensitive uses.

Goal OSR-1: Availability of and access to open space resources.

- Policy OSR-1.1: Preserve public and private open space lands for active and passive recreational opportunities.
- Policy OSR-1.2: Encourage individual school sites to maintain open space areas.
- Policy OSR-1.3: Expand the use of utility easements for linear trails and open space for active and passive recreation, where feasible.
- Policy OSR-1.4: Conserve Buena Park's flood control facilities, as appropriate, to protect the public health, safety, and welfare of the community.

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- Policy OSR-1.5: Evaluate and, where feasible, utilize the opportunities offered by abandoned road and railroad rights of way and similar environmentally impacted or unused linear open space to construct low maintenance greenbelts and multi use trails.
- Policy OSR-1.6: Continue to ensure that adequate useable private open space is provided in residential developments, and that such areas are maintained as open space in perpetuity.
- Policy OSR-1.7: Promote visually pleasing landscaped corridors and a sense of spaciousness throughout the community.
- Policy OSR-1.8: Reinforce a sense of form and positive civic image by preserving older trees where possible, by requiring integrated landscaping plans within areas of newer development, and by providing bicycle and walking trails that link cultural, educational, civic, and recreational uses.
- Policy OSR-1.9: Pursue innovative ways to provide parks and open space, including developing green roofs on buildings, reclaiming previously developed land, targeting vacant lots for use as passive parks or community gardens, or other strategies.

PRINCIPLE: PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMMING

Park and recreation facilities and programs are important to Buena Park. Parks and Recreation programs promote the health and well-being of residents and visitors to the City.

Goal OSR-2: Active and passive parkland areas that meet a variety of recreational needs in the City.

- Policy OSR-2.1: Look for opportunities to acquire parkland through land donations and/or joint-use agreements.
- Policy OSR-2.2: Continue to require new developments to provide park-in-lieu fees or land for recreational opportunities for residents in accordance with the City's park standard, 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
- Policy OSR-2.3: Upgrade and maintain existing City parks and facilities to properly meet the needs of the community.

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- Policy OSR-2.4: Ensure that parks and recreation facilities are developed with active and passive facilities appropriate to all ages, including athletic fields, active play areas, passive open space, tot lots, and picnic areas.
- Policy OSR-2.5: Design and redesign parks and recreational facilities to reflect the latest recreational features that are responsive to population trends and community needs, including convenient and accessible use by handicapped, elderly, and otherwise less mobile persons within the community.
- Policy OSR-2.6: Continue to provide disabled person accessibility to parks, recreational facilities, and open space.
- Policy OSR-2.7: Wherever feasible, develop new park facilities in areas of the City currently underserved by parks, particularly in the northern portion of City.
- Policy OSR-2.8: Encourage future parks in the City to be contiguous with public schools and designed as joint-use facilities, sharing playfields, playgrounds, and other amenities wherever possible.
- Policy OSR-2.9: Develop long term agreements with School Districts and, as appropriate, other agencies that will maximize joint use and multiple use of facilities, and reduce overall operations and maintenance costs.

Goal OSR-3: Recreational facilities and programs that meet the needs of the community.

- Policy OSR-3.1: Provide a wide variety of recreational opportunities and programs – both active and passive – to satisfy diverse needs of all ages and interest groups.
- Policy OSR-3.2: Maximize the recreational opportunities offered by existing open space and recreation resources so that they serve the greatest portion of the community.
- Policy OSR-3.3: Preserve existing recreational and park facilities and develop new park and recreational facilities and/or programs as necessary to maintain an adequate level of service and a wide variety of programs.
- Policy OSR-3.4: Tailor recreation programs to serve the community and include specialized populations, such as pre-school and elementary school children, teens, senior citizens, families, young adults and those with special needs.

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Policy OSR-3.5: Conduct ongoing needs assessments and evaluations of demands for recreational activities and public meeting facilities and modify programs where necessary to meet these demands, subject to availability of adequate funding.

Goals and policies in the Land Use and Community Design Element support social interaction and opportunities for open space through the development of public gathering places, such as community centers, mixed-use plazas or courtyards, and parks.

Goal OSR-4: Recreational programming meets the community needs through City collaboration with community groups, service organizations, employers, and others.

Policy OSR-4.1: Encourage community groups, organizations, clubs, and the private sector to take a greater interest and financial responsibility in the improvement and operations of parkland and recreational facilities through such means as facility and program sponsorship and donation of goods, services, and financial support.

Policy OSR-4.2: Allow for the inclusion of revenue-generating activities at public parkland facilities and design future facilities to accommodate such events provided that they are consistent with and complement the primary recreational purpose of the park.

Policy OSR-4.3: Work closely with other public agencies, including other parks and recreation departments and school districts, in developing cooperative park and recreation programs and services.

Policy OSR-4.4: Work closely with private employers to develop and finance the costs of joint recreational programs and facilities for those working in Buena Park.

Policy OSR-4.5: Encourage the development of recreation programs aimed at serving the needs of businesses and employees within Buena Park.

Policy OSR-4.6: Explore and develop non-traditional approaches to provide supplementary services and programs where facility deficiencies exist (e.g., mobile programs, street events, entertainment, storefront operations).

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Policy OSR-4.7: Allow for additional uses at the Los Coyotes Country Club including hospitality hotel, spa, golf course-oriented residential dwelling units, and other golf-related amenities.

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