

3.14 Recreation

This section provides the environmental setting and impact analysis for parks, open space, and recreational resources related to the proposed project. The purpose of this section is to assess impacts of the proposed project on recreational services.

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

Existing Conditions

Cleveland National Forest

The project area is adjacent to the Cleveland National Forest, which includes approximately 460,000 acres and provides numerous recreation facilities including: 15 family campgrounds, seven group campgrounds, over 650 campsites, 356 miles of trails, 10 trailheads, seven picnic areas, 23 miles of motorcycle trails, and seven miles of four-wheel drive off-road routes (USDA, 2013). The forest area near the site is designated as “Elsinore Place”, which includes 46,729 acres that contains: campgrounds, picnic areas, horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, and hang-gliding. The following facilities are in the vicinity of the project site:

- Blue Jay Campground, which is approximately 2,000 feet northwest of Phase 1 (south parcel) on Long Canyon Road and includes 51 campsites;
- Falcon Group Campsite, which is approximately 0.5-mile northwest the project site on Long Canyon Road, past the Blue Jay Campground and includes 3 large campsites for groups of 40 persons;
- Upper San Juan Campground that is approximately 2 miles west of the project site adjacent to Ortega Highway, and has 18 camp sites;
- El Cariso Campground that is approximately 2 miles east of the site adjacent to Ortega Highway, and has 24 camp sites; and
- The following hiking trails: San Juan Trail (2.4 miles northwest of the project site on Long Canyon Road), Main Divide Trail (2.9 miles northwest of the project site on Long Canyon Road), Los Pinos Trail (4.6 miles northwest of the project site on Long Canyon Road), and Chiquito Trail (2.9 miles south of the site on Ortega Highway).

County of Orange

The project area is within the County of Orange, which includes nearly 60,000 acres of regional parks, wilderness parks, nature preserves, historical sites, and beaches. This includes 63 developed parks within the unincorporated County. These facilities are identified in the County’s General Plan in the Master Plan of Regional Recreation Facilities, which describes the countywide regional network of facilities (Orange County, 2005).

The closest County of Orange park facility to the project site is Caspers Wilderness Park, which is an 8,000-acre protected wilderness preserve located approximately 14.2 miles west of the project site. Caspers Wilderness Park amenities include: an amphitheater, barbeques, fire rings,

bike trails, equestrian trails, hiking trails, camp sites, picnic areas, playground, tot lot, restrooms, and showers.

The County's General Plan also includes a Master Plan of Regional Riding and Hiking Trails that identifies 348 miles of existing and proposed trails. Many trails within the Cleveland National Forest connect to the regional trail system within both Orange and Riverside Counties. Regional trails support equestrian, pedestrian (walking, hiking, running), and mountain biking use. As listed above, the project site is in the vicinity of the San Juan Trail, Los Pinos Trail, Main Divide Trail, and Chiquito Trail, some of which continue into Cleveland National Forest (Orange County, 2005).

County of Riverside/City of Lake Elsinore

There are no County of Riverside parks in the vicinity of the project site. The nearest active parks to the proposed project in the County of Riverside are within the City of Lake Elsinore, and include:

- Machado Park is located at 15150 Joy Street, 9 miles east of the project site. Machado Park is 5 acres and includes: tennis courts, play equipment, open turf area, shaded shelters, barbecues, restrooms, picnic facilities and parking.
- Lincoln Street Park is located at 14986 Lincoln Avenue, 9 miles east of the project site. Lincoln Street Park is 2.2 acres and includes: tot lot, shade structure, benches, and picnic tables.
- McVicker Canyon Park is located at 29355 Grand Avenue, approximately 9.6 miles east of the project site. McVicker Canyon Park is 26 acres and includes: a skate park, two large softball/baseball fields, concession area, open play areas, a tot lot, dog play area, restrooms and shade structures.
- Summerlake Park is located at 900 W. Broadway, 9.7 miles east of the project site. Summerlake Park is 11.5 acres and includes: 5 soccer fields, 2 basketball courts, tot lot, restrooms, picnic areas, barbecues and parking.

Project Site

There are no structured recreational facilities located on the project site. The project site is private land that consists of open space, which is likely used for recreation purposes. The nearest designated trail is the San Juan Trail, that is within the Cleveland National Forest, located approximately 2.4 miles east of the project site.

Regulatory Setting

Quimby Act

The California Planning, Zoning, and Development Laws, Section 66477 (Quimby Act) allow the legislative body of a City or County, by ordinance, to require the dedication of land, the payment of in-lieu fees, or a combination of both, for park and recreational purposes as a condition to approval for a final tract map or parcel map. The Quimby Act requires that developers set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. The goal of the Quimby Act is to require developers to help mitigate the impacts of property improvements. The County

of Orange adopted the Interim Plan of Local Parks and the Local Park Code in response to the Quimby Act. This code allows for the payment of in-lieu fees or a combined provision of parkland and development fees. In addition, the regulations related to dedication of parkland and payment of in-lieu fees is provided in the County's Codified Ordinances, as described below.

County of Orange Codified Ordinances

Section 7-9-522 details the amount of parkland required per residential unit. The section states that developments that provide up to 6.5 dwelling units per acre, which includes the proposed project, are required to dedicate 0.008 parkland acres per dwelling unit. Based on the development of 72 single-family residential units, the project would be required to provide 0.58-acre of parkland.

The County's Ordinances also provide for the payment of fees, in lieu of the provision of parkland. Section 7-9-523 details the requirements for payment of parkland fees, which is based on the acreage requirements of Section 7-9-522 (above) and the land value of the area to be developed.

County of Orange General Plan

Recreation Element

The following goals and policies from the General Plan Recreation Element are relevant to the proposed project;

Goal 1: Provide adequate local park sites to meet the recreation needs of existing and future residents and preserve natural resources within unincorporated Orange County.

Policy 2.32: To acquire park lands by requiring residential developers to provide a minimum of 2.5 net acres of usable local parkland (i.e., parkland that is relatively level, served by utilities, for multipurpose playfields, court sports, etc.) for each prospective 1,000 residents. In no case shall the credit for parkland and improvements exceed the total requirement under the Local Park Code. No credit banking shall be permitted when a developer provides the full requirement in acres and also provides improvements.

Policy 2.4: To acquire local park lands in unincorporated areas to provide active recreation facilities to meet the needs of present and future.

3.14.2 Thresholds of Significance

The *CEQA Guidelines* Appendix G provides guidance for assessing the significance of potential environmental impacts. Relative to recreation, the project could have a significant effect on recreation if it would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated; or
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

3.14.3 Methodology

This analysis is based on a review of public information about Cleveland National Forest, Orange County, Riverside County, and City of Lake Elsinore parks and recreational facilities. The analysis considers the increase in use of parks and recreation facilities that would result from the increased development intensity from the proposed project, along with the ability of existing park and recreation facilities to accommodate the increased use. The analysis considers whether an increase in use would result in the substantial physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities, such as accelerated wear on sports facilities and fields, or in the need for new or expanded facilities.

3.14.4 Project Impacts

Impact 3.14-1: Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?

Less than Significant Impact. As described above, the project site is located adjacent to parcels that are within the Elsinore Place portion of the Cleveland National forest, which contains 46,729 acres of land that provides recreational facilities, such as: campgrounds, picnic areas, horseback riding, hiking, mountain biking, and hang-gliding. Also as listed above, there are various existing recreational facilities in the vicinity of the project site that include campgrounds and trails. In addition, the open space areas on the project site contain many trails.

The proposed project would develop 72 new single-family residential units in a rural part of Orange County, which would increase the population of Orange County by an estimated 230 residents¹. Although, the project would also provide 414.6 acres of open space land that would be offered for dedication to the U.S. Forest Service (Project Design Feature PDF-1), the intent of the area would be for preserved open space and additional recreation amenities or facilities would not be provided within the open space area.

However, the California Planning, Zoning, and Development Laws (Section 66477, Quimby Act) allows jurisdictions to establish requirements for the dedication of local park acreage, in lieu fees, or a combination of both for residential developments; and the County's Codified Ordinances implement parkland requirements for development projects. Based on Section 7-9-522 of the County's Codified Ordinances the proposed project would be required to dedicate 0.008 acres of parkland per dwelling unit. As the project would develop 72 single-family residential units, 0.58-acre of parkland would be required. This is also consistent with the General Plan Recreation Policy 2.32, which states that a developer is required to dedicate 2.5 acres of parkland, or the proportional share thereof, per 1,000 residents (Orange County, 2005). Because the proposed project would add 230 new residents to the project site 0.58-acre of parkland would be required.

Also, as described above, the County's Ordinance provides for the payment of fees, in lieu of the provision of parkland. Codified Ordinance Section 7-9-523 details that the requirements for

¹ Based on an average household size of 3.2 persons/household for unincorporated areas of Orange County. It should be noted that the average household size for all of Orange County is 3.0 persons/household (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

payment of parkland fees is based on the acreage requirements of Section 7-9-522 and the land value of the area to be developed. Although the project includes the provision of 414.6 acres of open space that would be offered for dedication to the U.S. Forest Service (Project Design Feature PDF-1), the intent of the area would be for preserved open space and additional recreation amenities or facilities would not be provided within the open space area. Thus, the project would pay the parkland in lieu fees required by Section 7-9-253.

Overall, due to the extensive acreage of existing recreational resources in the project vicinity that far exceed the County's requirement of 2.5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, the addition of 230 residents to the area would not result in increased use of recreation facilities, such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated. In addition, the payment of parkland fees per County Ordinance would be required to receive permits for project implementation, which would provide funding for recreation facilities. Therefore, impacts related to recreation would be less than significant.

Impact 3.14-2: Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?

No Impact. The proposed project does not include the construction of recreational facilities. Construction of the project is limited to residential structures and associated facilities, such as roadways and landscaping.

Additionally, as described above in Impact 3.14-1, the project site is located in the vicinity of a network of existing trails and other recreation facilities that would support the recreational needs of the additional 230 residents that would be generated from the project. The proposed project would retain 414.6 acres of the project site as open space (Project Design Feature PDF-1) which currently includes trail facilities that would be used by onsite residents in addition to the local offsite recreational facilities.

Although the existing recreational resources in the project vicinity would support the recreational needs of the project residents, the payment of in-lieu fees pursuant to the Quimby Act and County Codified Ordinance Sections 7-9-523 and 7-9-523 would be required for the project to be implemented. Overall, the proposed project would not require the construction or expansion of other recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment. As a result, impacts related to an adverse physical effect on the environment from construction of recreational facilities would not occur.

3.14.5 Cumulative Impacts

The geographic area in which cumulative impacts to recreation could occur is the nearby locations that the residents from the project would recreate a majority of the time, which are the portions of Orange County, Riverside County and Lake Elsinore that are detailed in the Environmental Setting, Section 3.14-1. As described previously, the proposed project would

preserve 414.6 acres of open space that includes existing trails and is nearby recreation facilities within the vast Cleveland National Forest. Because the project would provide the large preserved open space areas, (which would far exceed the acreage of project development) that is adjacent to recreational forest land and would pay parkland in-lieu fees, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact related to recreation. Cumulative impacts related to recreation would be less than significant.