

CHAPTER 5

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

IN THIS CHAPTER

Recreation and Parks | Regional Open Space and Trails | Fire Damage and Park Restoration



5.1 RECREATION, PARKS, AND OPEN SPACE FINDINGS

Recreation and Parks

1. The City of Santa Rosa's current General Plan sets a goal of six acres of parkland for every 1,000 Santa Rosa residents—twice the State standard and national average. Santa Rosa has nearly achieved this goal, with 5.9 acres of park and open space land per 1,000 residents.
2. Parkland in Santa Rosa is well distributed geographically, and a majority of residents have access to parks or open space areas within a half mile of their homes. This include neighborhoods designated by the State as "Communities of Concern" (which in other cities often specifically lack easy access to parks or open space).
3. The City is committed to maintaining and improving the community's access to quality parks now and in the future by: (a) ensuring safe, walkable access to parks for all residents; (b) continuing to offer valuable programming, including youth enrichment programs; and (c) maintaining high-quality park amenities.

Regional Open Space and Trails

4. Open space areas of various sizes are integrated into many of the city's parks and contribute to the overall preservation of recreational land in the Planning Area. Open space areas purposely have minimal improvements to preserve the natural setting
5. Larger open space areas in the Planning Area are generally developed in association with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and the Sonoma County Water Agency under joint acquisition and maintenance agreements. These spaces are counted toward the standard of 1.1 acres of public-serving open space per 1,000 residents.

Fire Damage and Park Restoration

6. The 2017 Tubbs Fire damaged approximately 75 acres of parkland across 10 park sites in Santa Rosa. This included damage to community parks, neighborhood parks, and landscaped and natural open space areas. The City is currently (2020) in the process of restoring nine of the 10 parks, including the full rebuild of the Coffey Neighborhood Park.

5.2 INTRODUCTION

Santa Rosa is rich in parkland that provides refuge and recreational opportunities for residents and visitors and supports the beauty and character of the city. The Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department owns and operates approximately 1,035 acres of parkland in the city, including neighborhood parks, community parks, special purpose parks, public plazas and gathering spaces, community recreational sites, trail parks, and open space. Each parkland type provides unique opportunities for people of all ages and abilities to recreate. Amenities include playgrounds, sports fields, swimming facilities, gathering spaces, and hiking and biking trails.

Special recreational programming is offered through hundreds of scheduled classes year-round and includes gang prevention and intervention services funded by Measure O. Each park, program, and service supports the Department's mission to foster human connection, increase cultural unity, protect environmental resources, strengthen safety and security, promote health and wellness, and support economic development.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:

- Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Findings (Section 5.1)
- Introduction (Section 5.2)
- Regulatory Setting (Section 5.3)
- Recreation and Parks (Section 5.4)
- Regional Open Space and Trails (Section 5.5)
- Fire Damage and Park Restoration (Section 5.6)
- Sources (Section 5.7)

5.3 REGULATORY SETTING

State

California Department of Conservation, Division of Land Resource Protection

The Division of Land Resource Protection (DLRP) works with landowners, local governments, and researchers to conserve open space resources statewide. DLRP provides information, maps, funding, and technical assistance to local governments, consultants, resource conservation districts, and nonprofit organizations, with the goal of conserving the state's agricultural and natural resources.

California Government Code

California Government Code, Sections 65560 to 65570, establish the need for an open space element in a general plan, define the types of open spaces, require an action program for implementing the open space element, and require that city and county actions be consistent with the open space element. Types of open space include those used for the preservation of natural resources; managed production of resources; outdoor recreation; public health and safety; support of the mission of military installations; and the protection of places, features, and objects described in Sections 5097.9 and 5097.993 of the Public Resources Code. Examples of city or county actions that must be consistent with the open space element include the acquisition or disposal of land of interest, restriction or regulation of uses, permitting for construction, approval for subdivision maps, and adoption of open space zoning regulations.

The Quimby Act of 1975 (California Government Code, Section 66477, as amended by AB 1359) authorizes cities and counties to pass ordinances requiring developers to set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. The Quimby Act sets a standard ratio of 3 acres of park space per 1,000 persons. Cities with a ratio of more than 3 acres per 1,000 persons can set a *standard* of up to 5 acres per 1,000 persons for new development. The City of Santa Rosa's *goal* is 6 acres per 1,000 residents and is almost met currently. The calculation of a city's park space to population ratio is based on a comparison of the population count of the last federal census to the amount of city-owned parkland. A 1982 State law amendment (AB 1600) requires agencies to clearly show a reasonable relationship between the public need for a recreation facility or park land and the type of development project upon which the fee is imposed.

State Street and Highway Code

The State Street and Highway Code includes provisions for equestrian and hiking trails within the rights-of-way of roads, streets, and highways.

Public Resources Code

The State Public Park Preservation Act (Public Resources Code, Sections 5400 to 5409) is the primary instrument for protecting and preserving parkland in California. Under the Act, cities and counties may not acquire any real property that is in use as a public park for any nonpark use unless compensation or land or both are provided to replace the parkland. This ensures no net loss of parkland and facilities.

Public Resources Code Section 5076 requires counties and cities to consider trail-oriented recreational use demands in developing specific open space programs during the development of a general plan. Cities are also required to consider the feasibility of integrating their trail routes with appropriate segments of the state system.

Local

Santa Rosa General Plan 2035

Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 includes goals and policies relevant to parks, recreation, and open space in the Land Use and Livability (LUL), Urban Design, (UD), and Public Services and Facilities (PSF) Elements. Applicable goals and policies include:

- **Goal LUL-E:** Promote livable neighborhoods by requiring compliance with green building programs to ensure that new construction meets high standards of energy efficiency and sustainable material use. Ensure that everyday shopping, park and recreation facilities, and schools are within easy walking distance of most residents.
- **Policy LUL-E-1:** Provide new neighborhood parks and recreation facilities, elementary schools, and convenience shopping in accordance with the General Plan Land Use Diagram.
- **Goal LUL-S:** Develop an attractive, safe, and extensive network for pedestrian and bicyclist movements.
 - **Policy LUL-S-3:** Link pedestrian and bicycle paths to community destinations (parks, etc.), the surrounding rural countryside trail system, and the downtown area.
 - **Policy LUL-S-4:** Coordinate with the Sonoma County Parks Department regarding potential linkages to the rural countryside.
- **Goal LIL-U:** Preserve, as permanent open space, areas which contain State or federally listed rare and endangered species.
 - **Policy LUL-U-1:** Designate areas with State or federally listed endangered species as permanent open space.
 - **Policy LUL-U-3:** Develop plans for long term maintenance of permanent open space.
- **Goal LUL-BB:** Enhance quality of life in the project area by providing parks, trails, and recreational and cultural opportunities.
 - **Policy LUL-BB-1:** Require that new development provide pedestrian connections and public open spaces.
 - **Policy LUL-BB-2:** Promote youth and cultural activities within the Plan area.
- **Goal UD-E:** Create a framework of public spaces at the neighborhood, city, and regional scale.
 - **Policy UD-E-1:** Provide for new open space opportunities throughout the city, especially in neighborhoods that have less access to open spaces.
 - **Policy UD-E-2:** Provide an open space network that is linked by pedestrian and bicycle paths, and that preserves and enhances Santa Rosa's significant visual and natural resources.

- **Policy UD-E-3:** Complete the Prince Memorial Greenway on Santa Rosa Creek as a creek restoration and linear park for pedestrians and cyclists.
- **Policy UD-E-4:** Enhance pedestrian activity and safety by designing streets, buildings, pathways, and trails to provide a visual connection with public spaces such as parks and creek trails. Review and revise the Zoning Code and Subdivision Guidelines to support this policy.
- **Goal PSF-A:** Provide recreational facilities and parks for all sectors of the community.
 - **Policy PSF-A-1:** Provide recreation and park facilities and services needed by various segments of the population—including specific age groups, persons with special physical requirements, and groups interested in particular activities—and make these facilities and services easily accessible and affordable to all users.
 - **Policy PSF-A-2:** Acquire and develop new park facilities to achieve a citywide standard of 6 acres of parkland per thousand residents:
 - 3.5 acres of city park land;
 - 1.4 acres of publicly accessible school recreational park land (defined as parkland that is open to the public during standard park hours when school is not in session);
 - 1.1 acres of public serving open space.
 - This will require a total of 1,401 acres of city parks, publicly accessible school recreation areas, and open space to be available in 2035.
 - **Policy PSF-A-3:** Develop a balanced park system throughout the city by incorporating the following parkland classification system into the 3.5 acres per thousand residents of city park land.
 - **Neighborhood Parks:** Are generally more than two acres but less than ten acres; provide spaces for informal or casual play, family or small group activities such as picnics, community gardens, children's play areas, a special feature such as a splash area, hard court or multiuse field space for fitness, and passive natural areas. The city aims to provide access to neighborhood parks within one-half mile of residential neighborhoods.
 - **Community Parks:** Are generally 10 to 25 acres; provide spaces for organized sports, larger group events, several unique features, pathways and natural areas, community gardens, and recreational facilities such as community centers. The city aims to provide access to community parks within one mile of residential neighborhoods.
 - **Citywide Parks:** Are generally larger than 25 acres; include special signature elements such as lakes, sports complexes, amphitheaters, lighted features, recreational facilities and buildings, large play structures, and spaces for large play structures, and spaces for large group activities such as citywide camps or corporate picnics.
 - **Special Purpose Parks and Facilities:** Park lands generally designated for single use such as golf courses, heritage museums, botanical gardens, and environmental interpretive experiences.

- **Policy PSF-A-4:** Continue planning efforts to acquire and develop parklands for all Santa Rosa residents, families, and neighborhoods that promote and encourage access by a variety of alternative methods such as biking and walking, and connect public spaces using the following guidelines:
 - Provide access to public plazas and gathering places within one-quarter mile of residential neighborhoods.
 - Provide access to neighborhood parks within one-half mile of residential neighborhoods.
 - Provide access to community parks within one mile of residential neighborhoods.
- **Policy PSF-A-5:** Developing areas of the city (e.g., southwest Santa Rosa) should be given a higher priority for new park development, and underserved neighborhoods should be given priority during redevelopment and renovation of the park system. Priority for park development should also be given to areas of greatest density and areas that allow for safe and easy access and visibility. Priority should also be given to locations that minimize impacts to sensitive environmental resources that could require extensive and expansive mitigation; the most sensitive environmental resource areas should generally be preserved for more passive recreation that assures their protection.
- **Policy PSF-A-6:** Design new parks so that they are highly visible from adjacent streets and neighborhoods to increase safety and enhance visual quality.
- **Policy PSF-A-7:** Acquire park sites adjacent to existing and proposed schools, where possible, and develop these sites as joint use facilities. Develop joint use agreements to ensure public access and provide for sustainable resources to maintain parks.
- **Policy PSF-A-8:** Integrate the bicycle and pedestrian path networks envisioned in both the Citywide Creek Master Plan and updated Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan with regional park plans, so that users can safely and comfortably access the full range of public open spaces.
- **Policy PSF-A-9:** When building new parks, consider expanding existing parks or consolidating proposed parks to provide larger acreage and greater range of recreation activities, while maintaining park standards.
- **Policy PSF-A-10:** Schedule activities in Prince Memorial Greenway, the Santa Rosa Creek park/promenade connecting downtown to Railroad Square.
- **Policy PSF-A-11:** Community gardens are encouraged within city parks and on city-owned property. As part of the master plan process for new parks, the city shall consider implementing new community gardens based on input from residents.
- **Policy PSF-A-12:** Hold neighborhood meetings when new facilities are proposed to discuss major recreation and parks issues and solicit comments from groups and individuals with special needs, including those unable to attend public meetings. Incorporate the community sentiments into ongoing recreation and parks planning, and General Plan updates.

- **Policy PSF-A-13:** Allow location of golf course facilities outside the Urban Growth Boundary in Community Separators and find this use and its accessory structures consistent with the Community Separator Concept. Such proposals must ensure that:
 - Accessory buildings such as clubhouses are unobtrusive to the separator and are not a highly visible feature of the development;
 - Only non-illuminated facilities are permissible;
 - Driving ranges not accessory to golf course are not permissible; and
 - Landscaping is used to ensure screening and a sense of open space.
- **Policy PSF-A-14:** Develop multi-use athletic fields to accommodate the changing community needs for organized sporting and fitness activities.
- **Policy PSF-A-15:** Require the provision of private play space and/or recreation centers for children, families, and older adults in small lot subdivisions, multifamily developments, and gated communities, on each lot or in common open space areas as part of the development project.
- **Policy PSF-A-16:** Pursue development of public plazas and gathering places where provision of a neighborhood park is not feasible or where they can be connected to existing public spaces utilizing pathways, trails, and bridges.
- **Policy PSF-A-17:** Develop special purpose parks and facilities for each recreation and park planning area throughout the city, including but not limited to multi-generational recreational centers, aquatic centers, education and community service centers and other unique facilities, with priority given to areas experiencing high growth.
- **Policy PSF-A-18:** Develop multi-use pathways and linear parks along creeks designated by the Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan. Create a system of interconnected linear parks that provide access to parks used for active recreation as well as to open space preserve areas that are used primarily for more passive recreation such as hiking and wildlife viewing.
- **Policy PSF-A-19:** Provide recreational opportunities and establish bike and pedestrian paths along Santa Rosa Creek through implementation of the Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan.
- **Policy PSF-A-20:** Encourage multiple use of waterways, including:
 - Flood control;
 - Wildlife habitats;
 - Passive open space uses;
 - Nature study;
 - Pedestrian and bicycle circulation; and
 - Other compatible outdoor uses.
- **Policy PSF-A-21:** Expand equestrian facilities in Santa Rosa and consider development of a trailhead at Hall Road with equestrian access to Santa Rosa Creek.

- **Goal PSF-B:** Ensure adequate funding for recreation and parks improvements and maintenance.
 - **Policy PSF-B-1:** Project acquisition and maintenance costs for new park facilities and ensure that sustainable resources and funding mechanisms are available to meet approved maintenance management plans and acceptable levels of maintenance services.
 - **Policy PSF-B-2:** Annually evaluate the in-lieu fees allowed under the Quimby Act for park acquisition to ensure sufficient funds to acquire parks consistent with General Plan acreage totals.
 - **Policy PSF-B-3:** Annually evaluate Park Impact Fees to ensure sufficient funds for park acquisition and development from proposals that do not meet Quimby guidelines.
 - **Policy PSF-B-4:** Establish and annually evaluate mitigation fees for environmentally sensitive resource lands and/or endangered species habitat areas that are subject to development and apply mitigation fees according to the quadrant of the city where these issues are applicable. Evaluate fees annually to update land costs and mitigation ratios.
 - **Policy PSF-B-5:** Establish limitations on the amounts of private recreational facilities, such as swimming pools and tennis courts, which may be substituted for park dedication or in-lieu payments.
 - **Policy PSF-B-6:** Develop a citywide Resource Management Plan for park and facility maintenance that addresses core versus non-core services, appropriate levels of service, and factors that affect park maintenance practices.
 - **Policy PSF-B-7:** Encourage innovative approaches for maintenance of parks and open space areas, by advocating and facilitating school, neighborhood, and business sponsorships and partnerships.

Santa Rosa City Code

Santa Rosa City Code, Chapter 19.70, Park and Recreation Land and Fees, outlines the requirements for the dedication of land or payment of fees for park and recreational services and land for public right of access. Under Section 19-70.090, a fee shall be paid for park development by the developer of each new dwelling unit irrespective of whether the developer is required to dedicate land or pay fees in lieu of land dedication. This fee shall be used to pay for improvements including landscaping and installation of recreational facilities. The fee shall be determined by the residential formula listed under Section 19-70-040, which is based on the goal of 6 acres per 1,000 persons. When a fee is to be paid in lieu of land dedication, the amount of the fee shall be based on the fair market value of the amount of land which would otherwise be required by dedication pursuant to Section 19-70-040, plus 20 percent toward costs of off-site improvements, such as extension of utility lines. The formula is the number of dwelling units multiplied by the population per dwelling units plus 20 percent.

Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Business and Strategic Action Plan

The 2008 Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks *Business and Strategic Action Plan* was adopted to identify and assess current and anticipated parks and recreation needs. The plan establishes parkland needs and priorities, provides practical and strategic direction for meeting these needs, and prepares a financial plan for the financing and funding of parks and recreation. This plan outlines several goals that are relevant to the proposed project:

- **Goal 1 - Park Development Standards**
 - **Strategy 1.2:** Pursuant to the General Plan, apply the standard of six acres of parkland per 1,000 residents to all development projects and ensure the following allocation is met:
 - 3.5 acres of parkland designated as city parks,
 - 1.4 acres of parkland as accessible school recreational land, and
 - 1.1 acres of public serving open space.
 - **Strategy 1.3:** Redefine access to park and public spaces for all residents to meet the following:
 - within ¼ mile to public plazas and gathering spaces,
 - within ½ mile to neighborhood parks, and
 - within 1 mile to community parks.
- **Goal 4 - Facilities**
 - **Strategy 4.2:** Continue ongoing efforts to locate new facilities throughout the community and not concentrated in one planning area.
 - **Strategy 4.3:** Provide a balance of new facility types in all recreation and park planning areas.
- **Goal 5 - Connectivity**
 - **Strategy 5.1:** Add trails and pathways to connect destinations throughout the city such as schools, libraries, and parks.
 - **Strategy 5.3:** Integrate corridors and pathways into overall community design, planning, and development decisions.
 - **Strategy 5.4:** Encourage new development to include a system of internal trails and pathways within developments and identify opportunities to connect with established trails and pathways.

Citywide Creek Master Plan

The Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan is a blueprint for the restoration, preservation, and improved accessibility for the entirety of the creek trail network. The creek plan includes a set of policies, recommendations, and strategies for site-specific improvements for over 100 miles of creeks. The plan's goals are not only to protect and restore the waterways and riparian habitats along the creeks, but to also develop a network of trails alongside the creeks. The trails are proposed as both an option for active transportation commuting and as a recreational resource.

Measure M

Measure M, approved by Sonoma County voters in 2018, collects a one-eighth cent sales tax on all sales in Sonoma County. Measure M, commonly known as "Parks for All," provides dedicated funding to regional and city parks until its sunset in 2028. Funds are dedicated to the maintenance, protection, and operation of parks. The city of Santa Rosa will receive an estimated \$1.9 million per year through 2028.

Measure O

Measure O, approved by Santa Rosa voters in 2004, imposed a special transactions and use tax to generate revenue for Police, Fire, and gang prevention and intervention. Measure O funds are presided over by a Citizens Oversight Committee. A portion of these funds are used for year-round special recreational programming that supports the mission of the gang prevention and intervention program.

5.4 RECREATION AND PARKS

Most parkland in Santa Rosa is categorized as neighborhood parks, community parks, and special purpose parks:

- **Neighborhood parks** are within approximately one-half mile of the residents they serve. Neighborhood parks range from 0.1 to 9 acres and often have picnic areas and playground equipment.
- **Community parks** provide specialized recreational facilities, such as pools, ball fields, or tennis courts within one mile of the residents served. Some community parks feature regional amenities such as ponds; lakes for fishing; rides and attractions, such as a carousel; or walking and hiking trails. Community parks range from 12 to 138 acres.
- **Special purpose parks** are open to the public but are not standard parkland. They include golf courses, gardens, museums, and cemeteries.

Other parkland is offered as community recreational sites, open space and trail parks, and public gathering spaces:

- **Community recreational sites** include senior or youth centers, public pools, and general community centers and clubhouses.
- **Open space and trail parks** offer passive recreational areas. Open space areas generally range between 0.5 and 25 acres and have minimal public improvements, largely consisting of vegetation. Trail parks include greenways, paved biking and pedestrian trails, and trails along creeks. Trail parks can range from 1 to 12 acres in size.
- **Public gathering spaces** largely consist of land around City buildings, such as the courthouse and city hall. Additional public gathering spaces include Courthouse Square and the Comstock Mall. Despite not offering typical recreational or parkland amenities, public gathering spaces are vital community assets because they are places for the public to congregate.

Parkland Location and Acreage

The Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department (SRRPD) manages a total of 1,035.78¹ acres of parkland. Of these, approximately 863 acres consist of special purpose parks, community recreational sites, community parks, and neighborhood parks. The remaining 172 acres belong to open space, trail parks, and public gathering spaces and plazas.

There are 52 neighborhood parks, totaling 157.40 acres in the Planning Area, seven are located in the southwest, 16 in the northwest, 20 in the northeast, and eight in the southeast quadrants of the city (the four areas split by US 101 and Highway 12). **Table 5-1** lists each neighborhood park and its acreage.

An additional 6.7 acres are in the planning process to become neighborhood parks, owned and maintained by SRRPD. An additional six neighborhood parks are proposed and in varying stages of the Santa Rosa development review process. These six parks are Jack London Park (northwest), Kawana Tokay Park (part of the proposed Kawana Springs Community Park), Lower Colgan Creek Park (southwest), Meadows Park (southwest), Piedra Park (northeast), and Tenth Street Park (northwest).

The city has 12 established community parks disbursed throughout the city—one to the southwest, four to the northwest, five to the northeast, and two to the southeast. A total of 487.60 acres of community parks exist in the Santa Rosa Planning Area. **Table 5-1** lists each community park and its acreage.

¹ This parkland total includes proposed parks that are undeveloped but are in the planning process or have been approved. The total represents all acreage that is owned and maintained by SRRPD.

Table 5-1: Existing Neighborhood and Community Parks and Acreages					
Park Name	Acres	Park Name	Acres	Park Name	Acres
A Place to Play Park	77.16	DeMeo Park	0.96	Olive Park	0.87
Doyle Community Park	21.76	DeTurk Park	0.96	Pearblossom Park	3.05
Finley Community Park	12.21	Dutch Flohr Park	2.38	Peter Springs Park	1.24
Franklin Community Park	13.36	Eastside Park	0.40	Peterson Lane Park	3.99
Galvin Community Park	23.37	Finali Park	2.76	Pioneer Park	4.53
Howarth Memorial Park	137.39	Fir Ridge Park	1.06	Prince Gateway Park	0.50
Nagasawa Community Park	33.23	Flat Rock Park	5.42	Rae Street Park	0.83
Northwest Community Park	35.07	Frances Nielsen Ranch Park	6.04	Railroad Depot Park	0.26
Rincon Valley Community Park	18.87	Fremont Park	1.71	Red Hawk Park	0.44
Skyhawk Community Park	20.78	Harvest Park	3.34	Rincon Ridge Park	1.83
Southwest Community Park	19.75	Haydn Village Park	0.11	Rinconada Park	2.17
Youth Community Park	73.80	Hidden Valley Park	8.23	Sonoma Ave Park	1.75
Airfield Park	3.10	Humboldt Park	0.53	South Davis Park	1.34
Bayer Park and Gardens	5.95	Jacobs Park	6.94	Steele Lane Park	2.43
Bellevue Ranch Park	3.51	Jennings Park	6.56	Strawberry Park	5.80
Bicentennial Park	5.34	Juilliard Park	9.09	Tanglewood Park	7.80
Brendon Park	1.40	Live Oak Park	4.86	Trailhead Park	4.21
Brush Creek Park	2.20	Martin Luther King Jr. Park	5.38	Triangle Park	0.11
Coffey Park	5.85	Matanzas Park	1.10	Village Green Park	1.96
Colgan Creek Park	2.77	Mesquite Park	3.96	Westgate Park	2.40
Cook School Park	0.85	North Park	0.96		
Dauenhauer Park	2.52	Oaklake Green Park	3.73		

Source: City of Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department Webpage, "Find a Park."

An additional 39 acres of community parkland are owned and maintained by SRRPD and are in the development review process to become new community parks. The 39 acres are split between two proposed community parks:

- The proposed Kawana Springs Community Park would introduce 19.2 acres of parkland in southeast Santa Rosa, featuring a community garden, multiuse turf area, children's play area, pump track for biking, dog park, and areas of riparian oak woodland along Kawana Springs Creek.

- The proposed Roseland Creek Community Park would introduce 19.5 acres of parkland in southwest Santa Rosa with a nature center, outdoor classroom, community garden, picnic areas, shade structure, multiuse turf area, play area, sports court, and network of trails.

Additional parkland in the Santa Rosa Planning Area includes:

- Nine community recreational parks totaling approximately 15 acres.
- Four special purpose parks totaling approximately 171 acres.
- Thirteen open space areas totaling approximately 115 acres.
- Five public plazas and gathering spaces totaling approximately 9 acres.
- Six trail parks totaling approximately 33 acres.

Two additional parks in the Santa Rosa Planning Area are not operated by the City but provide recreational opportunities to Santa Rosa residents. Spring Lake County Park provides 320 acres with a 72-acre lake, and Annadel State Park provides an additional 5,000 acres.

Parkland Dedication and Accessibility

Parkland Dedication Standard

The Santa Rosa General Plan 2035 adopted an overall parkland standard of 6 acres per 1,000 residents. Within this standard, City Council resolution determines the ratio of city parks, school recreation land, and open space. Currently, the adopted standard is 3.5 acres of city parks, (neighborhood, community, citywide, and special purpose parks and facilities) per 1,000 residents, plus 1.4 acres of publicly accessible school recreational land, and 1.1 acres of public-serving open space. As of January 2020, Santa Rosa had an estimated population of 173,628 and an estimated 1,035.78 acres of parkland, and therefore has about 5.9 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.²

Parkland Accessibility

Parkland in the Santa Rosa Planning Area is distributed evenly, as shown on **Figure 5-1**. Though large State and regional parks are located to the east and southeast of the Santa Rosa Planning Area, numerous community parks, neighborhoods parks, and open space areas are distributed throughout. Almost the entire Planning Area is within 0.5 mile of parkland; however, there are some pockets that more than 0.5 mile from parkland. These include:

- The commercial and industrial area at the corner of Piner Road and Coffey Lane.

² 1,035.78 acres divided by 173 (173,628/1,000) = 5.9 acres per 1,000 residents.

- The commercial and services area north of Montgomery Avenue, both east and west of US 101.
- Various pockets of rural land to the north and east.
- The residential area on Montecito Avenue south of Fountaingrove Parkway.
- The commercial area at the southeast corner of the Guerneville Road and Fulton Road intersection.
- Part of a residential neighborhood east of Highway 12 and west of South Wright Road.
- A pocket of residential development at the end of Highway 12, north and south of Hoen Avenue.
- The commercial corridor east and west of US 101 south of East Robles Avenue and north of Horn.

As shown on **Figure 5-1**, the Metropolitan Transportation Commission (MTC) has designated “communities of concern” in the central and western portions of the Santa Rosa Planning Area. Communities of concern are defined by MTC as census tract areas with a concentration of both minority and low-income residents. A community of concern can also be an area with a concentration of low-income residents and any three or more of six vulnerability indicators (MTC and ABAB 2017, p. 2-3):

- Persons with limited English proficiency;
- Zero-vehicle households;
- Seniors aged 75 years and over;
- Persons with one or more disability;
- Single-parent families; and/or
- Renters paying more than 50 percent of their household income on housing.

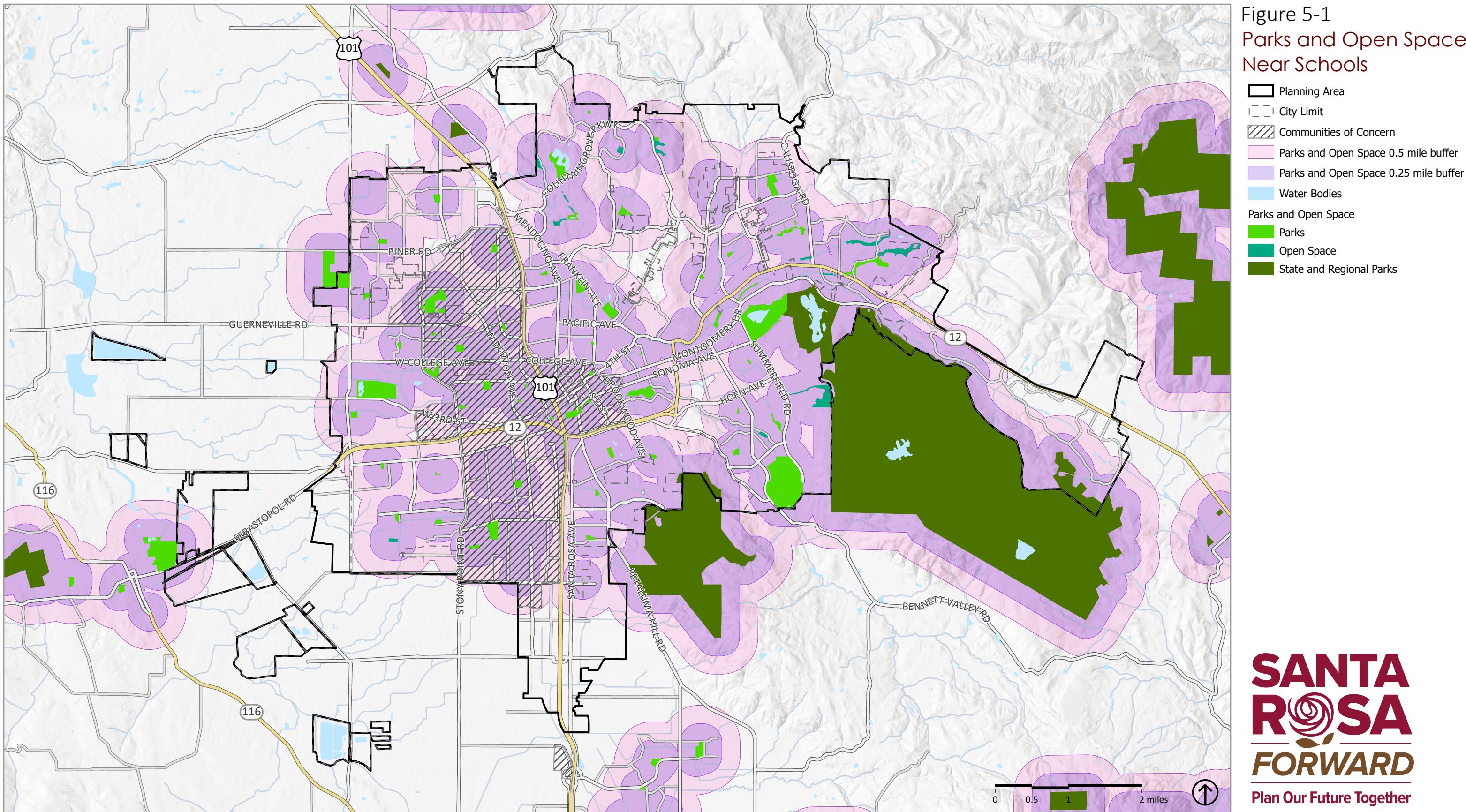
Access to parkland and opportunities to recreate are particularly important for communities of concern, which may be less likely to have other options for exercise, recreation, and gathering with neighbors than residents of other areas. However, in the Santa Rosa Planning Area, and as illustrated on **Figure 5-1**, most designated communities of concern are within a minimum of 0.5 mile of parkland. There is one small portion of the mapped communities of concern that is not within 0.5 mile of parkland—at the southeast corner of Piner Road and Coffey Lane—but this area is a commercial development along a primarily commercial and industrial corridor.

Recreational Programming

The Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department manages programming for all ages and hosts special events year-round. Such programming and events include:

- **Active Adults programming** is meant for seniors in the community and includes fitness classes, ukulele lessons, crafting, educational courses, language learning classes, photography, games, and book clubs. Activities and classes are offered at the Person Senior Wing at the Finley Recreation Complex and the Steele Lane Community Center. A membership program is available for seniors and includes reduced class prices, free legal clinics, free guest speaker series, a newsletter, and free coffee and tea.

Figure 5-1
Parks and Open Space
Near Schools



- **Aquatic sports** are offered at two year-round swim facilities: the Ridgway Swim Center and Finley Aquatic Center. In addition to recreational swimming, the Recreation and Parks Department offers swim lessons, water fitness classes, safety training, therapeutic classes, a master swim training program, and water polo. Santa Rosa residents are also able to rent the pool for birthday parties and other events.
- **Youth camps** are offered in the winter, spring, and summer and include day camps, specialty camps, art camps, and sports camps for children ages three and a half to fourteen.
- **Neighborhood Services** is a division of the Recreation and Parks Department that provides innovative youth development programming to serve at-risk, low-income, and homeless youth and families. The programs provide safe spaces for young people to participate in recreational, social, and athletic activities without the fear of gangs, drugs, or negative influences. Neighborhood Services additionally assists families in high-need neighborhoods with improving their quality of life by connecting them to available services and fostering a stronger community.
- **Special events** in Santa Rosa include the FairyTale Ball, St. Patrick's Day lunch for seniors, a 5k run, Arbor Day Tree Planting, a Senior Expo, Kids to Parks Day Scavenger Hunt at Howarth Park, Kids Fishing days, Movies in the Park on Friday evenings in the summer, Oktoberfest for seniors, a Bingo Party for seniors, a Floating Pumpkin Patch, Halloween, a Handmade Holiday Crafts Fair, and a Holiday Choral Concert.
- **Recreation programs and events for special populations** are offered year-round to meet the needs of children, teens, adults, and seniors with disabilities. Programs include the Differently Abled Adults Dances, and Youth Summer Camps.
- **Sports programs** serve youth and adults in Santa Rosa. Youth sports include tennis, basketball, soccer, and softball. Adult programs include tennis and softball. Sports courts and fields are also offered for solo use or can be rented for birthday parties or larger events.
- **General adult programs** are offered in arts and crafts, business and technologies, dance, education, fitness and wellness, and gardening.

5.5 REGIONAL OPEN SPACE AND TRAILS

Open space areas of various sizes are integrated into many of the city's parks and contribute to the overall preservation of recreational land in the Planning Area. Open space areas purposely have minimal improvements to preserve the natural setting. The Limited improvements include benches, picnic tables, and garbage cans.

Larger open space areas in the Planning Area are generally developed in association with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and the Sonoma County Water Agency under joint acquisition and maintenance agreements. These spaces allow some public access for hiking and wildlife viewing. They are counted toward the standard of 1.1 acres of public-serving open space per 1,000 residents, described above.

Spring Lake County Park, in northeast Santa Rosa, is operated by Sonoma County Regional Parks. It has 320 acres for walking, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, swimming, boating, fishing, camping, access to picnic areas, and access to the Environmental Discovery Center. Trione-Annadel State Park is operated by the California Department of Parks and Recreation. It has 5,000 acres of open space and offers bike trails, hiking trails, horseback riding, fishing, interpretive exhibits, vista points, nature and wildlife viewing, picnic areas, and an environmental learning and visitor center. The park is adjacent to Spring Lake Regional Park and provides connections to the Sonoma County Regional Park system.

A third open space area, Taylor Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve, is in the southeast portion of the Santa Rosa Planning Area and is operated by Sonoma County Regional Parks. The Taylor Mountain Park offers 1,100 acres of grassy hillsides, oak woodlands, and creeks. The park has 5.5 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding as well as an 18-hole disc golf course.

The Santa Rosa Planning Area has numerous trails. Hiking and walking trails are provided in all regional open space and in many of the community parks. Urban trails consist of separated bike paths or trails that parallel creeks. Two popular paths in central Santa Rosa are the Santa Rosa Creek Greenway and the Prince Memorial Greenway trails, which connect to several additional trails on each end. The Santa Rosa Creek Greenway trail begins to the west of downtown Santa Rosa and travels west along the Santa Rosa Creek and joins the Prince Memorial Greenway Trail in the downtown. Both trails feature artwork, tree-shaded corridors, and views of the Santa Rosa Creek. The Brush Creek Trail in northeast Santa Rosa is a 2.2-mile paved trail that borders Brush Creek. The southern end of the Brush Creek Trail meets the Flat Rock Open Space, which extends east along Santa Rosa Creek. A separated bike path along Fountaingrove Parkway in northeastern Santa Rosa extends from Nagasawa Park to the Parker Hill Open Space.

The Joe Rodota Regional Trail, operated by Sonoma County Regional Parks, is an 8.5-mile, paved, off-road trail that links Sebastopol to downtown Santa Rosa. Trail access is available at several points along the length of the trail. The Joe Rodota Trail terminates at the intersection of the Santa Rosa Creek and the Prince Memorial Greenway trails.

5.6 FIRE DAMAGE AND PARK RESTORATION

The Santa Rosa Recreation and Parks Department and the Santa Rosa Transportation and Public Works Department are responsible for all park rebuild and restoration projects. Rebuilds or restorations occur as needed and are largely driven by input from park neighbors and community stakeholders. Presently, the restoration and rebuilding of parks in the Santa Rosa Planning Area are in response to the 2017 Tubbs Fire, which damaged approximately 75 acres of parkland across 10 park sites. The Tubbs Fire damaged community and neighborhood parks as well as open space and landscape areas. Restoration is underway at 9 of the 10 parks, and a full rebuild is underway at the Coffey Neighborhood Park, which was destroyed in the Tubbs Fire.

5.7 SOURCES

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Persons Contacted

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