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## **5.19 PARKS AND RECREATION**

Information in this section is derived from the County of Los Angeles Santa Clarita Area Plan, and local, county, state and federal recreation facility records.

### **5.19.1 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING**

#### **LOCAL AND REGIONAL PARKS**

##### **City of Santa Clarita Parks**

As shown in Table 5.19-1, City of Santa Clarita Parks, the City has a total of 5 parks within approximately 2 miles of the project site totaling 37.4 acres. The developed parks contain amenities, such as children's play areas, multi-purpose fields, restrooms, volleyball courts, picnic tables, etc.

**Table 5.19-1  
City of Santa Clarita Parks**

<b>Parks</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Location</b>
Almendra Park	4.30	23420 Alta Madera Drive, Valencia
H.M. Newhall Memorial Park	14.30	24923 Newhall Avenue, Newhall
Old Orchard Park	5.40	25023 Avenida Rotella, Valencia
Valencia Glen Park	7.30	23750 Via Gavola, Valencia
Valencia Meadows Park	6.10	25671 Fedala Road, Valencia
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>37.4</b>	

Source: Per Jessica Humphries, City of Santa Clarita Department of Park, Recreation and Community Services, March 30, 2005.

##### **County of Los Angeles Parks**

County parks located within the jurisdictional boundaries of the City of Santa Clarita or within its established planning area are described in Table 5.19-2, Existing and Proposed County and State Parks and Recreation Facilities in the City of Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan Planning Area. Most of the County's parks are community-orientated and regional in nature, having parkland in excess of ten acres in area. Of the 23 County existing and proposed parks in the City's planning area, two are 50 acres or larger in area.

The largest of these parks is the 8,700-acre Castaic Lake State and County Recreation Area. This multi-use park is located north of the project site in the unincorporated area of Castaic and includes 2,600 surface acres of water contained in an upper and lower reservoir system. Castaic Lake reservoir and surrounding land is owned by the state; however, the County has a lease on the land and operates the upper lake, Castaic Lake Reservoir, and the lower lake, Castaic Lagoon.<sup>1</sup> Facilities at the upper lake include major boat ramps and supporting facilities with fishing, boating, water and jet skiing, and parking for boats and trailers. Development around

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<sup>1</sup> Per communication with Lillie Lowery, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, January 7, 2003.

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the 180-acre Castaic Lagoon includes major picnic areas for groups and families, swimming beaches, parking areas, non-motorized boat facilities, and general day-use recreation facilities, such as comfort stations. It is important to note that only the Santa Clarita Woodlands Park (located directly south of the proposed project) and the Pico Canyon Park would directly serve the project, given their relatively close proximity.

**Table 5.19-2  
Existing and Proposed County Parks and Recreation Facilities  
in the Santa Clarita Valley Planning Area**

	Acres	Type		Acres	Type
<b>CITY OWNED PARKLAND</b>			<b>COUNTY OWNED PARKLAND</b>		
Almendra Park	4.3	Neighborhood	Acton Park	12.5	Neighborhood
Begonias Lane Park	4.2	Neighborhood	Acton Open Space	76.8	Regional
Bouquet Canyon Park	10.5	Neighborhood	Castaic Sports Complex	51.0	Recreation
Bridgeport Park	16.0	Community	Chesebrough Park	5.1	Neighborhood
Canyon Country Park	19.3	Community	Del Valle Park	5.8	Neighborhood
Central Park	80.0	Metro-Regional	Hasley Canyon Park	5.4	Neighborhood
Circle J Ranch Park	5.3	Neighborhood	Jake Kuredjian Park	5.0	Neighborhood
Creekview Park	5.0	Neighborhood	Pico Canyon Park	18.0	Neighborhood
Newhall Park	14.3	Community	Plum Canyon/David March Park	12.9	Neighborhood
North Oaks Park	2.3	Special Use	Northbridge Park <sup>1</sup>	9.8	Neighborhood
Oak Springs Canyon Park	5.7	Neighborhood	Richard Rioux Park	15.4	Community
Old Orchard Park	5.4	Neighborhood	Val Verde Park	57.6	Regional
Pamplico Park	7.6	Neighborhood	William S. Hart Park <sup>2</sup>	224.0	Regional
Santa Clarita Park	7.3	Neighborhood	<i>Subtotal</i>	499.3	
Valencia Glen Park	7.3	Neighborhood	<b>STATE OWNED PARKLAND<sup>3</sup></b>		
Valencia Meadows Park	6.1	Neighborhood	Castaic Lake State Recreation Area	8,700.0	Regional
<i>Subtotal</i>	200.6		Placerita Canyon Nature Center	341.0	Regional
			Santa Clarita Woodlands Park	3,169.7	Regional
			Vazquez Rocks Park	739.5	Reservation
			<i>Subtotal</i>	12,950.2	
<b>Total</b>	<b>13,650.1</b>				

1,2. These parks are located within City of Santa Clarita limits, but are maintained by the County of Los Angeles.

3. State Owned Parklands are located in the unincorporated portions of the Planning Area and are operated by Los Angeles County.

Source: City of Santa Clarita Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services 2003, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation 2003

## STATE PARKS

The two state parks within the SCV Planning Area are the Santa Clarita Woodlands State Park and the Placerita Canyon State Park, which are described below.

### Santa Clarita Woodlands State Park

This 3,000 plus-acre state park is located west of Interstate 5, adjacent to the Ed Davis Park, and may be accessed via either the Lyons Avenue or the Calgrove/The Old Road interchanges. The creation of this park involved a land transaction that included the City of Santa Clarita, Chevron,

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and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy as the primary participants.<sup>2</sup> The transaction involved the donation of 851 acres of land historically owned by Chevron, with the Conservancy purchasing another 2,184 acres.

Santa Clarita Woodlands State Park includes the 145-acre Ed Davis/Towsley Canyon Park at 24255 The Old Road in Newhall, the three-mile Pico Canyon Trail, the 2.4-mile Rice Canyon Trail, and the 3.8-mile East Canyon Trail. The facilities at Towsley Canyon Park include trails for hiking, mountain biking and equestrian uses; picnic areas; the Sonia Thompson Nature Center; the Towsley Canyon Lodge available for daily or overnight use; and restroom facilities with a drinking fountain.

This park is located directly south of the proposed project.

### **Placerita Canyon Park**

Placerita Canyon Park is located east of the Antelope Valley Freeway and is accessible from Placerita Canyon Road. It is a state park that is operated by the Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation, and it contains a nature center, picnic areas, overnight and day camping facilities, a children's play area, hiking trails, and an equestrian campground.

### **FEDERAL PARKS**

The SCV Planning Area encompasses a portion of the Angeles National Forest and is adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest. Each of these federal parks is briefly described below.

#### **Angeles National Forest**

Portions of the planning area encompass a portion of the 650,000-acre Angeles National Forest, which offers a wide range of camping (with fees) and picnicking facilities. A segment of the Pacific Crest National Trail extends for 160 miles through the forest, providing views of the Antelope Valley; varied terrain, vegetation, and wilderness; and the San Gabriel Mountains. In addition, there are hundreds of miles of trails in the forest. The water reservoirs charge entrance fees, as well as boat launching, boat rental, and overnight camping fees. In addition to providing recreational opportunities, the forest provides a home for an array of wildlife. User fees (Adventure Pass) are required for any use of the Angeles National Forest.

#### **Los Padres National Forest**

The 311,294-acre Ojai Ranger District of the nearly two million-acre Los Padres National Forest is located primarily in the northern section of Ventura County; however, a portion of the Los Padres National Forest crosses the Los Angeles/Ventura County line and is within the SCV planning area boundary.

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<sup>2</sup> The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy is a state agency created in 1980 under the auspices of the Resources Agency. It was initially established to preserve land and to provide opportunities for recreation in the Santa Monica Mountains and the Rim of the Valley Corridor. The Conservancy is primarily responsible for funding the acquisition of land with statewide and regional significance.

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Various recreation facilities are provided in the Los Padres National Forest, including hiking, equestrian and off-road vehicle trails, and camping areas (with fees) accessible by road and trail. There are 57 dispersed trail camps, 19 developed family campgrounds, and one developed group campground. There are many miles of recreation roads utilized by visitors as scenic drives and by off-highway vehicles. The forest has inventoried 373.7 miles of trails, including 17.7 miles of the scenic Gene-Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trail, which begins at Reyes Creek Campground and ends at Lion Campground.<sup>3</sup> User fees (Adventure Pass) are required for any use of the Los Padres National Forest.

### TRAILS

#### Los Angeles County Trails

The County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation plans and maintains an extensive system of regional riding and hiking trails within the County, many of which extend to and within the SCV Planning Area. County trails located within the vicinity of the proposed project are listed in Table 5.19-3, Existing and Proposed County Trails, and are described below.

**Table 5.19-3**  
**Existing and Proposed County Trails**

Trail Name	Length (Miles)	Condition
Pico Canyon Trail	9.0	Proposed
Gavin Canyon Trail	8.0	Proposed
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.0</b>	

Source: Per James McCarthy, Trails Coordinator, Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation.

#### *Pico Canyon Trail*

Pico Canyon Trail is proposed to be approximately nine miles in length beginning at the intersection of Potrero Canyon and the Santa Clara River just east of the Los Angeles/Ventura County line. Moving in an easterly direction, the trail is generally proposed to follow Potrero Canyon, and then connect to Pico Canyon ending at the mouth of the canyon just west of Interstate 5. At this juncture, the trail will connect to another County proposed trail (Gavin Canyon Trail) that will connect to the partially built Rim of the Valley Trail.

#### *Gavin Canyon Trail*

This approximately eight mile trail links Pico Canyon to Rim of the Valley Trail. The Rim of the Valley/Corridor Trail is discussed immediately below.

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<sup>3</sup> Ventura County General Plan, Public Facilities and Services Appendix, May 1988.

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### Regional Trails in the SCV Planning Area

#### *Rim of the Valley Corridor/Trail*

The Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy Rim of the Valley Corridor includes land in the mountains that surround the San Fernando, Simi, Conejo, and La Crescenta Valleys (i.e., the San Rafael and Simi Hills, and the Verdugo, San Gabriel, and Santa Susana Mountains). It is actually an overlay on private property and the Corridor is a proposal envisioning an approximately 200 mile state trail. At the present time, only ten miles have been acquired in the Santa Susana Mountains. Located on both public and private land within the Rim of the Valley Corridor, it will connect many of the regional trails that, in turn, connect to the local trails within the unincorporated portions of Los Angeles County and the City of Santa Clarita.

#### *Pacific Crest National Trail*

A segment of the Pacific Crest National Trail extends for 160 miles through the Angeles National Forest, providing views of the Antelope Valley, varied terrain, vegetation, wilderness, and the San Gabriel Mountains. Campgrounds, picnic areas, and staging areas are available along the trail. In all, the Pacific Crest National Trail traverses 2,500 miles from Canada to Mexico. The trail was established under the National Trails System Act of 1968 and is part of the National System of Recreation and Scenic Trails. Only foot and equestrian travel is permitted on the trail; motorized vehicles and mountain bicycles are prohibited. Other trails that connect to the Pacific Crest National Trail include Fish Canyon Trail, Bear Canyon Trail and Gillette Mine Trail. All of these trails are located within the Angeles National Forest land and are north of Castaic Lake. The proposed County Castaic Creek Trail would connect to these trails.

#### **City of Santa Clarita Trail System**

The City of Santa Clarita has adopted a system of trails to provide pedestrian, bicycle and equestrian connections to residential communities within the City of Santa Clarita and to the County of Los Angeles regional trail system as well. City trails in the vicinity of the proposed project are listed below in Table 5.19-4, City of Santa Clarita Trails.

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**Table 5.19-4  
Existing and Proposed City Trails**

Trail Name	Length (Miles)
Newhall Ranch Road Trail	1.0
South Fork Trail	6.8
<b>Total Trail Miles</b>	<b>7.8</b>
Source: Per Jessica Humphries, City of Santa Clarita Department of Park, Recreation and Community Services, March 30, 2005.	

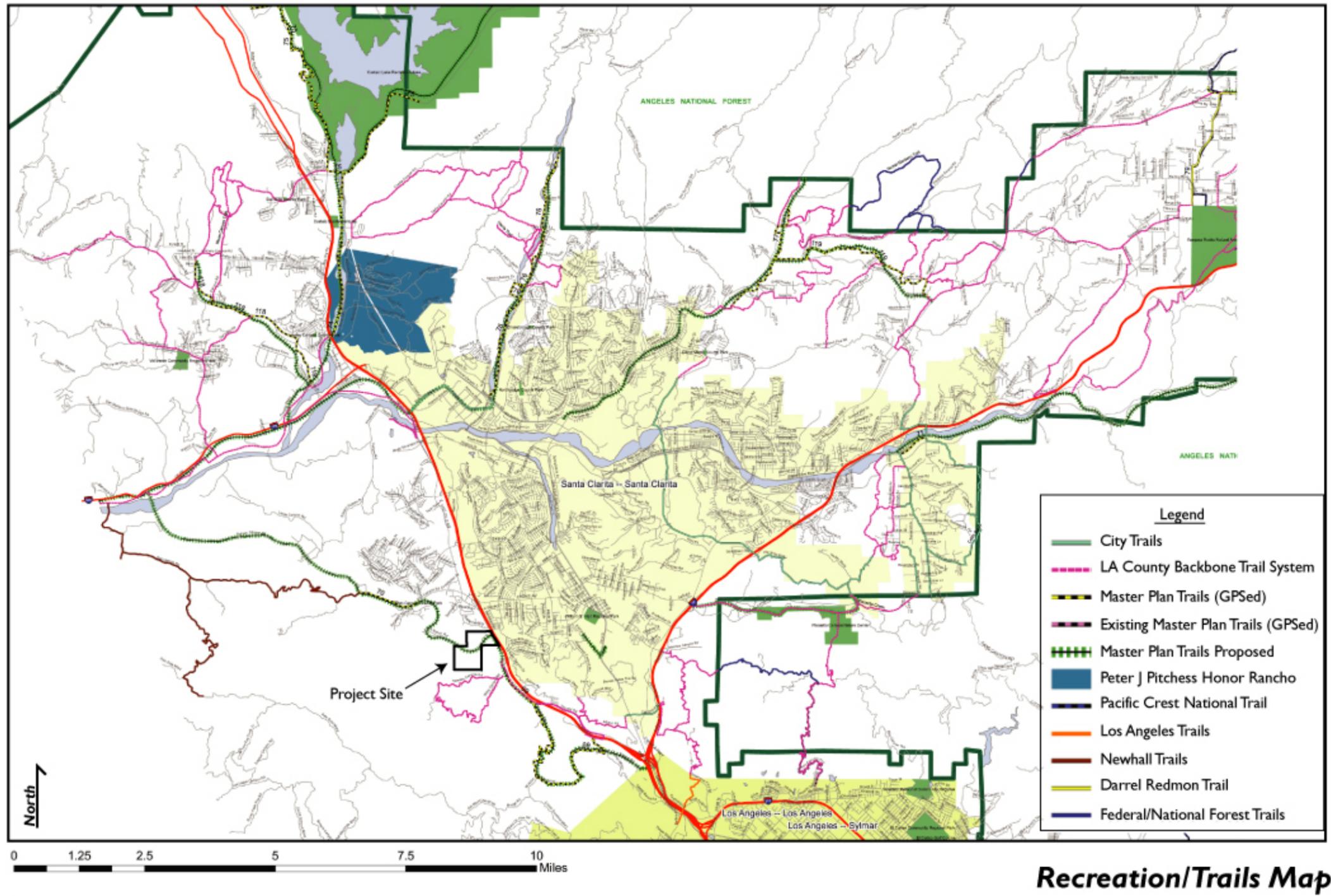
***Newhall Ranch Road Trail***

The Newhall Ranch Road Trail totals 1.0 mile and extends from McBean Parkway to Bouquet Creek.

***South Fork Trail***

This 6.8-mile trail runs along the South Fork of the Santa Clara River from Newhall at Orchard Village Road north to the Santa Clara River Trail in Saugus. An extension of this trail from Orchard Village Road to Towsley Canyon Park is proposed.

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Source: Los Angeles County Department of Parks and Recreation

Exhibit 5.19-1

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### COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES PARK STANDARDS

Current Los Angeles County parkland dedication requirements for the proposed project (as described in sections 21.24.340, 21.24.350, 21.28.130, and 21.28.140 of the Los Angeles County Code, Title 21, Subdivision Ordinance) specify 3.0 acres of regional park area for each 1,000 residents.

Long-term Los Angeles County park planning standards specify 6 acres of regional park area for each 1,000 residents. The regional park standard applies to both incorporated and unincorporated areas. The local park planning standard used by the County requires 4 acres per 1,000 residents.<sup>4</sup>

### CURRENT AND FUTURE NEEDS

As of January 1, 2003, approximately 13,439 acres of regional parks (existing regional and metro-regional parks and reservation), and 379.5 acres of local parks (210 acres of existing special use, neighborhood and community parks and 169.5 acres of passive parkland), were identified in the Santa Clarita Valley Area Plan planning area. The planning area population in 2000 was 212,611. Using current park standards applied to the 2000 population, the Planning Area would need 1,275 acres of regional parks and 850 acres of local parks to meet established standards.

### 5.19.2 SIGNIFICANCE THRESHOLD CRITERIA

Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines contains the Initial Study Environmental Checklist form used during preparation of the project Initial Study, which is contained in Appendix A of this EIR. The Initial Study includes questions relating to parks and recreation. The issues presented in the Initial Study Checklist have been utilized as thresholds of significance in this Section. Accordingly, a project may create a significant environmental impact if one or more of the following occurs:

- ◆ 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; and
- ◆ Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Additionally, The State of California (California Government Code, Section 66477 [Quimby Act]) has established a standard of three acres per 1,000 population as the proportionate amount of land necessary to satisfy the park requirement for new subdivisions. This standard is consistent with the current County of Los Angeles park requirements for new subdivisions. Fees in-lieu of the dedicated parkland, construction of amenities on dedicated parkland that total less than the standard, but are of equal dollar value to the park fee, or a combination of the three are all considered to satisfy the requirement.

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<sup>4</sup> One Valley, One Vision, Community Services, Section 5.2, Parks and Recreation, page 5-36, Standards.

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### 5.19.3 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

#### PROPOSED PARKS AND TRAILS IN THE PROJECT

##### Trails

Lyon Canyon Ranch proposes a private and publicly maintained trail system as part of its recreation component (refer to [Exhibit 3-7, Trails Plan](#)). The plan recognizes that bicycle, pedestrian, and possibly equestrian circulation is fundamental to creating a pedestrian-friendly/open space-oriented community. The proposed project includes the dedication of a 12-foot wide regional trail easement (Gavin Canyon Trail) that will traverse the central portion of the site from the Old Road to areas west of the project site. These areas are planned for future trail development by the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation and the project developer. This trail will be open to the public and will be accessible to equestrians, hikers, joggers, and bicyclists. Local trails are also proposed within the project site that will be open to the public and will be maintained by the project's HOA. The internal street system proposed for Lyons Canyon Ranch will also provide pedestrian walkways along the collector roads and all neighborhood streets.

All circulation elements within the proposed neighborhoods have been located and designed to be as accessible as possible to meet Los Angeles County construction standards. To the extent feasible, off-street trail connections and the existing regional trails will not contain prohibitively steep topography that will limit their design and use. In addition, the final location of all on-site trails will be determined through consultation with the Los Angeles County Parks and Recreation Department and the Department of Regional Planning to help ensure minimal impacts to the environment during both construction and use of the trail systems.

Santa Clarita Valley Regional Trails are located on the south and northwest sides of the project area. These trails are a part of the Towsley Canyon Park and a larger informal regional trail system that currently cross the project site. The trail connections through the project area would be maintained by the proposed project, providing trail access to the existing residential development to the north and other regional destinations.

##### Parks

To provide usable areas for passive and active recreational activities, Lyon Canyon Ranch includes four open space areas, which can support passive recreational uses, a 1.39-acre Recreation Lot, and recreational areas within the senior housing development.

The four Open Space Lots will primarily be used for passive recreation, include use as a trailhead, hiking and nature interpretation, and limited areas for picnicking. These open spaces have natural meadows and native oak trees. For protection and preservation of the on-site Oak trees, the areas below the oak tree drip line shall be kept free of landscaping and irrigation.

The 1.39-acre Recreation Lot area is planned for use as an active recreation area for residents of the Lyons Canyon Ranch project. This park is envisioned as a small open area with paths along

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the street edges and an open turf area. However, the project developer has reserved the right to construct a pool and pool house based on market demand. The Recreation Lot area and improvements will be for resident use only and will be maintained by the project's HOA.

The area proposed for senior housing will also include a private active recreational area for use by residents of Lyons Canyon Ranch.

### NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY PARKS

◆ ***DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INCREASE USAGE OF NEIGHBORHOOD AND COMMUNITY PARKS.***

***Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:*** Significant Impact.

***Impact Analysis:*** The County of Los Angeles has adopted park dedication requirements for new subdivisions that are applicable to the proposed project. These requirements are that land be dedicated, or equivalent fees be paid, for neighborhood and community park or recreational purposes at the rate of three acres per 1,000 persons residing within the project.<sup>5</sup>

As previously described, the proposed project includes 5 open space lots, 6 debris/detention basin lots, and 1 recreation lot. Open space and recreational components are divided into five large dedicated areas totaling approximately 123.6 acres. Approximately 72.5 percent of Lyon Canyon Ranch project is proposed as open space and recreational use; large open space areas surround each of the residential development clusters, providing a natural setting for the neighborhoods and preserving the vast majority of native oak trees and slopes on the site for passive recreational opportunities.

The project proposes to improve a 1.39 acre park for active recreation, and recreational opportunities within the area proposed for senior housing. These improvements, combined with the dedication of land for open space preservation and construction of the Gavin Canyon regional public trail will exceed the County's parkland dedication requirements.

### **Mitigation Measures:**

PR1 The project shall comply with the County Ordinance and/or Quimby Act by paying the in-lieu fees totaling \$364,931 to the County of Los Angeles.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

Implementation of the recommended mitigation measure, which requires that project-related park requirements be met, based on the County Ordinance and Quimby Act standards through a combination of park development and/or fee payments, would reduce impacts to a less than significant level.

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<sup>5</sup> Per the County of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation Department Conceptual Park Obligation Estimate, the proposed project is required to develop or dedicate 1.54 acres for public or private park purposes.

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## REGIONAL PARKS

- ◆ ***DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INCREASE USAGE OF REGIONAL PARKS.***

***Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

***Impact Analysis:*** While it is possible that project residents would use the adjacent Santa Clarita Woodlands Park, no significant regional parkland impacts are expected. Since the project proposes a total of 8.25 acres of active and passive park within 129.5 acres of dedicated open space, it is not expected that the project residents would, in any appreciable manner, need to use regional parks that are located off-site. This is not to say the project residents would not use off-site facilities. In fact, the Lyons Canyon Ranch project would provide trail linkages to the extensive trail network and parks within the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy (SMMC) property located south of the project site and trail alignments planned by the County of Los Angeles located west of the project site. However, by providing a neighborhood park, private recreation areas, and walking trails, the proposed project would help alleviate the existing Countywide shortage of parkland because facilities throughout the County serve all communities. Consequently, impacts to regional parks would be considered less than significant.

***Mitigation Measures:*** No mitigation measures are required.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

## STATE AND FEDERAL RECREATION/FORESTS

- ◆ ***DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INCREASE USAGE OF STATE AND FEDERAL RECREATION/FORESTS.***

***Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

***Impact Analysis:*** It is anticipated that new residents of the proposed project would use the state and federal recreation areas and forests. In fact, the Lyons Canyon Ranch plan would provide trail linkages to the SMMC property located south of the project site. As such, increased usage would be considered a potentially adverse impact. However, the State and National Forest facilities charge user fees for water sports and overnight camping at the reservoirs and camping areas. Additionally, state and federal taxes, which would be paid by residents and businesses located within the project site, would be available for maintenance of these facilities. Consequently, as with regional and local off-site facilities, no significant state or federal parkland impacts would occur.

***Mitigation Measures:*** No mitigation measures are required.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

## TRAILS

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◆ ***DEVELOPMENT OF THE PROPOSED PROJECT WOULD INCREASE USAGE OF LOCAL TRAILS.***

***Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

***Impact Analysis:*** As previously discussed, the Trails Plan for the Lyons Canyon Ranch Project area includes a trail system that provides access to the regional trail network within the SMMC property located south of the project site, open areas and connections between living areas, shopping, work, entertainment, schools, and civic and recreational facilities.

New residents of the proposed project are expected to use the existing and proposed City of Santa Clarita public trails and the County's existing and proposed trail systems in the Santa Clarita Valley area as they are constructed. Anticipated use of the surrounding trails would increase the density of users on such trails once they are constructed. After project completion, the trails would connect to local and regional trails. The proposed trail alignments would provide linkages to local and regional trails.

***Mitigation Measures:*** No mitigation measures are required.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

## **5.19.4 CUMULATIVE IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

◆ ***DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATED WITH THE PROPOSED PROJECT AND RELATED PROJECTS WOULD INCREASE DEMANDS FOR PARKS AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE SANTA CLARITA VALLEY.***

***Level of Significance Prior to Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.

***Impact Analysis:*** The County of Los Angeles' park dedication requirements for new subdivisions are applicable to the proposed project and related projects in the County that include residential development. Per the Quimby Act, the County requires that land be dedicated, or equivalent fees be paid, for neighborhood and community park or recreational purposes at the rate of three acres per 1,000 persons residing within the project. The expected cumulative population growth associated with the proposed project and related projects, of 60,395 persons, would create a need for an additional 181 acres of parkland, regardless of whether this growth occurs within the City of Santa Clarita or unincorporated areas. The proposed project includes the development of a 1.39 acre neighborhood park and the dedication of 129.5 acres for open space and trail usage, while the related projects include 28 acres of parks, some or all of which would count toward park dedication requirements, as applicable. As previously discussed, fees may also be used to satisfy parkland requirements in-lieu of the dedicated parkland. The actual park dedication calculations and credit determinations would be based on the subdivision maps submitted for each residential development among the cumulative projects. Given compliance with park dedication requirements and/or fees, as applicable, cumulative parks and recreation impacts would be less than significant.

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**Mitigation Measures:** Refer to Mitigation Measure PR1. No additional mitigation is required.

***Level of Significance After Mitigation:*** Less Than Significant Impact.