

4.14 RECREATION

This section describes the parks and recreational facilities within Tuolumne County and expected impacts associated with implementation of development under the proposed General Plan Update.

4.14.1 Setting

a. Existing Parks and Recreational Facilities. Parks and recreational facilities enhance Tuolumne County's aesthetic qualities, the health of the County's environment, and residents' quality of life. Community parks serve as both recreational and open space resources, which can provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, and can also include natural preserve areas. The County's Public land use designation includes the County's own property, Stanislaus National Forest, Yosemite National Park, Columbia State Historic Park, Railtown 1897 State Historic Park, and lands under jurisdiction of the Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, etc.

The 1996 General Plan designates 4,827 acres of land for Park and Recreation use. In addition to County-owned and managed resources, multiple agencies have jurisdiction over parks and other recreational facilities within Tuolumne County: the National Forest Service, Bureau of Reclamation, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, California State Parks and Recreation, and California Department of Fish & Wildlife. Schools also provide recreational facilities used by County residents when not in session.

Stanislaus National Forest, Yosemite National Park, and other surrounding areas in the Sierra Nevada Mountains provide incredible natural vistas and settings for hiking, water skiing, horseback riding, rafting, camping, snowmobiling, boating, snow skiing, fishing and other outdoor activities. In addition, human-made recreational attractions include restored historic hotels, golf courses, numerous gourmet restaurants, wineries, train rides, casino, five museums, two state historic parks, live theater, and bed-and-breakfasts. These parks and recreational resources make the County a true year-round vacation and recreation destination.

Table 4.14-1 describes some of the existing park and recreational facilities located within unincorporated areas of the County.



**Table 4.14-1 Park & Recreational Facilities
in Unincorporated Tuolumne County**

Name	Managing Entity	Location
Yosemite National Park	National Park Service	Unincorporated Area
Stanislaus National Forest	United States Forest Service	Unincorporated Area
New Melones Lake	Bureau of Reclamation	Unincorporated Area
Columbia State Park	State Parks and Recreation	Columbia
Railtown 1897 State Historic Park	State Parks and Recreation	Jamestown
Big Trees State Park	State Parks and Recreation	Unincorporated Area
Don Pedro Lake	Don Pedro Recreation Agency	Don Pedro Lake
Lake Tulloch	South San Joaquin Irrigation District	Unincorporated Area
Pioneer Park	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Columbia
Rocca Park	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Jamestown
Patterson Field	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Jamestown
Jamestown Youth Center	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Jamestown
Groveland Youth Center	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Groveland
Twain Harte Pool	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Twain Harte
Columbia Pool	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Columbia
Tuolumne Pool	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Tuolumne
Standard Park Sports Complex	Tuolumne County Recreation Department and Tuolumne Parks and Recreation District	East Sonora area
Tuolumne Memorial Park	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Tuolumne
Tuolumne Youth Center	Tuolumne County Recreation Department	Tuolumne
Twain Harte Park	Twain Harte Community Services District	Twain Harte
Eproson Park	Twain Harte Community Services District	Twain Harte
Twain Harte Tennis Courts	Twain Harte Community Services District	Twain Harte
Mary Laveroni Park	Groveland Community Services District	Groveland
Columbia College Tennis Courts	Columbia College	Columbia
Twain Harte Golf Club	Private	Twain Harte
Mountain Springs Golf Club	Private	Mountain Springs
Phoenix Lake Golf Course	Private	Unincorporated Area
Leland High Sierra Snow Play	Private	Unincorporated Area
Dodge Ridge Wintersports Area	Private	Pinecrest

Source: Tuolumne County Recreation Department website, accessed August 2015.

b. Regulatory Setting. The Quimby Act (California Government Code c§66477), passed into law in 1975, is intended to mitigate the impacts of development on parks and recreational facilities. This act authorizes cities and counties to pass ordinances requiring that developers set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. Required in-lieu fees for park and recreational improvements, known as Quimby fees, are attached as a condition of approval of a tract map or parcel map.

Policy 8.A.1 in the County’s existing Recreation Element states an intent to acquire and development recreation facilities based on a goal of 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents. Only County-owned public land, other local public land, and private facilities(not State or Federal lands) count toward this goal. The Tuolumne County Recreation Master Plan, adopted by the Board of Supervisors in February 2002, also identifies existing and proposed recreational trails.



4.14.2 Impact Analysis

a. Methodology and Significance Thresholds. Impacts are significant if buildout under the General Plan Update causes the County to contain less than 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents, per Policy 8.A.1 in the County's Recreation Element, or otherwise results in inconsistencies with the Quimby Act.

Additionally, in accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, an impact is significant if physical changes that could be facilitated by buildout of the proposed General Plan would result in one or more of the following conditions:

- *The project 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*
- *The project includes recreational facilities or requires the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.*

b. Project and Cumulative Impacts.

Impact REC-1 Development facilitated by the General Plan Update would increase the County's population and exacerbate an existing shortage in recreational facilities. Although policies and implementation programs in the General Plan Update would contribute to the development of additional parkland, the supply would not be sufficient to meet the County's goal of 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents. Impacts from the overuse and deterioration of existing park and recreational facilities would be Class I, *significant and unavoidable*.

Based on the unincorporated County's current population of 49,458, and the goal of 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents as written in Policy 8.A.1 of the Recreation Element, the County currently needs at least 1,484 acres of recreational facilities to meet existing demand from residents. As shown in Table 4.14-1, the unincorporated portion of Tuolumne County has several County-owned neighborhood parks, a sports complex, three youth centers, several public tennis courts and pools, and private golf courses and snow sport operations. Although these facilities partially meet public demand for recreation, they collectively fall short of the County's existing need based on population (Adam Paszkowski, personal communication, August 17, 2015). In practice, Federal and State parkland including Yosemite National Park, Stanislaus National Forest, Columbia State Park, and other parks and reservoirs, serve as major recreational amenities for residents of the unincorporated County. However, Federal and State parkland is not factored into attainment of the County's recreational acreage-to-population ratio.

As discussed in Section 4.12, *Population and Housing*, the Tuolumne County Transportation Council projects that the County's population will increase to 63,243 by the year 2040, which would exacerbate the existing deficit in recreational land unless additional recreational facilities are provided. This projected population would need 1,897 acres of recreational land to meet the County's standard. The implementation of goals, policies, and implementation programs in the General Plan Update would reduce the shortage in recreational land. For example, the updated



Recreation Element includes the following policies and implementation measures to reduce impacts to parks and recreational facilities.

- Policy 8.A.1* *Acquire and develop recreation facilities to fulfill the County's projected unmet need based on a goal of 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents.*
- Policy 8.A.2* *Update County population statistics and regularly solicit public input to provide adequate amounts and types of new recreational facilities.*
- Policy 8.A.3* *Maintain the amount of acreage devoted to the County of Tuolumne's regional recreation facilities and provide for replacement of any such parkland that may be eliminated.*
- Policy 8.B.1* *Develop shared-use facilities, where feasible, with the County's school districts and link school facilities, where feasible, into the County-wide trail system.*
- Policy 8.B.4* *Cooperate with the City of Sonora, public schools, recreation and park districts, community services districts and other providers of recreational facilities to provide a coordinated approach for the acquisition, construction and maintenance of recreational facilities.*
- Policy 8.C.1* *Identify existing public parks and recreational facilities on the land use diagrams of the General Plan to facilitate planning compatible land uses near these facilities, planning trails to link such facilities and identifying land for new parks and recreational facilities.*
- Policy 8.D.1* *Address the location, amount of acreage for and design of new recreational facilities in conjunction with approvals for new communities and community plans.*
- Implementation Program 8.D.a* *Recreational Needs in New Communities and Community Plans. Address recreational needs of new defined communities and community plans through a recreation plan to be approved in conjunction with approvals for new communities and community plans which includes the following:*
- 1. Recommendations for the amount of acreage needed to serve the population of the new community or within the community plan's boundaries using a minimum standard of 5 acres/1,000 population.*
 - 2. Recommendations for the locations and alternative locations for park sites within the boundaries based on projected acreage needs.*
 - 3. Appropriate zoning to facilitate future dedication/development of identified park sites.*



4. *Recommendations for maintaining proposed recreation facilities, including maintenance districts.*
5. *Identification of potential routes for trails to link new towns or communities into the County-wide trail system.*

*Implementation
Program 8.D.b*

Recreational Facilities for New Residential Development. Require new residential development of five or more units to participate in the provision of recreational facilities for their residents as follows:

- a. *For multiple family housing developments, such as apartments, or mobilehome parks, recreational facilities shall be provided on site.*
- b. *For residential subdivisions, the subdivider shall have the option to provide recreational facilities on site, pay an in-lieu recreation fee or dedicate land for public recreational facilities in accordance with Government Code Section 66477 et seq. Any such fees collected may be used for the acquisition, construction and maintenance of recreational facilities.*

*Implementation
Program 8.D.d*

Recreational Facilities for New Commercial and Industrial Development. Encourage the inclusion of recreational facilities, dedicated open space, and/or trails within new commercial and industrial developments.

Policy 8.E.3

Give preference to locating new recreational facilities in areas where high levels of community support and interest are expressed.

Policy 8.E.5

Encourage the dedication and installation of multi-use non-motorized trails in new development proposals. Provision of any such trails shall count toward the required on-site recreational facilities pursuant to Government Code Section 66477(1)(g).

The updated Water Resources Element includes the following goals, policies, and implementation measures to provide for recreational uses in flood zones, and public waterways:

Goal 19.C

Provide for recreational use in water resource areas.

Policy 19.C.1

Permit recreational uses in flood zones if it can be demonstrated that the recreational use will not cause additional flooding or increase the potential for flood damage.

Policy 19.C.2

Provide reasonable public access to public waterways, lakes and reservoirs in compliance with State statutes while protecting private property rights and maintaining the biological, scenic and historical integrity of these features and lands adjacent to these features.



*Implementation
Program 19.C.b*

*Develop a Program to Identify and Provide Access to Public Waterways.
Develop a program to identify public waterways, lakes and reservoirs that do not already provide reasonable public access, but which are required to provide such access pursuant to State statutes. The program should include provisions for identifying which bodies of water require public access, identification of reasonable access points to these water bodies and procedures for providing such access.*

The updated Jamestown Community Plan includes the following policies to provide for recreational facilities:

Policy 14.C.2 Require new urban residential development to provide amenities such as pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths, street lights, landscaping and recreational facilities.

Policy 14.H.1 Provide or promote the expansion of existing parks and recreational facilities or the development of new such facilities with the Jamestown community of varying size, function and location to provide recreational opportunities for Tuolumne County's citizens as well as the residents of Jamestown.

Policy 14.H.2 Encourage the development of the following passive and active recreational facilities to benefit and to serve the entire Jamestown community:

- *Lighted tennis courts*
- *Swimming pool*
- *Lighted basketball courts*
- *Playing fields – soccer, softball*
- *Bicycling paths*
- *Hiking trails*
- *Picnic areas*
- *Equipped children's play area*
- *Youth center*
- *Community/senior center*
- *Library*
- *Western film set*
- *Museum*
- *Path of history and historic architecture walks*

Policy 14.H4 Require new residential development to provide recreational facilities for their residents and/or the community of Jamestown.

The updated East Sonora Community Plan includes the following goals and policies to promote the development of recreational opportunities:

Policy 16.C.5 Support the use of the Sierra Railroad grade for pedestrian and equestrian recreational use.



Goal 16.E Promote the development of community oriented recreational opportunities and facilitate pedestrian accessibility throughout East Sonora.

The updated Tuolumne Community Plan includes the following policies for the development of recreational facilities:

Policy 17.H.1 Encourage the development of new passive and active recreational facilities to benefit and serve the Tuolumne Planning Area.

Policy 17.H.2 Require new residential development to provide recreational facilities for their residents and/or the Tuolumne Planning Area.

Policy 17.H.3 Facilitate trail use by encouraging the establishment of staging areas and support facilities in strategic locations along adopted trail routes within the Tuolumne Planning Area.

Policy 17.H.4 Encourage recreational use of railroad grades, creeks and historic ditches as trails.

Policy 17.H.5 Protect railroad grade corridors for future trail use.

In support of the County's goal to have 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents, Implementation Measure 8.D.b would require that new residential developments with five or more units provide such facilities on-site, pay in-lieu fees under the Quimby Act, or dedicate land for public recreational facilities. However, the General Plan Update does not quantify the amount of facilities to be provided, and the Quimby Act limits the dedication of parkland or in-lieu fees to the proportionate amount necessary to provide three acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, or five acres per 1,000 residents under exceptional circumstances. Therefore, recreational facilities or in-lieu fees from new developments under buildout of the General Plan Update would not fully offset increases in demand according to the County's goal of 30 acres per 1,000 residents. Moreover, the minimum standard for new communities of 5 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents in Implementation Measure 8.D.a would be inconsistent with the County's goal of 30 acres per 1,000 residents. Without ensuring an adequate supply of parks and recreational lands, the General Plan Update could result in greater use of existing facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of these places could occur. Impacts would be potentially significant.

Mitigation Measures. Mitigation to ensure that the County attains its goal of 30 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents is not feasible. California Government Code §66477(a)(2) prevents the County from raising its requirements for dedication of parkland or in-lieu fees to a level greater than that necessary to provide five acres per 1,000 residents. Although the County could provide additional parkland through grants and direct acquisition, the General Plan Update does not propose specific park and recreation projects to meet remaining public demand. It may not be feasible for the County to provide the bulk of parkland to meet its goal of 30 acres per 1,000 residents.

Significance after Mitigation. The County is not currently attaining its goal of 30 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and the General Plan Update would not necessarily resolve this



shortfall. Furthermore, mitigation to ensure the attainment of the County's goal may not be feasible. Therefore, new development under the General Plan Update could result in overuse and deterioration of existing park and recreational facilities. Impacts would be significant and unavoidable.

Impact REC-2 While the General Plan Update does not propose specific park and recreation improvements, it would support the creation of a regional park in East Sonora and recreational facilities to serve the Jamestown community. The implementation of these parks and recreation facilities and others associated with new residential developments could result in environmental impacts related to traffic, noise, and aesthetics on surrounding uses. From a programmatic perspective relative to the General Plan Update, this would be a Class III, *less than significant*, impact.

The General Plan Update does not propose specific park and recreation projects, but policies and implementation measures in the updated community plans would encourage the development of new recreational facilities. In the East Sonora Community Plan, Implementation Measure 16.E.g supports the expansion of Standard Park or the adjacent portion of the Peaceful Oak Estates development site to create a regional park. In the Jamestown Community Plan, Policy 14.H.2 encourages development of the following types of passive and active recreational facilities to serve the community:

- *Lighted tennis courts;*
- *Swimming pool;*
- *Lighted basketball courts;*
- *Playing fields – soccer, softball;*
- *Bicycling paths;*
- *Hiking trails;*
- *Picnic areas;*
- *Equipped children's play area;*
- *Youth center;*
- *Community/senior center;*
- *Library;*
- *Western film set;*
- *Museum; and*
- *Path of history and historic architecture walks.*

In addition, the General Plan Update would require that new residential development provide recreational facilities, pay in-lieu fees, or dedicate parkland.

This Program EIR evaluates the programmatic impacts of buildout of the General Plan Update, including the buildout of parks and recreation facilities. A project-specific analysis of the impacts associated with development of specific parks and recreational facilities is not currently possible because the specific timing, location and features of such projects are not known with certainty, and the assessment of corresponding impacts would be speculative. The construction of parks and recreation facilities within a residential area and/or near schools could potentially



result in significant impacts in the areas of traffic, noise, or visual impacts to existing sensitive receptors. In addition, construction in undeveloped areas could result in impacts to biological resources or unknown buried cultural resources. However, the CEQA environmental review process requires that such potential impacts be addressed, on a project-by-project basis, prior to construction of new facilities. Project-specific CEQA review of future facilities may identify future impacts depending on the location and the conditions in place at that future time, for which mitigation may be required if such impacts are found to be significant. In addition, the General Plan and Community Plan policies and implementation programs identified in Impact REC-1 would also reduce impacts for individual construction of new recreation facilities. At a programmatic level of analysis appropriate to the proposed General Plan Update, impacts would be less than significant.

Mitigation Measures. No mitigation measures are required in addition to proposed General Plan Update policies. See policies listed under Impact REC-1.

Significance After Mitigation. Impacts would be less than significant without mitigation.



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