

**CITY OF EL CENTRO
GENERAL PLAN UPDATE
PARKS & RECREATION FACILITIES MASTER PLAN**

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Executive Summary

The City of El Centro (City) was the lead agency in developing the City of El Centro General Plan. The City's General Plan outlines the City's planned program for growth and includes, among other things, land use, public facilities and conservation and open space goals and policies that encourage the development and enhancement of the parks and recreation facilities that serve the community.

The City is proposing to adopt a Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan¹ (the Master Plan) which provides a detailed inventory and description of the existing park and recreation facilities and makes recommendations for improvements, expansions and design standards that will enhance the quality and quantity of park and recreation opportunities in the City. The detailed analysis in the Master Plan goes above the level of detail provided in the General Plan. The City is proposing to modify the goals and policies in the Land Use, Public Facilities and Conservation and Open Space Elements of its General Plan in order to more fully articulate the recommendations of the Master Plan.

A Mitigation Fee Study has been prepared in conjunction with the Master Plan. The study ensures that new development will pay its "fair share" of the parks and recreation facilities. The Mitigation Fee Study has been prepared to meet the requirements of Government Code 66000 and, as such, includes the nexus findings which support the calculation of fees. Amendments to Chapter 20, Article 5 and Chapter 24, Article 5 have been developed in order to make the City's existing mitigation fee and in-lieu dedication program consistent with the Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. The Mitigation Fee Study and implementing ordinance amendments are consistent with the General Plan, which has always emphasized that the new development will support the cost of infrastructure from which it benefits.

This document includes the proposed modifications to the Land Use, Public Facilities and Conservation and Open Space Elements of the General Plan, as well as modifications to the Implementation Programs that support each Element. While the Master Plan is generally consistent with the General Plan, the following changes are necessary to fully implement the recommendations of the Master Plan.

The Parks & Recreation Facilities Master Plan, the Mitigation Fee Study, the implementing ordinance amendments and this proposed General Plan Update were reviewed in light of the City's Program Environmental Impact Report (Program EIR) for the General Plan. The Master Plan and the proposed General Plan Update do not create

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new environmental impacts nor do they increase the significance of the impacts identified in the Program EIR. Therefore, an addendum to the Program EIR has been prepared and accompanies this proposed update.

City Park Acreage Standard

This update proposes to change the City's Park Acreage Standard from three acres per 1,000 population to 5 acres per 1,000 population. This increase can be accommodated within the land use pattern outlined in the General Plan.

Land Use

This update proposes New Policy 1.14, which establishes the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan as the guide for improvement of existing park and recreation facilities and for the development of new facilities.

This update also proposes a new implementation action LU-9, which directs the implementation of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.

Public Facilities

This update proposes to modify Policies 1.1. and 1.4. Modified Policy 1.1 sets ½-mile as the "suitable" distance between parks and residential areas. Modified Policy 1.4 sets design standards for retention basins that focus on low water use.

This update also proposes new Public Facilities Goal 3 and new Policy 3.1 focused on strengthening Joint-Use Agreements with the local school districts.

This update proposes to modify Policy 8.2 in order to specify an ideal location for a Cultural Arts Center close to or within the downtown commercial area. The proposed modification to Policy 8.2 highlights a Master Plan recommendation.

The update includes a current inventory of park and recreation facilities, including joint use facilities, in order to develop an accurate update of the acreage the City devotes to park and recreation facilities. The current acreage devoted to park and recreation facilities exceed 3 acres per 1,000 population (the City's current standard). However, community input during the development of the Master Plan indicated that current facilities do not adequately provide for the range of community needs. The detailed and updated inventory supports the proposed modification to the City's Park Acreage Standard.

This update adds or significantly modifies seven implementation actions (PF 1 through PF-6 and PF-9). These actions focus on the recommendations of the Master Plan, specifically:

- improvements to and design standards for parks;
- funding for parks including development impact fees;
- joint-use agreements with local schools;

- regular updates to the Master Plan and development impact fee program to reflect increasing refinements to project costs as designs develop.

Conservation and Open Space

This update proposes new Policies 2.2, 2.4 and 2.5 which focus on design standards, the use of recycled water and the use of drought tolerant materials.

This update also proposes New Conservation and Open Space Goal 4.4 “Embrace the Desert”. This new goal and its two supporting policies highlight the Master Plan’s emphasis on El Centro’s unique landscape. The Environmental Education Program and Desert Demonstration Garden described in these new policies are consistent with the recommended capital projects included in the Master Plan.

This update incorporates Master Plan recommendations for water and energy efficiency into implementation actions COS-3 and COS-21. This update proposes two new actions. New action COS-5 focuses in implementing a recycled program through the use of planning grant funding from the State Water Resources Control Board. New action COS-9 provides detailed implementation actions for Goal 4.4 “Embrace the Desert”.