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## 4.14 RECREATION

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### INTRODUCTION

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The recreation impact chapter analyzes the Wheatland General Plan Update Study area. This chapter contains goals, and policies that establish the framework for the provision of recreational services for Wheatland residents and visitors. The General Plan Update sets the framework for an expanded park system with physical recreational facilities to provide the opportunity for a variety of recreational activities. City decisions concerning growth and development affect schools, childcare, and senior citizen facilities. Even when the City is not directly responsible for their development and operation, the City plays an important role in the siting and planning of these facilities. The General Plan Update also promotes the creation/expansion of a Civic Center, library services and arts and cultural activities. The following impact assessment is based on information provided by the *Wheatland General Plan Update Background Report* (2004).

### ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

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The setting section describes the existing open space and recreation opportunities related to the General Plan Update Study area.

The City provides and maintains public park facilities and services for all age and income groups. The General Plan sets the framework for an expanded park system with physical recreational facilities to provide the opportunity for a variety of recreational activities. Even when the City is not directly responsible for their development and operation, the City plays an important role in the siting and planning of these facilities.

#### Parks and Recreational Facilities

Parks and recreation activities foster community interaction and a sense of community involvement. Wheatland seeks to provide an opportunity for residents to enjoy active and passive recreation facilities. City standards for the development of City-owned park facilities are shown in Table 4.14-1:

| <b>Facility Type</b> | <b>Size</b>    | <b>Standard</b>            |
|----------------------|----------------|----------------------------|
| Neighborhood Park    | 5 to 10 acres  | 2 acres / 1,000 population |
| Community Park       | 20 to 30 acres | 1 acre / 1,000 population  |

Wheatland currently has two distinct types of City parks: neighborhood, and community.

### Neighborhood City Parks

These parks are designated to serve from 3,000 to 5,000 people located within a quarter to half-mile radius of the park. Park sites typically range in size from 5 to 10 acres. Neighborhood park sites are generally located within short walking distance of residents. Current parks meeting these criteria are:

- *Park Place subdivision*, which contains a landscaped park occupying approximately two acres, as well as open space totaling approximately 4.2 acres. A drainage channel takes up most of this open space.
- *Wheatland Ranch subdivision*, which contains approximately 1.1 acres of landscaped parkland, and 3.8 acres of open space/turf area. Approximately 2.3 acres of the open space/turf area consists of a joint use detention basin/athletic field.

### Community City Parks

Community city parks are designated to be centrally located to a larger population, and should serve 20,000 to 30,000 people located within five-mile radius. They are generally 20 to 30 acres in size. Facilities located in community parks should include lawn areas, playing fields, multipurpose equipment, and picnic areas.

Current community facilities are designated as community parks even though they only encompass 0.25 to 3.8 acres. As they are major focal points in the community, they have community park status.

- *City Park*, which is the largest park, occupying 3.8 acres on the east side of State Route 65, between C Street and the Union Pacific tracks. Most of City Park is occupied by a little league baseball diamond (Tom Abe Field).
- *Tomita Park*, which occupies a quarter-acre site in downtown, and is located along the Union Pacific tracks on the west side of Front Street, the location of the City's original train depot. Tomita Park is landscaped with turf and large trees, and includes benches, a gazebo, and a plaque commemorating the Johnson's Rancho historical landmark.

Numerous planned community facilities have also been designated which meet the preferred park acreage and recreational components; although the acreage to population ratio is different from those parks constructed and managed by the City. New development is required to provide a minimum of 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 new residents. The planned communities include:

- *Jones Ranch*: The recently approved Tentative Map identifies 4.7 gross acres as Neighborhood Park, 24.8 acres of Open Space/Drainage Corridor, and 1.2 acres of Pedestrian Paseo/Tot Lot, for a total of 30.7 park and/or open space acres, well above the required amount of parkland dedication.
- *Heritage Oaks Estates West*: The recently submitted Tentative Map identifies 8.09 net acres as park.
- *Heritage Oaks Estates East*: The recently submitted Tentative Map identifies 23.07 acres for park space, including tot lots, parkways, and community and neighborhood parks.

Sports Parks

As noted, the City is anticipating the incorporation of parks to meet the needs of an expanded population. The greater population will allow for the creation of park facilities not currently supported by a city the size of Wheatland. In the future, it will be possible to create sports park facilities encompassing 25 to 75 acres. Such facilities will be designed to serve 5,000 to 15,000 people and will allow for regional events such as fairs, statewide athletic tournaments, and revenue generating exhibitions. The City shall strive to achieve the standards shown in Table 4.14-2 for existing or new sports and recreational facilities.

| <b>Table 4.14-2<br/>Sports and Recreational Facility Standards</b> |  |                                    |
|--|--|------------------------------------|
| Facility Type  | Standard (Facilities per unit of pop.) | Minimum size                       |
| <b>Facilities to be located at Parks</b>                           |  |                                    |
| Tennis Courts  | 1 to 2,000                             | 7,500 sq. ft. court                |
| Volleyball Courts  | 1 to 5,000                             | 4,000 sq. ft. court                |
| Multipurpose Courts  | 1 to 10,000                            | 10,000 sq. ft. court               |
| Basketball Courts  | 1 to 5,000                             | 7,300 sq. ft. court                |
| Play Apparatus   | 1 to 3,000                             | 2,500 sq. ft.                      |
| Picnic Unit  | 1 to 10,000                            | 2,500 sq. ft.                      |
| <b>Ball Fields, Skate Park, Pool, Gym (See Policy 6.A.5)</b>       |  |                                    |
| Baseball Fields  | 1 to 8,000                             | 7 acres                            |
| Softball Fields  | 1 to 10,000                            | 7 acres                            |
| Soccer Fields  | 1 to 15,000                            | 5 acres                            |
| Multipurpose Fields  | 1 to 5,000                             | 5 acres                            |
| Skate Park   | 1 to 30,000                            | 5 acres                            |
| Gyms   | 1 to 30,000                            | 3 acre site (250 person capacity)  |
| <b>Other Facilities</b>  |  |                                    |
| Civic Center (outdoor auditorium)                                  | 1 / 30,000                             | 10 acre site (500 person capacity) |
| Youth Center   | 1 / 30,000                             | 5 acre site (250 person capacity)  |
| Senior Center  | 1 / 30,000                             | 3 acre site (8,000 sf)             |
| Park / Recreation Office   | 1 / 30,000                             | 2 acre site (8,000 sf)             |

These standards may be satisfied through any combination or joint development of public facilities, private recreational facilities, and school facilities. In addition to these standards and minimum sizes, sports facilities shall be developed according to adopted sports facilities master plans.

### Wheatland Pedestrian, and Bicycle Trails

Recognizing ongoing development pressures and the valuable waterway resources within the City's Study area, the City of Wheatland has considered many potential uses of local waterways and proposes to enhance these community resources. The goals of the General Plan are to encourage and improve public access to creek and river channels, establish riparian and scenic values, and promote the continued support and maintenance of the creeks and trail systems by local residents. While the emphasis of the Land Use Diagram is to improve access and vegetation, it is noted that the primary function of these waterways is flood protection. Accepting this priority, it is still possible to maintain and enhance public access and vegetation and habitat values of the waterways.

The one main waterway within the City's study area is detailed in the Land Use Diagram: Grasshopper Slough. As development occurs within the waterway area, the diagram has supported designs that improve access and enhance vegetation through integrated bike and pedestrian trails. The diagram does not offer detailed designs for individual sections of trail. Specific designs are considered along with development plans for specific land parcels. Jones Ranch, located along Grasshopper Slough, will not include the partial construction of the trail; however, space is reserved along the waterway to serve as future trails.

While the Land Use Diagram identifies additional linkages along existing irrigation canals and proposed roadways within the Study area, further trail development will also serve additional functions, such as open space and alternative transportation routes. As Wheatland does not have any existing bike trails, a comprehensive bicycle system would provide a safe and effective method of travel between neighborhoods and to local recreation and retail uses.

### Existing Unmet Recreational Needs

The Yuba County General Plan establishes an overall community standard of five acres of total (neighborhood and community) park space per 1,000 residents. Based on the current population of approximately 3,178, and using the above standard, the City should contain 15.75 acres of park space. Existing parks within the City total approximately 15.45 acres. Using the above service standard, the City requires an additional 0.30 acres of park space to meet the needs of the current population.

## **REGULATORY CONTEXT**

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### **Wheatland General Plan Update**

The project involves establishment of goals and policies aimed at supporting population growth within the City of Wheatland. These applicable goals and policies have been included in the following impact discussions, where appropriate, in order to mitigate potential impacts

## **IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

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### **Standards of Significance**

The recreation and open space impact analysis considers the Study area's consistency with several standards, including the existing land uses, the general plan, and the zoning ordinance. Impacts related to recreational uses and open space may also be considered significant if any of the following conditions, or potential thereof, would result if the proposed project's implementation would

- result in inadequate park and recreational facilities, or;
- result in the lack preservation and enhancement of open space lands.

### **Method of Analysis**

Determinations of impacts to public services were based on information from the *City of Wheatland General Plan Background Report*, the *General Plan Update Land Use Map*, and the General Plan Update goals and policies.

### **Project-Specific Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

#### **4.14-1 Impacts related to neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities.**

The General Plan Update includes standards, which seeks to provide for the development of new parks and recreation facilities, including a new community park, a Civic center, a senior center, a youth center, a sports and ball field east of Downtown, and new neighborhood parks. Though the current park acreage is sufficient for the current population, additional parks will need to be constructed to meet the needs of the projected population.

As recreational facilities are minimal in Wheatland, additional facilities would need to be implemented to maintain the present facilities. Wheatland's existing City Hall and community service facility are inadequate to accommodate the growth of the City. The General Plan Update calls for the creation of a Civic Center close to the Downtown to house these functions.

The City's Land Use Diagram has designated 200 acres for park space that it hopes to bring into service over the next 20 years. This allotment will be implemented as additional residential development sites are set for construction. Assuming the 200 acres is added, the projected population of 30,100 for 2025 will be fully met. The precise location of future park sites will be determined by the City in conjunction with new development and based upon available and appropriately located land.

Community involvement and activity is an important component of the quality of life and small-town character of Wheatland. Policies of the plan seek to provide for facilities where groups can gather for functions and activities. Though the current facilities are inadequate to support the projected population growth, additional sites will be consistently developed to meet the needs of the growing community.

The General Plan Update includes the following goals and policies applicable to recreational issues:

- Goal 6.A To establish and maintain a public park system, recreational, and civic facilities suited to the needs of Wheatland residents, employees, and visitors.
- Policy 6.A.1. The City shall initiate the financing, design, and development of a City-owned community park adjacent to the new Civic Center site, in accordance with the Land Use Diagram.
- Policy 6.A.2. The City shall develop and promote the use of its park system to include a balance of passive and active recreation opportunities.
- Policy 6.A.3. The City shall strive to achieve the following standards for the development of City-owned park facilities, shown in Table 4.14-1.
- Policy 6.A.4. The City shall require new development to provide a minimum of 5 acres of parkland for every 1,000 new residents.
- Policy 6.A.5. The City shall strive to achieve the standards shown in Table 4.14-2 for existing or new sports and recreational facilities. These standards may be satisfied through any combination or joint development of public facilities, private recreational facilities, and school facilities.
- Policy 6.A.6. The City shall recognize that standards for neighborhood park acreage are distinct from standards for sports fields and facilities acreage for baseball, softball, and soccer fields, skate parks, pools, gyms, and youth, senior, or civic centers.

- Policy 6.A.7. The City shall seek to establish and maintain a linear park system of greenbelts, bicycle paths, and pedestrian walkways that link city park facilities and other key destinations. This linear park system should not be counted towards meeting acreage standards for neighborhood or community parks and recreation facilities.
- Policy 6.A.8. The City shall ensure that appropriate funding mechanisms are identified to adequately fund the development of new parks and recreational facilities and the redevelopment of existing parks and recreational facilities.
- Policy 6.A.9. The City shall ensure that appropriate funding mechanisms are identified to cover the cost of maintaining parks and recreational facilities on an ongoing basis.
- Policy 6.A.10. The City shall consider the following factors in the design of new parks:
- a. Safety
  - b. Security
  - c. Maintenance
  - d. Accessibility
  - e. Landscaping complimentary to the surrounding environment
  - f. Travel distance of users
  - g. Passive vs. active use areas
  - h. Restroom facilities
  - i. Citizen input
  - j. Adequacy of off-street parking
  - k. Flexibility for programming activities
- Policy 6.A.11. The City shall investigate the potential for joint use agreements with the school districts for the use of shared-use park and school facilities.
- Policy 6.A.12. The City shall encourage local service clubs and non-profit organizations to participate in the development and improvement of City parks and recreation facilities.

Policy 6.A.13. The City shall encourage the establishment or joint development of commercial or private recreation facilities within the Wheatland area.

Policy 6.A.14. The City shall ensure that recreation facilities are sited to minimize negative impacts (i.e., parking, night lighting, excessive noise) on surrounding neighborhoods.

Policy 6.A.15. The City shall prepare and implement a Parks Master Plan.

Policy 6.A.16. The City shall provide supervision of park areas to protect the rights of the users of the parks and reduce vandalism, and shall work with law enforcement agencies to eliminate crime at parks and recreation facilities.

Goal 6.B To develop a permanent, centralized home for City departments, while providing valuable public services and facilities within the Downtown area of Wheatland.

Policy 6.B.1. The City shall develop a site plan for a Civic Center.

Policy 6.B.2. The City shall develop the Civic Center, which will serve as the community gathering place and center for community events and recreation. The Civic Center shall reflect community history and help to establish the Downtown as a vibrant community center.

Policy 6.B.3. The City shall develop the Civic Center to accommodate the Police Department, Fire Department, City Library and City Hall, and for possible expansion of Public Works and other City Departments as needed.

Policy 6.B.4. The City shall locate the Civic Center west of the proposed Community Park along Spenceville Road (see the Land Use Diagram).

Policy 6.B.5. The City shall actively seek funding for, and involve youth in the planning of, a citywide youth recreation center to be located on the Civic Center site, which will include gymnasium, game rooms, meeting rooms, offices, and a patio area.

Goal 6.C To provide facilities which bring citizens together to meet their social, cultural, recreational, and educational needs.

Policy 6.C.1. The City shall actively seek funding for, and involve senior citizens in the planning of, either the expansion of the current Senior Center or establishment of a new larger Senior Center. The

Senior Center should include meeting rooms, offices, game rooms, dining areas/kitchens, and a patio area.

Policy 6.C.2. The City shall site the Senior Center so that it is easily accessible to transit, the library and Civic Center, medical facilities, and other key destinations within the City.

Implementation of the goals and policies above would reduce the impact to a *less-than-significant* level.

Mitigation Measure(s)

*None required.*

**4.14-2 Impacts related to preservation and enhancement of open space lands.**

Part of the enjoyment of Wheatland is its open space resources, both manmade and natural. Wheatland's open space resources include parks, mature trees in the neighborhoods and along roadways, and the agricultural lands surrounding Wheatland.

The General Plan Update includes guidelines to protect natural resources, while meeting Wheatland's future parks and recreation needs. The Land Use designation provides for outdoor recreational uses, equestrian uses, habitat protection, irrigation canals, reservoirs, watershed management, public and quasi-public uses, and areas typically limited for human occupation due to public health and safety hazards such as floodways, unstable soils, or areas containing wildlife habitat and other environmentally-sensitive features.

As discussed previously in this chapter, the City of Wheatland recognizes ongoing development pressures and the valuable environmental resources within the City's Study area. The City of Wheatland has included goals of the General Plan to encourage and improve public access to creek and river channels, establish riparian and scenic values, and promote the continued support and maintenance of the creeks and trail systems by local residents. In addition, the GPU includes goals and policies to protect natural resources, thus assisting in the preservation and enhancement of open space lands.

The General Plan Update includes the following goals and policies applicable to recreational issues:

Goal 6.A To establish and maintain a public park system, recreational, and civic facilities suited to the needs of Wheatland residents, employees, and visitors.

Policy 6.A.7. The City shall seek to establish and maintain a linear park system of greenbelts, bicycle paths, and pedestrian walkways that link

City park facilities and other key destinations. This linear park system should not be counted towards meeting acreage standards for neighborhood or community parks and recreation facilities.

Policy 6.A.14. The City shall ensure that recreation facilities are sited to minimize negative impacts (i.e., parking, night lighting, excessive noise) on surrounding neighborhoods.

Goal 8.D To preserve and enhance open space lands to maintain the natural resources of the Wheatland area.

Policy 8.D.1. The City shall support the preservation and enhancement of natural land forms, natural vegetation, and natural resources as open space to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy 8.D.2. The City shall, where appropriate, permanently protect as open space areas of natural resource value, including wetlands preserves, riparian corridors, woodlands, and floodplains.

Policy 8.D.3. The City shall require that new development be designed and constructed to preserve significant stands of vegetation and any areas of special ecological significance as open space to the maximum extent feasible.

Policy 8.D.4. The City shall support the maintenance of open space and natural areas that are interconnected and of sufficient size to protect biodiversity, accommodate wildlife movement, and sustain ecosystems.

Policy 8.D.5. The City shall encourage the development of natural open space areas in regional, community, and neighborhood parks.

Policy 8.D.6. The City shall serve as the steward of public open space and ensure that the use and maintenance of the open space is carried out in an environmentally-responsible manner.

Policy 8.D.7. The City shall plan and establish natural open space parkland as a part of the overall City park system.

Implementation of the goals and policies above would reduce the impact to a *less-than-significant* level.

Mitigation Measure(s)

*None required.*

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**Endnotes**

<sup>i</sup> City of Wheatland, Wheatland General Plan Update Background Report, July 2004.