

## ***CHAPTER 6 PUBLIC FACILITIES AND SERVICES***

Public services and facilities – including basic utilities and infrastructure – must be considered in the planning process in order to identify potential opportunities and constraints for new development. Public service and facility issues relate to several of the state’s mandatory general plan elements, including Safety, Conservation, Open Space, and Land Use. Since there is a direct relationship between the City’s ability to provide community services and the public facilities available in the community, it is appropriate that public facility and public service policies and goals be included in the General Plan.

The Public Facilities and Services element includes those services, facilities, and capital improvements needed to service the entire community, including the City Hall, police and fire facilities, and parks. A range of services and facilities, including schools and libraries, are provided to El Cerrito residents by other service providers. The City works with the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD), Contra Costa County, and other service providers to maintain service to current and future residents and employees.

Specific public facility and service needs, goals, and policies are addressed in the following subsections:

- Parks and Recreation
- Non-Recreational Facilities
- Public Services and Infrastructure

### **PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE**

#### **A. Setting**

El Cerrito is blessed with many fine parks, major open space areas, several creeks, and easy access to the regional park system. Residents of the City enjoy a rich diversity of parks and recreational opportunities, including a variety of City-operated recreational programs (including childcare programs) and City-maintained parks and recreation facilities. While program fees have helped cover basic service costs, however, growing demand for these services and the age of many recreation facilities (mostly built in the 1950s and 1960s) have resulted in a growing list of deferred facility capital improvement needs.

### *Existing Facilities*

Park and open space facilities in El Cerrito include approximately 31.6 acres of City-owned parks, 99.9 acres of City-owned open space, 23.3 acres of other City-maintained recreational facilities, and 26.6 acres of school district owned and maintained recreational areas for a total of approximately 181.4 acres of publicly owned recreation and open space facilities (**Table 6-1**). The amount of City-owned open space includes approximately 2.9 acres in two areas not previously designated for recreation or open space, but so designated by this Plan. These figures do not include two significant creek areas – Cerrito Creek at El Cerrito Plaza and Baxter Creek near Key Boulevard – that total approximately 2.6 acres, which may be secured through easements rather than fee title.

**Table 6-1. Inventory of Parks, Recreation Lands, and Open Space**

<b>City-owned Parks</b>		<b>Utility-owned (Public or Private) Open Space Areas</b>	
	5.2	RG&E Right of Way	22.0
Arlington Park	7.4	EBMUD Reservoir Sites	11.2
Canyon Trail Park	3.1		
Canyon Trail Field	0.2		
Central Park (El Cerrito portion)	7.6		
Cerrito Vista Park	1.5		
Creekside Park	2.6		
Huber Park	1.1		
Poinsett Park	2.9		
Tassajara Park			
Subtotal	31.6	Subtotal	33.2
<b>City-owned "Open Space" Facilities</b>		<b>Privately-owned Open Space Areas</b>	
Hillside Natural Area	85.0	Mira Vista Country Club	127.1
Ohlone Greenway (City portion)	12.0	Camp Herms Scout Camp	18.0
City-owned land not previously dedicated to recreation or open space*	2.9	Sunset View Cemetery	7.1
Subtotal	99.9	Windrush School	1.3
		Residential (sites designated as open space in the General Plan)	
<b>Other City-maintained Recreation Facilities</b>		• North side of Moeser @ Seaview	2.8
Castro Park	2.7	• West end of Buckingham Drive	8.2
Fairmont Park	3.6		
Harding Park	3.5		
Central Park (Richmond portion)	1.5		
Ohlone Greenway (BART portion)	12.0		
Subtotal	23.3	Subtotal	164.5
<b>School District-owned &amp; Maintained Recreation Area</b>		<b>Newly added Open Space Included in this General Plan</b>	
Cougar Field (Albany USD)	7.6	Creek areas (exact locations and ownership not determined)	1.8**
El Cerrito High (West County USD)	15.0		0.8**
Portola Middle (West County USD)	5.0	• Cerrito Creek @ El Cerrito Plaza	
Subtotal	26.6	• Baxter Creek near Key Blvd.	
		Subtotal	2.6
<b>Total Publicly Owned Recreation &amp; Open Space Facilities</b>	181.4	<b>Total Other Open Space</b>	200.3

\* Lots on north side of Roger Court and area on south side of Moeser Lane @ Seaview

\*\* Estimates

Source: City of El Cerrito staff, July 1999

## Recreation Facilities

The City's Community Services Division provides facilities and programs that serve the broader needs of the entire community (**Table 6-2**) as well as facilities that serve local neighborhoods (**Table 6-3**). The City also leases City-owned buildings for uses such as the Contra Costa Civic Theater. Also, all the public and most of the private schools in El Cerrito have facilities available for community groups to use for recreation or meetings. Six of the neighborhood parks have clubhouses for City recreation programs and community group uses.

**Table 6-2. Community-Serving Parks and Recreation Facilities  
(including public use facilities not owned by the city)**

Facility	Location
Casa Cerrito Childcare Center <i>play area, equipment</i>	6927 Portola Drive
Cerrito Vista Park (7.6 acres) <i>2 tennis courts, 4 softball fields, volleyball court, picnic facilities, play equipment</i>	7300 Moeser Lane
El Cerrito Community Center/Swim Center Complex	7007 Moeser Lane
El Cerrito Tennis Center (El Cerrito High)	540 Ashbury
Ohlone Greenway (2.5 miles long) <i>("linear park" along the BART right-of-way, maintained by the city)</i>	On and parallel to BART right-of-way
Hillside Natural Area (85 acres) <i>Memorial Grove, Hillside Trail, Eucalyptus Grove, Quarry</i>	Hill areas (see Community Facilities Map)
Cougar Field <i>(owned and operated by the Albany Unified School District)</i>	On El Cerrito/Albany border West of Behrens Street
El Cerrito High School (approx. 14 acres for recreation) <i>5 tennis courts, baseball and soccer fields, outdoor basketball courts, gymnasium, football field, baseball area, jogging track</i>	540 Ashbury Avenue
Portola Middle School (approx. 5 acres for recreation) <i>Playground and gym</i>	1021 Navellier Street
Veterans Hall (Contra Costa County)	6401 Stockton Avenue
"Open House" Senior Center	6500 Stockton Avenue
Contra Costa Civic Theater	Moeser at Pomona
Camp Herms Boy Scout Camp (private)	Above Arlington Park off Thors Bay Road
Mira Vista Country Club (private)	Northeastern portion of city, above Arlington Blvd.
Windrush School (Independent) <i>Gymnasium available for rent by city and others</i>	1800 Elm Street

*Source: Draft Community Services Element of the El Cerrito General Plan, October 1986; supplemented by input from City of El Cerrito staff, May 1998 and March 1999.*

**Table 6-3. Neighborhood-Serving Parks and Recreation Facilities  
(including public use facilities not owned by the city)**

<b>Facility</b>	<b>Location</b>
Arlington Park (5.2 acres) <i>Clubhouse, 2 ponds, 3 tennis courts, picnic facilities, basketball court, play equipment, grass play area, creek access</i>	1120 Arlington Boulevard
Canyon Trail Park (10.5 acres) <i>2 tennis courts, clubhouse,* play equipment, grass play area, large natural area in canyon with small pond, creek access, picnic facilities; includes former El Monte playfield with baseball diamond and soccer field</i>	6757 Gatto
Castro Elementary School <i>Playground</i>	7123 Donal Avenue
Castro Park (2.7 acres) <i>Clubhouse/childcare center, 2 tennis courts, baseball field, playground, play equipment</i>	1420 Norvell Street
Central Park (1.7 acres) (located mostly in Richmond but jointly maintained by El Cerrito) <i>softball field, basketball area, play equipment</i>	5701 Central Avenue
Creekside Park (1.5 acres) <i>play equipment, lawn areas</i>	South end of Santa Clara Avenue
Fairmont Elementary School <i>Playground, basketball courts</i>	724 Kearney Street
Fairmont Park (3.6 acres) <i>Clubhouse/childcare center, play equipment, small softball field</i>	715 Lexington
Harding Elementary School <i>Playground, basketball courts</i>	7230 Fairmount Avenue
Harding Park (3.5 acres) <i>Clubhouse/childcare center, 2 tennis courts, baseball field, playground, play equipment, picnic facilities</i>	7115 C Street
Huber Park (2.6 acres) <i>Small clubhouse,** play equipment, basketball court, picnic and barbecue facilities, creek access</i>	7711 Terrace
Madera Elementary School <i>Playground</i>	8500 Madera Drive
Madera Childcare Center <i>Childcare center, play equipment</i>	1500 Devonshire Drive
Poinsett Park (1.1 acres) <i>Small clubhouse, play area, basketball area, open creek</i>	5611 Poinsett Drive
Sierra Prospect Elementary School (Independent) <i>Play area and equipment</i>	2060 Tapscott Avenue
St. John's School (Independent) <i>Playground, gym</i>	11156 San Pablo Avenue
Tassajara Park (2.9 acres) <i>Clubhouse/ceramics studio, 2 tennis courts, small ballfield, playground, picnic facilities, basketball courts</i>	2575 Tassajara Avenue
Tehiyah Day School (Independent) <i>Playground, play equipment</i>	2603 Tassajara Avenue

\* not currently in use due to building settlement

\*\* limited use due to lack of accessibility

Source: Draft Community Services Element of the El Cerrito General Plan, October 1986, supplemented by input from City of El Cerrito staff, May 1998 and March 1999.

In addition to City facilities, El Cerritans benefit from close proximity to major regional recreation facilities operated by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD). These facilities include Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, located just east of El Cerrito; Point Isabel Regional Shoreline, located west of El Cerrito; and Miller-Knox Regional Shoreline, located west of El Cerrito.

### ***Recreation Programs***

The City also operates a wide range of recreation programs:

- **Adult Recreation Programs.** This includes programs and classes covering a range of activities and topics. The programs serve 400 to 500 people per week and are paid for by class fees. The department also organizes and supervises men's and women's softball leagues each summer.
- **Senior Center.** The City leases the "Open House" Senior Center from the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The center is located at 6500 Stockton Avenue, near the City library, and includes a dining area, lounge, and meeting rooms. The facility accommodates social activities such as dances, classes, crafts, and meetings. It also houses programs available to older residents, including daily lunch, home-delivered meals, grocery shopping, adult day care program, equipment loans for disabled persons, counseling, and senior discount card services. The center is funded by participants, private donations and the general fund, and serves between 800 and 1,000 seniors per week. The center also handles a discount paratransit voucher program and special van trips for seniors and disabled riders, with funds received from Measure C.
- **Youth Services.** The City provides childcare (for children 5 to 12 years), pre-school programs (20 months to 5 years), and summer day camps (3.5 to 15 years). Childcare is provided in state-licensed centers adjacent to each of the four public elementary schools in El Cerrito. In addition, the City provides an offsite childcare center and transportation from schools for children on the waiting list for the onsite centers. Over 1,500 youth participate in these programs.
- **After-School Programs.** Middle school students are served by free after-school enrichment programs funded by the West County Public Education Fund and delivered by staff of the City's Community Services Department. This program serves 200 Portola Middle School students.
- **Youth Recreation Programs.** Fee-based classes and activities are provided by independent contractors for youth aged 3 to 18 years. These programs serve 250 to 350 young people per month.
- **Jobs and Volunteer Positions.** Youths aged 12 to 18 are encouraged to participate in division activities as volunteers and counselors for younger children.
- **Swim Programs.** The El Cerrito Swim Center houses programs (classes, lap swims, swim teams, etc.) that serve more than 2,000 swimmers each year.

The City's Community Services Division also coordinates a number of community events and fundraisers each year such as the Golf Scramble, July Fourth Celebration (sponsored by the El Cerrito Rotary and co-sponsored by the City), and Annual Egg Hunt. The Division also works to provide support for community-based groups such as the Tennis Club, Garden Club, and NAACP Youth Group.

Many community facilities are available for rental to groups, including the Community Center, Senior Center, clubhouses, Swim Center, and picnic facilities.

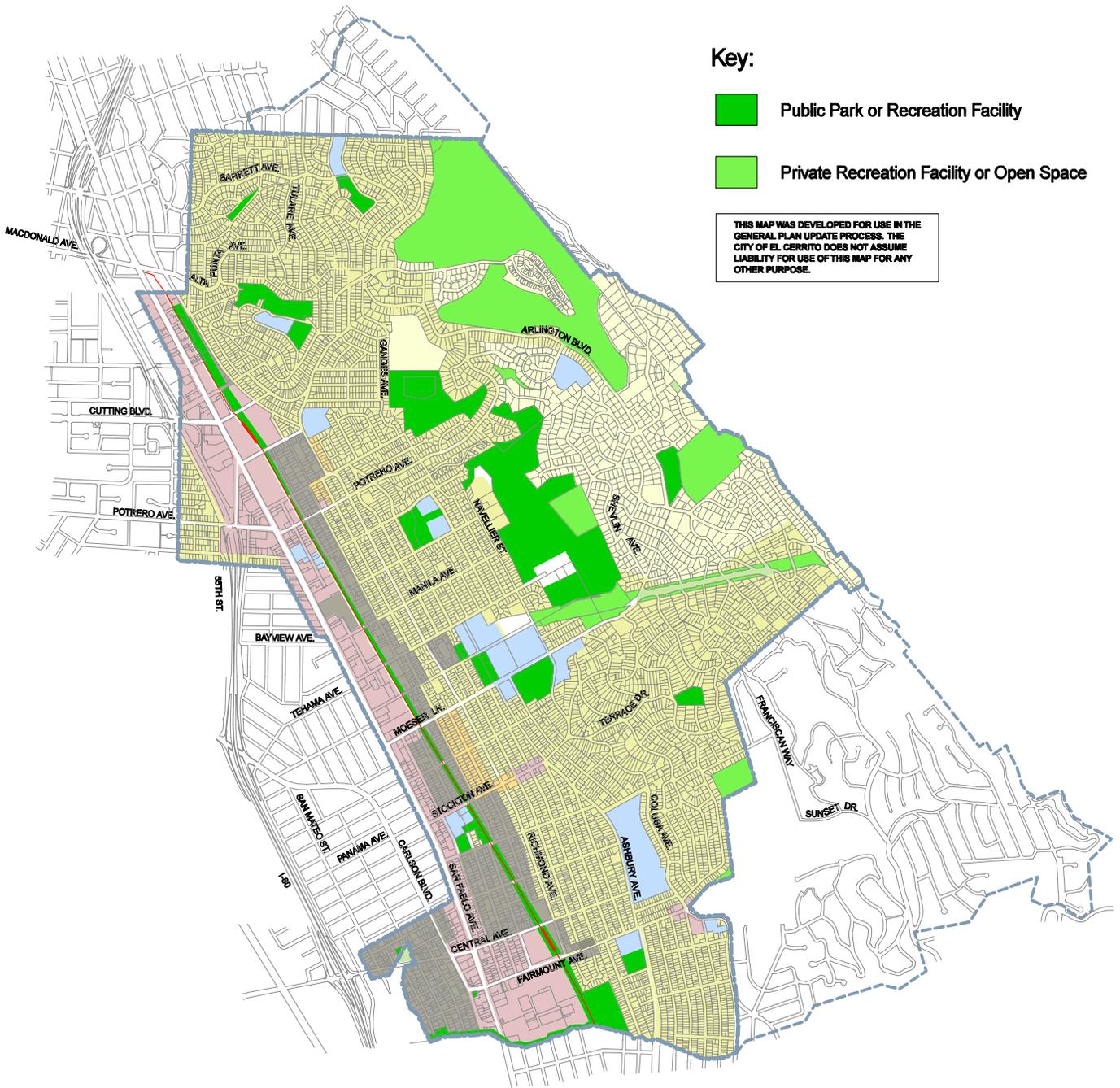
### ***Open Space***

El Cerrito is blessed with many fine parks, major open space areas, several creeks, and easy access to the regional park system. The western portion of the City is built on an extension of the San Francisco Bay Plain. The eastern half of the City extends into the Berkeley Hills, with the ridgetop lying near the eastern City Limits. Although these west-facing slopes are gentler than the east-facing slopes in Wildcat Canyon, El Cerrito contains some very steep areas.

The City of El Cerrito has substantial open space and natural resources under various forms of ownership. The City itself has large holdings, while other parcels are under the stewardship of various public and non-profit agencies as well as private landowners. The Hillside Natural Area (HNA), which is a 165-acre open space area, is located east of Navellier Street and west of Contra Costa Drive. The HNA has a number of trails that are used for both recreation and emergency access. The largest portion of the area is centrally located, and contains a number of woodlands, grasslands, and fuel breaks, and surrounds an old quarry. In addition, there is a significant amount of undeveloped property adjacent to the HNA, owned by a number of private individuals (zoned residential), and other lands which are used by public entities including: EBMUD, PG&E, City of El Cerrito, and Stege Sanitary District.

The City's tree-covered hillsides, creeks, the west facing slopes of the Berkeley Hills, and the approximately 2,600 acre Wildcat Canyon Regional Park, which is contiguous with two-thirds of the City's eastern boundary, are important resources to preserve and enhance. Other open space resources include: (1) the Mira Vista Country Club, a 110-acre parcel, zoned for open space use, but privately owned by the Mira Vista Country Club – it contains a golf course, and the main building/clubhouse; (2) Camp Herms Boy Scout Camp, which is an 18-acre parcel, zoned for open space use, which is privately owned by the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) and used as a camp; and (3) the Sunset View Cemetery, which comprises a total of about 60 acres, with a small portion of the cemetery (6 acres) within the bounds of the city and zoned for open space use.

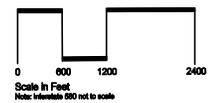
Open space serves several purposes: (1) preservation of certain natural resources, such as habitats and watersheds; (2) protection of lands used for the managed production of resources, such as timber and crops; (3) provision of outdoor recreation, such as parks and trails; and (4) protection of public health and safety, such as lands subject to unstable soils or flooding. The same open space parcel may serve several of these purposes. This General Plan includes the primary discussion of open space in this chapter because of its close connection to parks and recreation uses. Specific aspects of open space that relate to preservation of natural resources or protection of public health and safety are discussed in Chapter 7.



**Key:**

- Public Park or Recreation Facility
- Private Recreation Facility or Open Space

THIS MAP WAS DEVELOPED FOR USE IN THE GENERAL PLAN UPDATE PROCESS. THE CITY OF EL CERRITO DOES NOT ASSUME LIABILITY FOR USE OF THIS MAP FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE.



Drawing prepared by MIG, Inc. 800 Hearst Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94710

**Figure 12 OPEN SPACE PLAN**

### ***Level of Service Standards***

Prior to adoption of this updated General Plan, El Cerrito did not adopt park standards similar to those established by nationally recognized organizations, such as the National Recreation and Parks Association. Instead, the City modified the 1975 General Plan to include a Community Services Element that laid out a detailed activity program for every neighborhood park, each citywide recreation center, and each specialized open space facility. In each instance, service standards and programs were based on an evaluation of the limiting effects of geography, distribution of age groups, and availability of complementary facilities (i.e., school grounds and parks in adjoining cities). This approach worked well in the past, but a new system is easier to implement and monitor. Many other cities, including some that are subject to Contra Costa County Measure C, have adopted a commonly used level of service standard of five acres of park and recreation facilities per thousand. Adoption of this standard would allow some residential growth in El Cerrito without having to acquire more land for parks.

### **B. Trends**

The trend in El Cerrito, as well as in other cities in California, is an increasing demand for more and better recreation facilities, especially sports fields. These demands should be taken seriously because recreation facilities contribute to the quality of life and economic well being of the City.

Several key issues of concern over the coming years relate to maintenance costs and acquisition of open space.

1. *Open Space Maintenance Costs.* Maintenance costs for any City-owned open space would include fire prevention, weed control, litter and safety patrol, and cleaning of drains and culverts. Facilities such as restrooms, playgrounds, and game courts involve additional maintenance costs. Liability for fire, landslides, flooding and injuries is another operational cost. Long-term expenses need to be considered when priorities are set for acquiring land and developing recreational facilities.
2. *Open Space Acquisition Methods.* The type of acquisition that is appropriate for a given parcel depends on the location, physical characteristics, designation and intended use of the land. If the parcel's value is its visual amenity, then a scenic easement would be sufficient. If the only reason to keep a parcel in open space is to avoid hazards, the existing open space designation would serve this purpose. To preserve habitat in areas already designated open space, all that is needed is to maintain the designation.
3. *Open Space Alternatives.* Although recreational uses generally require more than a designation or granting of an easement, fee ownership by the City may not always be necessary. A neighborhood park for a new development could be set aside as a dedication to a neighborhood association, which could maintain it. Play areas can be developed in cooperation with schools. Regional acquisitions can provide connections in regional trail corridors. Access easements can provide passageways to "landlocked" parcels.

While program fees have helped cover basic recreation service costs, growing demand for park and recreation services and the age of many facilities (mostly built in the 1950s and 1960s) have resulted in a growing list of deferred facility capital improvement needs. These needs include replacement of play equipment, turf renovation, replacement of irrigation systems, large-scale replacement of fencing and large backstops, and replacement or refurbishing of steps, bleachers, and food shack. Present estimates for addressing these capital improvement and restoration needs in parks (excluding buildings, such as the Swim Center) range from \$925,000 to \$1.35 million (see **Table 6-4**). This is an “order of magnitude” estimate prepared by City staff based on a preliminary needs assessment. This assessment has taken into consideration projects that could be undertaken as volunteer projects (through Adopt-a-Park or Earth Day activities), in addition to improvements that require major capital outlays (over \$5,000). Volunteer activities, however, do require a commitment of supervisory staff time.

As of Spring 1999, the Parks and Recreation Commission is continuing a park-by-park review of facilities and programs, and a more detailed cost estimate for needed improvements will be developed. This will then feed into the City’s “Services for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Program” which is designed to reach community consensus on a variety of budget and public service issues.

**Table 6-4: Estimated Capital Improvement Needs for City Park Facilities**

Park	Per Park Estimate	Total Estimate Range
Tassajara, Canyon Trail, Cerrito Vista	\$125k – \$150k	\$375k – \$450k
Harding, Central, Creekside, Huber, Castro, Fairmont	\$75k – \$125k	\$450k – \$750k
Poinsett, Arlington	\$50k – \$75k	\$100k – \$150k
<b>Total</b>		<b>\$925k – \$1.35 million</b>

*Source: City of El Cerrito Maintenance and Engineering Services Manager, presentation to the City Council on April 20, 1998.*

In addition to capital improvement needs for existing facilities, Community Services Division staff has identified several areas where facilities are inadequate to meet existing and projected community demand for recreation programs:

- **Youth Activities and Facility.** There is a strong and growing demand for recreation programs for teenagers. This year (1999) the division is adding several new recreational programs for youth (e.g., girls hoops and a “creative arts academy”). The staff has identified the need for a “gymnasium/teen center” or similar facility as an important issue for the future.

- **Senior Center.** The City has a long-term lease for the “Open House” Senior Center from the West Contra Costa Unified School District. The center has several deficiencies, including inadequate parking and a lack of space to accommodate new programs. There is also a trend toward decentralizing recreation services and targeting programs to the “well senior” (representing a growing portion of the senior population). These issues will need to be considered and addressed when the current facility lease expires.
- **West El Cerrito.** The City needs a community facility and park to serve the residents in its western portion. This could possibly be accomplished in partnership with community churches, neighborhood schools, or other institutions located in the City of Richmond.

The City Council, at its 1999 annual goal setting session, adopted a five-year goal of expanded recreational opportunities for citizens of all ages. It adopted a top priority action item to develop a parks and recreation facilities financing measure that includes the Swim Center, Canyon Trail Clubhouse, gymnasium/teen facility, and playing field.

### C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

**Goal PR1: Adequate, diverse, and accessible recreational opportunities for all residents – including children, youth, seniors, and others with special needs – in parks, school yards, and open space.**

**Policies**

**Implementation Measures**

<b>PR1.1</b>	<b>Priorities for Rehabilitation.</b> Place the highest priority on maintaining and rehabilitating existing recreational facilities to operational and safety standards that, at a minimum, comply with applicable state and federal laws and regulations. The highest priority facility for rehabilitation is the Swim Center on Moeser Lane.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capital Improvements Program</li> <li>• Public/Private Partnerships</li> <li>• Grant Funds</li> <li>• Special Taxes</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.2</b>	<b>Regular Maintenance Program.</b> Continue regular inspection and maintenance of park facilities to prolong the life of equipment, ensure facility safety and accessibility, and enhance the enjoyment of park users.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annual Budget</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.3</b>	<b>Level of Service Standard.</b> Use a level of service standard of five acres of publicly owned parkland per 1,000 residents as the minimum requirement for recreation and open space land. Additional requirements for publicly owned recreation and open space land may be imposed by the City on development approvals, dependent upon the characteristics of the project, including its proximity to existing recreation and open space facilities. This requirement is independent of any requirements for project-scale open space addressed by Policy CD3.2.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Review</li> </ul>

<b>PR1.4</b>	<b>Minimum Parkland.</b> Ensure that the amount of City owned park and open space lands is not reduced below the 1999 level of 131.5 acres, and work with other public agencies to ensure that the amount of other publicly owned park and open space lands is not reduced.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Preservation Program</li> <li>• Open Space Acquisition Priorities</li> <li>• Open Space Funding</li> <li>• Capital Improvements Program</li> <li>• Intergovernmental Coordination</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.5</b>	<b>Costs Resulting from New Facilities.</b> Assure that long-term maintenance needs are considered when reviewing new park facility proposals, including the need for future staff and equipment.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development Review</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.6</b>	<b>Private Involvement.</b> Continue to encourage community organizations and private citizens to help maintain public parks and open spaces, and to assist in running recreation programs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Private Partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.7</b>	<b>Coordination on Use of School Facilities.</b> Continue to coordinate with adjacent cities and other agencies in providing adequate recreational facilities, including connections to the Ohlone Greenway, for all El Cerrito residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergovernmental Coordination</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.8</b>	<b>Inter-Agency Coordination.</b> Continue to coordinate with adjacent cities and other agencies in providing adequate recreational facilities for all El Cerrito residents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergovernmental Coordination</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.9</b>	<b>Alternative Sources of Space.</b> Continue to explore the possibility of using semi-public and private facilities for additional indoor recreational space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intergovernmental Coordination</li> <li>• Public/Private Partnerships</li> </ul>
<b>PR1.10</b>	<b>Existing Facilities.</b> Encourage the continuation of Mira Vista Golf Club, Cougar Field, and Camp Herms because of their contribution to meeting recreational needs and providing aesthetic appeal.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public/Private Partnerships</li> </ul>

- PR1.11 New Parks.** Pursue the purchase of new parks with City money only after existing facilities are brought up to an acceptable level of adequacy or when action is required to meet the accepted level of service or the minimum parkland requirements.

  - Capital Improvements Program
- PR1.12 New Residential Development.** Require that all new multi-family residential projects provide on-site open space and recreational facilities for residents or provide a combination of park in-lieu fees and on-site facilities.

  - Development Review
  - In-lieu Fees
- PR1.13 People with Special Needs.** Ensure that public access points to open space areas and design features for all recreational facilities provide equal opportunity for people with special needs.

  - City Project Design
- PR1.14 Bicycles.** Implement bicycle route improvements, including signing, striping, paving, and providing bicycle racks.

  - Bicycle Master Plan
- PR1.15 Development Impacts.** Development should not be allowed to denigrate or interfere with the use or enjoyment of City-owned park, recreational, and open space facilities.

  - Development Review
- PR1.16 Recreation Programs.** Maintain and expand, as budgets allow, existing recreation programs to meet the needs of City residents.

  - Annual Budget
  - Public/Private Partnerships
- PR1.17 Buffer Zones.** Encourage the creation of native plant buffer zones between natural areas and residences.

  - Development Review

**Goal PR2: High quality open space protected for the benefit of present and future generations, reflecting a variety of important values: ecological, educational, aesthetic, economic and recreational. These values are interwoven throughout the community in numerous ways so that the preservation of open space is very important to the well being of the City.**

Policies	Implementation Measures
<p><b>PR2.1 Open Space Purpose.</b> Identify and protect the natural resources of the Tri-Cities Area (El Cerrito, Richmond and San Pablo) for the benefit of present and future generations.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Preservation Program</li> <li>• Open Space Acquisition Priorities</li> <li>• Intergovernmental Coordination</li> </ul>
<p><b>PR2.2 Development Suitability.</b> Encourage urban growth in those areas where the natural characteristics of the land are most suited to such development, and to protect the public from risks to life and property.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Preservation Program</li> <li>• Development Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>PR2.3 Open Space Plan Map.</b> Preserve the open space areas identified on the Open Space Plan Map for visual resources, protection of environmental resources, public health and safety reasons, and for recreational use.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Preservation Program</li> <li>• Open Space Funding</li> </ul>
<p><b>PR2.4 Open Space Strategy.</b> In meeting open space objectives to secure and preserve open space in perpetuity, the City will make maximum use of approaches that minimize ongoing City costs and liability exposure. One approach will be to employ the development review process, wherever appropriate, to secure dedications, easements, and/or maintenance agreements.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open Space Preservation Program</li> <li>• Development Review</li> <li>• Scenic Easements</li> <li>• Public/Private Partnerships</li> <li>• Open Space Consolidation</li> </ul>
<p><b>PR2.5 Open Space Use.</b> Improvements within open space areas shall be limited to those needed for educational and recreational purposes, and those improvements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Project Design</li> <li>• Development Review</li> </ul>

necessary for health and safety purposes. All improvements shall be compatible with protection and preservation of existing natural and habitat resources.

- PR2.6 Existing Open Space Preservation.** Except where extraordinary circumstances indicate otherwise, ensure that development decisions protect existing open space areas.
  - Open Space Preservation Program
  - Development Review

**Goal PR3: Public access to open space areas while protecting important habitats.**

<b>Policies</b>	<b>Implementation Measures</b>
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| <p><b>PR3.1 Clear Delineation.</b> Clearly delineate which areas of publicly owned open space are appropriate for public use and access, and clearly differentiate them from those areas to be protected from human disturbance.</p> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public Access Program</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>PR3.2 Open Space Improvements.</b> Design any improvements in open space areas to minimize adverse impacts to habitats, view, and other open space resources.</p>  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Project Design</li> </ul>  |
| <p><b>PR3.3 Creek Restoration.</b> Integrate recreational amenities with creek restoration efforts in a way that protects riparian values, including natural habitats.</p>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• City Project Design</li> <li>• Development Review</li> <li>• Grant Funds</li> </ul> |

## NON-RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

### A. Setting

The City owns and maintains the buildings that house the City's public safety departments (police and fire) and administrative functions. It also owns and maintains a variety of buildings to meet the cultural and other needs of El Cerritans. These buildings include the Public Safety Building; City Hall; City Community Center and Swim Center; Cerrito Vista Childcare Center; Library; Contra Costa Civic Theater; and clubhouses and childcare facilities at the City's parks and public elementary schools. In addition, the City owns and maintains the corporation yard and recycling center. The City also maintains the Open House Senior Center, which it leases from the school district. The Community Facilities Map provides a complete listing of City-owned facilities. The map also shows facilities owned by the school district and several private entities.

The City recently completed an ADA-compliance program (Americans with Disabilities Act), including completion of its Transition Plan in accordance with federal laws. This effort was funded from the proceeds of property sales by the City.

### B. Trends

Most City-owned and maintained facilities were constructed during the 1950's and have significant deferred maintenance issues, including rotting roofs and tile flooring; deteriorated plumbing; outdated wiring; and antiquated equipment. At the Swim Center (built in 1962), the training and lap pools need resurfacing; a significant portion of the pool deck needs to be replaced; the bathhouse roof requires replacement; and the pool's pumps, lighting, plumbing, and filter systems need to be replaced.

In addition to these maintenance issues, nearly all of the City's facilities require major structural work to bring them up to modern building standards. These code-related issues include the need for further accessibility modifications to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act; the need to remove lead-based paint and asbestos; and the need for seismic retrofitting.

This last issue – seismic retrofitting – is particularly important given El Cerrito's proximity to the Hayward Fault (it passes through El Cerrito near the eastern city limits, generally following the route of Arlington Boulevard). Experts have determined that there is a high probability of a large earthquake (magnitude 7 or greater) in the next thirty years along this fault segment and other nearby faults.

Two buildings where seismic retrofitting is of particular concern are the Public Safety Building on San Pablo and Manila and the Community Center on Moeser. The Public Safety Building is the designated primary facility for emergency

operations in El Cerrito, while the Community Center is a “second alternate” for emergency operations and is the only Red Cross-certified emergency mass care facility in the city. (Some schools may be eligible for certification.) Both facilities require seismic evaluation and retrofitting, and the Community Center requires an emergency generator. Furthermore, the Public Safety Building has inadequate facilities for accommodating male and female police officers and there is insufficient storage space. The exterior design of the building does not allow for the safe conveying of suspects from the parking lot into the building. A Sallyport or drive-in enclosed garage would be preferable from a security standpoint.

A conservative cost estimate for bringing City facilities up to current code specifications and giving them another 30 years of life is in the range of \$2 million to \$3 million. This does not include any type of construction for a new City Hall, which has been housed in temporary “portables” at its Manila and San Pablo location since 1987.

The City Council, at its 1999 annual goal setting session, adopted a five-year goal of investment in City infrastructure and facilities. It adopted two applicable high priority action items:

- Begin developing a community center by having a community discussion on form and placement of a City Hall/Safety Building and a Cultural/Arts and History Center.
- Develop a financing measure for the Public Safety Headquarters, Community Center, and neighborhood clubhouses to make them seismically safe and ready to respond to natural disasters.

## C. Goals and Policies

The Implementation Measures associated with each policy are described at the end of this chapter.

**Goal CF1: Safe and adequate community facilities that allow the City to offer better services and inspire a sense of community pride.**

Policies	Implementation Measures
<p><b>CF1.1 Safety.</b> Place the highest priority on ensuring the safety of existing community facilities, especially the Public Safety Building, Community Center, and neighborhood clubhouses, including seismic retrofits and necessary upgrades.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capital Improvements Program</li> <li>● Asset Replacement Fund</li> <li>● Special Taxes</li> <li>● Grant Funds</li> </ul>
<p><b>CF1.2 Regular Maintenance.</b> Provide regular maintenance of community facilities to ensure their continued usability and prevent deferred maintenance, which adds to long-term costs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Annual Budget</li> </ul>
<p><b>CF1.3 Development Incentives.</b> Obtain community facilities through appropriate development incentives that are consistent with other policies in this Plan.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Development Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>CF1.4 Future Development.</b> Require future development to pay its fair share of purchasing sites and financing needed improvements for existing and future community facilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Development Review</li> <li>● Impact Fees</li> </ul>
<p><b>CF1.5 Responding to Growth.</b> Provide new or expanded community facilities as the need increases due to increased population or development.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capital Improvements Program</li> <li>● Development Review</li> </ul>
<p><b>CF1.6 New Facilities.</b> Build a new City Hall/Public Safety Building, gymnasium/teen center/multi-purpose facility, cultural and arts center, and children’s art center in the Canyon Trail</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Capital Improvements Program</li> <li>● Special Taxes</li> </ul>