



7

OPEN SPACE & CONSERVATION ELEMENT

7.1 Introduction

As the City continues to grow, it will be vital to the residents' quality of life to ensure that open space and recreational opportunities are available and accessible to everyone. The Conservation and Open Space Element has been prepared in response to this growing need as well as the need to maintain the natural and cultural attributes that make the City of Ridgecrest unique. The intent is to provide for the continued psychological and physical well being of citizens from every economic level, age group or physical ability classification.

This element recognizes the finite limits of natural resources and presents policies and measures for the conservation, development and utilization of these local natural resources. Furthermore, the identification of programs to promote community involvement in the support and maintenance of the natural environment is emphasized.

This element also identifies opportunities for enhancing the park system with related facilities and recommends a comprehensive strategy for the long-term development of a park system that can satisfy recreational, cultural, environmental, and design needs while shaping the community's open space system. The location of existing and future parks will be essential to the vitality of neighborhoods. In addition, the types of parks that are available to residents will be key to the residents' well being. Setting up an integrated

system of local, community, regional and specialized open space will provide residents with access to a variety of recreation opportunities.

KEY TERMS

Bureau of Land Management. A land management agency that administers United States public lands.

Capital Improvement Plan. A long-range plan identifying capital projects and equipment purchases, which provides a planning schedule and identifies options for financing the plan. Essentially, the plan provides a link between a municipality, school district, parks and recreation department and/or other local government entity and comprehensive and strategic plans and the entity's annual budget.

Groundwater Recharge. The process of water soaking into the ground to become groundwater.

Habitat Conservation Plan. A management plan used to identify and provide for the regional or area wide protection of plants, animals, and their habitats, while allowing compatible and appropriate economic activity.

Open Space. Open space is any parcel, area, or waterway that is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use. Under Section 65560 of the California State Government Code, open-space land is broadly defined as land designated for preservation of natural resources (i.e., lakeshore and watershed lands); managed production of resources (i.e., lands for agriculture, forestry, recharge of ground water basins); outdoor recreation (i.e., parks, scenic highway corridors, and areas with outstanding scenic, historic and cultural values); and public health and safety (i.e., flood plains, unstable soil areas).

Planned Unit Residential Development. A tool municipalities use to create unique, functional, and efficient planned communities, often incorporating mixed use, encouraging cluster development, and protecting farmland and open space.

Pocket Parks. Small parks located centrally in urban or residential areas, encompassing approximately 0.25 to 0.5 acres.

Recreational Area. Any public or private space set aside or primarily oriented to recreational use. This includes both parks and community centers.

Wastewater Reuse. The use of treated wastewater or reclaimed water. Reused wastewater can be applied to landscape irrigation, agricultural irrigation, aesthetic uses, groundwater recharge, industrial uses, and fire protection.

Xeriscape. The use of water conserving measures in landscaping through water conserving design, use of vegetation that can thrive in the natural

climatic conditions of the region, and implementation of efficient soils and irrigation techniques.

7.2 Existing Conditions

AESTHETIC RESOURCES

An aesthetic or visual resource is a broad term used to identify the particular scenic qualities that define a place or landscape. The City of Ridgecrest's aesthetic setting can generally be described as an urban area set within a rural backdrop. Consequently, the Planning Area is defined by several natural and human-made aesthetic resources, including a variety of natural features (i.e., desert areas, mountain views, etc.), scenic corridors, and urban landscapes (i.e., urban parks, low rise residential development). Each of these unique aesthetic resources is discussed below.

Natural Features

The City of Ridgecrest enjoys a prime scenic location within the upper Mojave Desert and is surrounded on all sides by four mountain ranges: Sierra Nevada Mountains to the west, the Cosos to the north, the Argus Range on the east, and the El Paso Mountains to the south. Scenic vistas of the mountains and the surrounding desert are found throughout the City. Desert landscapes are comprised of desert scrub habitats. Views of these desert habitat areas would include a variety of unique plant species including creosote bush, desert agave, barrel cactus, and Mohave yucca.

Scenic Corridors

Ridgecrest's Scenic Corridor Plan identifies several scenic corridors in the Planning Area. These corridors include West Inyokern Road, North and South China Lake Boulevard, East and West Ridgecrest Boulevard, West Bowman Road, College Heights Boulevard, West Drummond Avenue and Jack Ranch Road and have been identified so because of their scenic qualities and their existing or potential function as gateways into the City.

A typical corridor boundary is defined by existing topographic features along these roadways and by any significant landmarks or man-made features, up to 1,000 feet from the center of the roadway in areas of level terrain. Within more urban areas of the Planning Area, corridor limits have been defined as up to 200 feet from the center of the roadway.

Typical motorist views throughout the Planning Area, range from foreground (0 to ½ mile), to middle ground (½ mile to 2 miles), to background (greater than 2 miles). Owing to the flat topography, views within the urban areas from the roadway consist of open space (such as in parks), commercial uses, and residential areas with the desert and mountain ranges in the background. Roadways along the periphery of the City of Ridgecrest provide uninhibited views of the surrounding upper Mojave Desert and mountain ranges.

State Scenic Highways

The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) identifies several elements that define a State Scenic Highway. The scenic designation of the highway may depend on how much of the natural landscape can be seen by travelers, the scenic quality of the landscape, and the extent to which development intrudes upon the traveler's enjoyment of the view. For an eligible scenic roadway to be officially designated as a State Scenic Highway the local agency must adopt a scenic corridor protection program and apply to Caltrans for scenic highway approval. Kern County does not contain any Caltrans designated scenic corridors. However, State Highway 14 and State Highway 58 are eligible for designation as State Scenic Highways and are located south, west, and east of the City.

Urban Landscapes

The City's urban landscape is also considered an important aesthetic resource. The City is characterized by low rise buildings (one or two stories), lower density residential, and commercial uses surrounded by vast open space. Higher intensity development (commercial, office, civic, and institutional uses) lies adjacent to primary thoroughfares such as Ridgecrest Boulevard, Highway 178, Bowman Road, and China Lake Boulevard. Less intensive uses, including rural residential and natural open space, are located on the urban fringe of the City. Urban parks that provide for a variety of uses, including organized sports, can be seen throughout the City.

BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES

In general, wildlife habitats provide food, shelter, movement corridors, and breeding opportunities for a variety of wildlife species. Habitats can be classified in broad terms with an emphasis on vegetation structure, and include other elements such as vegetation species composition, soil structure, and water availability. Climatic conditions also affect habitat types and the Ridgecrest Planning Area is comprised of a limited number of habitats that thrive in dry desert-like conditions. These habitats primarily consist of alkali and desert scrub habitats in addition to urban areas that provide some minimal habitat values to wildlife. Outside of urban areas, desert scrub habitat dominates the Planning Area.

In addition to wildlife habitats, there are several unique special status species with potential to occur in the Planning Area. These species include the American Badger (*Taxidea taxus*), desert tortoise (*Gopherus agassizii*), and the California condor (*Gymnogyps californianus*).

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Cultural resources are defined as buildings, sites, structures, or objects that have historical, architectural, archaeological, cultural, or scientific importance. Once settled the Kawaiisu Indians, the rich history of the Indian Wells Valley extends well before western settlement of the area. This history, coupled with the first exploration and settlement of the region in the early 1800s, provides ample opportunity to preserve the known assets and discovery of new assets significant to the cultural and historical value of the community.

PARKS AND RECREATION / OPEN SPACE

The City of Ridgecrest offers a variety of recreational opportunities through its Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Affairs Department. Within the Planning Area, the City currently operates seven parks totaling 103.5 acres of parkland. Based on a 2007 population in the City of 27,944, the City maintains/manages 3.7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

The City does not currently have a parks master plan to guide future development, and the General Plan update will need to provide a policy framework to help guide future park development and recreation programs.

Parks

Parks in the City of Ridgecrest range from as small as ½ acre to parks as large as 56 acres. Parkland in the City includes parks owned and operated by the City as well as a park owned by Kern County and operated by the City (Leroy Jackson Park Sports Complex).

Sport Complexes & Special Purpose Facilities

The City of Ridgecrest has a variety of sports complexes to serve youth and adult recreational sports programs and leagues. These sports complexes include about 68 acres of baseball fields, football fields, tennis courts, and soccer fields. In addition, the City also operates two special purpose facilities including a skate park and community pool.

Community and Senior Centers

Ridgecrest has a multifunctional community center (the Kerr McGee Community Center) and a senior center (Ridgecrest Senior Center) that provide services to the residents of Ridgecrest as well as the unincorporated parts of the Indian Wells Valley.

National, State and County Parks

Several national, State, County and BLM wildernesses are located in close proximity to the Planning Area, which complement the City’s recreational resources. Opportunities are extensive and include: Inyo National Forest, El Paso Mountains Wilderness, Golden Valley Wilderness, Kiavah Wilderness, Owens Peak Wilderness, Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park and Death Valley National Park. In addition, BLM has extensive land holdings in the area, many of which are available to the public to support a range of outdoor activities.

7.3 Goals and Policies

General

Goal OSC-1	To create an orderly process for the development of appropriate recreational and cultural facilities and for the preservation of desirable open space in the city. [Source: Open Space Element, Goal 4.1].
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OSC-1.1 *Designate a Coordinating Committee*

The City shall establish a Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Cultural Coordinating Committee to oversee compliance with the goals and the policies herein. [Source: Modified Policy 4.1.1, Open Space Element]

OSC-1.2 *Create a Citizens Advisory Group*

The City shall designate an Ad hoc citizen’s advisory group to address parks, cultural and open space issues on an as-needed basis. [Source: Policy 4.1.3, Open Space Element]

OSC-1.3 *Protect Natural Resources*

The City shall strive to protect natural resource areas, wildlife habitat areas, scenic areas, open space areas and parks from encroachment or destruction by incompatible development. [New Policy]

OSC-1.4 *Coordinate with Kern County for Open Space Preservation*

The City shall coordinate with Kern County to ensure City issues are incorporated into future regional plans. [New Policy]

OSC-1.5 *Creation of Buffers*

In new development areas, the City shall encourage the use of open space or recreational buffers between incompatible land uses. [New Policy]

OSC-1.6 *Protection of Culturally Significant Lands*

Of agencies that have jurisdiction over historical, archaeological, and geological significant lands, the City shall support efforts to conserve, and when appropriate, develop and utilize such resources for the public benefit and enjoyment. [Source: Policy 5.5.4, Conservation Element]

Aesthetic Resources

Goal OSC-2

To protect and enhance the natural setting and scenic resources within the City. [New Goal]

OSC-2.1 Preservation of Aesthetic Views

The City shall preserve important public views and viewsheds by ensuring that the scale, bulk and setback of new development does not significantly impede or disrupt them and ensure that important vistas and view corridors are enhanced. Require development to provide physical breaks to allow views into these vistas and view corridors. [New Policy]

OSC-2.2 Protect and Enhance Scenic Resources

The City shall protect and enhance the scenic resources of the beaches, beach access routes, harbor, farmland, and significant natural features and, where appropriate, prohibit land uses that could degrade distinctive natural features. [New Policy]

OSC-2.3 Preserve Natural Aesthetic Resources

The City shall preserve significant plant communities including wetlands, riparian vegetation along riverbanks and bodies of water, ponds and wetlands, and unique species, wherever possible. [New Policy]

OSC-2.4 Discourage Removal of Significant Resources

The City shall identify and discourage the removal of significant trees. Where removal is required for new development, require a two-for-one replacement or transplantation. [New Policy]

OSC-2.5 Siting Transmission Lines

The City shall avoid the siting of transmission lines interfering with scenic views. [New Policy]

OSC-2.6 Control of Lighting and Glare

The City shall require that all outdoor light fixtures including street lighting, externally illuminated signs, advertising displays, and billboards use low-energy, shielded light fixtures which direct light downward. Where public safety would not be compromised, the City shall encourage the use of low-pressure sodium lighting for all outdoor light fixtures. [New Policy]

Cultural and Historical Resources

**Goal
OSC-3**

To identify, protect, and enhance the City’s archaeological and historical resources. [New Goal]

OSC-3.1 Evaluation of Historic Resources

The City shall use appropriate State and Federal Standards in evaluating the significance of historical resources that are identified in the City. [New Policy]

OSC-3.2 Historic Structures and Sites

The City shall support public and private efforts to preserve, rehabilitate, and continue the use of historic structures, sites, and districts. Where applicable, preservation efforts shall conform to the current Secretary of the Interior’s Standards for the Treatment of Historic Properties and Guidelines for Preserving, Rehabilitating, Restoring, and Reconstructing Historic Building. [New Policy]

OSC-3.3 Archaeological Resources

The City shall support efforts to protect and/or recover archaeological resources. [New Policy]

OSC-3.4 Historical Resources Inventory

The City shall prepare a historical resources inventory and use State and Federal Standards in evaluating historical resources for their significance. [New Policy]

OSC-3.5 Mitigation Monitoring for Historical Resources

The City shall develop standards for monitoring of mitigation measures established for the protection of historical resources prior to development. [New Policy]

OSC-3.6 State Historic Building Code

The City shall establish construction standards for the protection of historic resources during development and use the State Historic Building Code for designated properties. [New Policy]

OSC-3.7 Discovery of Archaeological / Paleontological Resources

In the event that archaeological / paleontological resources are discovered during ground disturbing activities, the City shall required that grading and construction work within 100 feet of the find shall be suspended until the significance of the features can be determined by a qualified professional archaeologist / paleontologist as appropriate. The City will require that a qualified archeologist / paleontologist make recommendations for measures necessary to protect the find; or to undertake data recovery, excavation,

analysis, and curation of archaeological / paleontological materials, as appropriate. [New Policy]

OSC-3.8 Native American Resources

The City shall consult with Native American representatives to discuss concerns regarding potential impacts to cultural resources and to identify locations of importance to Native Americans, including archeological sites and traditional cultural properties. Coordination with the Native American Heritage Commission should begin at the onset of the review of a proposed project. [New Policy]

OSC-3.9 Preserve Local Cultural Heritage

The City shall take steps to support the preservation of the local cultural heritage through public awareness such as tours of historical sites. [Source: Modified Policy 4.2.9, Open Space Element]

Energy and Water Conservation

Goal OSC-4	To develop a conservation program to reduce the use of non-renewable energy sources and make full use of local sustainable resources, including solar and wind energy. [Source: Goal 5.4, Conservation Element]
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OSC-4.1 Educational Programs

The City shall promote greater public awareness of desert habitat, flora, and fauna as a unique and limited resource in Indian Wells Valley, and support public agency and private organization education programs to preserve or restore natural desert habitats. [Source: Modified Policy 5.3.1, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.2 Water Conservation Programs

The City shall develop programs to encourage water conservation in conjunction with the IWWWD and other interested agencies. [Source: Policy 5.3.3, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.3 Alternative Energy Educational Program

The City shall establish an energy education program to increase public awareness of conservation and other alternative energy sources, such as solar energy. [Source: Policy 5.3.4, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.4 Promote Resource Conservation Awareness

The City shall take a leadership role in promoting resource conservation awareness through educational programs to the public by encouraging public agencies to establish a stronger approach to conservation. [Source: Modified Policies 5.2.6 and 5.3.5, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.5 Uniform Building Codes

The City shall adopt the updated Uniform Building Codes to establish minimum energy efficiency standards for buildings. [Source: Modified Policy 5.4.1, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.6 Energy Conservation Technologies

The City shall require use of energy conservation technologies in new construction and retrofit existing buildings to meet the same standards. [Source: Modified Policies 5.4.2 and 5.4.3, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.7 Non-conventional Energy Efficient Housing

The City shall encourage non-conventional energy-efficient housing, such as row or bermed housing. [Source: Policy 5.4.4, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.8 Use of Low-Income Grants or Subsidies

The City shall encourage low income households to utilize grants or subsidies offered by utility purveyors or governmental agencies to meet energy efficiency standards. [Source: Policy 5.4.5, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.9 Energy Efficient Land Use Patterns

The City shall reduce dependence on the automobile and encourage energy-efficient land use patterns through close-in development, creating stronger public transportation systems inclusive of pedestrian and bicycle paths, and implementing mixed-use designs.. [Source: Modified Policy 5.4.6, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.10 Make Available Energy Utilization Information

The City shall create and compile existing energy utilization information and make this information available to the public. [Source: Policy 5.4.7, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.11 Passive Solar Techniques

The City shall encourage the use of passive solar techniques, such as building siting, thermal mass, solar access, landscaping and roadway design, in all new public, and private commercial and industrial construction. [Source: Policy 5.4.8, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.12 Alternative Energy Utility Business

The City shall continually monitor and assess the feasibility of the City entering the alternative energy utility business. [Source: Policy 5.4.9, Conservation Element]

OSC-4.13 Solar and Wind Energy Systems

The City shall continuously monitor and assess active and/or passive solar energy systems in all new construction. [Source: Modified Policy 5.4.10, Conservation Element and Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

OSC-4.14 Green Building Features

The City shall require green building practices, such as recycled, renewable, and reused materials; efficient lighting/power sources; design orientation; roof top gardens, etc. in new construction. [New Policy]

OSC-4.15 Local and State Programs

The City shall participate in local and state programs that encourage energy conservation and reduction methods. [New Policy]

OSC-4.16 Landscape Improvements

The City shall encourage the planting of shade trees along all City streets to reduce radiation heating. [New Policy]

OSC-4.17 Alternative Use Vehicles

The City shall use alternative use vehicles, where feasible, to provide public services. [New Policy]

Biological Resources

<p>Goal OSC-5</p>	<p>To continue to make the Indian Wells Valley a desirable place to live, work, and enjoy leisure time, by maintaining the high level of environmental quality characteristic of the Indian Wells Valley. [Source: Conservation Element, Goal 5.1 - revised].</p>
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OSC-5.1 Encourage the Desert Setting

The City shall promote the survival of native wildlife species and the preservation of their natural habitat. [Source: Policy 5.1.7, Conservation Element]

OSC-5.2 Off-Highway Vehicles

The City shall prohibit off-highway vehicle use in designated habitat preservation areas, as well as in ecologically important and sensitive lands. [Source: Modified Policy 5.1.8, Conservation Element]

OSC-5.3 Cerro Coso Community College

The City shall support the Bureau of Land Management’s efforts to retain natural open space areas surrounding Cerro Coso Community College. [Source: Policy 4.3.8, Open Space Element and Policy 5.1.9, Conservation Element]

OSC-5.4 Maintain Biological Resource Database

The City shall maintain a current database of biological resources, including maps that identify the locations of specific environmentally-sensitive habitats and lists of special-status species. [New Policy]

OSC-5.5 Development Review

The City shall review development proposals in accordance with applicable Federal, State and local statutes protecting special-status species and jurisdictional wetlands. [New Policy]

OSC-5.6 Requirements for Biological Studies

On sites that have the potential to contain critical or sensitive habitats or special-species or are within 100 feet of such areas, the City shall require the project applicant to have the site surveyed by a qualified biologist. A report on the findings of the survey shall be submitted to the City as part of the application process. [New Policy]

OSC-5.7 Regional Habitat Conservation Plan



The City shall consider the West Mojave Habitat Conservation Plan as the regional habitat conservation plan. [New Policy – R-508 JLUS]

OSC-5.8 Appropriate Mitigation Measures

The City shall consider using appropriate mitigation measures for future projects (i.e., specific plans or individual projects) based on mitigation standards or protocols adopted by the applicable statute or agency (e.g., USFWS, CDFG, etc.) with jurisdiction over any affected sensitive habitats or special status species. [New Policy]

OSC-5.9 New Development in Sensitive Areas

The City shall require that new development in areas that are known to have particular value for biological resources be carefully planned and where possible avoided so that the value of existing sensitive vegetation and wildlife habitat can be maintained. [New Policy]

Groundwater and Water Resources

<p>Goal OSC-6</p>	<p>To ensure that a supply of acceptable quality water is available to meet the present and future needs of the City and the Indian Wells Valley. [Source: Goal 5.2, Conservation Element]</p>
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OSC-6.1 Reduce Surface and Runoff

The City shall require a construction plan prior to the groundbreaking that uses site design and grading techniques to reduce the amount of impervious surface and runoff for all new urban commercial or residential developments proposed projects. [Source: Modified Policy 5.1.10, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.2 Solid and Liquid Waste Disposal

The City shall require the disposition of solid and liquid wastes is in a manner consistent with state and federal regulations to prevent contamination of the aquifer. [Source: Modified Policy 5.1.11, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.3 *Establish a Sustainable Yield of Groundwater*

The City shall establish a reasonable population limit for the City and Indian Wells Valley in order to reflect the basin's capacity for sustainable yield of groundwater for future studies. [Source: Policy 5.1.12, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.4 *Investigate Groundwater Recharge Methods*

The City shall investigate methods of expanded reuse or tertiary treatment of wastewater for groundwater recharge, industrial use and landscape irrigation, and implement effective methods where feasible. [Source: Modified Policy 5.1.13, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.5 *Over-Extraction of Groundwater*

The City shall discourage further increases in groundwater extraction for water intensive uses such as agricultural crops. [Source: Policy 5.1.14, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.6 *City-Wide Water Conservation Practices*

The City shall encourage water conservation on a city-wide basis. [Source: Policy 5.1.15, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.7 *Water Conservation Practices for Municipal Buildings*

The City shall investigate and implement water efficient devices for existing and future municipal buildings. [Source: Policy 5.1.16, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.8 *Investigate Unnecessary Water Losses*

The City shall evaluate, define, and correct water losses on City property that are detrimental to conservation efforts. [Source: Policy 5.1.17, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.9 *Water Efficient Landscaping*

The City shall encourage using water efficient landscaping practices, where possible, for all City landscaping. [Source: Policy 5.1.18, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.10 *Building Codes*

The City shall update the building codes to require grey water usage for landscaping. [Source: Modified Policy 5.1.19, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.11 *Indian Wells Valley Water District Urban Water Management Plan*

The City shall support and adopt the goals of the Indian Wells Valley Water District (IWWVD) Urban Water Management Plan. [Source: Policy 5.2.1, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.12 *Groundwater Dynamics of the Indian Wells Valley Groundwater Basin*

The City shall support efforts to more accurately determine the groundwater dynamics of the Indian Wells Valley groundwater basin. [Source: Policy 5.2.2, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.13 Support Research for Alternative Sources of Water

The City shall support the IWWWD and NAWS efforts to identify and secure alternative sources of water supply. [Source: Policy 5.2.3, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.14 Support Development of Efficient Pumping Patterns

The City shall support efforts by the IWWWD, NAWS and other water purveyors to develop sound pumping patterns through well field redesign, and, where possible, consolidate systems. [Source: Policy 5.2.4, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.15 Valley Wide Water Policy

The City shall create a valley wide water policy to control the exportation of water from the Indian Wells Valley. [Source: Policy 5.2.5, Conservation Element]

OSC-6.16 Identify Possible Groundwater Recharge Aids

The City shall identify flood plains, aquifer recharge areas and natural drainage courses, where possible, as open space to aid groundwater recharge. [Source: Policy 5.5.3, Conservation Element]

Parks and Recreation

**Goal
OSC-7**

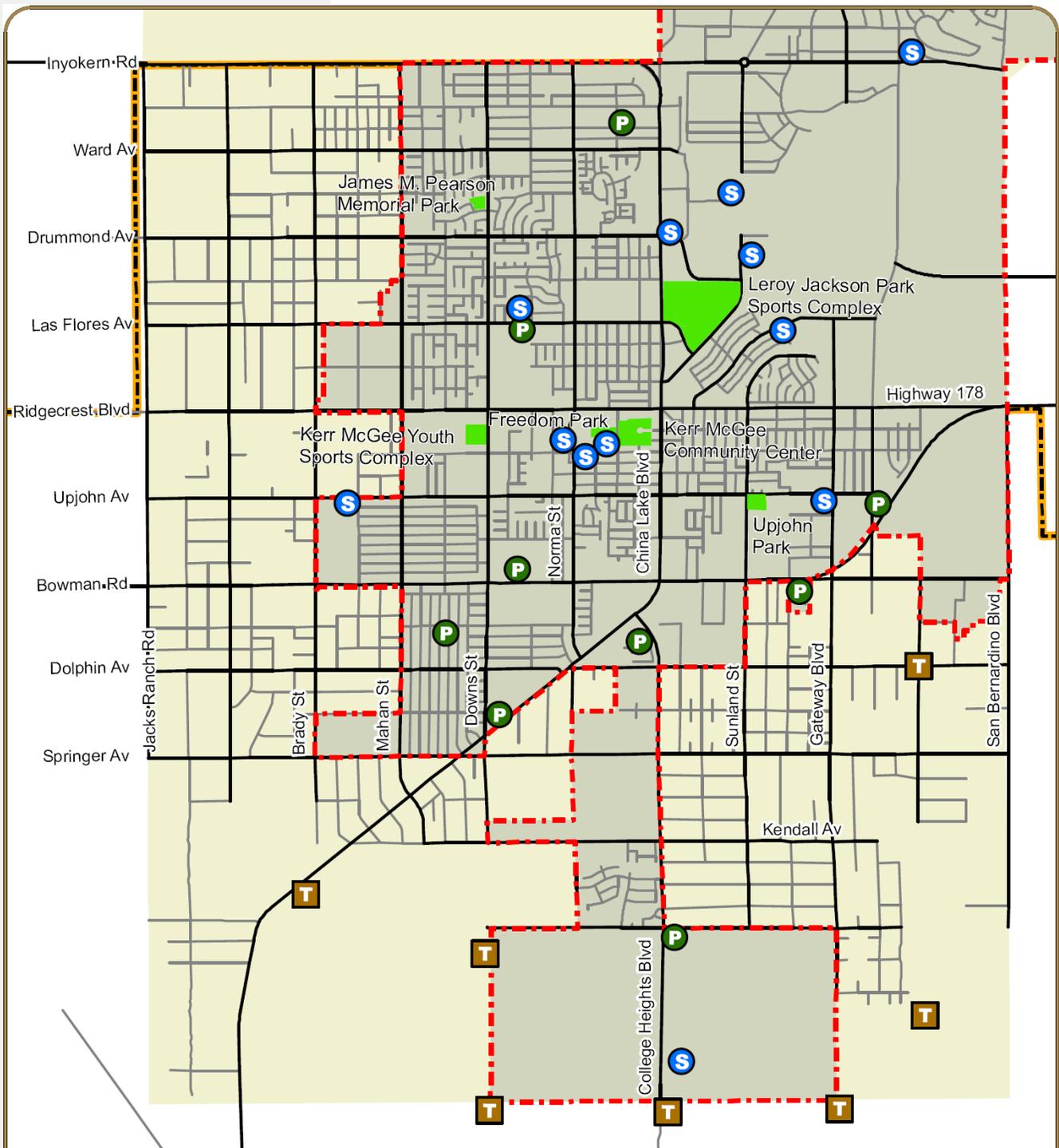
To encourage recreation for and self-development of, city residents through the development of a comprehensive parks, recreation, and cultural system with a focus on facilities and programs. [Source: Open Space Element, modified Goal 4.2].

OSC-7.1 Develop a Master Plan

The City shall prepare and adopt a Parks, Recreation, Cultural and Open Space Master Plan to address the size, location, as well as maintenance services and facilities of future parks, and open space sites. This plan should incorporate the needs identified on Figure 7-1, Parks and Recreation Plan. [Source: Modified Policy 4.1.2, Issues and Problems 4, Open Space Element]

OSC-7.2 Recreational Facilities

The City shall plan and develop highly visible recreational facilities that are responsive to desert climatic conditions and accessible to the population they are intended to serve. [Source: Modified Policy 4.2.1, Open Space Element]



Legend

- School Athletic Facilities and Playgrounds
- Future Park (general area)
- Trail Head (general area)
- Park and Recreation Locations

- Major Roads
- Collector & Local Roads
- City Limits
- NAWS China Lake
- Planning Area

Acres	
80	40
20	10
10	5



Parks & Recreation Plan | Figure 7-1

OSC-7.3 Park Facility Standards

The City shall provide park facilities in accordance with following adopted park standards [Existing Implementation Standards - revised]:

Parks	Standard
Pocket Parks	No set standard ; 0.25 to 0.5 acres
Neighborhood Parks	3 acres/1,000 persons ; 1 acre to 5 acres; ¼ to 1 mile service radius; minim facilities include open lawn play areas, walkways, play apparatus, picnic units, shade shelters, game courts, possibly small restroom
Community Parks	3 acres/1,000 residents; extended space and includes all sports fields and specialized game courts that service organized teams or specific sports; activities include baseball, softball, football, soccer, tennis, racquetball/handball, and other specialized uses. Includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Swimming Pool (2 mile service area) - Baseball/Softball/Soccer Field (Youth, 1/3,000 persons, Rec., 1/6,000 persons) - Gymnasium (1 facility/15,000 persons)
Regional Recreation Areas	
- Golf Course	1 course/50,000 persons
- Indoor Recreation Center	1 to 2 acres City-wide
- Cultural Facilities	Expanded museum facilities / 2,000 sq. ft. of exhibit space; 300-500 seat theatre; other facilities determined by the Parks, Recreation, Open Space, and Cultural Coordinating Committee
- Camping Facilities	1 facility for regional use with a minimum of 50 camping spaces available

OSC-7.4 Land Acquisition

The City shall acquire additional park sites through easements and dedications in areas where no parks exist, but where growth is expected. [Sources: Modified Policy 4.2.2, Open Space Element].

OSC-7.5 Recreational Facilities on NAWS China Lake

The City shall work with NAWS China Lake to determine the feasibility of joint operation and maintenance of recreational facilities on the installation to minimize duplication of programs and facilities available to the community. [Source: Policy 4.2.3, Open Space Element - revised].

OSC-7.6 Integrate School Sites for Parks and Recreation

The City shall pursue joint use of school sites for park and recreational development wherever feasible. [Source: Policy 4.2.4, Open Space Element]

OSC-7.7 *Leroy Jackson Regional Park*

The City shall guide and encourage complete development of the Leroy Jackson Regional Park as a key element in attaining an adequate park system within the City. [Source: Policy 4.2.5, Open Space Element - revised].

OSC-7.8 *Private Development of Recreational and Cultural Facilities*

The City shall encourage development of recreational and cultural facilities by the private sector. [Source: Policy 4.2.6, Open Space Element - revised]

OSC-7.9 *Create a Friendly Non-Motorized Environment*

The City shall provide and encourage design and implementation of a continuous system of interconnected bicycle lanes, and pedestrian pathways for both regional and local non-motorized transportation and recreational use. [Source: Policy 4.2.7, Open Space Element - revised]

OSC-7.10 *Community Gardens*

To re-enforce a sense of pride in the community, the City shall encourage community gardens through after school and weekend programs for the design and maintenance of the gardens. [Source: New Policy]

OSC-7.11 *Pocket Parks*

The City shall require the integration of pocket parks (approximately 0.25 to .50 acre) in its urban design concept to create passive recreational and social public gathering spaces throughout the City, where appropriate. The parks shall be maintained through the City's Landscaping and Lighting Maintenance District funds. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

OSC-7.12 *New Development Parks*

The City shall implement the State's Quimby requirements and collect park dedication fees, require the dedication of parkland, or a combination of both as a condition of development approval for the provision of new parks, or the rehabilitation of existing parks and recreational facilities in order to meet the City's parkland standards established in Policy OSC-7.3. [New Policy]

OSC-7.13 *Parks and Infill*

The City will evaluate park development opportunities to ensure that access to recreational facilities and programs are balanced across the City. This will include a focus on development of parks within the existing, developed portions of the City. [New Policy]

OSC-7.14 *Linear Park Development*

The City shall promote the development of linear parks extending both east-west (along Bowman Road) and north-south (along Brady or Mahan). The possibility of an additional north-south linear park along the east side of town along with additional east-west routes through College Heights and along Inyokern Road should also be investigated. Linear parks should include the following features:

- Landscaping shall include native and desert vegetation including hardy trees and shrubs (i.e., desert willow, mesquite, etc.) adequately placed along the path to provide ample shade.
- Linear parks shall be encouraged not to be located adjacent to major arterials or have ample separation from vehicular traffic to prevent automobile / pedestrian conflicts. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

OSC-7.15 Landscaped Multi-Use Connections

The City shall encourage developers to include winding landscaped walking paths that connect to other housing areas, schools, shopping areas, and other activity centers. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

OSC-7.16 Performing Arts Center

The City shall encourage the development of a performing arts center in the central city location, such as near the Maturango Museum or near the Kerr-McGee Center. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

OSC-7.17 Indoor Aquatic Center

The City shall develop an indoor, year-round aquatic center including an Olympic Center size pool to replace Pinney Pool. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

OSC-7.18 Increase Recreational Facilities

The City shall increase the number of recreational facilities for sports such as golf courses, skate parks, baseball, softball, football, soccer, track and field, and gymnasiums including the feasibility of replacing the Kerr-McGee Center gym. If feasible, these facilities should be centralized in one location to provide easy access to all residents. Potential sites for such facilities include the City-owned property in the business park area. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

Multi-Use Park and Recreation Assets

<p>Goal OSC-8</p>	<p>Develop regional parks in Ridgecrest, applying a multiple-use concept, to provide for recreational opportunities for the residents of Northeast Kern County. [Source: Open Space Element, Goal 4.4].</p>
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OSC-8.1 Indian Wells Valley Regional Parks

The City shall work in coordination with BLM and Kern County to develop regional parks in the Indian Wells Valley. [Source: Policy 4.4.1, Open Space Element]

OSC-8.2 Multi-Use Regional Parks

The City shall create development plans for a regional park that could incorporate multi-uses including but not limited to, R.V./campgrounds facility, horse trails, golf course, interpretive trails, recreational vehicle dump station, etc. [Source: Policy 4.4.3, Open Space Element]

OSC-8.3 Multi-Use Recreational Facilities

The City shall ensure that the constructions of new facilities will accommodate a wide variety of recreational activities. [New Policy]

OSC-8.4 Ridgecrest Heights Regional Park

The City shall investigate the possibility of developing a regional park in the Ridgecrest Heights area (see Figure 7-1). [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreational Subcommittee]

Park and Recreation Funding

<p>Goal OSC-9</p>	<p>To create an orderly process for the development of appropriate recreational and cultural facilities and for the preservation of desirable open space in the City by optimizing the public investment in parks and recreation through reduced costs and funding alternatives. [Source: New Goal based on Parks and Recreation Element, Policy 2]</p>
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OSC-9.1 Funding Methods

The City will shall continue to pursue cost-effective approaches to developing, funding, improving, and maintaining facilities. [New Policy]

OSC-9.2 Fiscal Responsibility

The City shall develop a coordinated recreation programming process with other public agencies and create service links to avoid duplication of services and budgetary expenditures. [New Policy]

OSC-9.3 Capital Improvement Fees

The City will collect a capital improvement fee from new developments to accrue funds for the construction or improvement of the City’s public parks and facilities. [New Policy]

OSC-9.4 Capital Improvement Program

The City shall include park and recreation improvement maintenance programs in the City’s Capital Improvement Plan. [New Policy]

OSC-9.5 Lighting and Landscape District

The City will continue to use the lighting and landscape district to develop and maintain parks. [New Policy]

Recreational Programs

Goal OSC-10	Develop recreational programs that meet Ridgecrest’s diverse needs. [New Goal]
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OSC-10.1 Accommodate Special Needs

The City shall pursue development opportunities of new recreational facilities and retrofit existing facilities to meet the needs of handicapped persons according to state regulations. [Source: Modified Policy 4.2.8, Open Space Element]

OSC-10.2 Promote Childcare/Youth and Family Programs

Promote the use of City parks and community centers for child care/youth and family programs, including programs for after school, holiday, and vacation time periods. [New Policy]

OSC-10.3 Coordinate Recreation Programs with Other Agencies

Coordinate recreation programs with those of other public agencies and private non-profit organizations. [New Policy]

OSC-10.4 Sponsor Specialized Recreation Programs

Participate with other public agencies and private non-profit organizations to sponsor specialized recreation programs and events such as juvenile diversion and family-oriented activities. [New Policy]

OSC-10.5 Recreational Opportunities for Lower-Income Families

Provide opportunities for lower-income families and individuals to participate in City-sponsored recreation and park programs. [New Policy]

OSC-10.6 Youth Programs and Services

The City shall provide and promote youth programs and services that integrate cultural diversity and outdoor recreational activities to enforce positive social skills across all income classes and age groups. [Source: New Policy]

OSC-10.7 Recreational Services and Programs Reflecting Cultural Diversity

Provide and promote recreational services and programs that reflect the cultural diversity of the community. [New Policy]

OSC-10.8 Volunteer Organizations

The City shall support and cooperate with volunteer groups and organizations that provide recreation activities to young people. [New Policy]

Open Space Preservation

Goal OSC-11

To preserve open space areas within the city and Indian Wells Valley, to perpetuate the unique natural setting of the region and provide a desirable environment in the urban area. [Source: Open Space Element, Goal 4.3].

OSC-11.1 Undeveloped Land Acquisitions

The City shall establish land acquisition programs for undeveloped land that can be recreated into parks and recreational sites, in an effort to preserve open space, and vistas of community-wide significance. [Source: Modified Policy 4.3.1, Open Space Element]

OSC-11.2 Physical and Preservation Balance

The City shall plan for a balance between physical development and preservation of open space. [Source: Policy 4.3.2, Open Space Element]

OSC-11.3 Hazard Areas

The City will classify hazardous areas identified in the Safety Element and other parcels as not suitable for development as open space and recreation sites. [Source: Modified Policy 4.3.3, Open Space Element]

OSC-11.4 Encourage Common Spaces in New Developments

The City shall encourage provision for common open space and recreational areas in new Planned Unit Residential Developments, with maintenance to be performed by a homeowners' association, where feasible. [Source: Policy 4.3.5, Open Space Element]

OSC-11.5 Promote Water Conservation Methods

The City shall develop park areas utilizing xeriscape practices, wastewater reuse and other water conserving measures as a demonstration and educational opportunity for residents to learn water conservation practices. [Source: Policy 4.3.7, Open Space Element]

OSC-11.6 Bureau of Land Management

The City shall support the Bureau of Land Managements efforts to retain natural open space areas surrounding Cerro Coso Community College. [Source: Policy 4.3.8 Open Space Element]

OSC-11.7 Desert Education

The City shall support private efforts to provide residents and tourists the opportunity to experience the local desert environment within a developed outdoor environmental education center. [Source: Policy 4.3.9, Open Space Element]

OSC-11.8 Create Buffers

The City shall encourage opens spaces or recreational buffers between incompatible land uses in new development areas. [New Policy]

OSC-11.9 Native Plants

The City shall encourage landscaping with native trees, shrubs, and grassland to provide habitat conditions for native vegetation, and minimize maintenance of the landscaping by using plants that are well-adapted to the desert environment. [New Policy]

OSC-11.10 College Heights Open Space

The City shall maintain the current open space south of Jarvis in College Heights to provide recreational opportunities and protect City views. [Source: New Policy – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]

Open Space Acquisition

Goal OSC-12	To achieve a balanced distribution of public and private open space lands in order to provide an attractive protected environment, with amenities for maintaining an acceptable quality of life all of which is essential to a stable economy. [Source: Conservation Element, Goal 5.5].
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OSC-12.1 Habitat and Open Space Preservation

The City shall encourage County, State and Federal agencies who control habitat and open space lands to maintain such areas for the benefit of the general public. [Source: Policy 5.5.1, Conservation Element]

OSC-12.2 Participate in Future Land Dispositions

The City shall participate in the decision-making process for future disposition of BLM lands in the City and Indian Wells Valley. [Source: Policy 5.5.2, Conservation Element]

7.4 Implementation Measures

Table 7-1, Open Space and Conservation Implementation Measures, identifies the implementation measures the City should take to implement the goals and policies of this General Plan. The implementation program lists each specific implementation measure, a reference to which General Plan policy it is implementing, who is responsible to implement the program, and the timeframe for implementation.

Table 7-1. Open Space and Conservation Implementation Measures

Implementation Measure	Policy	Who is Responsible	Timeframe			
			2008-2010	2010-2015	2015-2030	On-going
1.0 The City shall establish and maintain an Open Space and Recreation Committee to address topics such as parks, recreation, open space, cultural assets, and environmental quality. [Existing Implementation Measure #1, Conservation Element and Existing Implementation Measure #1, Open Space - revised]	OSC-1.1 OSC-1.2	Public Services	■			■
2.0 The City shall adopt specific criteria for the protection of natural and cultural resources as part of the City's environmental review process. This will include standards for determining environmental significance. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-1.3 OSC-1.6 OSC-5.1 OSC-5.6	Public Services	■			
3.0 The City shall investigate the establishment of a land trust for open space lands and consider opportunities for acquiring natural habitat and agricultural areas for permanent open space and natural parks. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-1.3 OSC-12.1	Public Services		■		
4.0 The City shall adopt construction standards for the protection of cultural and historic resources in the City [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-3.2 OSC-3.6	Public Services		■		
5.0 The City shall develop a library of solar and energy conservation references for use by local residents. [Existing Implementation Measure #14, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.1 OSC-4.2	Public Services	■			
6.0 The City shall develop and implement a water conservation program in conjunction with other related agencies. [Existing Implementation Measure #15, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.1 OSC-4.4	Public Services; Public Works	■			
7.0 The City shall support desert education and interpretive programs. [Existing Implementation Measure #9, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.1 OSC-5.1	Parks and Recreation				■
8.0 The City shall develop and adopt a landscape ordinance encouraging the use of low-water, native vegetation for landscaping purposes. [New Implementation Measure – Parks and Recreation Subcommittee]	OSC-4.2	Public Services	■			

	Implementation Measure	Policy	Who is Responsible	Timeframe			
				2008-2010	2010-2015	2015-2030	On-going
9.0	The City shall adopt regulations to require solar access plans for new development proposals. [Existing Implementation Measure #22, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.5 OSC-4.6 OSC-4.13	Public Services		■		
10.0	The City shall research the viability of a building retrofit program. [Existing Implementation Measure #13, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.6	Public Services		■		
11.0	The City shall initiate the monthly reporting on public (City) energy use. [Existing Implementation Measure #12, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.10	Administration				■
12.0	The City shall encourage solar energy features in new public buildings. [Existing Implementation Measure #11, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.11 OSC-4.12 OSC-4.13	Public Services				■
13.0	The City shall adopt a Green Building Ordinance. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-4.14	Public Services		■		
14.0	The City shall evaluate the feasibility of using alternative fuels in public vehicles. [Existing Implementation Measure #20, Conservation Element]	OSC-4.17	Administration; Public Works	■			
15.0	The City shall develop measures to capture runoff. [Existing Implementation Measure #21, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.1	Public Works	■			
16.0	The City shall develop and periodically update a groundwater management plan to protect local aquifers. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-6.3 OSC-6.4 OSC-6.5 OSC-6.14 OSC-6.15 OSC-6.16	Public Services; Public Works		■		■
17.0	The City shall develop and administer a long-term carrying capacity model for the Indian Wells Valley. [Existing Implementation Measure #18, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.3 OSC-6.12	Public Services; Public Works		■		■
18.0	The City shall adopt an ordinance implementing a groundwater recharge plan. [Existing Implementation Measure #19, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.4 OSC-6.6	Public Services; Public Works	■			
19.0	The City shall prepare a wastewater feasibility study in conjunction with NAWS China Lake and other agencies. [Existing Implementation Measure #16, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.4 OSC-6.16	Public Services; Public Works	■			

	Implementation Measure	Policy	Who is Responsible	Timeframe			
				2008-2010	2010-2015	2015-2030	On-going
20.0	The City shall continue to pursue voluntary limits on increases in the groundwater withdrawal rate. [Existing Implementation Measure #6, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.5 OSC-6.14	Public Services; Public Works		■		
21.0	The City shall research the feasibility of municipal wastewater re-use for irrigation. [Policy 4.4.2, Open Space Element]	OSC-6.6 OSC-6.9	Public Works		■		
22.0	The City shall participate in regional water resources planning. [Existing Implementation Measure #5, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.11 OSC-6.12 OSC-6.15	Public Services; Public Works				■
23.0	The City shall participate in developing a comprehensive groundwater recharge program. [Existing Implementation Measure #8, Conservation Element]	OSC-6.12 OSC-6.14	Public Services; Public Works	■			
24.0	The City shall develop groundwater monitoring partnerships with local groundwater users and stakeholders. [New Implementation Measures]	OSC-6.12 OSC-6.14 OSC-6.16	Public Services; Public Works				■
25.0	The City shall conduct a survey of the existing conditions of parks to determine where short-term and long-term renovation and facility improvements are necessary. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-7.1 OSC-7.2	Parks and Recreation	■			
26.0	The City shall develop standards for park multiple-use as flood control basins, separation of non-compatible land use areas or linkage areas for circulation, bike, or walking paths. [Existing Implementation Measure #9, Open Space Element]	OSC-7.1 OSC-8.4	Parks and Recreation	■			
27.0	The City shall develop a Parks, Recreation, Cultural and Open Space Master Plan to determine the specific community needs, and relevant technical and economic requirements for the acquisition and development of a comprehensive recreational and cultural program for all city residents. [Existing Implementation Measure #5, Open Space Element]	OSC-7.1	Parks and Recreation	■			

	Implementation Measure	Policy	Who is Responsible	Timeframe			
				2008-2010	2010-2015	2015-2030	On-going
28.0	The City shall develop standards for landscaping of park and recreational areas using water conserving design concepts. [Existing Implementation Measure #10, Open Space Element]	OSC-7.1	Parks and Recreation	■			
29.0	The City shall conduct periodic surveys to determine specific recreation needs of various age groups, the physically and mentally challenged, and special needs groups. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-7.1 OSC-7.2 OSC-10.1 OSC-10.2 OSC-10.5 OSC-10.6 OSC-10.7	Parks and Recreation				■
30.0	The City shall investigate the feasibility and develop a new golf course within the City. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-7.2 OSC-7.3	Parks and Recreation	■			
31.0	The City shall develop and initiate a park land acquisition strategy as part of the Parks, Recreation, Cultural and Open Space Master Plan. [Existing Implementation Measure #6, Open Space Element]	OSC-7.4 OSC-11.1	Parks and Recreation		■		
32.0	The Municipal Swimming Pool, Skateboard Park and Performing Arts Center should be expanded, with consideration of locating additional assets in other areas of the City.	OSC-7.16 OSC-7.17 OSC-7.18	Parks and Recreation	■			
33.0	The City shall work with community arts and cultural groups and the museum to enable them to identify community needs and expand their program and facilities. [Existing Implementation Measure #12, Open Space Element]	OSC-7.18	Parks and Recreation				■
34.0	The City shall adopt land and/or in lieu fee dedication requirements. [Existing Implementation Measure #2, Open Space Element]	OSC-9.1	Parks and Recreation	■			
35.0	The City shall identify federal, state, and other governmental sources of grant funds for recreational purposes and prepare applications to secure such funding. [New Implementation Measure]	OSC-9.1 OSC-9.2 OSC-9.3	Parks and Recreation				■

Implementation Measure	Policy	Who is Responsible	Timeframe				
			2008-2010	2010-2015	2015-2030	On-going	
36.0	The City shall continue work with Bureau of Land Management to establish appropriate uses for Bureau of Land Management land within the city and within the Sphere of Influence. [Existing Implementation Measure #11, Open Space Element]	OSC-11.6 OSC-12.2	Parks and Recreation				■
37.0	The City shall work with the BLM to designate the BLM lands near Cerro Coso College as habitat preserves. [Existing Implementation Measure #4, Conservation Element]	OSC-11.6 OSC-11.10 OSC-12.1 OSC-12.2	Parks and Recreation	■			
38.0	The City shall facilitate the development of a nature interpretive park and interpretive program. [Existing Implementation Measure #16, Open Space Element]	OSC-11.7	Parks and Recreation	■			
39.0	The City shall participate in the use and disposal planning for BLM lands. [Existing Implementation Measure #3, Conservation Element]	OSC-12.1 OSC-12.2	Administration; Public Services				■

Please see the next page.