

3.14 RECREATION

This section describes the local and regional recreational uses in the project vicinity and the project's potential effects on existing recreation facilities. The discussion explores whether the project would require creation or expansion of recreational facilities or result in other potential adverse physical effects.

3.14.1 Environmental Setting

Existing development on the proposed project site consists of a public entertainment venue (Wells Fargo Center for the Arts) and other LBMF facilities, including an athletic field and playground. The Santa Rosa Christian School is also located at the proposed project site in the WFC.

3.14.1.1 Existing Recreational Facilities

Regional Context

Sonoma County has two state park districts, the USACE Lake Sonoma Recreation Area, the Sonoma County Regional Park Department, the parks and recreation departments of five cities, and three special parks districts that together provide a variety of parklands. Additional recreation facilities are operated by nonprofit agencies.

The types of parklands found in Sonoma County are classified based on category recommendations from the National Recreation and Parks Association. Federal recreation areas and state parks provide recreational opportunities intended to serve national or statewide populations. Regional parks provide opportunities for a broad range of recreational activities, generally within a 30- to 60-minute drive from urban areas, at a rate of 20 acres per 1,000 persons. Community parks are large enough to accommodate a variety of activities within a 30-minute drive of population centers, at a rate of 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons. Neighborhood parks are smaller, multi-use facilities within 0.5 mile of the population served. The standard is 2.5 acres per 1,000 persons (Sonoma County Board of Supervisors 2003).

Visitor use of Sonoma County recreational facilities has increased faster than the county population over the past decade, indicating that the demand for outdoor recreational facilities may exceed population growth (Sonoma County Board of Supervisors 2003). Public response from a 1995 survey (Sonoma County Board of Supervisors 2003) indicated that future acquisition and development of county park facilities should emphasize open space, trails, and other forms of passive use.

Potential future state acquisitions total 1,600 acres. Proposed additions to the county regional park system (5,923 acres) would result in a ratio of about 19 acres per 1,000 persons. The ratio is substantially higher when region-serving state parks are included. Up to 290 acres of community and neighborhood parks are proposed, which would result in a ratio of 5.7 acres per 1,000 persons in unincorporated areas.

City of Santa Rosa and the Project Area

The City of Santa Rosa has 57 parks totaling 514 acres. Twenty-three parks are in the northeastern quadrant of the city, closest to the project site. The parks offer a wide variety of recreational activities including trails for hiking, mountain biking, and trail riding; miniature trains and carousel; skate parks; boating; sailing; sports fields; playgrounds; and picnicking.

The nearest large park to the project site is the Shiloh Ranch Regional Park to the north, which includes 850 acres of natural wooded area and over 3 miles of trails for hiking, biking, and horseback riding; picnicking; a gazebo; a lawn area; and flush restrooms. Nearby neighborhood parks include Coffey Park and Bicentennial Park on the west side of US 101, which have playgrounds and picnic areas, flush restrooms, and lawn areas.

The proposed project site currently has athletic fields on Parcel B in the northeastern section and a playground associated with the school in the WFC (see **Figure 2-2**).

Recent and Planned Facility Improvements

The Sonoma County Regional Parks Department lists the following improvements to county recreation facilities (Sonoma County Regional Parks Department 2009):

- Central Sonoma Valley Bikeway – Larson Park to Highway 12. This multi-phased project plan proposes to start with the construction of a 2.76-mile bike and pedestrian facility from Verano Avenue to Agua Caliente Road in Sonoma Valley.
- Cheney Creek Bridge and Trail Project – New 110-foot metal bridge and crushed rock trail links the California Coastal Trail. Completed in May 2008.
- Crane Creek Regional Park Frisbee Golf Course – Expected in spring 2009.
- Ernie Smith Community Park Expansion Project – New and renovated trails, retaining walls, a fenced dog park, landscaping, and picnic tables. Completed in April 2007.
- Guerneville River Park – Group and individual picnic sites, outdoor stage area, restrooms, parking. Expected in spring 2009.
- Maxwell Farms Regional Park – Americans with Disabilities Act playground installation of upper body play equipment. Completed in fall 2008.

3.14.2 Impact Analysis

3.14.2.1 Approach and Methodology

This section does not evaluate impacts on recreational facilities in terms of additional acreage that may be needed to meet local standards. Rather, this section examines the additional demand, if any, for recreational facilities as a result of the project and any potential environmental effects from the development of additional lands for recreational uses to meet that demand.

3.14.2.2 *Thresholds of Significance*

The following standards of significance are based on Appendix G of the *CEQA Guidelines*. For the purposes of this EIR, an impact to recreation would be considered significant if the implementation of the proposed project would:

- Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreation facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facilities would occur or be accelerated; or
- Propose the construction of recreational facilities or require the expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

3.14.2.3 *Less Than Significant Impacts Not Requiring Further Analysis*

The project, because of its commercial/public facilities nature, would not substantially increase the use of parks or recreational facilities. The population served by the project is predominately local and therefore will not require new recreational facilities. The project would have a less-than-significant impact on the use or condition of existing recreational facilities.

3.14.2.4 *Impacts and Mitigation*

**Impact REC-1:
Construction of
Recreational Facilities
That Might Have an
Adverse Physical Effect
on the Environment**

The project would relocate existing athletic fields and a playground at the WFC and construct passive recreation facilities at the Medical Campus. Relocation of the WFC facilities could have temporary minor impacts on recreationists during construction.

Significance: Less than significant

Discussion:

During Phase I of the proposed project, the existing athletic fields would be moved to the southeastern corner of Lot C, and the playground would be moved to the northern portion of Lot C. The temporary closure of the athletic fields and playground during Phase I construction has the potential to inconvenience recreation users.

The proposed Medical Campus would provide on-site passive recreation facilities for staff and clients in the form of outdoor areas, including meditative paths, outdoor gardens, courtyards, and open space. These recreational facilities would be visually unobtrusive and would not generate any traffic, emissions, or substantial noise. Construction impacts associated with these on-site passive recreation facilities have been included in the project impact analysis throughout this Draft EIR.

Relocation of the existing athletic fields and playground and construction of new passive recreation facilities would have a less than significant impact.

Mitigation: No mitigation required

**Impact REC-2:
Cumulative Recreation
Impacts** Implementation of the proposed project could result in a considerable contribution to significant cumulative recreation impacts.

Significance: Less than significant

Discussion:

The Sonoma County General Plan 2020 EIR determined that development in the County would have a significant cumulative effect on parks and recreation services because of the uncertainty of adequate ability to provide increased services in the County. However, the proposed project would not increase demand for recreational services and would not substantially increase the use of existing recreational services. Use of the WFC for entertainment and the arts would continue. The proposed project would provide onsite recreational facilities for staff and clients in the form of outdoor areas, including meditative paths, outdoor gardens, courtyards and open space. Therefore, the project would not contribute to a cumulative impact on recreation.

Mitigation: No mitigation required