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## **4.3 PARKS AND RECREATION**

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### 4.3.1 INTRODUCTION

This section describes existing parks and recreation facilities in the City of Vacaville, including Lagoon Valley Regional Park, which is located in the Specific Plan area. This section also identifies the anticipated demand for park facilities as well as the physical impacts on existing facilities resulting from development of the proposed development project. In addition, potential inconsistencies with adopted plans and policies, including the City of Vacaville General Plan will be addressed. Information provided in this section was gathered from site visits and a review of relevant planning and policy documents that are cited, as appropriate.

The following issues were raised in NOP comment letters (see Appendix B):

- Loss of potential park land;
- Loss of open space;
- Public access to open space;
- Request inclusion of a 12-acre Canine and Equestrian Park;
- Maintenance of park improvements resulting from the development;
- Use of public land for private use;
- Increased use of the park and resulting impacts; and
- Cumulative impacts of the development.

All issues raised in the NOP comment letters are addressed in this section with the exception of the loss of open space, which is addressed in Section 4.4, Aesthetics, of this EIR.

### 4.3.2 ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

#### City of Vacaville

The City of Vacaville's park system includes many landscaped parks, recreational facilities, and open space areas, such as rolling hills and creeks that connect residents to the more natural environment. Through the Community Services Department, the City owns and operates approximately 2,582 acres of parkland. The school district and the City co-develop school sites to provide multi-purpose facilities. The City designates four different types of open space: Greenbelt buffers, Agriculture/Open Space, Community Separator Overlays, and Urban Open Space. Urban Open Space uses are located to the south and east of the Specific Plan area. Urban Open Space is defined by the *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* as City-owned parcels that are intended for maintenance or preservation in a natural or less intensively developed state.

The following summarizes the number, type, and acreage of park facilities operated by the City:

- 18 neighborhood parks totaling 89.3 acres,
- 10 neighborhood school parks totaling 42.2 acres,
- 7 community parks totaling 116.9 acres,
- 23 public/urban open space areas totaling 1904.9 acres,

- 1 city park totaling 41 acres,
- 1 regional park totaling 388 acres (includes 106 acre Lagoon Lake), and
- 14 recreation centers.

The General Plan defines each of these categories as follows:

- Neighborhood parks: developed primarily to serve the recreation needs of a small portion of the City.
- Neighborhood school parks: built adjacent to but separate from an elementary school and sometimes include a recreation center.
- Community parks: designed to serve a portion of the City's population living within a 1-1.5 mile distance.
- City parks: 100 acres or more and are designed to serve the entire City population as a community centerpiece and outdoor recreational space.
- Public open space: parcels of land owned by the City of Vacaville and intended for maintenance or preservation in a natural or less-intensive developed state.
- Recreation centers: specialized to provide recreational programs and facilities targeted to meet the needs of a certain sector of the population or neighborhood.

Neighborhood, neighborhood school, community, and city parks contain both passive and active recreational uses while public/urban open space areas are focused on passive uses and recreation centers on active uses. The City's Public Works Department maintains all City-owned parks and recreational facilities.

### **Specific Plan Area**

The Specific Plan Area totals 2,354 acres of land and includes the existing 388-acre Lagoon Valley Regional Park, surrounding publicly-owned undeveloped hillside land, and some existing highway commercial uses. The 1,066-acre open space area within the Specific Plan area borders the Lagoon Valley Regional Park and the Development Areas to the east, south, and west. The open space is mostly publicly owned. Most of the lands currently owned by the City were dedicated to the City under the terms of the development agreement between the City and the original developer of the Lower Lagoon Valley, which was intended to implement the development called for under the 1990 Policy Plan. The 388-acre Lagoon Valley Regional Park is described in more detail below.

### **Lagoon Valley Regional Park**

The 388-acre Lagoon Valley Regional Park is a partially developed regional park facility that is generally used for passive recreation. The park includes the 106-acre Lagoon Valley Lake and Peña Adobe Community Park. Lagoon Valley Lake is used for fishing and non-motorized boating. An unimproved path runs along the west and south sides of the lake. On the east side are picnic facilities, a Frisbee golf course, and large flat open areas. In the hills further east are formal and informal trails used for walking, mountain biking and running.

The Lagoon Valley Regional Park was first established in the late 1970s as a County park facility on City-owned property. The lake was created at this time as a part of the Lagoon Valley Regional Park construction. Lagoon Valley Lake was historically a natural seasonal lake and wetland. It was envisioned that the park would be a regional recreational facility for all the residents of Solano County. Additional purposes for the park included a historic element (Peña Adobe Community Park) for educational purposes, a buffer to promote and retain open space

between the cities of Fairfield, to the southwest, and Vacaville, to the northeast, and as a drainage control mechanism for the City of Vacaville.

In the late 1980s the City of Vacaville expanded its Sphere of Influence (SOI) to include the Lower Lagoon Valley area. In 1990 the area was annexed to the City and a policy plan and development proposal was approved. The Lagoon Valley Regional Park was included in this planning document and any development was required to preserve the scenic quality of the park and design appropriate interfaces to the park. The City assumed operational and maintenance responsibilities for the park in mid-1995.

The Lagoon Valley Regional Park not categorized under the City's neighborhood park system; however, a portion was designated as a community park in the City of Vacaville 1999 General Plan Update (GP Update). The GP Update recommended that, due to increased development proposed in the area, Lagoon Valley Regional Park development be focused on a regional facility with urban amenities.

The hillside area on the east side of Lagoon Valley above Lagoon Valley Regional Park and Hines Nursery is owned by the City. This area is publicly accessible. The City also currently owns several 100 acres on the south side of the valley.

### **Lagoon Valley Lake Management Plan**

The City of Vacaville *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* (1991) identified the potential for the Lagoon Valley Regional Park to provide improved opportunities for a variety of passive and active recreational opportunities. Development of a long-term lake management plan that addresses a wide variety of concerns is integral to the success of the Master Plan. The overall goal of the plan is to ensure that the lake will remain a natural, scenic, and recreational amenity for the people of Vacaville and the surrounding region. In 1999, the *Lagoon Valley Lake Management Plan* was adopted by the City and City staff was directed by the City Council to implement the plan.

In 2002, the City adopted a Mitigated Negative Declaration that evaluated impacts associated with a Conditional Use Permit for on-going operation and use of the Park, improvements to the watershed areas above Lagoon Valley Lake (Lake Management Plan) to reduce sedimentation and improve water quality, and creation of an off-leash dog-park. The Mitigated Negative Declaration identified potentially significant impacts associated with potential disturbance of Valley Elderberry Longhorn Beetle habitat, and increased sediment loading in the lake due to bank disturbing activities. Mitigation measures were adopted into the Lake Management Plan that reduces these impacts to a less-than-significant level.

Separately, the City is currently initiating an update of the Lagoon Valley Regional Park Master Plan. Other improvements, in addition to those approved under the 2002 Conditional Use Permit, could be considered as part of that process. Improvements proposed as part of the Park Master Plan update could include, but might not be limited to, trails, play structures, landscaping, lake enhancements and other facilities that would be identified through a public process subject to adoption by the City Council. However, at this time, no particular projects or improvements within the park have been selected for incorporation into an updated Park Master Plan. The Park Master Plan process will also identify means by which funding can be secured for any proposed future improvements. The Proposed Project is not dependent on this effort, which is being undertaken independently by the City in light of the regional nature of these facilities, and is expected to be completed regardless of whether the Specific Plan is eventually

approved by the City. Therefore, the Park Master Plan update is being considered as a separate project for CEQA purposes and will undergo project-level CEQA review once the master plan update is developed and proposed.

### 4.3.3 REGULATORY SETTING

#### **Federal**

There are no specific federal regulations pertaining to the provision of local parks and recreation facilities.

#### **State**

##### **Quimby Act**

California Government Code Section 66477, Subdivision Map Act, referred to as the Quimby Act, permits local jurisdictions to require the dedication of land and/or the payment of in-lieu fees solely for park and recreation purposes. The required dedication and/or fee are based upon the residential density, parkland cost, and other factors. Land dedicated and fees collected pursuant to the Quimby Act may only be used for developing new, or rehabilitating existing, park or recreational facilities. The maximum dedication and/or fee allowed under current State law is equivalent to providing three acres of park land per 1,000 persons, unless the park acreage of a municipality exceeds that standard, in which case the maximum dedication is five acres per 1,000 residents. The City's requirement of 4.5 acres of Public Park per 1,000 residents falls within the parameters set forth by the Quimby Act.

#### **Local**

##### **City of Vacaville**

###### **City of Vacaville General Plan**

The General Plan recognizes that the presence of plentiful, well-designed parks and recreation facilities contributes to the quality of life in a community. The Parks and Recreation Element was amended in 1992, concurrently with the preparation and adoption of the City's *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan* (Parks Master Plan).

The City of Vacaville General Plan requires all residential developers to provide public park and recreation facilities either by paying Park Development Impact Fees and/or dedicating sites in lieu of Park Development Impact Fees based upon a minimum standard of 4.5 acres per 1,000 residents as follows:

###### Public park distribution:

- 1.8 acres of neighborhood park per 1,000 residents,
- 1.7 acres of community park per 1,000 residents,
- 1.0 acres of city park per 1,000 residents.

Development of the proposed Specific Plan would result in a population increase of approximately 3,750 residents.

Consistency of the Proposed Project with relevant City of Vacaville General Plan goals and policies is presented in Appendix C. As shown in Appendix C, the Proposed Project is consistent with applicable parks and recreation goals and policies.

#### Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan (1992)

In 1990, the Community Services Department started the process of preparing a 20-year master plan for its recreation facilities and open space. The plan was rooted in the 1990 General Plan but driven by the demand for recreation programs. The City Council approved the Master Plan in 1992 with a specific implementation timeline and development impact funding plan up to the year 2010. A 10-year status report on the plan was prepared in 2002. The Master Plan guides the development of the City's recreation facilities and open space.

The City of Vacaville *Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan* (1992) encourages:

- Development of regional uses related to the lake; including boating, sailing, group and individual picnicking, fishing, and festivals or other special events.
- A mix of regional and local-serving uses including retail, office or business villages, residential neighborhoods, regional and neighborhood parks and private recreation facilities, and a multi-use trail system for the 930 acres of hillside open space framing the Lower Lagoon Valley.
- Enhancing Lagoon Valley Regional Park is a key element of the land use concept that provides for a range of active and passive recreational uses, including greater access to the open space for residents and workers within the valley, as well as for the regional population.
- Trailheads at the Lagoon Valley Regional Park and other strategic locations around the area of development.

#### **4.3.4 IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

##### **Method of Analysis**

The amount and type of park acreage included in the Proposed Project has been compared to the standards established by the City of Vacaville's General Plan and the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. The Proposed Project would result in a total of approximately 3,750 residents. This number was used to quantify the demand for parkland generated by the Proposed Project, based on the following citywide standards:

- 4.5 acres of public park per 1,000 residents.
- Public park distribution:
- 1.8 acres of neighborhood park per 1,000 residents
  - 1.7 acres of community park per 1,000 residents
  - 1.0 acres of city park per 1,000 residents

##### **Standards of Significance**

For the purpose of this EIR, impacts to Parks and Recreation are considered significant if the Proposed Project would:

- Fail to meet the City's standards for the provision of parkland;
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of existing recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment; or
- Increase use of existing park facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility could occur or be accelerated.

The potential incompatibility of proposed developed uses with Lagoon Valley Regional Park is addressed in Section 4.2, Land Use and Planning.

### **Project Impacts and Mitigation Measures**

#### **4.3-1 Development of the Proposed Project could conflict with City standards for the provision of parkland.**

Development of the proposed Specific Plan would result in a population increase of approximately 3,750 residents. General Plan Implementing Policy 4.6-I requires 4.5 acres of parkland be provided for every 1,000 residents, broken out between neighborhood, community, and city park space. The Proposed Project would require or generate a need for approximately 17 acres of parkland: including 6.8 acres of Neighborhood Park; 6.4 acres of Community Park; and 3.8 acres of City Park.

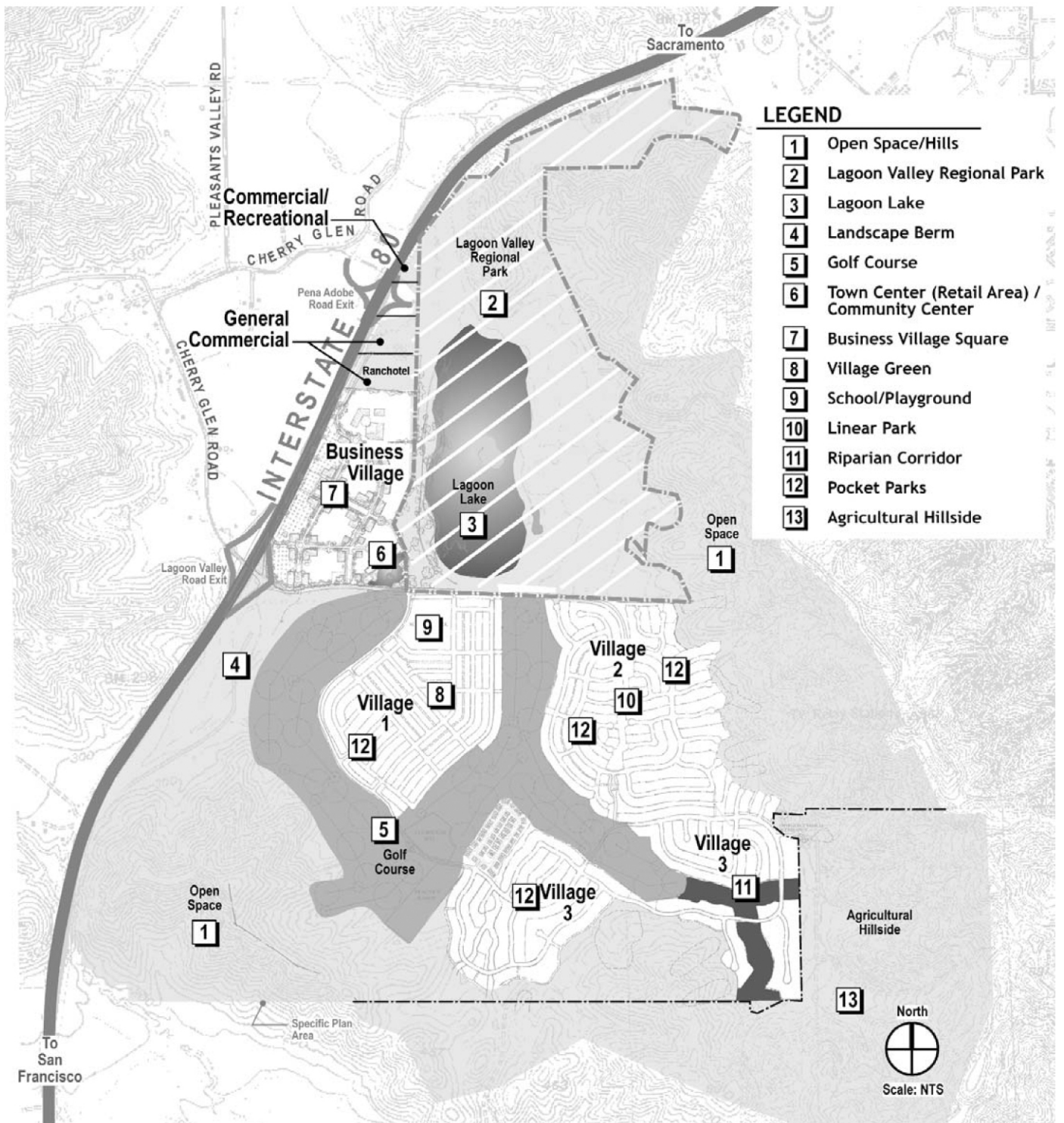
The proposed Specific Plan would include village squares/greens, school playgrounds, linear and pocket parks, passive open spaces and tot lots (see Figure 4.3-1). A total of approximately 16 to 18 acres of such facilities would be developed as recreational spaces within the residential community. The Proposed Project would also provide for approximately 15 acres of passive open space. The project would therefore provide park acreages that would meet or exceed the minimum total neighborhood park acreage required by the General Plan. The project applicant proposes to make a contribution of \$4 to \$5 million to the City for park-related and other purposes. Because the project provides adequate park acreage and because the applicant proposed to contribute money to the City for park-related uses, this impact is ***less than significant***.

#### **Mitigation Measure**

4.3-1 *None required.*

#### **4.3-2 Proposed project would create additional demand necessitating the construction or expansion of existing recreational facilities, which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.**

The Proposed Project would increase population in the City of Vacaville by approximately 3,750 residents. The increased population would increase the demand on existing recreation facilities, such as Lagoon Valley Regional Park. As noted above under Impact 4.3-1, the Proposed Project includes development of parks and recreation facilities including village squares/greens, school playgrounds, linear and pocket parks and tot lots. In addition, the project includes construction of an approximately 213-acre championship-style golf course with associated clubhouse facilities.



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**FIGURE 4.3-1**  
**Open Space and Recreation System**

Source: EIP Associates, 2003

Not to Scale



City of Vacaville

As described in the Environmental Setting discussion, the City is currently initiating an update of the Lagoon Valley Regional Park Master Plan. Other improvements, in addition to those approved under the 2002 Conditional Use Permit, could be considered as part of that process. Improvements proposed as part of the Park Master Plan update could include, but might not be limited to, trails, play structures, landscaping, lake enhancements and other facilities that would be identified through a public process subject to adoption by the City Council. However, at this time, no particular projects or improvements within the park have been selected for incorporation into an updated Park Master Plan. The Park Master Plan process will also identify means by which funding can be secured for any proposed future improvements.

Approximately 1,066 acres of open space agricultural hillside areas would provide for a range of passive recreational uses for the residents of the Specific Plan area, as well as for the regional population. Proposed improvements include a trail system that would connect the hillside areas with Lagoon Valley Regional Park. The system would include: pedestrian trails throughout the valley and connecting to areas to the north and south; bicycle trails providing circulation along the major loop roads, around the lake, and over the freeway interchange bridges; and a horse trail and hiking path along the ridgeline connecting the regional park to Nelson Road. The proposed Specific Plan designates a trail system as a component of the Specific Plan improvements that would be refined as part of the Park Master Plan. The updated Park Master Plan would determine specific locations of trails and their design details. Such improvements would be implemented under a revised park master plan.

The physical environmental impacts of construction of the trail system and the golf course, including construction-related air quality, noise, and water quality impacts, are evaluated in the appropriate sections of this EIR. As previously discussed, the Lower Lagoon Valley Regional Park Master Plan update is being considered as a separate project for CEQA purposes and will undergo project-level CEQA review once the master plan update is developed and proposed. The Specific Plan requires that work in the park, open spaces, and on the development site comply with the strategies and measures contained in the adopted Lake Management Plan; therefore, ensuring that construction projects within the Specific Plan area incorporate steps to protect and improve the lakes water quality,

In addition to the construction of proposed neighborhood park facilities, the golf course and trail system, the applicant proposes to contribute \$4 to \$5 million to the City for park-related and other civic purposes. These funds could be used to fund a portion of whatever ultimate park improvements the City proposes as part of the Park Master Plan update or other open space acquisition projects. However, because the specific improvements are unknown at this time, and the associated environmental impacts can not be determined, this impact is ***potentially significant***.

#### **Mitigation Measure**

There is no feasible mitigation available to reduce the magnitude of this impact; therefore, it remains *significant and unavoidable*.

4.3-2 *None available.*

**4.3-3 Proposed project could increase use of existing park facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility could occur or be accelerated.**

The Proposed Project would increase population in the City of Vacaville by approximately 3,750 residents. The increased population would increase the demand on existing recreation facilities, including Lagoon Valley Regional Park. Park facilities would not only be used by new residents, but by the employees of the Business Village uses as well. Increased use of the Regional Park could cause and/or accelerate physical deterioration of facilities. Currently, the City has no funding source other than its General Fund and periodic grants for park maintenance. Lack of maintenance for Lagoon Valley Regional Park has been identified by the City as an impediment to current park maintenance activities and as an impediment to implementation of the Park Master Plan.

The proposed Specific Plan would include establishment of a funding mechanism (i.e., Lighting and Landscaping Maintenance District(s) and developer contributions) prior to the approval of the first final map for residential lots. The funding mechanisms would provide for the maintenance of Lagoon Valley Regional Park and the publicly owned open space hillside areas in the Specific Plan area. The funding would include provisions for the cost of providing a full-time, on-site park ranger for the Regional Park.

In addition, as previously stated, the City is currently initiating an update of the Lagoon Valley Regional Park Master Plan. Improvements proposed as part of the Park Master Plan update could include, but might not be limited to, trails, play structures, landscaping, lake enhancements and other facilities that would be identified through a public process subject to adoption by the City Council. However, at this time, no particular projects or improvements within the park have been selected for incorporation into an updated Park Master Plan. The Park Master Plan process will also identify means by which funding can be secured for any proposed future improvements. The Park Master Plan update is being considered as a separate project for CEQA purposes and will undergo project-level CEQA review once the master plan update is developed and proposed. The applicant proposes to contribute \$4 to \$5 million to the City for park-related and other purposes. These funds could be used to fund a portion of whatever ultimate park improvements the City proposes as part of the Park Master Plan update. The Proposed Project would not alter the park status as a designated regional level park facility. Park improvements would be funded and maintained by the development project within Lower Lagoon Valley. These improvements would be carried out only as part of the approved Park Master Plan.

The Proposed Project includes the funding and establishment of a permanent maintenance funding mechanism and contributes funds to the City for park-related and other purposes. These uses would be consistent with the current or the Park Master Plan update. However, because the specific improvements are unknown at this time and the associated environmental impacts can not be determined, this impacts is considered ***potentially significant***.

### **Mitigation Measure**

There is no feasible mitigation available to reduce the magnitude of this impact; therefore, it remains *significant and unavoidable*.

4.3-3 *None available.*

**4.3-4 Construction activities associated with installation of utilities infrastructure could temporarily disrupt existing recreation facilities.**

Installation of project utility infrastructure, including off-site utility infrastructure, would include earth-disturbing activities within Lagoon Valley Regional Park and along existing hillside pedestrian and bike trails. Portions of the facilities could require closure, which would disrupt the use of these facilities for limited period of time.

Trail closures required as part of off-site wastewater collection system improvements and other utilities installations would be required over substantial portions of the bicycle/pedestrian trail where the adjacent topography does not provide adequate space for a detour path, or in the open space area adjacent to Peña Adobe. Also water lines would require construction on Lagoon Valley Regional Park. Because the installation of utilities infrastructure would temporarily disrupt recreation facilities, this is considered a **significant impact**.

### **Mitigation Measure**

Implementation of the following mitigation measure would reduce this impact to a *less-than-significant level*.

- 4.3-4 (a) *The Applicant shall fund a public information and outreach program beginning two months prior to construction of utility corridors in Lagoon Valley Regional Park and continuing until construction is completed. The program shall either be developed by the City, or subject to City review and approval no later than three months prior to start of construction.*
- (b) *The Applicant shall implement measures to minimize the amount of time the trails are closed to public access including, but not limited to, development of an alternative/detour plan in coordination with the City Community Services Department.*
- (c) *The Applicant shall ensure that at no time during construction on the trail will City staff be hindered from accessing the reservoir site or water transmission pipelines for routine and emergency operational and maintenance activities, by providing alternative access, subject to City Public Works approval.*