

PARKS AND RECREATION EXISTING CONDITIONS

San Rafael General Plan 2040 Background Report

Abstract

This report provides background data to support park and recreation policies in San Rafael General Plan 2040. It includes a 2019 inventory of park facilities and an overview of recreational programs

San Rafael Community Development Department
December 2019

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Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide background information on parks and recreational facilities in San Rafael. The information will inform updated policies and implementation programs in the 2040 General Plan and provide the “Setting” section of the Environmental Impact Report (EIR) chapter addressing parks and recreational impacts.

General Overview

San Rafael’s parks provide space for recreation, community gathering, visual beauty, resource conservation, and climate resilience. Parks improve the quality of life in the city, shape the identity of its neighborhoods, and contribute to the health, wellness, and creative potential of those who live and work in San Rafael.

For the purposes of this analysis, “parks” are distinguished from “open space.” Although both are considered parkland, open space is principally managed for resource conservation, hazard reduction, and scenic value, along with compatible recreation activities such as hiking. By contrast, the parks addressed in this section have been “improved” to support active recreation. Typical park improvements include sports fields, playgrounds, picnic areas, tennis courts, running tracks, recreation centers, and basketball courts. The larger parks support programmed services such as classes, swim and tennis lessons, activities for children and seniors, and league sports.

The City of San Rafael is one of several park service providers in the Planning Area. Other service providers include the County of Marin/ Marin Open Space District, the State of California, the Marinwood Community Service District, San Rafael City Schools, and the Miller Creek School District. Public park services are supplemented by private facilities such as swim and racquet clubs, the YMCA and Osher JCC, private golf courses, and community-run pools and play areas.

Park Classification

Table 1 lists park and recreation areas in the City of San Rafael. Table 2 lists parks and recreation areas in the unincorporated portion of the Planning Area. Both tables are organized based on a park classification system that is described below, roughly corresponding to standard categories used by the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA):

- **Region-Serving Parks** draw visitors from throughout Marin County and the Bay Area and offer unique amenities. There are three region-serving parks in San Rafael: McInnis Park and Golf Center (County of Marin), McNeers Beach (County of Marin), and China Camp State Park (State of California). Most of the acreage in these parks counted as “open space” but each park also includes active recreational areas serving a regional market.
- **Community Parks** primarily serve residents from San Rafael and attract users from multiple neighborhoods. They are typically 10 acres or larger and include a variety of facilities such as recreation centers, swimming pools, tennis courts, restrooms, and multi-use athletic fields. There are three community parks in the city limits (Albert Park, Pickleweed Park, and Terra Linda Recreation Area) and one in the unincorporated area (Marinwood Park). For analysis purposes, the service area

radius for a community park is approximately one mile and the service area population is 10,000 to 20,000 residents.¹

- **Neighborhood Parks** serve a more limited geographic area than community parks. They are within walking distance of many users, with a service area radius of one-half mile and a service area population of 2,000 to 5,000 residents. Neighborhood parks are typically between one and ten acres in size and include a range of facilities such as softball fields, playgrounds and tot lots, lawn areas, picnic areas, and basketball courts. Examples include Santa Margarita Park and Sun Valley Park.
- **Pocket Parks** are less than an acre in size and draw from a smaller service area than neighborhood parks, such as a quarter-mile radius. Facilities in these parks are usually limited to children’s play structures, lawn areas, and places to sit or enjoy nature. Examples include Riviera Park in Peacock Gap and Oliver Hartzel Park on Golden Hinde Boulevard. A few pocket parks have no facilities and were designed as ornamental open spaces along major roads.
- **Special Use Parks** include parks that serve a unique purpose or activity. These include shoreline trails (such as Starkweather Park along the Bay), the “Field of Dogs” County Dog Park, and the historic homes at Boyd Park and the Falkirk Mansion. These parks play an important role in meeting community-wide cultural and recreational needs or showcasing special community features.
- **Public School Facilities** include open spaces that are owned and operated by San Rafael City Schools and the Miller Creek School District. Although there may be limitations on access, school campuses complement City-operated facilities by providing additional sports fields, hard court areas, and playgrounds.

The acreage figures in Tables 1 and 2 exclude submerged lands and wetlands. For school sites, the acreage figures reflect only the portion of each campus that is dedicated to recreational and sports activities.

As noted earlier, the table excludes passive open space areas such as Harry A Barbier Memorial Park and the Terra Linda – Sleepy Hollow Open Space (these areas are addressed later in this report). Low intensity recreational uses such as hiking are compatible with open space areas, and facilities such as staging areas, restrooms, and picnic grounds may be appropriate in limited locations.

Figure 1 shows the location and classification of the parks listed in Tables 1 and 2.

¹ Terra Linda Recreation Area is counted as a Community Park because it includes a recreation center, swimming pool, and other community-serving facilities, and because of its long-standing role as a community gathering place for North San Rafael. However, at 2.9 acres, the park falls short of the acreage requirement for a Community Park.

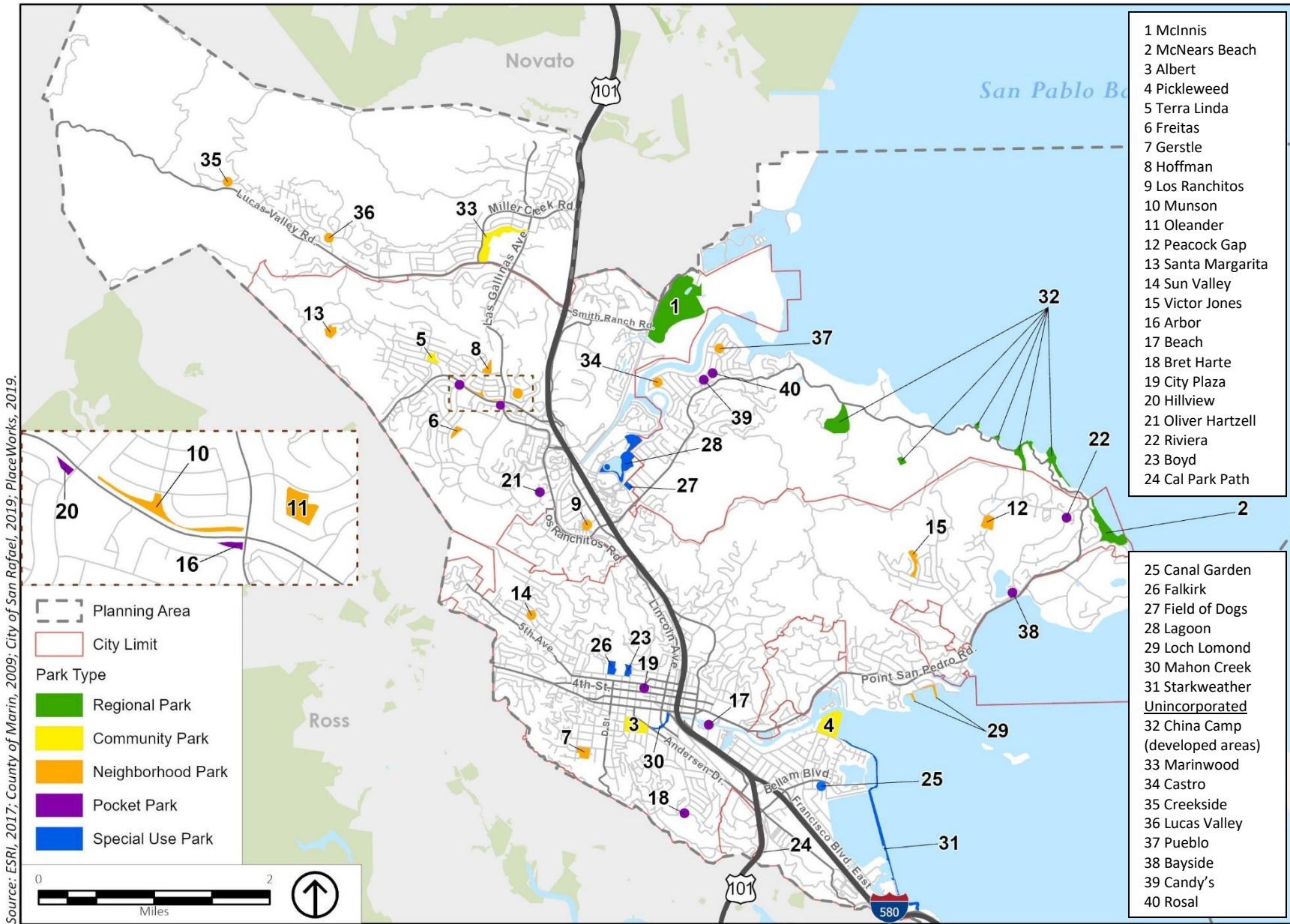


Figure 1: San Rafael Parks

Table 1: San Rafael Improved Parkland Inventory – Within City (excludes passive open space)

Park Name	Operator	Acres	Comments
REGION-SERVING PARKS			
McInnis Park (part)	County	72.50	Includes 9-hole golf course, driving range, clubhouse, 2 softball diamonds, 2 soccer fields, skate park, playgrounds, BBQ areas, lawns, rest rooms. Acreage figure excludes 360 acres of wetland and open space areas.
McNears Beach	County	19.00	Sandy beach, changing rooms, 500-foot fishing pier, picnic/ BBQ areas, pool, snack bar, tennis courts, volleyball, restrooms. Acreage total excludes 36 acres open water.
<i>SUB-TOTAL REGION-SERVING</i>		<i>91.50</i>	
COMMUNITY PARKS			
Albert	City	13.34	2 ballfields, multi-purpose field, picnic/ BBQ areas, 4 tennis courts, playground, includes San Rafael Community Center (with auditorium, classrooms, commercial kitchen)
Pickleweed	City	17.60	Soccer fields, picnic/BBQ areas, playground, basketball courts, Al Boro Community Center and gymnasium
Terra Linda	City	2.87	Picnic tables, playground, basketball courts, swimming pool, community center, grassy area
<i>SUB-TOTAL COMMUNITY</i>		<i>33.91</i>	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS²			
Freitas	City	2.69	Water play area, amphitheater, playground, grassy area, restroom
Gerstle	City	6.00	Picnic/ BBQ areas, basketball court, grassy area, tennis courts, multi-age playground
Hoffman Field	City	3.80	Softball field complex
Los Ranchitos	City	3.00	Children’s play structure, basketball court, rest rooms, path, lawn
Munson	City	1.46	Picnic table, lawn area
Oleander	City	2.28	Small picnic and BBQ area, a turf field, and playground
Peacock Gap	City	4.14	Playground, 2 tennis courts, turf field, par course, trails
Santa Margarita	City	5.00	Group picnic area, tennis court, basketball court, playground, lawn
Sun Valley	City	2.20	Group picnic area picnic tables, a basketball court, a volleyball court, grassy area, and a playground.
Victor Jones	City	5.96	Group picnic area, baseball field, basketball, playground, volleyball, shuffleboard, hiking
<i>SUB-TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD</i>		<i>36.53</i>	

² Jerry Russom Park is included as a City “open space” rather than a neighborhood park, as it has no facilities.

TABLE 1, CONTINUED			
Park Name	Operator	Acres	Comments
POCKET PARKS			
Arbor	City	0.30	Landscaped area along Freitas Pkwy with bench, trellis, lawn
Beach	City	0.44	Bocce courts, picnic area, playground, leased to Terrapin Crossings for public use in exchange for maintenance/programming
Bret Harte	City	0.46	Picnic area, playground, basketball
City Plaza	City	0.32	Plaza in former Court St ROW, landscaping, outdoor dining, performance space
Hillview	City	0.26	Landscaped area along Freitas Pkwy, no improvements
Oliver Hartzell	City	0.54	Lawn, children's play structure, open space access
Riviera	City	0.27	Tot lot, lawn
<i>SUB-TOTAL POCKET</i>		2.59	
SPECIAL USE PARKS			
Boyd (part)	City	1.75	Historic home, playground, picnic area. Excludes 16-acre upper area open space
Cal Park Pathway	County	0	1.1-mile bike/ped trail through tunnel. Acreage is transportation ROW and not counted as park.
Canal Community Garden	San Rafael Sanit. District	0.35	Community Garden
Falkirk (part)	City	3.60	Lower portion of site only, includes historic mansion/lawns. Excludes 8-acre upper open space.
Field of Dogs	County	0.71	Fenced dog play area
Lagoon	County	10.00	Lawns, benches, lagoon with fishing areas, picnic tables, restrooms. Excludes additional acreage associated with the Marin County Fairgrounds and the Marin Center.
Loch Lomond	City	3.00	Shoreline promenade, benches, lawns, picnic area, playground, kayak launch
Mahon Creek	City	2.54	Bike trail and landscaped area along Mahon Creek channel
Jean Starkweather	City	21.30	3-mile shoreline path, approximately 100' wide with picnic tables, benches
<i>SUBTOTAL SPECIAL USE</i>		43.25	
Total Developed Park Acreage in City Limits		207.78	

TABLE 1, CONTINUED			
Park Name	Operator	Acres	Comments
PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES			
Bahia Vista	SR City Schools	1.62	Play structure, field, hard courts
Coleman	SR City Schools	0.93	Hard courts, multi-purpose field
Davidson	SR City Schools	7.20	Two large hard courts and multi-purpose field areas
Miller Creek District Offices	Miller Creek SD	3.85	Community garden, softball field (on Nova Albion)
Glenwood	SR City Schools	4.26	Three softball fields, picnic area, 2 basketball courts, 2 tennis courts, hard court areas
Laurel Dell	SR City Schools	0.37	Hard courts (no field)
Mark Day	Miller Creek SD	3.82	Multi-purpose sports field, hard courts
San Pedro	SR City Schools	1.88	Hard court, softball field
San Rafael High	SR City Schools	15.92	Multi-purpose field, softball field, 6 tennis courts, hard courts, two gymnasiums, swimming pool, running track, football/soccer field with bleachers.
Short	SR City Schools	0.32	Hard court, play structure
Sun Valley	SR City Schools	1.46	Hard courts, multi-purpose lawn
Terra Linda High	SR City Schools	16.6	6 tennis courts, multiple hard-court areas, track and bleachers, football/soccer field, pool, softball field
Vallecito	Miller Creek SD	15.9	2 softball fields, running track, hard courts, 2 tennis courts
<i>SUB-TOTAL SCHOOL FACILITIES</i>		<i>74.13</i>	<i>Acreage represents recreational portion of school campuses only</i>

Source: City of San Rafael, 2019

Table 2: San Rafael Parkland Inventory – Unincorporated Planning Area (excl. passive open space)

Park Name	Operator	Acres	Comments
REGION-SERVING PARKS			
China Camp (part)	State	30.00	Includes 31 campsites, 25 picnic areas, beach, boat launch, shore fishing, trails, partially restored historic Chinese fishing village
<i>SUB-TOTAL REGION-SERVING</i>		<i>30.00</i>	<i>Excludes passive open space portion of park</i>
COMMUNITY PARKS			
Marinwood	Marinwood CSD	14.12	2 large lawns, playground, BBQ/picnic areas, trails, community center, pool, tennis, plus playground and mini park on Las Gallinas
<i>SUB-TOTAL COMMUNITY</i>		<i>14.12</i>	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS			
Castro	County CSA 18	1.48	Turf lawn, picnic tables, playground, volleyball courts
Creekside	Marinwood CSD	1.22	Tennis court, picnic tables, tot lot, playground
Lucas Valley	Lucas Valley HOA	1.52	Swimming pool, community center, tennis on separate parcel
Pueblo	County CSA 18	1.07	Playground, pickleball, tennis court, picnic area, basketball, multi-purpose turf area.
<i>SUB-TOTAL NEIGHBORHOOD</i>		<i>5.29</i>	
POCKET PARKS			
Bayside	County	.72	Benches, waterfront path
Candy's	County CSA 18	.14	Benches, turf lawn, picnic tables, playground
Rosal	County CSA 18	.74	Picnic table, BBQ, turf lawn
<i>SUB-TOTAL POCKET</i>		<i>1.60</i>	
Total Developed Park Acreage in Unincorporated Planning Area		51.01	
PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES			
Gallinas Children's Ctr	Miller Crk SD	1.94	Play structure, hard court, softball field (school closed in 1983)
Lucas Valley	Miller Crk SD	3.57	Multi-purpose field, hard courts, play structures
Mary Silveira	Miller Crk SD	3.83	Two softball fields, hard courts
Miller Creek Middle	Miller Crk SD	4.41	Track, 2 tennis courts, hard courts, multi-purpose sports field
Venetia Valley	Miller Crk SD	3.10	Multi-purpose field and hard courts (former Junior High)
Waldorf	Miller Crk SD	3.65	Multi-purpose field and hard courts
<i>SUB-TOTAL SCHOOL</i>		<i>20.50</i>	<i>Acreage represents recreational portion of school campuses only</i>

Source: City of San Rafael, 2019

Per Capita Service Standards

One measure of the adequacy of a city’s park system is the number of acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Most cities use a standard of 3 to 5 acres of active open space per 1,000 residents. The Quimby Act allows cities in California to require open space dedication in new subdivisions (or pay an equivalent impact fee) to maintain the parkland standard. San Rafael’s current adopted standard is 3 acres per 1,000, which is the baseline figure allowed by the Quimby Act. Cities may collect higher fees if they demonstrate their existing ratio is higher than 3 acres per 1,000.

As Table 3 indicates, the adopted 3 acres per 1,000 standard is below the existing ratio, which is approximately 4.14 acres per 1,000 within the City limits. This ratio incorporates a discount factor of 50% to School District properties, since they are not available for public use when school is in session.

Assuming the City adds 7,500 residents in the next 20 years³ without adding any parkland, its per capita ratio would drop to 3.67 acres per 1,000 residents. To maintain the existing ratio, the City would need to add about 31 acres of parkland. This could be done by adding recreational facilities to existing undeveloped open space areas, creating parks within new developments, acquiring additional neighborhood parkland, or some combination of the above.

Per capita standards generally do not count passive open space areas, since they serve a different function than active parkland. If such areas were added to the inventory, the existing ratio in San Rafael would be roughly 50 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. This is nearly five times the national average of 10.1 acres per 1,000 residents, according to the National Recreation and Park Association.⁴

Table 3: Park Acreage Per Capita in San Rafael, 2019

	City Limits	Unincorporated Area	Total Planning Area
(A) Developed Park Acreage	207.78	51.01	258.79
(B) Developed School Recreation Acreage with 50% discount factor applied	37.07	10.25	47.32
Sum of (A) + (B)	244.85	61.26	306.11
Population (2018)	59,180	14,141	73,321
Acres per 1,000 residents	4.14	4.33	4.17

Source: City of San Rafael, 2019

³ 3,000 housing units at 2.5 persons per household

⁴ [2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review](#)

Service Area Standards and Gaps

Per capita acreage standards are often supplemented by distance standards (in other words, the distance a resident must walk, bike, or drive to reach a park) and standards for specific types of facilities. Figure 2 shows the following:

- areas within a 1-mile radius of a community park
- areas within a 0.5-mile radius of a neighborhood park
- areas within a 0.25-mile radius of a pocket park

The analysis provides a rough estimate of areas that may be underserved by parks and recreation facilities. However, there are mitigating factors that may reduce a deficiency, such as proximity to a regional park, a school playground, or access to an HOA-operated recreation facility.

At the same time, an area may be within one-half mile of a neighborhood park and still face a deficiency. The radii on Figure 2 do not represent the actual watershed around each park, which in many cases is encumbered by steep terrain, waterways, freeways, or circuitous roads. They also do not consider the type of facilities in the park and their adequacy to meet neighborhood needs. In addition, the radii do not consider population density or the number of potential users at each park. Nonetheless, the analysis provides a starting point for further discussion.

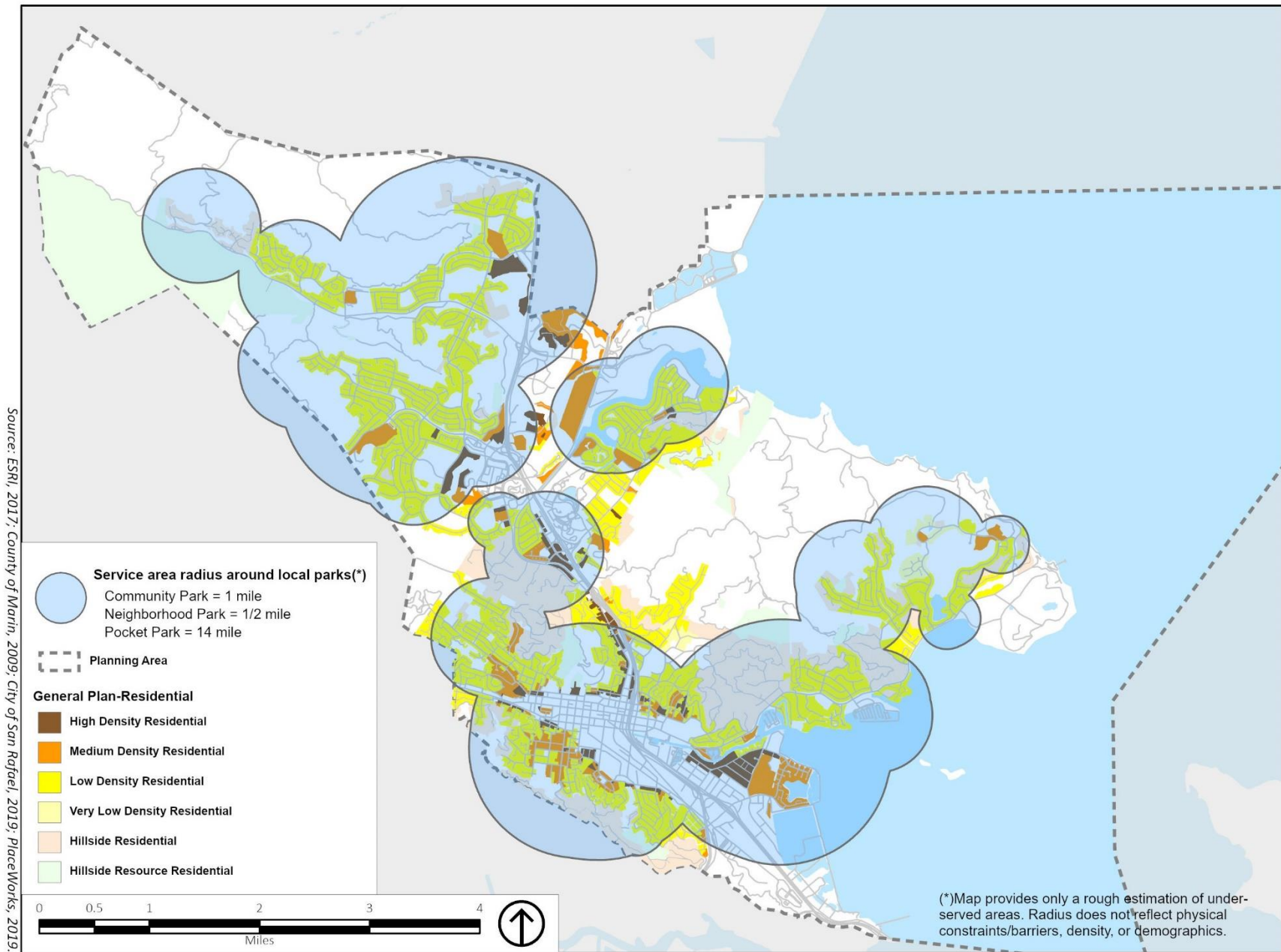
Based on Figure 2, most San Rafael's neighborhoods are well served by City-operated parks. Notable gaps in park service within developed areas include Montecito and area around Dominican University, the West End and Fair Hills neighborhoods, the Lincoln/ San Rafael Hill area, the Contempo/ Smith Ranch area, and the Northbridge/Marin Lagoon area. In addition, the Canal neighborhood has greater needs for park acreage than other parts of the city given its density, large number of children, income characteristics, and absence of backyards for most residents.

The National Recreation and Park Association has also developed metrics for evaluating the adequacy of specific recreational facilities, such as swimming pools and soccer fields. A detailed assessment of each facility type and its adequacy is beyond the scope of the General Plan and would be appropriately addressed in a Parks and Recreation Master Plan. Anecdotally, participants in General Plan community meetings have indicated an interest in an additional soccer fields, children's play areas, and a community swimming pool south of Puerto Suelo Hill. The need for neighborhood parks in the Canal and Montecito areas was raised in the last General Plan and continues to be raised today.

Existing Assets

Based on the City's Comprehensive Annual Financial Report, existing assets include 14 playgrounds, four community centers (Terra Linda, Al Boro, San Rafael Center at Albert Park, Falkirk Mansion), one swimming pool (Terra Linda), one community garden (Canal)⁵, 10 tennis courts, five basketball courts, five baseball/softball diamonds, and two soccer/football fields. These facilities are supplemented by school and County-operated facilities, as well as multi-purpose fields and hard-court areas used for informal recreation. When the City completes a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, a more complete inventory of recreational facilities, programs and maintenance standards should be developed.

⁵ A second community garden is located on Miller Creek School District property on Nova Albion Drive.



Source: ESRI, 2017; County of Marin, 2009; City of San Rafael, 2019; PlaceWorks, 2019.

Figure 2: Park Service Area Gap Analysis

Planned Improvements

Planned park improvements are identified in the City's three-year capital improvement program. The list of needed improvements is informed by staff and community input, and by the results of a 2018 Facilities Assessment Study. Maintenance and updating of existing facilities have historically been priorities. Facilities such as play structures require periodic replacement due to wear and tear. Community centers require modernization, ADA compliance upgrades, and repairs due to heavy use.

Recently completed projects include a new prefabricated restroom at Bret Harte Park and the new Albert Park playground. Projects now underway include repair and ADA compliance improvements to the Shoreline Park restroom and a \$317,000 upgrade of the Pickleweed Park playground. Improvements to the electrical system at the San Rafael Community Center (Albert Park) also are underway. Additional improvements to the San Rafael Community Center, including replacement of the interior restrooms and miscellaneous repairs, are also programmed.

Planned improvements include:

- Retrofitting of restrooms at Albert Park ballfield for ADA compliance
- Installation of an ADA lift in the bleachers at Albert Park baseball stadium
- Replacement of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system at the Terra Linda Community Center
- Miscellaneous repairs to the Al Boro Community Center
- Gerstle Park restroom repair
- Replacement of play structures at Gerstle, Sun Valley, and Peacock Gap Parks
- Update of the Bernard Hoffman Playground
- Resurfacing of the tennis courts at Gerstle, Peacock Gap, and Santa Margarita Parks
- Repaving of the Terra Linda Community Center basketball court and a new shade structure
- Installation of angled parking at Schoen Park

Other projects have been identified as needed but are unfunded at this time. The following projects may be considered for inclusion in future year CIPs:

- Improvements to Starkweather Shoreline Park
- Updating of the Terra Linda Community Center Play Area and ADA access
- Resurfacing of the Pickleweed Park basketball court
- Restroom improvements at Victor Jones Park
- Drainage and irrigation improvements at Bernard Hoffman Field
- Replacement of the existing turf at Pickleweed Park with a synthetic field

Replacement of Pickleweed Park turf is funded for design, but not construction. The estimated cost of construction is \$3.6 million, which is greater than the total for all other funded capital improvements combined.

A variety of funding sources is used to cover capital improvement costs. These include Measure A, a countywide one-quarter cent sales tax passed in 2012 and managed by the County of Marin. The Measure has a nine-year term and is used to care for existing parks and open spaces, restore and protect farmland,

and support regional and community parks. About 15% of the Measure A revenue stream is directed to local governments in Marin County.

Some of the City's General Fund is set aside in a Building Maintenance account, which supports parks, community centers, and other City buildings. The City's budget includes a bedroom tax fund, which includes money for neighborhood park maintenance and development, and a park capital projects fund, which is a repository for funds to be used for capital projects. The City also receives park in-lieu fees from new development and may apply for grants from the State and other entities. Gas tax revenues provided to the City by the State provide a supplemental funding source, although these funds are primarily intended for transportation projects.

The City regularly considers more stable and reliable long-term funding sources for capital projects, including bond financing, grant funding, voter-approved taxes, and alternative funding mechanisms. Alternative mechanisms could include public-private partnerships, such as the unique arrangement between the City and Terrapin Crossroads at Beach Park. The park remains in public ownership, although it was leased to a restaurant/entertainment venue in exchange for \$100,000 in improvements and ongoing programming for community events, as well as activities such as bocce, volleyball, and a children's play area.

Marin County Parks likewise conducts long-range planning for capital investment in its parks, including those located in and around San Rafael. The County completed a Master Plan for McNear's Beach in 2017, including specific capital improvement projects. It is investing in marsh restoration at McInnis Park, new wayfinding signs and trail improvements at most of the County's open space preserves, and a native plant nursery at Lagoon Park. A restroom and picnic area enhancement are planned for Adrian-Rosal Park in Santa Venetia. The Marinwood CSD and CSA #18 (Santa Venetia) are responsible for maintaining and planning for the improvement of neighborhood parks and mini-parks in parts of unincorporated San Rafael. The Marinwood CSD is planning to replace its park maintenance facility using Measure A funding.

There are no long-term plans for additional parks in San Rafael at this time. The San Rafael City Schools Corporation Yard has been suggested as a possible location for a neighborhood park serving the nearby Montecito neighborhood. In addition, the San Rafael Rock Quarry reclamation plan includes provisions for a 100-foot park band along the waterfront if and when the rock quarry ceases operation. Ultimate delineation of the park would be determined as part of a reuse plan for the site, which is not anticipated during the horizon of General Plan 2040.

Joint Use Agreements

Many California cities have executed formal joint use agreements with their local school districts to enable the public to use school recreation areas when school is not in session. These agreements supplement City parks in two ways—first, they provide access to unique recreational facilities such as stadiums, running tracks, and swimming pools, and second, they provide a place for informal play in neighborhoods that lack a local park.

San Rafael does not have formal joint use agreements with either of its local school districts. However, San Rafael City Schools has adopted a policy for the public use of its facilities, covering “supervised recreational activities, including but not limited to, sports league activities that are arranged for and

supervised by entities, including religious organizations or churches, and in which youth may participate regardless of religious belief or denomination.”⁶ The District has a specific set of priorities for community use, including community-based youth programs, community recreational youth sports leagues, public agency adult recreation and activities, non-profit adult recreation, and individual family use for special events. Fees may be collected by San Rafael City Schools for the use of their facilities.

The Miller Creek School District likewise allows limited public access to its facilities, with a process in place for obtaining a permit. Reservation of school grounds is only permitted after verifying with the school administrator that the space is available, and that the use would not interfere with regular school activities. Fees may be waived for certain groups, such as PTAs, scout troops, and parent/school clubs. Other groups are charged direct costs.

A number of San Rafael and Miller Creek schools have closed in the last 40 years due to declining enrollment. A few of these sites were sold and redeveloped with housing, but most have been retained in public ownership. Several campuses have been leased to private schools or provide specialized educational services. At least one campus (McPhail Elementary) is vacant.

The State of California Naylor Bill allows cities and counties to purchase outdoor school recreation areas at reduced prices. To qualify, the City or other public agency must have an adopted plan identifying portions of public-school sites it desires to retain for recreational use. Other priorities, such as housing, also must be taken into consideration—and proposals that combine both uses (housing on the school building portion and parks on the open space portion) may achieve both objectives. The Naylor legislation does not apply to the purchase of school buildings, which include facilities such as gymnasiums. It is primarily used to help cities acquire sports fields and playgrounds.

San Rafael has already acquired some of its former school properties for recreation. For instance, Bernard Hoffman Field is owned by the City and used for softball as well as other neighborhood park activities. In the event properties such as McPhail Elementary, Santa Margarita Elementary, Gallinas Children’s Center, St. Mark’s (formerly Timoteo Elementary), or the Nova Albion/ Miller Creek District offices are made available for reuse, opportunities to convert former school open space into neighborhood parks should be considered. This will require collaborative discussions with the school districts, as well as cost-benefit studies to determine ongoing maintenance and operating costs to the City.

Private Facilities

Public recreational facilities in San Rafael are supplemented by private facilities. Dominican University includes the Conlan Center, with regulation basketball and volleyball courts, a fitness center, and a swimming pool. Marin Academy includes a gymnasium, pool, and athletic fields. The Peacock Gap neighborhood has a private golf course. There are swim and racquet clubs throughout the city. Larger residential developments in San Rafael may include recreational facilities such as swimming pools, community rooms, and tennis courts. These facilities are typically supported by Homeowner Association or membership fees in owner-occupied developments or are passed along to tenants through rents in apartment communities.

⁶ San Rafael City Schools, BP 1330(b), adopted 2016.

As a waterfront community, San Rafael has numerous boating centers and marinas. The Canal and San Francisco Bay shoreline provide exceptional opportunities for boating, kayaking, windsurfing, and other water-oriented recreation. The city is also home to health clubs, gyms, fitness centers, yoga studios, dance studios, and other businesses that supplement public facilities.

Operations and Programming

Recreational services are provided to San Rafael residents by the City's Library and Recreation Department. The Department's role is to promote health and wellness, increase cultural unity, and facilitate community interaction and personal development. The Department has a Recreational Services and Child Care Division that provides classes and programs, manages facilities and rentals, and operates the Falkirk Cultural Center. A separate Division manages the library and arts programs. The Library and Recreation Department also provides staff support to the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Pickleweed Advisory Board, and special focus committees.

A full array of recreational programs is offered, including those targeted to specific age groups such as older adults, preschoolers, and youth, and those oriented around specific activities such as aquatics. Classes and programs include arts and crafts, athletics, computers, dance, fitness, games, language, martial arts, music, personal growth, and theater. Athletic programs include soccer, pickleball, bocce, basketball, and volleyball, among others.

The Department offers state-licensed year-round child care to children in Kindergarten through 5th grade, operating programs from elementary schools. It also offers exercise, bingo, and other programs for seniors at the three community centers. The City also organizes and hosts special events such as a Holiday Crafts Fair, the Dia de Los Muertos celebration, and the Second Friday Artwalk.

The Library and Recreation Department operates the Falkirk Cultural Center, a historic mansion built in 1888 in the Queen Anne and Eastlake architectural styles. The property was owned by the Dollar family from 1906 until the early 1970s. It is a national register historic landmark, an art gallery, a cultural and education center, and a popular event venue. The facility may be rented for special events such as weddings, and its grounds include demonstration gardens for education and public enjoyment.

Library and Recreation also oversees operation of the Canal Community Garden (Bellam and Windward) and the Terra Linda Community Garden (next to the Miller Creek School District offices at 380 Nova Albion). It manages group picnic area rentals at several city parks, and facility rentals at the community centers. Most park maintenance responsibilities are assigned to the Public Works Department. Public Works also maintains medians, street trees, and municipal landscaping.

Services provided by the City are supplemented by those provided by Community Service Districts in the unincorporated areas, and by private organizations such as the YMCA and the Osher Marin Jewish Community Center. The City is also home to sports organizations such as San Rafael Little League (with more than 450 registered players), San Rafael Soccer (with over 700 players), and Central Marin Lacrosse. Many of these organizations rely on City parks and school district facilities for their games. Services for seniors are supplemented by Whistlestop, a non-profit organization that provides recreational programming, as well as health care, transportation, nutrition, legal, and social support services.

Because San Rafael does not have a Parks and Recreation Master Plan, it has not recently completed a comprehensive assessment of recreational needs. The Library and Recreation Department conducts occasional user surveys and uses program participation data to develop its course catalog each year. It also tracks demographic data and nationwide trends in service delivery to ensure that programming is responsive to emerging needs. A more systematic needs assessment that considers local demographic conditions and trends would be beneficial and help inform future program development and facility needs.

Open Space

Marin County has a legacy of preserving environmentally sensitive lands as open space. Voters approved the Marin Open Space District in 1972 as a way to preserve about 25,000 acres from development. Many of the Open Space District's landholdings are in the San Rafael Planning Area. In addition, the State of California and the City of San Rafael both have significant open space landholdings. Table 4 provides an inventory of these properties. Only larger properties are listed; there are additional small sites in the inventory that have been acquired to protect open space and preclude potentially hazardous development.

Recreational facilities in these areas are generally limited to hiking trails, staging areas, and picnic areas. Ongoing issues include vegetation management, habitat conservation and restoration, fire prevention, and the use of trails by mountain bikes, off-leash dogs, and other activities that may cause erosion potential or interfere with wildlife. The Marin County Open Space District prepares land management plans for properties that address long-term uses, including public access. These plans also address fire hazard reduction, erosion control, police and fire protection, wildlife, and other issues.

Open Space areas are shown in Figure 3.

Table 4: Major Public Open Space Reserves in the San Rafael Planning Area

Name	Acreage	Owner	Comments
WITHIN CITY LIMITS			
Bay Way	6.4	City	Wetland area along Canal
Boyd Park (upper part)	16.0	City	Excludes lower area 1.75-acre park (Table 1)
China Camp	440.3	State	Portion within City limits only
Deer Valley	43.0	City	Remainder of planned development, City portion
Falkirk (upper part)	7.5	City	Excludes 3.6-acre historic home park (Table 1)
Gallinas Creek	30.0	State	Area along channel/marsh owned by State of CA
Glenwood	56.3	City	Adjacent to Glenwood neighborhood
Harry Barbier Memorial	582.0	City	Adjoins China Camp and San Pedro Mtn
Hartzell	18.1	City	Adjoins Oliver Hartzell Park
Hillside Avenue	8.0	City	Ridgeline between Ross and San Rafael
Jerry Russom	7.0	City	Mont Marin/ San Rafael park area
Mont Marin	68.0	City/County	East of Mont Marin, west of Los Gamos
Mountain	51.4	City/County	Adjoins Boyd Park
Picnic Hill-Bret Harte	13.2	City	Separates Picnic Hill and Bret Harte
Terra Linda-Sleepy Hollow	1,172.0	Marin OS	
Upper Gerstle Park	22.0	City/County	Adjoins Gerstle Park
Upper Toyon	30.3	City	Ridgeline between Ross and San Rafael
INCORPORATED TOTAL	2,571.5		
UNINCORPORATED PLANNING AREA			
China Camp	850.0	State	Unincorporated portion; excludes active recreation areas (Table 2) and 223 acres of wetlands/ submerged land
Daphne	69.9	Marin OS	Recently dedicated as part of adjacent subdivision
Heron Hill-Bucks Landing	39.6	Marin OS	Recently acquired (Santa Venetia)
Lucas Valley	1,229.0	Marin OS	Total is 1,271 acres but a portion is outside the Planning Area
Lucas Valley 2	46.0	Marin OS	Disconnected from the larger unit, north of Idylberry Rd at Jeanette Prandy Way
Lucas Valley 3	385.0	LV CSD	Hillside above Lucas Valley 2
Marinwood	758.0	Marinwood	Hillsides above Marinwood, owned by Marinwood CSD
Marinwood 2	13.7	Marinwood	South of Miller Creek Middle School
San Pedro Mountain	373.0	Marin OS	Adjoins China Camp and Barbier
Santa Margarita Island	4.6	Marin OS	
Santa Venetia Marsh	32.7	Marin OS	
UNINCORPORATED TOTAL	3,801.5		
PLANNING AREA TOTAL(*)	6,373.0		

(*) Total excludes small scattered publicly owned sites and open spaces managed by other agencies, such as utilities, water districts, and homeowner associations. Total also excludes 373 acres of active parkland (see Tables 1 and 2)

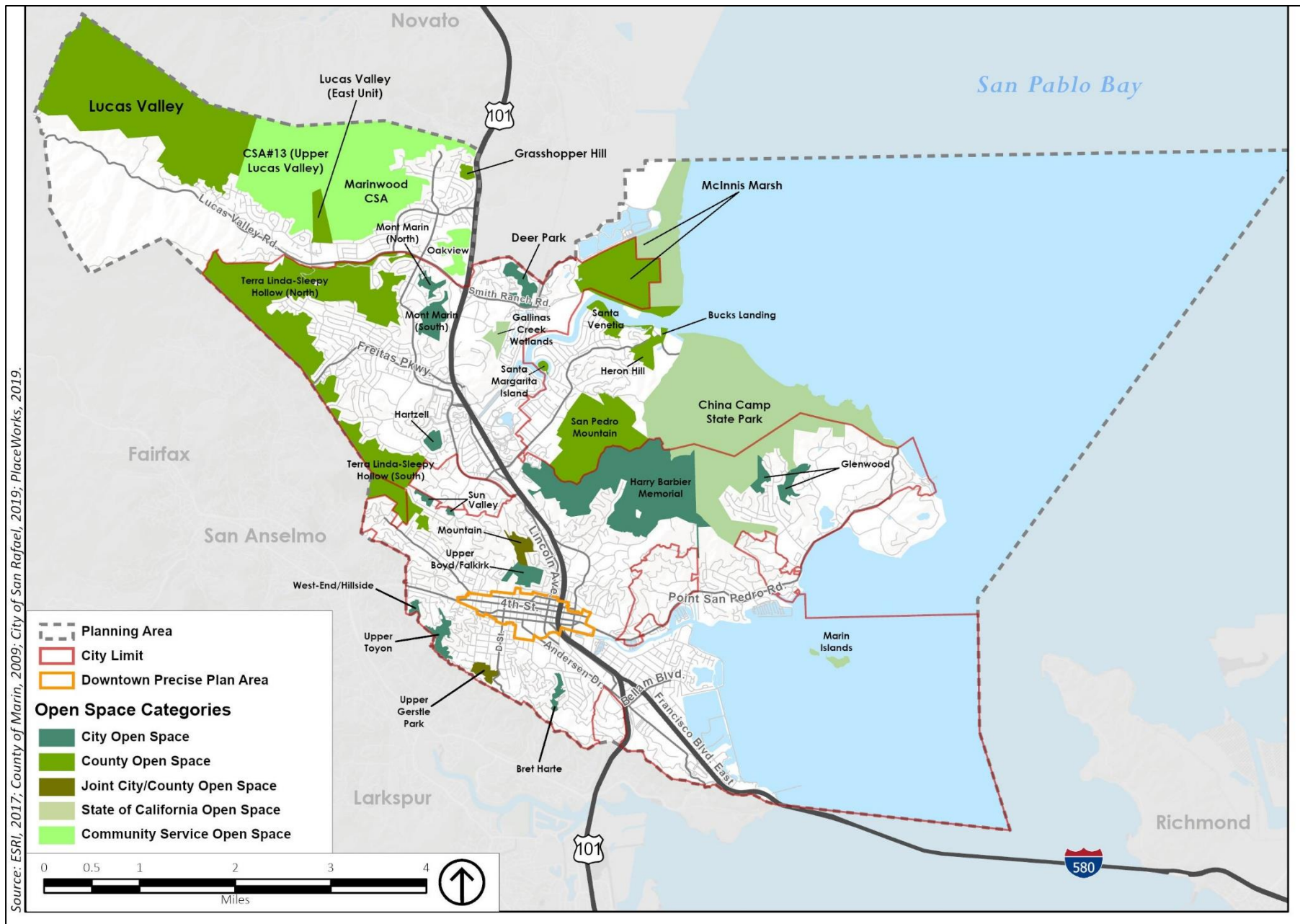


Figure 3: Public Open Space

