

6. OUR ACTIVE COMMUNITY

Our goal is to add to and enhance our parks and open spaces to provide enriching recreation options for the entire community.

Higher Standards

For many people, spending time outdoors and participating in recreational activities represent some of life’s most cherished rewards. Ventura’s superb public park, open space, and recreation system offers a myriad of ways to partake in these privileges. The city offers 34 developed parks, 45 miles of linear park and trail network, stellar beaches, specialized play and sports facilities and programs, communitywide events, senior and youth activities, and two 18-hole tournament class public golf courses. Figure 6-1 at the end of this chapter shows the locations of various public facilities in the city.

The City is committed to ensuring that its citizens have ample access to high quality spaces for leisure and active recreation. The City’s adopted standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents has created far more park area than would be possible under the basic State level of 3 acres per 1,000, and also tops the more ambitious National Park and Recreation Association benchmarks for specific park types (see Table 6-1). The City continues to create customized facilities like the Community Park (approved by the voters pursuant to SOAR) to expand opportunities for local residents to enjoy healthy, active lifestyles.

Park Type	Standards	
	City of Ventura	National Park & Recreation Association
Neighborhood	2 acres	1.5 acres
Community	3 acres	2.5 acres
Citywide	5 acres	5 acres
Total	10 acres	9 acres

Sources: City of Ventura, www.nrpa.org.



City Parks and Open Space

The public park and open space system in Ventura includes neighborhood, community, citywide, and linear parks. As shown in Table 6-2, the City oversees nearly 600 acres of developed park facilities, plus the linear park network, which provides important connections among watersheds for both people and wildlife.



As the City continually strives to improve the quality of leisure and recreation opportunities for everyone in the community, it must address a number of challenges such as:

- modernizing existing facilities,
- finding appropriate land for new facilities,
- developing useful and enjoyable public spaces, such as plazas and mini-parks in urban settings,
- formalizing shared use arrangements for non-City facilities like school playfields,
- meeting increasing demand for athletic courts, fields and pools,
- provide opportunities for passive recreation, and
- providing services needed by youth, seniors, and residents with special needs.

Neighborhood Parks

Typically less than 8 acres each, these smaller parks primarily serve specific residential areas in the community. The 18 neighborhood parks in Ventura cover about 73 total acres. Any future development outside the current city limits will have to provide new neighborhood parks to serve the added population.



Community Parks

These parks are designed to offer specialized opportunities and facilities to residents of more than one neighborhood. Amenities in community parks may include formal athletic fields, courts, recreation buildings, preschool and youth play structures, group and individual picnic areas, and landscaped areas for informal activity or leisure.

Citywide Parks

These parks feature recreational opportunities that draw a wide range of age and interest groups from throughout the city. They offer a variety of attractive amenities, such as large open spaces, unique natural resources, interpretive centers, cultural amenities, group picnic areas, sports facilities, and equestrian, bicycling, and hiking trails. The Ventura Community Park also serves some citywide park functions and attracts visitors from outside the city with its high-quality playing fields and aquatic center.

Linear Parks

Ventura's unique linear park network intersperses trails and picnic areas among a mostly undeveloped web of barranca and riverbanks that provide valuable wildlife habitat and migration corridors. The linear parks also merge with a number of neighborhood and community parks, complementing developed recreation areas with natural riparian qualities. Extending trails through the linear park network can create additional opportunities for low-impact contact with nature, and in some cases even provide pleasant non-automobile commuting options.

Table 6-2 City Park Facilities

Park	Park Size (in acres)				
	Neighborhood Parks	Community Parks	Citywide Parks	Special Use Facilities	Total
Albinger Archaeological Museum				0.9	0.9
Arroyo Verde Park	2.0	23.0	104.3		129.3
Barranca Vista Park	8.7				8.7
Blanche Reynolds Park	3.4				3.4
Camino Real Park			38.2		38.2
Cemetery Memorial Park	7.1				7.1
Chumash Park	6.1				6.1
Downtown Mini-Park	0.4				0.4
Eastwood Park				0.7	0.7
Fritz Huntsinger Youth Sports Complex	4.3	14.0			18.3
Grant Park			107.3		107.3
Harry A. Lyon Park			10.7		10.7
Hobert Park	7.1				7.1
Juanamaria Park	5.0				5.0
Junipero Serra Park	2.7				2.7
Linear Park Network				46.0	46.0
Marina Park			15.3		15.3
Marion Cannon Park	5.0				5.0
Mission Park	1.5				1.5
Ocean Avenue Park	1.3				1.3
Olivas Adobe Historical Park				22.5	22.5
Ortega Adobe Historic Residence				0.3	0.3
Plaza Park	3.7				3.7
Promenade Park	1.0				1.0
Seaside Wilderness Park ^{1, 2}				24.0	24.0
Surfers Point at Seaside Park ¹				3.4	3.4
Ventura Community Park		100.0			100.0
Westpark	1.5	5.8			7.3
Total	60.8	142.7	275.8	97.8	577.1

Sources: City of Ventura, 2004. Note: several parks serve functions in more than one category.
¹ Acreage varies with ocean high levels.
² Acreage varies with fluctuations in Ventura River level.

As with most parks in the city, resources for linear park system improvements typically come through conditions placed on adjacent development. City regulations establish standards for park width, landscaping, fencing, lighting, and tree rows that apply specifically along barrancas, freeways, rivers, the shoreline, harbor, hillsides, and utility rights-of-way.



Recreation Programs


The City operates four neighborhood centers where recreation programs and senior services are available: the Ventura Avenue Adult Center, Senior Recreation Center, Barranca Vista Center, and Westpark Community Center. The City also offers a wide range of sports programs, including youth and adult sports programs, classes, aquatics, and corporate games. Other City-sponsored recreational activities include arts and environmental education, community gardening, recreation programs for special needs residents, and after-school activities and summer camps.


A variety of other recreation opportunities are available in Ventura in addition to City programs. Foremost among these are all of the activities possible at State beaches and developed waterfront areas. Other local non-City facilities include the County Fairgrounds and local golf courses. In addition, joint-use agreements allow city residents to use sports fields, pools, and gymnasiums during certain times at public schools and Ventura College.


The policies and actions in this chapter seek to further expand local park and recreation choices by:


- identifying sites for new parks,
- increasing public access to open space, including via linear park trails,
- collaborating with schools and other local agencies and organizations,
- ensuring universal and equal access to parks and recreation facilities, and
- allowing appropriate revenue-generating activities at City parks.


Policy 6A: Expand the park and trail network to link shoreline, hillside, and watershed areas.


Action 6.1: Develop new neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and community gardens as feasible and appropriate to meet citizen needs, and require them in new development. 

Action 6.2: Require higher density development to provide pocket parks, tot lots, seating plazas, and other aesthetic green spaces. 

Action 6.3: Work with the County to plan and develop trails that link the City with surrounding open space and natural areas, and require development projects to include trails when appropriate. 


Action 6.4: Request Flood Control District approval of public access along unchannelized watercourses for hiking. 

Action 6.5: Seek landowner permission to allow public access on properties adjacent to open space where needed to connect trails. 

Action 6.6: Update plans for and complete the linear park system as resources allow. 

Action 6.7: Work with the County of Ventura to initiate efforts to create public trails in the hillsides.


Action 6.8: Update and require periodic reviews of the Park and Recreation Workbook as necessary to reflect City objectives and community needs.

Action 6.9: Require dedication of land identified as part of the City's Linear Park System in conjunction with new development. 

Action 6.10: Evaluate and incorporate, as feasible, linear park segments in the General Bikeway Plan.

Action 6.11: Update standards for citywide public parks and open space to include an expanded menu of shared park types, and identify locations and potential funding sources for acquiring new facilities in existing neighborhoods.

Action 6.12: Update and carry out the Grant Park Master Plan.

Action 6.13: Foster the partnership between the City and Fair Board to improve Seaside Park. 

Policy 6B: Ensure equal access to facilities and programs.


Action 6.14: Improve facilities at City parks to respond to the requirements of special needs groups.


Action 6.15: Adjust and subsidize fees to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to participate in recreation programs.

Action 6.16: Update the project fee schedule as necessary to ensure that development provides its fair share of park and recreation facilities.

Policy 6C: Provide additional gathering spaces and recreation opportunities.

Action 6.17: Update and create new agreements for joint use of school and City recreational and park facilities.

Action 6.18: Offer programs that highlight natural assets, such as surfing, sailing, kayaking, climbing, gardening, and bird watching. 

Action 6.19: Provide additional boating and swimming access as feasible. 

Action 6.20: Earmark funds for adequate maintenance and rehabilitation of existing skatepark facilities, and identify locations and funding for new development of advanced level skatepark facilities.

Policy 6D: Increase funding and support for park and recreation programs.

Action 6.21: Promote the use of City facilities for special events, such as festivals, tournaments, and races.

Action 6.22: Enter into concession or service agreements where appropriate to supplement City services.



- Police Station
- Elementary School
- Library
- City Limits
- Fire Stations
- Middle School
- Recreational Facilities
- Planning Area
- Hospitals
- High School
- Linear Park
- Government Center
- Community College
- Parks
- Golf Courses

Figure 6-1
Public Facilities

This map is a product of the City of San Buenaventura, California. Although reasonable efforts have been made to ensure the accuracy of this map, the City of San Buenaventura cannot guarantee its accuracy.