
PARKS, TRAILS, AND
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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One of the city's many ballfields



Multi-use trails provide opportunities for cycling, pedestrian, and equestrian uses



Open spaces are an important part of the City's vision for the future

Parks, Recreation, and Open Space are important components of the quality of life desired by the residents of Elk Grove. This Element of the General Plan addresses the City's goals, policies, and actions to ensure that the City's desires and/or needs for parks, recreation, and open space are recognized and addressed as the development of the city continues.

PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION

Elk Grove is home to numerous public parks, some of which are owned and operated by the Elk Grove Community Services District (CSD), an independent agency which operates in Elk Grove and surrounding areas (see the Background Report for additional information on the Elk Grove CSD). The Elk Grove CSD has an adopted Master Plan of Parks, which identifies standards for public parks, desired locations for new facilities, and standards for the development of new parks.

This General Plan envisions that the City will take a more active role in defining the locations, sizes, and facilities provided at public parks, as well as in expanding the number of trails in Elk Grove. At the same time, the City will continue to work with the Elk Grove CSD.

TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

An important component of the community's vision for the future of Elk Grove is the retention of significant amounts of open space in the Planning Area (please see the Introduction to this General Plan for a description of the Planning Area), and the creation of a trails system to link the developed portions of Elk Grove with these areas. Although the area within the current city limits is envisioned to be for the most part developed with urban uses (please see the Land Use Element for a map and discussion of proposed land uses), the City recognizes that there are many important open space resources in the Planning Area, including the Cosumnes River, the Delta, and agricultural areas.

This General Plan therefore provides policies and programs to ensure that trails and open space are addressed as development proceeds within the city, and to ensure that the City's vision for trails and open space as well as other habitat and conservation needs in the Planning Area is considered by the County of Sacramento, the Local Agency Formation Commission, and other agencies in the area outside the city limits.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element implements the following Goals of the City of Elk Grove:

Guiding Goal 1: A High Quality of Life for All Residents

Focused Goal 1-2: Outdoor recreation opportunities for all residents

Focused Goal 1-7: Active and passive park facilities and recreation programs that satisfy the leisure time and recreation needs of all residents

Focused Goal 1-8: Creation and maintenance of a strong, positive community image for Elk Grove

Guiding Goal 2: Diversified Economic Base

Focused Goal 2-3: Creation of Elk Grove as a desired place to locate major employment-generating uses

Guiding Goal 3: Protection of the Natural Environment

Focused Goal 3-2: Open space lands in proximity to Elk Grove which provide for agricultural use and habitat for native species

Focused Goal 3-3: Natural resources managed and protected for the use and enjoyment of current and future generations

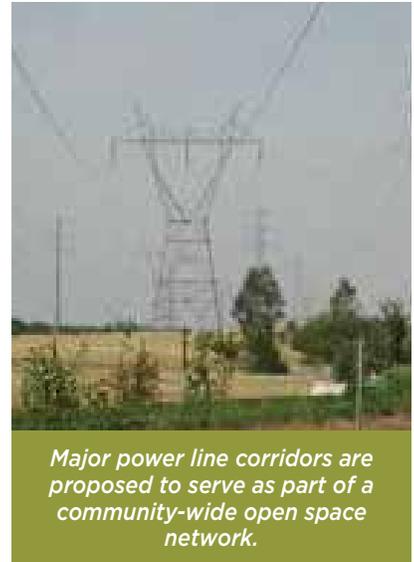
Focused Goal 3-4: Preservation and enhancement of Elk Grove's natural areas, in particular the areas within the floodplain of the Cosumnes River

Guiding Goal 4: Preservation and Enhancement of Elk Grove's Unique Historic and Natural Features

Focused Goal 4-2: Preservation of the large oak and other tree species which are an important part of the City's historic and aesthetic character

Guiding Goal 5: Preservation of the Rural Character of Elk Grove

Focused Goal 5-2: Maintenance of those features that provide the character of Elk Grove's rural areas, including: large oak and other trees, small local roadways, animal keeping and raising, equestrians, agriculture, and limited commercial opportunities



PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES: PARKS AND TRAILS

PTO-1 The City of Elk Grove supports the development, maintenance, and enhancement of parks and trails serving a variety of needs at the neighborhood, area, and citywide level. The City may seek to accomplish the provision of parks and trails in cooperation with the Cosumnes Community Services District (CCSD).

PTO-1-Action 1 As part of the review of development projects, ensure that public parks and trails are provided which meet the City's and CCSD's criteria and which implement the CCSD/City Parks Master Plan and City Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trail Master Plan.

PTO-2 The City specifically supports the provision of parkland at a rate which exceeds the levels historically (prior to adoption of this General Plan) provided in Elk Grove. Parks shall be provided which meet community needs and desires.

PTO-2-Action 1 The City shall conduct a "nexus study" to determine the demand for parkland in the city and the reasonable relationship between the demand and the type of development project to support the imposition of parkland dedication and/or fees.

PTO-2-Action 2 To the extent consistent with applicable state law, the City and CCSD shall develop criteria defining the types of parks and trails to be developed, including criteria defining desired:

- Park types and sizes
- Park facilities by type
- Locational criteria
- Spacing
- Trails and related facilities by type and function

PTO-2-Action 3 The City and CCSD shall adopt a comprehensive Parks Master Plan which provides information on parks criteria and planned parks, The City shall also adopt a Bicycle, Pedestrian, and Trail Master Plan that shall provide information regarding offstreet recreational, walking, equestrian, and multi-use trails. Prior to the adoption of these Master Plans, the City shall require the provision of parks as part of development projects to implement the City's parkland standards. The size, location, and facilities provided in these parks may be determined on a case-by-case basis.

PTO-3 Funding for maintenance of parks and/or trails shall be assured to the City's satisfaction prior to the approval of any Final Subdivision Map which contains or contributes to the need for a public parks and facilities.

PTO-3-Action 1 The City shall pursue the implementation of funding mechanisms to provide for the long-term maintenance of parks and/or trails in those instances where funding is not available from other sources. Such mechanisms may include local or regional assessment districts, homeowners associations, or other methods as determined appropriate by the City.

PTO-4 New residential developments may be required to, at a minimum, provide parks consistent with the Quimby Act (CA Govt. Code Section 66477), through land dedication, fees in lieu, or on-site improvements at a standard of five (5) acres of land for parks per 1,000 residents. Land dedication and/or payment of in-lieu fees shall be required consistent with state law. Land dedication and/or fees may be required pursuant to other policies in this Element with or without the use of the authority provided in the Quimby Act, or in combination with the Quimby Act and other legal authority.

PTO-4-Action 1 The City and CCSD shall adopt standards designating which types of lands shall be considered "parks" for the purpose of implementing Quimby Act requirements.

PTO-5 The City encourages the Cosumnes Community Services District to develop self-supporting recreation programs for those activities that go beyond providing for basic recreation needs. Examples include outdoor and indoor sports complexes, aquatic centers, and community centers. The City may also develop and operate such programs independently.

PTO-6 The City encourages park development adjacent to school sites and the formation of joint use agreements between school and park districts.

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PTO-6-Action 1 During the review of proposed development projects, comment to the Cosumnes Community Services District and the Elk Grove Unified School District to encourage location of schools adjacent to parks.

Please see the Public Facilities/Finance Element for additional policies related to the locations of public schools.

PTO-7 The trails system in Elk Grove should provide for connectivity, so that all trails are linked to the extent possible for greater use as recreational and travel routes. The following features should be included in the trails system in Elk Grove:

- Trails should link residential areas with parks, commercial and office areas, and other destinations.
- Trails along major roadways should avoid meanders or other design features which make bicycle use less convenient or safe.
- Trails should be located off-street to the extent possible.
- Easements such as access roads should be placed in joint use as trails.

PTO-8 The City shall maintain and implement a Bike, Pedestrian, and Trail Master Plan that carries out the goals and policies of the General Plan and defines the following key elements:

- The type and location of bike, pedestrian, and trail segments.
- Standards for bike, pedestrian, and trail improvements.
- Funding and implementation of the proposed bike, pedestrian, and trail system.

PTO-8-Action 1 As part of the review of development projects, ensure that bike, pedestrian, and trail facilities are provided that meet the City's criteria and that implement the City's desired plan.

PTO-9 Funding for maintenance of City trails shall be assured prior to the approval of any project which contains a City-owned trail.

PTO-10 Trailheads should be provided at appropriate locations to provide safe starting points on the trails system for equestrians, cyclists, and pedestrians.

PTO-10-Action 1 Develop standards for and locations of potential trailhead locations, including sufficient space for the off-street parking of equestrian trailers and vehicles.

PTO-10-Action 2 To the extent possible, coordinate with the Elk Grove CSD in the review of projects containing trails.

PTO-11 Trails which parallel streams should be primarily located beyond the riparian corridor and wetlands to minimize wildlife impacts and shall be restricted to non-motorized traffic.

PTO-12 Trails should be designed with the safety of users and adjacent property

owners in mind. To the extent possible, the bicycle trails system should provide safe, off-street options suitable for use by children and less-experienced riders.

PTO-12-Action 1 Involve the Elk Grove Police Department in the review of proposed trail locations and designs.

PTO-13 Recreational trails should not be placed adjacent to or on farmland if feasible alternative routes exist elsewhere in the vicinity. However, if no other feasible routes exist, trail facilities should be designed in cooperation with adjacent property owners to minimize adverse impacts on farming practices.

PTO-14 The City supports the use of volunteers and community groups to provide maintenance and safety patrols on trails.

PARKS, TRAILS, AND OPEN SPACE POLICIES: OPEN SPACE

PTO-15 The City views open space lands of all types as important resource which should be preserved in the region, and supports the establishment of multi-purpose open space areas to address a variety of needs, including, but not limited to:

- Maintenance of agricultural uses;
- Wildlife habitat
- Recreational open space
- Aesthetic benefits
- Flood control

To the extent possible, lands protected in accordance with this policy should be in proximity to Elk Grove, to facilitate use of these areas by Elk Grove residents, assist in mitigation of habitat loss within the city, and provide an open space resource close to the urbanized areas of Elk Grove.

PTO-15-Action 1 Consider the establishment of a citywide fee and/or assessment system which would provide funding for the purchase of open space land or easements and the maintenance of these areas.

PTO-15-Action 2 Work with the County of Sacramento and other resource agencies to develop a regional open space plan which provides for multiple uses of open space (e.g., agriculture and wildlife foraging)

PTO-15-Action 3 Consider using funds collected under existing (2003) fee programs (e.g., Swainson's Hawk mitigation and East Franklin Specific Plan agricultural mitigation) to fund this expanded open space program.

PTO-16 Stream corridors, floodways, electrical transmission corridors, and similar features shall be considered for inclusion in the citywide trails and open space system.

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PTO-16-Action 1 Involve the Elk Grove CSD in the identification of appropriate open space and trails corridors which could be identified in this General Plan and the Elk Grove CSD's Master Plan.

PTO-17 The City encourages the creation of a regional trail/open space system which links the Cosumnes River with the Sacramento River and provides for trail connections between Elk Grove and these open space areas. The City's vision for regional open space and trails is shown in Figure PTO-1 and in the "Planning Area Land Use Concept" in the Land Use Element of this General Plan.

PTO-17-Action 1 Within the Cosumnes River floodplain, the City will encourage the dedication or acquisition of easement or fee title for trails as part of an overall trail system linking the Cosumnes and Sacramento rivers. Note: This policy affects lands within the planning area but outside of the 2002 city limits only.

PTO-18 To the extent possible, retain natural drainage courses in all cases where preservation of natural drainage is physically feasible and consistent with the need to provide flood protection.

Figure PTO-1: Open Space Policy Map

