

4. PARKS, RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

4.1 Setting

Open space is a major feature within the Moreno Valley study area. For the purposes of this General Plan, open space includes land that is planned to remain in a natural condition or substantially free of structures. It does not include vacant property planned for future development, except for hillside properties where a large percentage of such property will remain in a natural condition.

Open space comprises a relatively large percentage of the study area and borders the City on three sides, giving it a setting unlike any other community in the region. Open space land can be classified into several categories, depending on the primary purpose for which it is used. It includes lands for preservation of natural resources (e.g. wildlife habitat), production of resources (e.g. farming), public health and safety (e.g. floodplains), low-density residential development and outdoor recreation (e.g. parks). Figure 4-1 is a map of open space lands within and around the study area.

4.2 Open Space

4.2.1 Open Space for the Preservation of Natural Resources

A large amount of the study area consists of open space lands managed for the preservation of natural resources. These areas include the Box Springs Mountain Reserve, the San Timoteo Canyon Park property, the Lake Perris State Recreation Area and the San Jacinto Wildlife Area. These areas are also used for hiking, horseback riding and other uses.

The Box Springs Mountain Reserve and the San Timoteo Canyon Park property are owned and operated by Riverside County Regional Park and Open Space District.

They are primarily mountainous natural open space parks.

The Box Springs Mountain Reserve is located at the northwest corner of Moreno Valley. The Reserve consists of three noncontiguous land areas, two of which are within the City's sphere of influence.

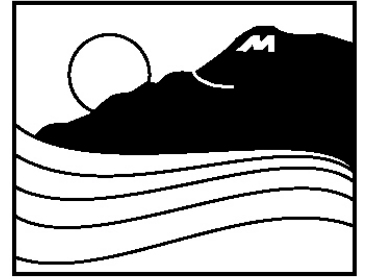
San Timoteo Canyon Park property is located east of the City's sphere of influence along the north side of State Route 60. About 1,100 acres of the property, including the Badlands Landfill is jointly owned by the Regional Park and Open Space District and Riverside County Waste Management District.

Lake Perris State Recreation Area, located south of Moreno Valley, is about 8,000 acres in area. The Recreation Area contains a major reservoir, natural open space and facilities for boating and fishing, picnicking and camping. About 1,600 acres of the property was dedicated to the State of California as mitigation for loss of wildlife habitat due to development of the Moreno Valley Ranch Specific Plan. The Lake Perris State Recreation Area serves as one of several habitat reserves for the endangered Stephen's kangaroo rat.

The San Jacinto Wildlife Area in the southeastern corner of the study area consists of gently sloping grasslands, sage scrub and natural and man-made wetlands that support migratory birds and resident wildlife. Bird watching and hunting are popular activities. Some of the adjoining property is owned by private organizations dedicated to hunting and wildlife conservation.

Several open space areas are located along soft-bottomed drainage courses within the planned communities of Sunnymead Ranch and Hidden Springs. The City also owns

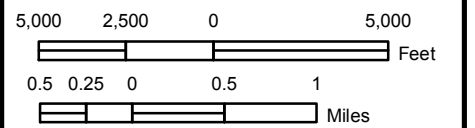
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**FIGURE 4-1
OPEN SPACE**

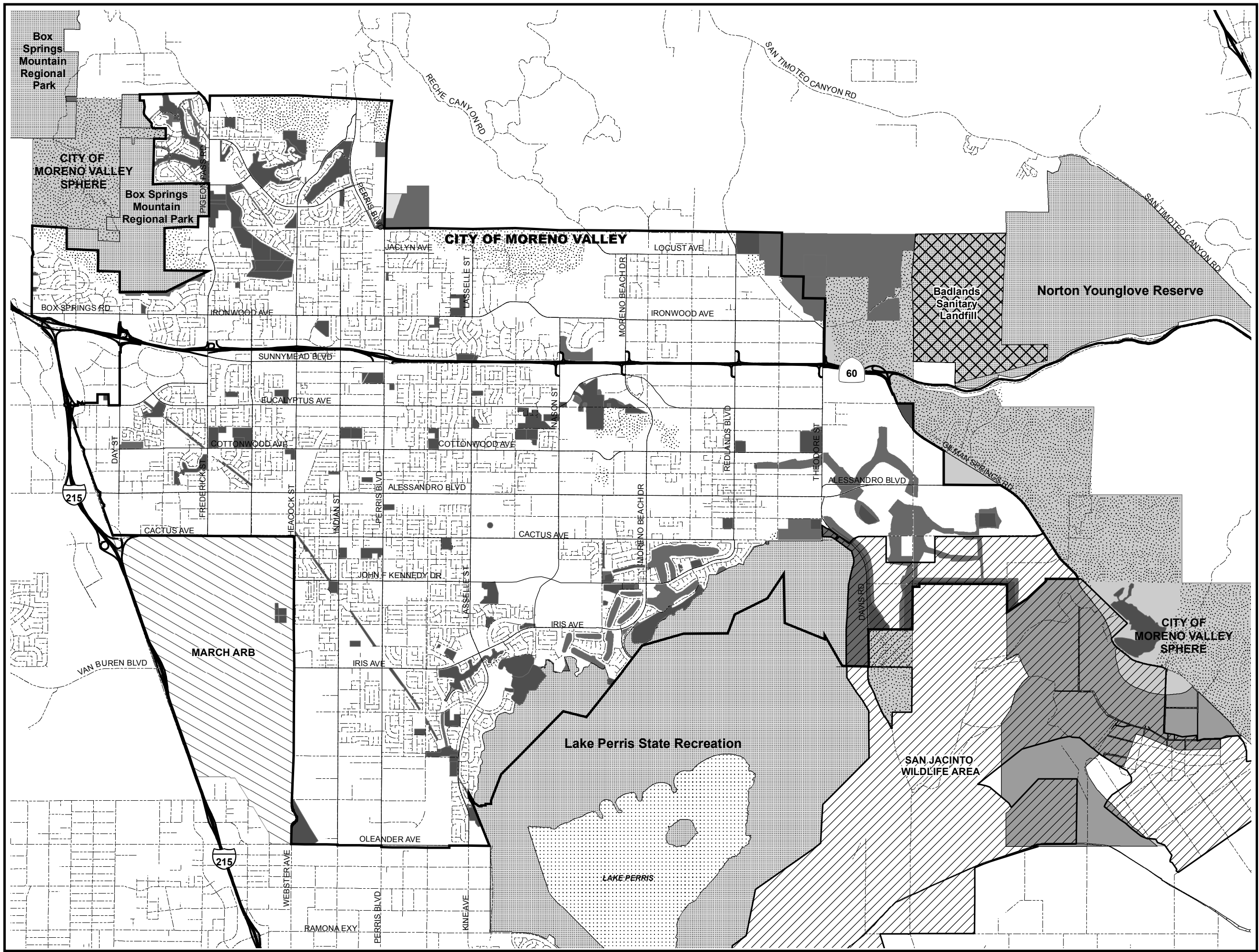
- Streets
- Major Streets
- Highways
- Natural Open Space, Parks, Golf Courses, Flood Basins, and other Open Areas
- ▤ Hillside Residential and Rural Residential
- Flood Plain
- ▨ State and County Parks
- ▧ San Jacinto Wildlife Area
- ▩ Badlands Landfill
- Moreno Valley
- Moreno Valley Sphere
- ▨ March ARB
- ▤ Waterbodies



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GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEMS

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two natural open space areas. One open area is adjacent to the Moreno Valley Equestrian Center, located at the northeast corner of Redlands Boulevard and Locust Avenue. A second natural open space area is located north of Sunnymead Ranch Parkway, on the east side of Perris Boulevard.

Natural open space can also be found within the steeply sloping areas designated Rural Residential and Hillside Residential on the General Plan land use map. These areas contain wildlife habitat, watershed benefits and scenic values that can be conserved even as these areas are developed. Natural open space can be conserved because these areas are planned for low-density residential development. Low-density development requires a minimal amount of land disturbance.

4.2.2 Open Space for Public Health and Safety

A substantial amount of land within the study area cannot be developed due to public health and safety concerns. These include areas subject to air crash hazards, flooding and cemeteries.

March Air Reserve Base, located southwest of the city limits, was once an active duty aerial refueling and deployment base. The airfield is a joint-use military reserve base and civilian airport. The land at each end of the runway is subject to significant danger of aircraft accidents during takeoff and landing. The land below the landing approach, designated as the clear zone, is within the study area. It is located at the northeast corner of Heacock Street and Oleander Avenue. Only open space uses are appropriate within the clear zone.

Part of the southeast corner of the planning area is within the floodplain of the San Jacinto River. The resulting floodwater,

known as Mystic Lake, has been known to inundate the area for months and sometimes years at a time. The land use designation for the area is Floodplain. Only uses consistent with the protection of public health and safety are allowed within this area.

Man-made lakes and flood control basins are also important open space features. Man-made lakes are found within the communities of Sunnymead Ranch and Moreno Valley Ranch. A network of flood detention basins and flood channels exist or are planned throughout the study area.

Although public access is restricted to most flood control facilities, plans for public recreational uses have been made for several flood detention basins, including Poorman's Reservoir, the Nason Basin and the Elder Basin.

A cemetery is yet another form of open space set aside for public health and safety purposes. Cemeteries are open space uses although they typically include accessory buildings such as mausoleums. The southeast corner of State Route 60 and Gilman Springs Road is designated for use as a cemetery.

4.2.3. Open Space for the Production of Resources

Open space for the production of resources includes open space used for agricultural production and open space used for the mineral production. The acreage within the study devoted to these uses is expected to decrease.

Agricultural open space within the study area has diminished over time as farming became less economically viable in comparison to commercial, industrial and residential development. The viability of farming is further impacted by the high cost of water, the cost of land and property taxes, conflicts with surrounding urban uses

and the lack of agri-business support in the area.

Agricultural land within the study area is generally leased to farm operators. Few, if any, of the farms are owner-operated. The major types of agricultural uses are grazing and farming of dry grains, truck crops and tree crops.

A limited amount of temporary grazing and dry grain farming occurs within the study area. For example, sheep sometimes graze on open grasslands and on cut grain after harvest. Irrigated vegetable crops, including potatoes are grown in the northeastern portions of the study area. Melons are sometimes cultivated in small amounts. A few citrus orchards, avocado groves and Christmas tree farms remain in the northern and eastern sectors of Moreno Valley.

To provide an economic incentive to preserve agricultural lands, the State of California passed the California Land Conservation Act, commonly referred to as the Williamson Act, in 1965. Under this act, agricultural lands are taxed at their agricultural value rather than their value for higher valued uses. In exchange, the landowner enters into a contract to retain his or her land in agricultural use for at least 10 years. Once a "Notice of Nonrenewal" is filed, it is ten years until the contract expires. At the time that the first General Plan was adopted, hundreds of acres within the study area were under Williamson Act contracts. Notices of Nonrenewal have since been filed for these areas. At this time, no lands within the study area are under Williamson Act contract.

At the time that the first General Plan was adopted, the University of California Field Station, located between Lasselle and Nason Streets and south of Brodiaea Avenue, was used to raise experimental crops suited to dry and semi-dry climates. The University later decided to move its research operations

to a station in the Coachella Valley. A mixed-use specific plan was adopted for the property in 1999, and was subsequently amended in 2005 as a gated age-qualifying community.

Mineral extraction, including the mining of sand, gravel and rock is another type of open space use. The mineral potential with the study area is very limited. There is only one active sand and gravel quarry on record within the study area: the Jack Rabbit Canyon Quarry. It is in a drainage course located at the northeast corner of Jack Rabbit Trail and Gilman Springs Road, adjacent to the Quail Ranch Golf Course.

4.2.4 Open Space for Outdoor Recreation

Open space for outdoor recreation includes public and private outdoor recreation facilities. Public recreation facilities in Moreno Valley include state, county and city parks as well as public golf courses. Private outdoor recreation facilities include private golf courses, driving ranges and other private outdoor recreation facilities.

Two private outdoor recreation facilities are owned and operated by homeowner's associations in Sunnymead Ranch and Moreno Valley Ranch. Two private golf courses were in operation as well: the Moreno Valley Ranch Golf Club in Moreno Valley Ranch and the Quail Ranch Golf Course in the southeast corner of the study area.

4.3 Parks and Recreation

Parks and recreation facilities and services are an important component of the quality of life in Moreno Valley. The City of Moreno Valley Parks and Recreation Department provides parks and recreation facilities in Moreno Valley through partnerships with other public agencies and the private sector.

4.3.1. Recreation Service Level Standards

The State of California recognizes a minimum level of service standard for parkland of 3 acres per 1,000 residents. The minimum standard was established in the Quimby Act (Government Code Section 66477).

Moreno Valley experienced a lack of funding for ongoing maintenance of existing park and recreation facilities. The City was limited to an annual fee for park maintenance equal to \$87.50 per lot, through its Community Service District, Zone A, parcel charge (SDA#94). The County of Riverside originally established the tax. It became a city tax after incorporation. A proposal to increase this fee was placed on the ballot in 1996 and was rejected by voters. Since incorporation, the City also received an annual lump sum ad valorem portion of property taxes from the County of Riverside, which was applied to the Parks and Recreation budget, but is not specifically dedicated to maintenance.

Immediate needs for neighborhood and community park sites have been derived on the basis of an estimated January 2005 population in Moreno Valley of 165,328 and the standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The total acreage requirements have been calculated as shown in Table 4-1.

**Table 4-1
Parkland Needs**

Year 2005 Population	165,328
Acreage required by 3 acre/1,000 person standard	496 acres
Year 2005 Parkland	335 acres
Deficit	161 acres

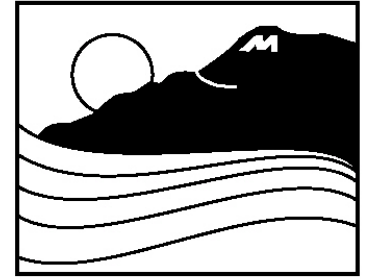
The City has enacted an ordinance requiring new development to dedicate land or pay fees to help the City toward its goal of meeting the level of service set forth herein. Only acreage usable for active recreation applies toward meeting this standard.

Unless new parks are developed, the existing park facilities will be strained as the City continues to grow. Table 4-2 shows that land set aside for future parks would not meet the minimum park acreage required at build-out. Certain areas of the city have the greatest need for acquisition and development of parkland. Figure 4-2 identifies areas where future acquisition would be most beneficial.

**Table 4-2
Future Park Acquisitions**

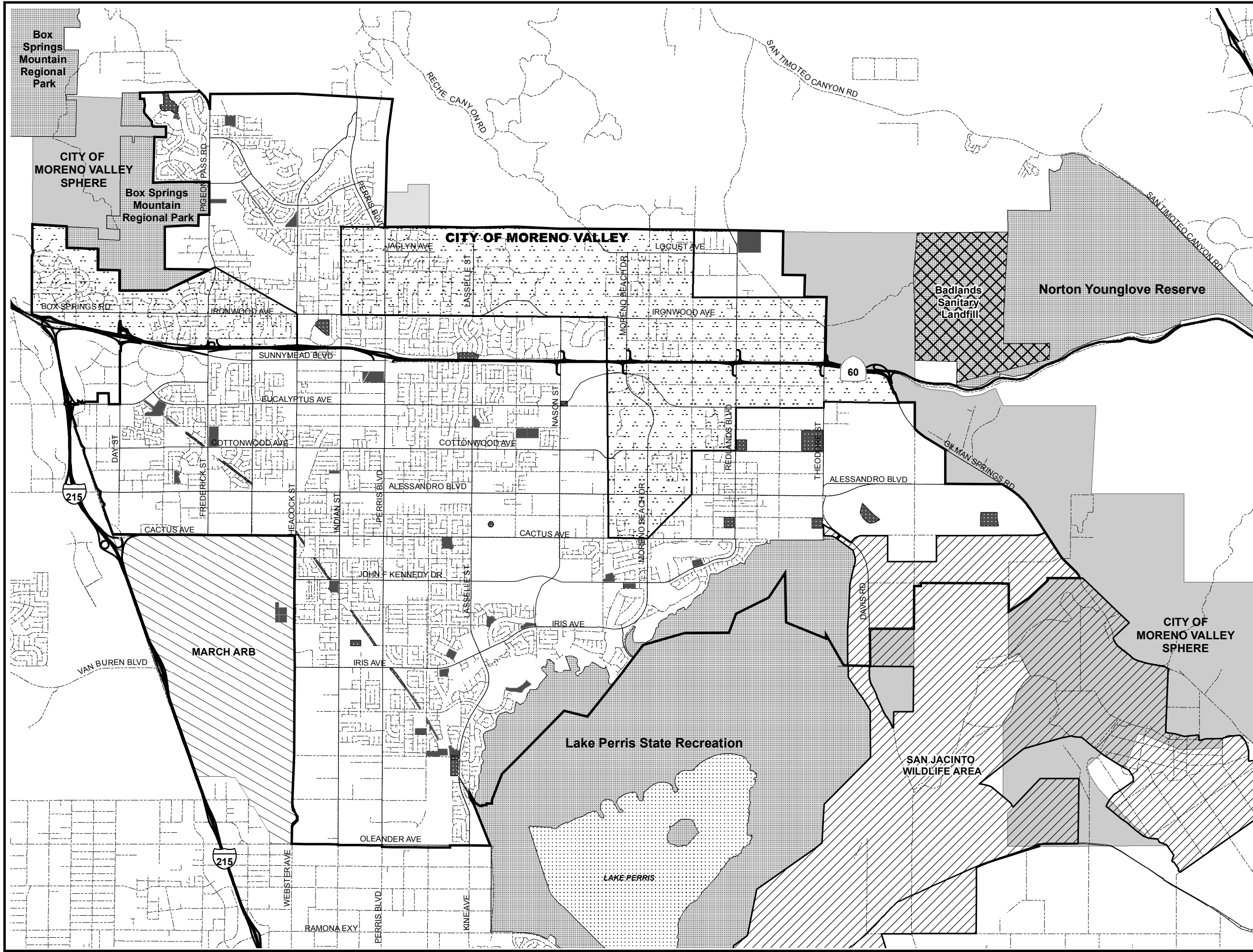
Planned Population at Build-out	304,966
Acreage Required by Park Standard (3 acres/1,000 population)	915 acres
Year 2005 Parkland	335 acres
Planned Future Active Parkland	319 acres
Current and Planned Future Parkland	610 acres
Acres Under Minimum Required	305 acres

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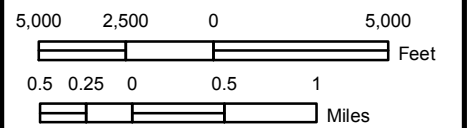


VALLEY

**FIGURE 4-2
FUTURE PARKLANDS
ACQUISITION AREAS**



- Streets
- Major Streets
- Highways
- [Pattern] Future Parkland Acquisition Areas
- [Pattern] Existing Active Parks
- [Pattern] Proposed Active Parks
- [Pattern] San Jacinto Wildlife Area
- [Pattern] State and County Parks
- [Pattern] Badlands Landfill
- [Pattern] Moreno Valley
- [Pattern] Moreno Valley Sphere
- [Pattern] March ARB
- [Pattern] Waterbodies



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4.3.2. Park Planning and User Needs

Many of the issues presented in the 1988 General Plan relate to the formula driven standards set by the National Recreation & Parks Association (NRPA). Since that time, the NRPA has taken a more deferential approach to community judgment with respect to sizing the different types of parks. Many communities felt the nationally prescribed minimums by park type were not feasible. The NRPA's approach is need based. It recognizes that each community has unique needs and it should determine what mix of facilities best meet its needs within its own financial ability. The process allows a wider range of opportunities for citizens to become active stakeholders and more involved in the decision-making process.

Moreno Valley should select a facility menu that best suits the needs of its citizens. Naturally not every need can be accommodated under this process, however, rational basis for allocating resources and maximizing recreation benefits can be established. Rather than set a standard such as one baseball diamond for every 6,000 people, the City's park and recreation facilities should be able to change as needs, tastes, types of equipment and leisure choices change over time.

The NRPA recommends market research and community involvement in park planning. Specialized facilities should be developed only with strong market data to support a need for facilities. In some cases, these needs could be filled by the private sector.



Adopting this approach, Moreno Valley involved the community in identifying key recreational and open space issues and priorities. The process involved focus groups and interviews, children and youth involvement and community issues workshops to determine the priority issues. The residents expressed a desire for a new gymnasium/multi-purpose facility, a regional park and a performing arts/cultural center. Another top priority issue was the integration of equestrian, pedestrian and bicycling trails into open space, parks, residential developments and the larger regional trail system.

Top priorities among elementary and middle school students were amusement parks, water parks, team sports and the natural world. Top priorities among middle school to high school students included skateboarding, rollerblading, roller hockey, team sports, and go-kart riding.

In response to the community's expressed desires, a skate facility for roller blading, skateboarding and roller hockey was constructed in 2003. The facility is located at 15415 6th Street on property leased from the March Joint Powers Authority. In addition, a multi-purpose community center was constructed in 2005 at the southwest corner of Alessandro Blvd. and Frederick Street. The community center includes a gymnasium and other recreation facilities as well as facilities for conferences, banquets and the performing arts.

Moreno Valley should investigate the feasibility of adding the following recreational features to meet the expressed desires and needs of the community:

1. A regional park that could be relatively large (in excess of 250 acres) providing a sense of remoteness, spaciousness, diversity or use and environment or small and of historical, geographic, cultural or special recreational interest;
2. Fields for team sports to accommodate the growing trend in youth team activities; and
3. Amusement facilities.

In addition to the above, the City was also considering the feasibility of developing a publicly owned and operated municipal golf course.

The General Plan recognizes three categories of parks: neighborhood park, the community park and the regional park. These categories focus on the functions of these parks. They are discussed in greater depth in Section 4.3.4.

4.3.3. Recreational Services

The City of Moreno Valley Parks & Recreation Department offers 79 youth programs, 88 senior programs and 31 adult programs. Moreno Valley facilities served an estimated 417,180 youth and adults for baseball, softball and soccer. Parks and Recreation coordinated the City's 4th of July parade and festivities, involving approximately 35,000 participants. The Department operated 9 elementary and 1 middle school after-school programs and coordinated sports facility reservations for 38 school sites. The Department also operated 8 after-school middle school sports programs, serving an estimated 1,500 children.

Youth sports programs included such activities as football, baseball, basketball, roller hockey, soccer, tennis, bowling, gymnastics, swimming and track. Various adult sports activities include softball, tennis, basketball, soccer and golf. Special interest programs included numerous classes such as dancing, computers, dog obedience, aerobic exercise, day camps, swim programs, after school fun club, teen nights and sports.

Organizational groups in Moreno Valley providing recreational opportunities include soccer associations, football leagues, baseball and soccer leagues, basketball leagues, swim teams, track teams, roller hockey in-line leagues, equestrian clubs, golf associations and walking clubs.

The senior center was opened in March of 1993. The number of seniors participating at the center continued to increase annually. The center offers exercise classes, fitness equipment, crafts, painting, ceramics, billiards, dancing, meals, cards, bingo, trips, tours and special events. Senior citizens were also offered a wide range of special services, including weekday lunch programs, health clinics, paralegal service, income tax assistance and transportation.



Moreno Valley Senior Center

4.3.4. Local Park and Recreation Facilities

The Moreno Valley Department of Parks and Recreation owns and operates over 335 acres of parks, trails, and park facilities and manages over 195 programs and services for youth and adults. Refer to Figure 4-2 for locations of existing park sites. The planned parks and future acquisition areas shown on Figure 4-2 are conceptual and subject to change.

a. Regional Parks



Lake Perris

Regional parks meet those needs not served by national facilities, community and neighborhood parks or private recreational facilities. These parks are either relatively large (in excess of 250 acres), providing the impression of remoteness, spaciousness, diversity of use and environment, or are small in size, and of historical, geographic, cultural or special recreational interest. Moreno Valley does not operate a regional facility; however, the following paragraphs describe regional facilities that are readily accessible to Moreno Valley residents.

The State of California Department of Parks and Recreation owns and operates the Lake Perris State Recreation Area. The major feature of the recreation area is Lake Perris, a component of the State Water Project. Located along the southern periphery of the Moreno Valley study area, the facility offers

8,300 acres of a variety recreational opportunities, including swimming, fishing boating, sailing, water skiing, and scuba diving and also offers opportunities for hikers, bikers and equestrians and rock climbing. The San Jacinto Wildlife Area is operated by the State of California, Department of Fish and Game and provides access to about 5000 acres of undeveloped native habitat.

The County of Riverside currently owns and operates Box Springs Mountain Reserve and the San Timoteo Canyon park property. Box Springs Mountain Reserve is located approximately three miles north of State Route 60, west of Pigeon Pass Road and encompasses 1,155 acres of open space and day use. Box Springs Mountain Reserve presently offers hiking and equestrian trails. The San Timoteo Canyon park property, which includes the Norton Younglove Reserve, is located east of the City's sphere of influence on the north side of State Route 60.

b. Community Parks

Community parks traditionally range from 15 to 20 acres with at least 2/3 of the acres developed for active recreation. They serve 20,000 to 30,000 residents within a 20-minute drive from their homes. The greater size and accessibility of community parks allow for more active play and are intended to serve a wide variety of active and passive recreation activities, which may include sports fields, tennis courts, family and group picnic areas, children's play apparatus, community buildings, water sports, ponds, riparian areas, specialized activity areas and landscaping. Night lighting of activity areas is appropriate at community parks to increase the availability and utilization of courts and playing field facilities. Parking lots and restroom facilities are typically provided at community parks. The City owns and maintains 10 community parks encompassing approximately 185 acres.



Moreno Valley Ranch Golf Course

c. Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks range from 5 to 20 acres in size, although the size may vary depending on the size of the neighborhood and the proximity to a community park. Neighborhood parks are specifically oriented to serving residents within a $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ mile radius of their homes. Ideally, the neighborhood park should be built in conjunction with a school facility in order to maximize community funds and cost efficiency. Facilities in neighborhood parks are geared toward the recreation needs of children and provide for the daily recreation needs of residents in the areas surrounding these parks.

Linear parks fall within the neighborhood park category. These parks lie in utility easements or along the California aqueduct. Similarly, mini parks fall under the neighborhood park category and are characterized as a park of less than five acres. Because of their small size and/or configuration, these parks provide limited active and passive recreation opportunities and do not include restrooms or parking. Future mini parks will require a specific funding mechanism for operation and maintenance, due to the high costs of building and maintaining these facilities. Where possible, mini parks should be adjacent to greenways, linear parks, and/or

one of the City's trail systems. Bayside Park and Vista Lomas Park are the only mini parks in the City.



Previously, the neighborhood park was defined as passive in nature. The trend, however, has been to include limited active recreation opportunities such as hard surface playing courts and multi-purpose fields. Due to high demand, neighborhood parks now frequently provide practice and game areas for many of the organized sports groups in the City, although heavy programming is not to be considered a design feature of the neighborhood park. Passive recreation, such as picnicking, strolling and informal play is a priority for the neighborhood park. Unlike community parks, on-site parking and restrooms are not provided.

There were 19 neighborhood parks in Moreno Valley, encompassing 150 acres. New development of neighborhood parks should seek to achieve a balance between active and passive park uses and to accommodate a wide variety of age and user groups.

d. School Facilities

School facilities provide significant recreational opportunities in Moreno Valley. By combining resources of public agencies,

recreational, social and educational opportunities are made available to the community in an efficient and cost effective manner. Riverside Community College and the many campuses of the Moreno Valley Unified and Val Verde Unified School Districts contribute substantially to the City's recreational opportunities, providing both outdoor and indoor facilities. The Moreno Valley Unified School District and the Val Verde Unified School District provide approximately 80 additional acres of playing fields and ball courts.



The acreage of the school parks has not been included in the City's inventory of parkland since there is no permanent commitment to maintain the acreage for public park purposes. Also, public access to recreation facilities on school sites must, of necessity, be limited. Even with access limitations, recreation facilities on school sites complement and enhance the City's ability to provide recreation services.

e. Private Sector Recreation Facilities

Private residential recreation facilities meet a portion of local demand for recreation facilities. Homeowners associations provide park areas, greenbelt areas, swimming pools, tennis courts and community centers for the exclusive use of their residents. Approximately 15,000 residents have access to these private recreational facilities. While these facilities provide specific recreation amenities, they do not satisfy the need for large sports fields and

community social spaces. Other private facilities in Moreno Valley include for-profit enterprises, such as health and fitness clubs, golf courses, etc., which are not considered in the level of service standard.

4.3.5. Future Facilities

Demand for parks and recreation will continue to increase with new population. Future parks sites have been identified and additional parkland will need to be acquired. The planned parks and future acquisition areas shown on Figure 4-2 are conceptual and subject to modification and refinement.

4.3.6. Multiuse Trails

Although trails and open space are not included in the 3-acre per 1,000 residents parkland standard, they are an important element of the park system and provide significant opportunities for recreation. Equestrians, hikers and bicyclists all share a need for trails, although their specific requirements vary. Trails have two major functions. First, they can provide recreational values associated with the natural environment such as scenic values. Secondly, they can provide safe, off-street linkages between neighborhoods, parks, schools and other public facilities. Sidewalks and bicycle paths are addressed in the Circulation Element of the General Plan.

In 1991 the City Council updated the precise trail alignments map, which is incorporated herein by reference. The City owns and maintained about 10 miles of developed trails. Refer to Figure 4-3 for existing and proposed trail locations.

Multiuse trails are popular with the equestrian community. The Moreno Valley Equestrian Center, dedicated in 2003, provides additional facilities of interest to equestrians. This 45-acre park is located at the northeast corner of Redlands Blvd. and

Locust Avenue. The park features equestrian facilities, including an arena, with bleachers, a water trough, night lighting and parking for horse trailers.

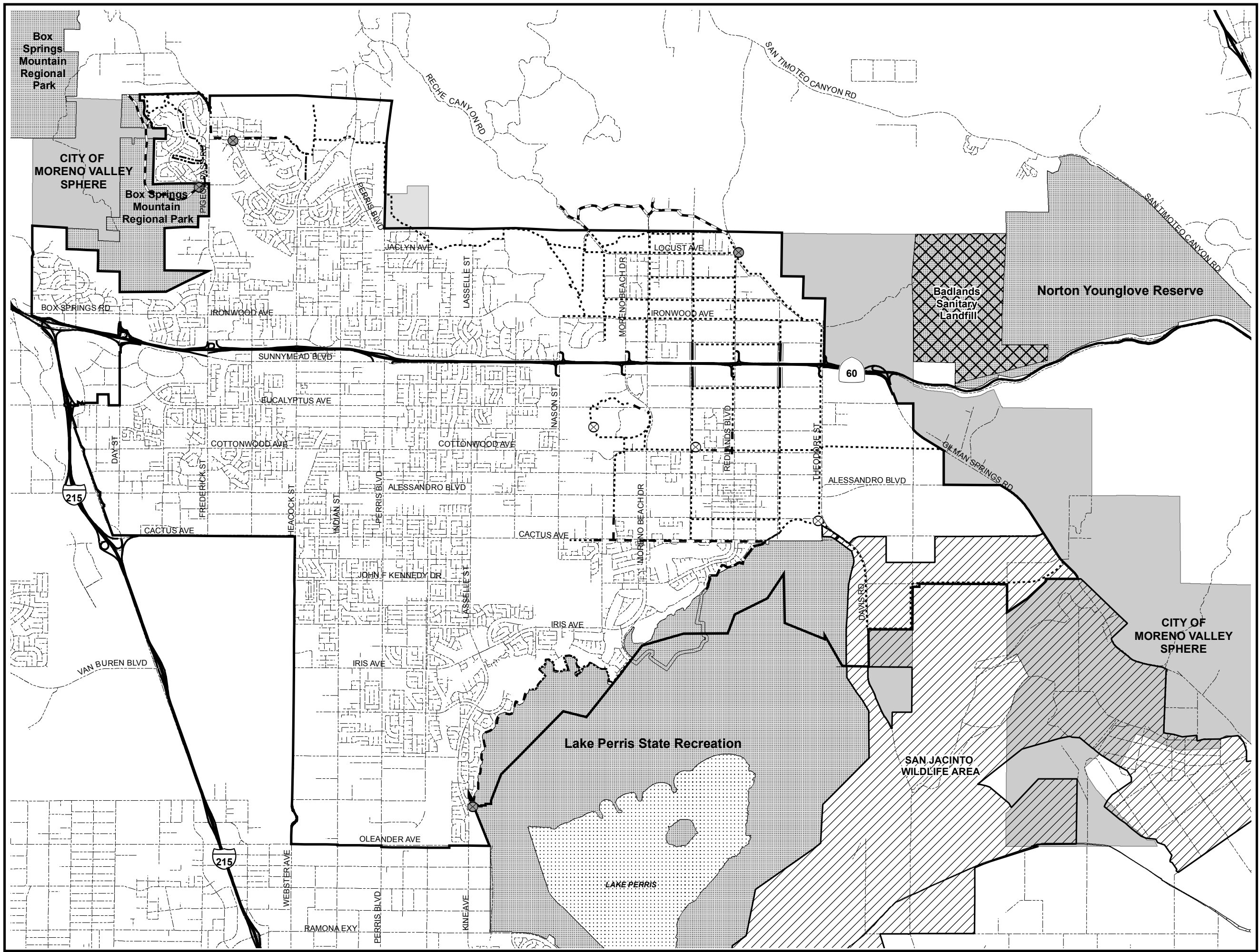
Citizens of Moreno Valley consider expansion of the trail network a high priority. The Citizen's Advisory Committee on Recreational Trails, together with the community of equestrians, has worked extensively on the development of a trail system. It is their desire to link all areas of the City together with a multi-use trail system and to enhance the City's equestrian park by promoting the development of an equestrian community around the park. There is also a desire for a trail that crosses State Route 60.

The City should continue to develop trails, but funding is an issue. General fund dollars are not available to construct new trails. Efforts should be made to obtain private funds and grants. It has become common for cities with equestrian communities to require development in certain zones to provide access to existing trails and to construct new trails.

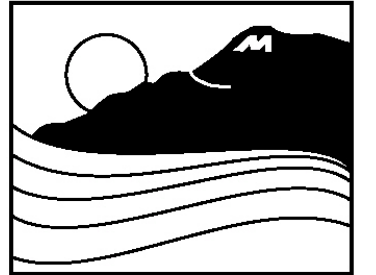
Multiuse trails should be designed with considerations for safety, accessibility, proper design and construction, signage and relative location. The City's trail network should also connect to the county and state regional trail systems.



Hidden Springs Trail



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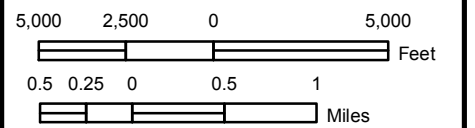


VALLEY

**FIGURE 4-3
MASTER PLAN
OF TRAILS**

- ⊗ Trail Staging - Existing
- ⊗ Trail Staging - Proposed
- Streets
- Highways
- - - Improved Trail
- · - · Multiuse Trail
- · · · Proposed Trail
- Regional Trail
- State Trail
- Proposed Subject to Feasibility of Freeway Bridge or Underpass
- ⊗ Badlands Landfill
- ▨ State and County Parks
- ▭ Moreno Valley
- ▨ Moreno Valley Sphere
- ▨ San Jacinto Wildlife Area
- ▨ Waterbodies

* Trail locations are approximate



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