

III. RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

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1. Open Space

Introduction**Overview**

The overall quality of life in a community is enhanced by the provision of open space and recreational opportunities. As Lawndale's population continues to increase, the need for open space and recreational areas increases as well. Use of available and accessible open space and recreational areas within City boundaries is currently at capacity. Lawndale's urbanized character leaves limited open space and recreational opportunities for the future. Therefore, the preservation, enhancement, expansion and improvement of open space and recreational areas becomes a priority issue in the City.

Authority

The Lawndale Open Space Element maintains the overall quality of life for residents through the rational management of open space and recreational lands. City adoption of a comprehensive, long-term program ensures that open space and potential recreation areas are protected for the benefit of residents.

To this end, Government Code Section 65302 requires the preparation of an Open Space Element as part of the General Plan. Further defining the Element, Government Code Section 65560 states open space lands "are any parcel or area of land or water which is essentially unimproved and devoted to an open space use...which is designated on a local, regional or State open space plan as any of the following:

- Open space for the preservation of natural resources;
- Open space for the managed production of resources;
- Open space for outdoor recreation;
- Open space for public health and safety."

As part of the Open Space Element, Government Code Section 65564 requires an Action Program consisting of specific programs to implement the open space plan. Furthermore, the Open Space Element must be consistent with all other elements of the General Plan, with close relationships to the Land Use and Conservation Elements.

Organization

This Open Space Element assesses current supply, documents accepted standards, establishes goals and policies for the improvement of open space opportunities and concludes with implementation programs. It is organized to represent the status of, and direction for, open space and recreational lands in Lawndale.

The Assessment section identifies and categorizes existing open space areas. Included in the assessment are the amounts and locations of City parklands, vacant lands, recreational facilities and regional facilities as well as existing development standards related to open space. Following the assessment, the Open Space Goals and Policies are presented. These goals and policies will guide and direct the City in its efforts to provide adequate and accessible open space and recreational opportunities for its population. The final section of this Element discusses implementation programs. These programs are designed to achieve the stated goals and policies.

Assessment

Overall Supply/ Programs

There are three types of open space and recreational areas/facilities in Lawndale:

- Parkland
- Vacant/Private Lands
- Community Recreation Facilities

Table 1 illustrates the total Open Space and Recreation Inventory in the City of Lawndale. As the table shows, a total of 39.27 acres are available for open space and recreational opportunities. Recreation programs are categorized as either City funded or user fee funded. These programs are detailed in Table 2.

Based on the National Recreation and Park Association's most commonly accepted ratio of desirable parkland area to population (2.5 acres per 1,000 persons), the existing City-wide supply falls approximately 29 acres short.

Parkland

There are two forms of parkland in Lawndale; parks that are City owned and parks that are contracted through a Joint Powers Agreement for City utilization. The City owned parks include the Hogan Tot Lot, a 6,000 square foot improved child play area located on West 167th Street, and the Community Garden, a 24,000 square foot "Pocket-Park" used for planting and cultivating plants, located on 160th Street, north of the 405 Freeway.

Open Space and Recreation Inventory	
Site	Acres
School Sites	
Rogers/Anderson	5.70
Jane Addams ¹	5.00
William Green ¹	4.00
Parks	
Hogan Tot-Lot	0.14
Community Garden	0.57
Vacant	
Public (Utility-Water Co.)	0.45
Private (78 lots)	9.11
Railroad Right-of-Way	11.04
Community Recreational Facilities²	
Prairie Avenue Community Center	0.40
Civic Center	2.80
Total	39.27

¹ The City is currently negotiating to renew Joint Powers Agreement.

² The Community Recreation Facilities are designated Public Facilities in the Land Use Plan that serve community recreational purposes.

Source: City of Lawndale Planning Department and The Lightfoot Planning Group 1990 Land Use Inventory.

Funding Sources For Recreation Programs		
Program	City Funded	Participation Fees
1. Adult Softball League		
2. Adult Softball Tournaments		•
3. Youth Sports Leagues		•
4. Youth Toy Loan		•
5. Children's Arts and Crafts	•	
6. Teen Dances	•	
7. Day Camps		•
8. Special Olympics		•
9. Youth Gymnastics	•	
10. Golf Tournaments	•	
11. Youth in Government Day		•
12. Preschool classes	•	
13. Mental Health Services		•
14. Trips and Tours	•	
15. Before and After School Child Care Program		•
16. Easter Program		•
17. Halloween Program	•	
18. Fourth of July Program	•	
19. Bicycle Safety Program	•	
20. Bicycle Licensing Program	•	
21. Adult Interest Classes		•
22. Recreation Brochure		•
23. Youth Camp	•	•

Source: City of Lawndale Department of Parks and Recreation, January 25, 1990..

Funding Sources for Recreation Programs

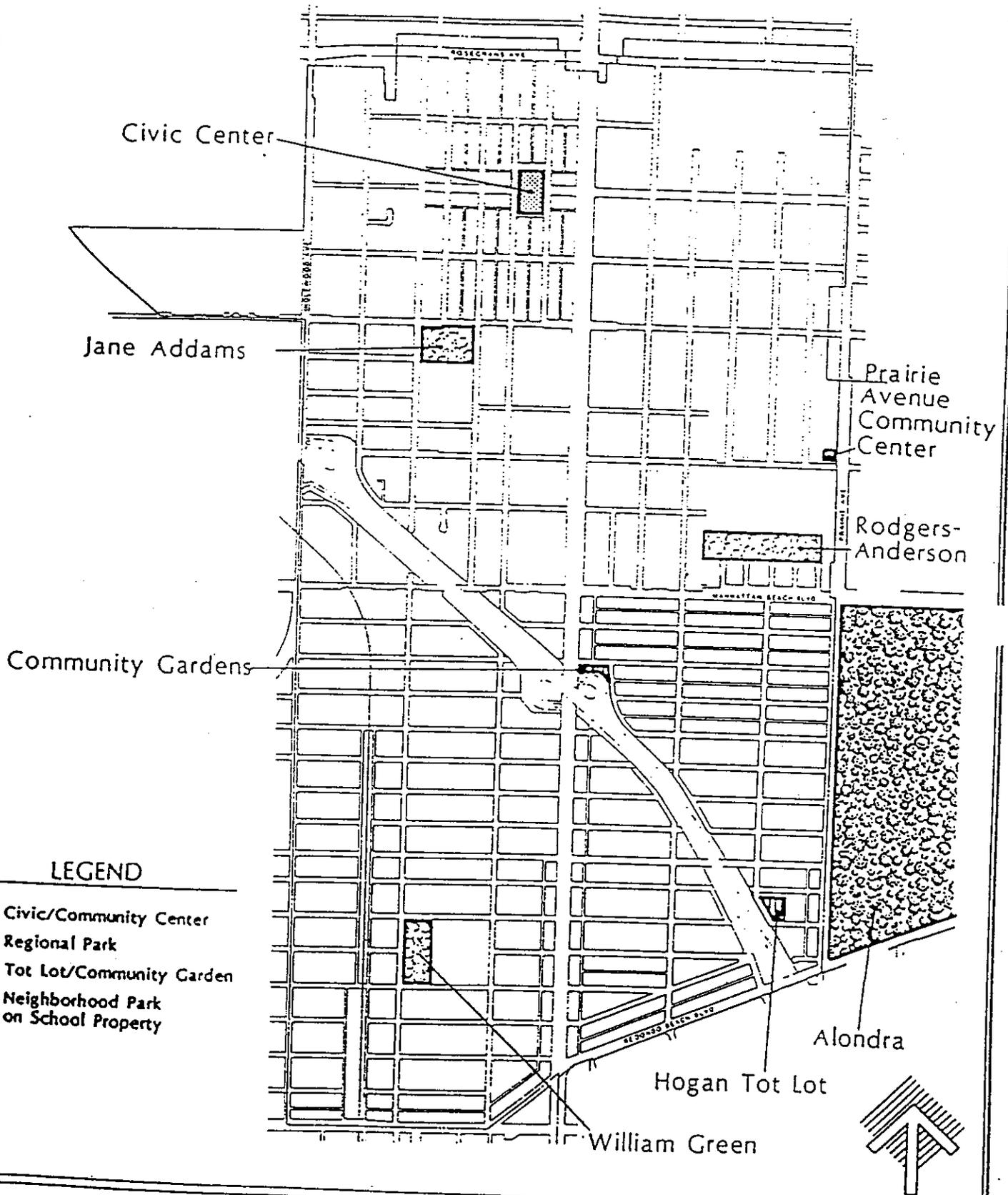
Table 2

Funding Sources For Recreation Programs		
Program	City Funded	Participation Fees
1. Adult Softball League		
2. Adult Softball Tournaments		•
3. Youth Sports Leagues		•
4. Youth Toy Loan		•
5. Children's Arts and Crafts	•	
6. Teen Dances	•	
7. Day Camps		•
8. Special Olympics		•
9. Youth Gymnastics	•	
10. Golf Tournaments	•	
11. Youth in Government Day		•
12. Preschool classes	•	
13. Mental Health Services		•
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19. Bicycle Safety Program	•	
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22. Recreation Brochure		•
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Source: City of Lawndale Department of Parks and Recreation, January 25, 1990.

Funding Sources for Recreation Programs

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LEGEND

-  Civic/Community Center
-  Regional Park
-  Tot Lot/Community Garden
-  Neighborhood Park on School Property

Existing Open Space and Recreational Facilities

figure A

acres, have various shapes and range from 3,000 to 6,000 square feet in size. Table 4 details the distribution, zone designation and size for these vacant parcels. Figure B illustrates the location and distribution of the vacant parcels. The majority of the vacant lots are not maintained. Some have accumulated remnants of old cars, garbage, wood, and miscellaneous debris. Finally, many of the vacant parcels are constrained due to both size and accessibility.

The privately owned Atcheson, Topeka and Santa Fe Railroad (AT&SF) corridor, extending through the southwestern quadrant of the City, is included in the vacant land inventory. This corridor is presently undeveloped, except for the rail tracks. The corridor varies in width and the tracks are periodically utilized.

The City is presently evaluating the impacts of the proposed Coastal Corridor Rail transit Project. This study was prepared in May 1990, by the Los Angeles County Transportation Commission in cooperation with the Cities of Lawndale, Redondo Beach and Torrance. The study proposes to route a light-rail transit line within the median strip of Hawthorne Boulevard, south of the 405 Freeway. If plans to route the light rail line in this location are adopted, the abandonment of the existing corridor could provide Lawndale with an opportunity to develop a linear open space and recreation corridor. This area totals approximately 11 acres, making it the largest piece of contiguous vacant land in Lawndale.

Community Recreation Facilities

The City of Lawndale has two primary recreation facilities; the Prairie Avenue Community Center and the Civic Center. Combined, these two facilities provide 3.2 acres of recreational area. Through the City's Department of Recreation and Community Services, the Prairie Avenue Community Center, located at Prairie Avenue and 154th Street, provides events and services for all ages in the community. Senior Citizen services and events are also scheduled at the Prairie Avenue Community Center.

The Lawndale Civic Center is located at 14717 South Burin Avenue. The facility has two rooms that are available for group meetings and recreational programs similar to those provided at the Prairie Avenue Community Center. There is also small lawn areas immediately adjacent to both facilities which may be utilized for outdoor programs.

Development Standards

Although not perceived as such, the majority of open space areas within a community consists of setbacks and required yard areas of new developments. Open space and recreation areas are required by zoning

Inventory of Private Vacant Lands									
Street Name	No. of Parcels	Total Acres per Zoning Designation							Total Acres
		R1	R2	R3	R4	C3	C4	MI	
Artesia Blvd.	2					0.19			0.19
Hawthorne Blvd.	11					1.63			1.63
Prairie Avenue	5	0.02			0.20	0.05			0.27
Mansel Avenue	4	0.14	0.07						0.21
Grevillea Avenue	4	0.20		0.45					1.08
Manhattan Beach Blvd.	6	0.12		0.14				0.43	0.86
Compton Avenue	5							0.60	1.06
Larch Avenue	7		0.39	0.15			0.21	0.85	0.54
Freeman Avenue	2		0.08						0.08
Sombra Avenue	1		0.08						0.08
Kingsdale Avenue	1			0.07					0.07
Eastwood Avenue	1		0.18						0.18
Firmona Avenue	1		0.01						0.01
145th	1			0.07					0.07
149th	1		0.07						0.07
152th	1			0.05					0.05
153rd	4			0.11					0.49
154th	4		0.28			0.11	0.18	0.09	0.28
159th	3		0.20	0.13		0.03			0.36
161st	1		0.12						0.12
162nd	3		0.24						0.24
163rd	2		0.22						0.22
164th	1		0.05						0.05
165th	2		0.23						0.23
166th	1		0.12						0.12
167th	1		0.23						0.23
170th	1		0.06						0.06
171st	1		0.13						0.13
173rd	1			0.13					0.13
TOTALS	78	0.48	2.76	1.30	0.20	2.01	0.39	1.97	9.11

Source: The Lightfoot Planning Group 1990 Land Use Inventory.

Inventory of Private Vacant Lands

Table 4

III. Resource Management

Billy Mitchell Elementary School

Leuzinger High School

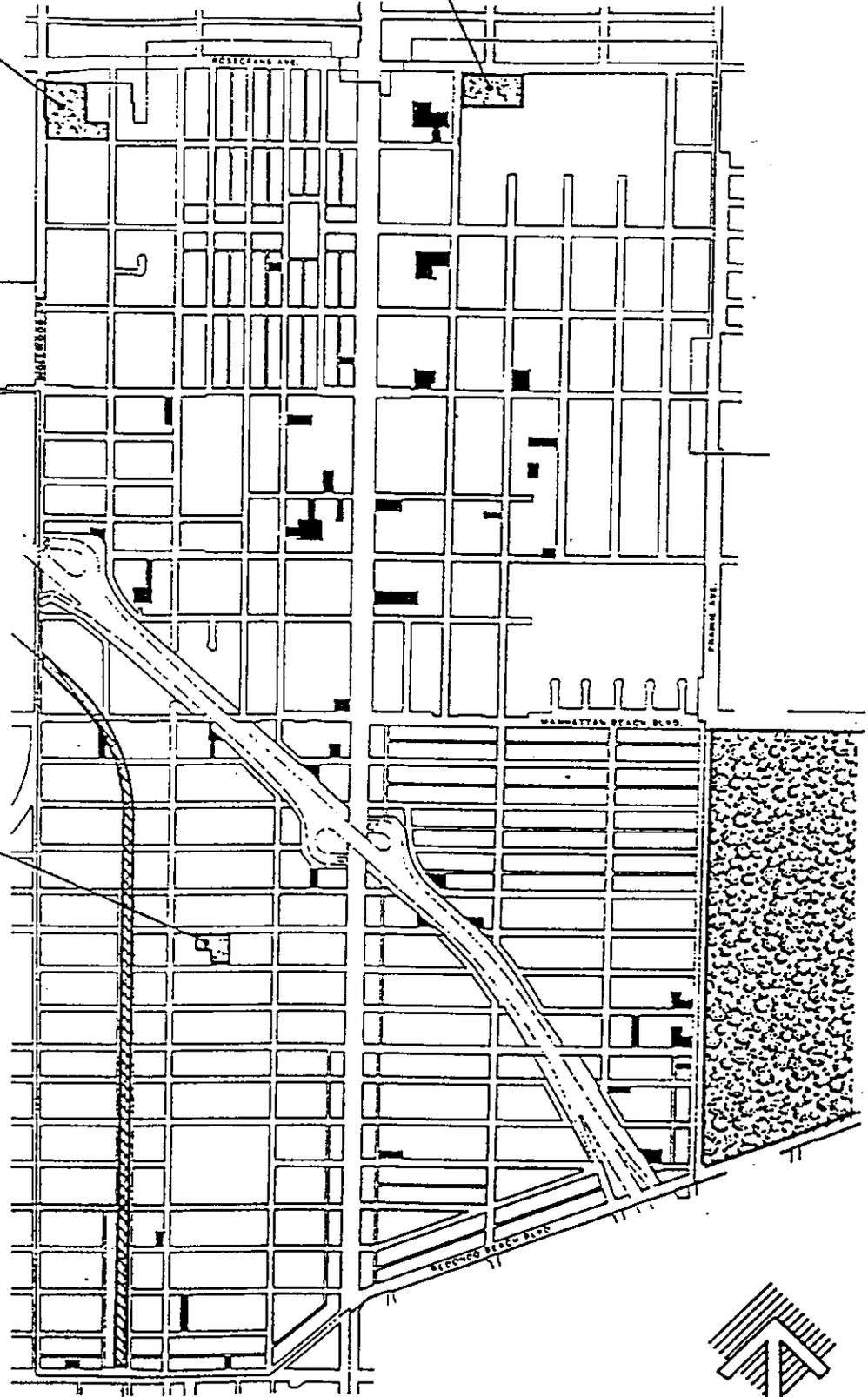
I. Open Space

Lloyd High School

Betsy Ross School

LEGEND

-  A.T. & S.F. Railroad
-  Regional Park
-  Vacant Land
-  School Property (No Joint Powers Agreement)



Source: The Lightfoot Planning Group 1990 Land Use Inventory

Open Space/Recreational Area Opportunities

Figure B

and subdivision standards. Zoning ordinance standards specify open space areas typically called setbacks, that function as buffers between land uses, promote safety and reduce visual impacts. Open space may also include recreational facilities within residential developments or facilities incorporated into the workplace.

Setback and common area requirements are the most common form of private open space. Single-family residential units typically utilize standard front, side and rear yard setbacks as open space while multi-family projects use common areas and standard setbacks. Private recreation required as part of multi-family projects in the R-2 zone are required to be "unobstructed from the ground to the sky," while the common recreation areas for condominiums not in the R-2 do not have this provision. All multi-family projects are permitted to encroach into the setbacks. Table 5 details Zoning Ordinance residential open space requirements. These requirements become important because much of the future open space and recreational areas in Lawndale will be provided through private developments, both residential and non-residential.

Regional Facilities

A variety of regional recreation and open space opportunities and facilities are available to residents of Lawndale. The closest is Alondra Park, located adjacent to the southeastern City boundary. The park is situated within the adjoining unincorporated area of Los Angeles County, east of Prairie Avenue and is operated by the County. The 200-acre park offers a variety of active and passive types of open space and recreation. Facilities include: Baseball and softball fields, a gymnasium, children's play equipment, a recreation club house, a swimming area and a 155-acre golf course.

In addition to Alondra Park, there is a range of open space and recreation opportunities within the greater Los Angeles County region. Figure 3 shows locations of regional opportunities such as museums and beaches. Other recreational uses located near Lawndale include miniature golf, water slides, and various commercial facilities such as bowling alleys.

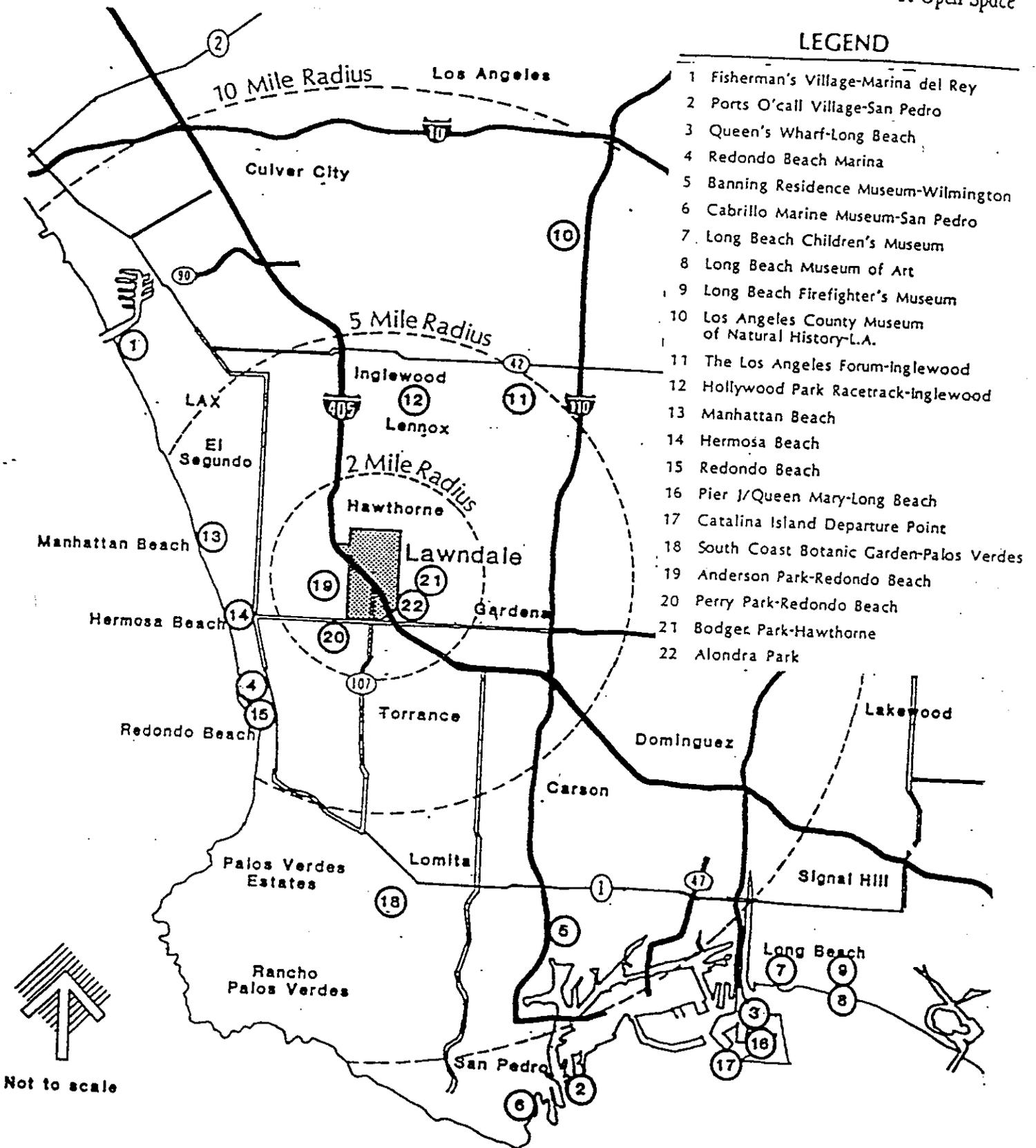
Given the City-wide population of 27,331, the current ratio of parkland to population in Lawndale is equal to approximately 0.6 acres per 1,000 persons. In relation to the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) accepted standard of 2.5 acres per 1,000 population, the City is over 29 acres deficient.

Residential Open Space							
Open Space Policy	Zoning Classification				Additional OS Policy		
	R1	R2	R3	R4	PRD Overlay	Condo	Apt
Allowable Uses							
Public and Associated Uses	•	•	•	•	•		
Development Regulations							
Required Setbacks:							
10' to 20' minimum front yard	•	•	•	•			
3' to 5' minimum side yard	•	•	•	•			
5' to 7' rear yard	•	•	•	•			
Required Common/ Private Recreation Space							
private recreation (open to sky): 200 sq. ft./unit		•					
common recreation space: 10% lot area			•	•		•	•
landscaped: 5% lot area				•			
common recreation space: 30% lot area					•		
private recreation space: 120 sq. ft./unit		•	•	•		•	•

Source: Lawndale Zoning Ordinance, 1985.

Residential Open Space Requirements

Table 5



Regional Open Space and Recreational Facilities

Figure C

Lawndale, however, is in a location that may not be appropriate to utilize the NRPA standard. Since the City is only 1,241 acres in size, factors such as regional opportunities should be taken into account. The location of Alondra Park and other regional facilities do provide open space and recreational opportunities that are not included in the calculation to determine deficiencies in City facilities.

Goals and Policies

In order to direct the preservation, enhancement and improvement of open space and recreational opportunities within the City of Lawndale, the following goals and policies are provided.

Goal 1. Open Space

It is the City of Lawndale's goal to provide sufficient and accessible open space areas for all existing and future residents.

Policy 1a

Develop and adopt a comprehensive open space funding program contingent on new development for acquisition and maintenance of open space and recreational facilities.

Policy 1b

Continue and pursue additional Joint Powers Agreements with Lawndale School District for Park uses at School sites.

Policy 1c

Should the Lawndale School District propose to sell or develop an existing facility, pursue a purchase from, or joint venture with, the District to ensure long-term open space availability.

Policy 1d

Encourage the creation of open space areas (i.e., common areas, courtyards) within non-residential developments.

Policy 1e

For residential developments, in order to maximize usable open space, the City shall discourage structural projections into required setback open space areas.

Policy 1f

Prepare and adopt a Master Street Tree program providing street trees in all development projects.

**Goal 2.
Recreation**

Policy 1g

Review new development to ensure existing significant trees and vegetation on adjacent parcels will not be adversely affected due to interference with sunlight and drainage patterns.

It is the intent of the City of Lawndale to provide recreational facilities and programs for all segments of the community.

Policy 2a

Encourage and promote use of the Civic Center and Prairie Avenue Community Center facilities for recreational activities and programs provided by the City.

Policy 2b

Study the feasibility of annexing all, or portions, of Alondra Park to increase City-wide recreational opportunities.

Policy 2c

Evaluate all vacant parcels within the City for their ability to accommodate active recreational uses (i.e., basketball, volleyball, etc.).

Policy 2d

Encourage new development, through development incentives, to provide on-site recreational facilities for employees and residents.

Policy 2e

Encourage multi-family residential developments to provide active open space and recreational uses which are maintained by Homeowners Associations.

**Goal 3.
Trails**

It is the City of Lawndale's goal to provide safe and accessible riding and walking trails for the City's residents.

Policy 3a

Pursue the feasibility of acquisition and development of a trail corridor along the AT & SF railroad right-of-way.

Policy 3b

Pursue funding and development of City-wide pedestrian/bicycle trails to integrate with the Los Angeles County Regional Trail System.

Policy 3c

Where feasible, improve and promote the establishment of a fitness trail utilizing alleys, streets, sidewalks, railroad right-of-way, and other open space areas.

Implementation Programs

1. Open Space Programs

1.1. Park Master Plan

Prepare and adopt a Master Parks Plan to guide the provision and maintenance of parkland. The Master Park Plan should be designed to serve as a statement of general policy and desired City standards for location and development of public parks and community open space areas, with definite time frames outlined.

1.2. Small Park Development Program

Utilizing Park Fee Ordinance revenues, the City shall pursue development of pocket parks and/or tot lots on underutilized and vacant parcels.

1.3. Naylor Act Rights Program

The City shall pursue the acquisition of surplus school sites utilizing its Naylor Act Rights, when the sites become available.

1.4. Zoning Ordinance Revisions

The City shall revise the City's Zoning Ordinance to require open space and plazas within multi-family residential and non-residential developments. Revision also to include language requiring street tree plantings and provisions for maintaining existing trees on sites.

1.5. Open Space Evaluation Program

The City shall develop an evaluation system for prioritizing open space and recreational opportunities as well as future investments using the following criteria:

Benefits:

- Increased Land Values of Adjacent Properties
- Recreation User Satisfaction
- Savings in Transportation Costs
- Improvement in Mental and Physical Health
- Reduction on Levels of Air, Noise or Water Pollution
- Increased Recreation Opportunities for the Disadvantaged
- Retention of Options for Future Growth

Costs:

- Land Acquisition
- Development of Recreation Facilities
- Maintenance and Operation of Recreation Facilities
- Impacts on Tax Base
- Impacts on Housing Market

These costs and benefits must be carefully weighed when trying to provide adequate open space and recreation areas.

2. Recreation Programs

2.1. Civic Recreation Program

The City shall continue to fund recreational programs and advertise on a citywide basis these programs available for the citizenry. Advertisement should be in public places and in various local periodicals.

2.2. Recreational Use Program

In conjunction with the Small Park Development Program, the City shall develop recreational uses such as basketball courts, volleyball, tennis, etc. on vacant parcels.

2.3. Zoning Ordinance Revisions

The City shall revise the Zoning Ordinance to require active recreational amenities in multi-family residential and non-residential developments.

2.4. Commercial Recreation Program

The City may encourage commercial recreational uses to locate in Lawndale. Incentives such as advertising on City owned bulletin boards, stream line processing and zoning ordinance variances may be utilized.

2.5. Alondra Park

The City may pursue the annexation of Alondra Park by preparing a feasibility study to analyze the impacts of such action. If favorable, the City shall make application with SCAG to annex a portion, or all of the park, to increase recreational opportunities in Lawndale.

3. Trails Programs

3.1. Master Trails Plan

The City shall develop and adopt a Master Trails Plan delineating potential and proposed trail routes throughout the City. This plan should be prepared in conjunction with regional trail systems and incorporate them where appropriate.

3.2. Fitness Trail Program

The City shall develop and adopt a city-wide Fitness Trail fee charged to new residential developments. This program will include the utilization of the AT & SF railroad right-of-way, if it becomes available to the City.