



05



**Recommendations &
Action Plans**

5.1 Overview of Recommendations

Recommendations were derived from community input including stakeholder interviews, community workshops, intercept surveys, statistically valid surveys, pop-up outreach, and staff interviews. The recommendations were also informed by the Level of Service (LOS) analysis, geographic gap analysis, and funding considerations.

The following discussion describes ways to increase LOS, equitable distribution, and the quality of the parks and recreation system. This is accomplished through adding and enhancing amenities, as well as a commitment to partner with private development and schools to lower the deficiencies and geographic distribution of neighborhood and community parks. Expanding recreational programs or partnerships with those that could deliver programs, is also important in order to provide access to services. It is equally important to look at improving organizational efficiencies, and augmenting financial opportunities and staffing for the division under Public Works.

The following recommendations for providing park and recreation experiences are listed in order of priority for helping to meet future demand for park facilities, as well as equitable distribution of amenities and access to these facilities and potential programs that may or may not be offered in current situations.

5.2 Recommendations for Meeting Population Based Standards

The first five goals (and their supporting objectives) are focused on meeting the quantity of parks available to the public based on current and future populations. Parks standards are not only about the quantity of parks, but also about the equitable distribution of these facilities and the ability of the public to access these facilities. As stated in the General Plan Open Space Policy 6.2, "to the extent feasible, park and recreation facilities shall be equitably distributed throughout the city to serve the various neighborhoods and all socioeconomic segments of the city's population. Particular emphasis shall be placed on provision of new park and recreation facilities in areas that are underserved."

5.2.1 Recommendation Goal 1: Maximize active park acreage on public land without disturbing passive natural area.

The city has over 500 acres of neighborhood and regional open space and several underutilized open space areas, but also some deficiency in active parks. This is partially due to inaccurate park categorization. Some neighborhood parks only have a small portion of active functions and the rest remain passive natural area, while some neighborhood open spaces have some flat lawn space with high infill potential for new parks. This two-way transformation between parks and open space is more like a specification of open land form. Goleta's park system can benefit in the long run in that more potential parkland is identified without changing the form and nature of existing passive open space.

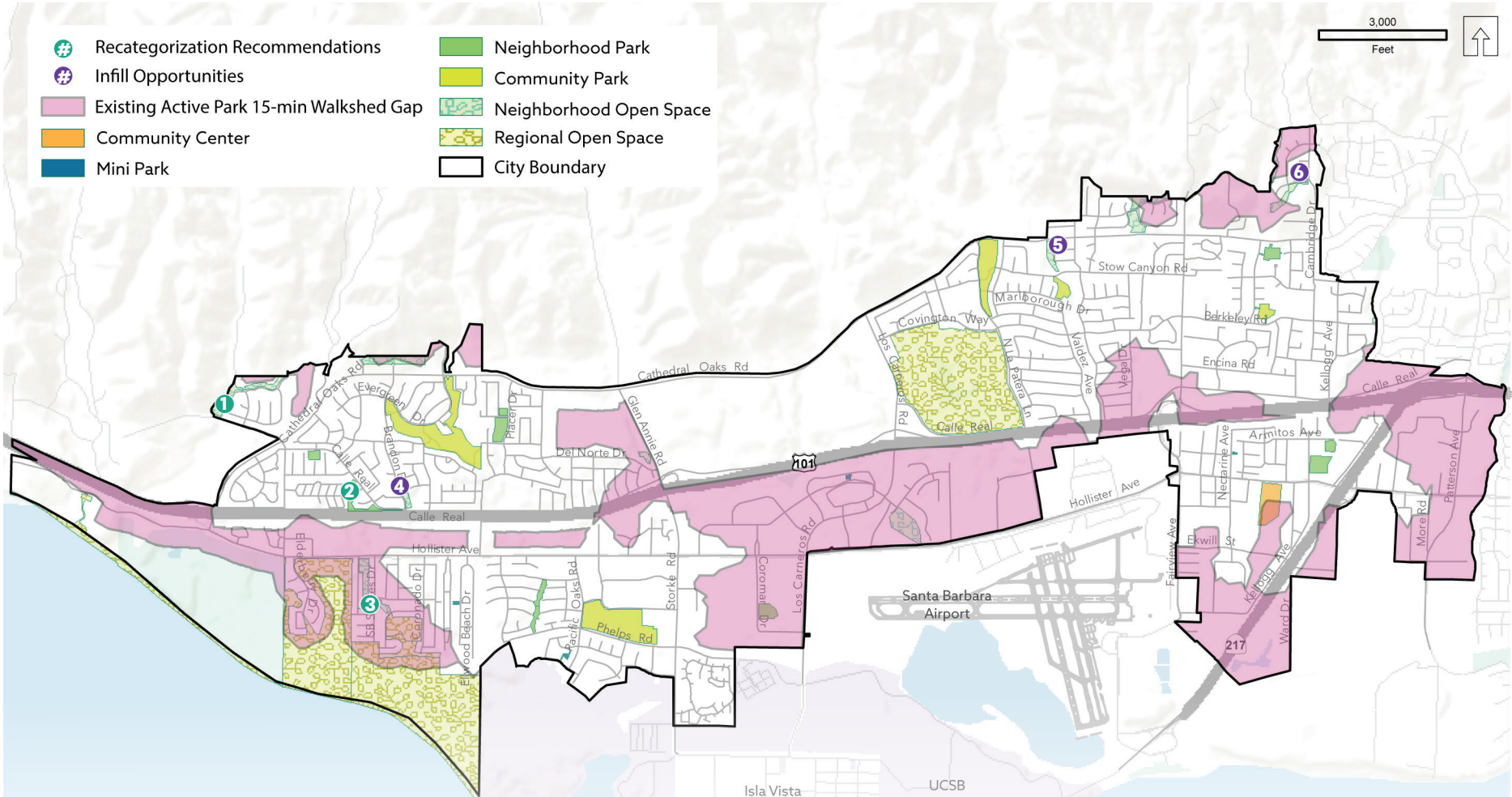
Objective 1.1 Re-categorize active parks and passive open spaces.

Detailed desktop inventory and measurements were done to specify and separate areas with playground and other existing park facilities versus passive unimproved natural areas. Three parks are suggested to be split or re-designated as neighborhood parks and neighborhood open spaces. Number 1 through 3 in Figure 5-1 point out these areas.

Natural Open Space - This category assumes some level of natural habitat is left intact on site or has been created for the purposes of habitat restoration. In general, wetland, riparian corridor, trees, or oak woodland habitats make up this category. Peripheral trails with educational interpretive signage programs will be allowed in these areas, per General Plan policies CE 1.6 and 2.3. Entrance signage designating the park as natural open space should be installed along with posted rules on access restrictions and encouragement of environmental protection and limited access. Maintenance is limited to invasive removal, dead fuel removal and monitoring to prevent homeless encampments from occurring.

General Open Space / Unimproved Parkland - When an area has been left that may have been related to agricultural lands or other disturbed open space that is not considered to be native or natural from a habitat perspective, it should be considered as general open space. This would include areas graded by adjacent development that are dedicated as open space areas turned over to the City of Goleta. The property should be allowed to have access through the site with trails, interpretive signage, picnic areas, benches, open turf fields or grasslands. Parking lots around the periphery of the site will be allowed as will restrooms. Activities associated with this type of parkland will be limited to low intensive activities requiring minimal facility

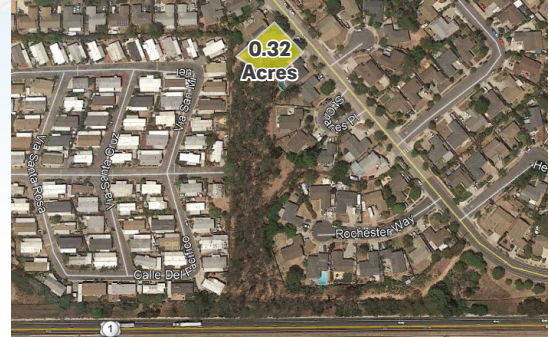
Figure 5-1: Reorganize Active Parks and Passive Open Spaces; Infill Opportunities in Existing Parks and Open Spaces



1 San Miguel Park is currently categorized as a neighborhood park, while it is mostly unimproved natural land. Its available active space has a playground, a swing set and a multi-purpose field. It should be divided into 0.75-acre mini park and a linear open space along the creek.



2 Winchester Park is currently categorized as a neighborhood park, but it is mostly passive open space. Its available active space has a playground and a multi-purpose field. It should be divided into 0.32-acre mini park with the rest of the park remaining as open space.

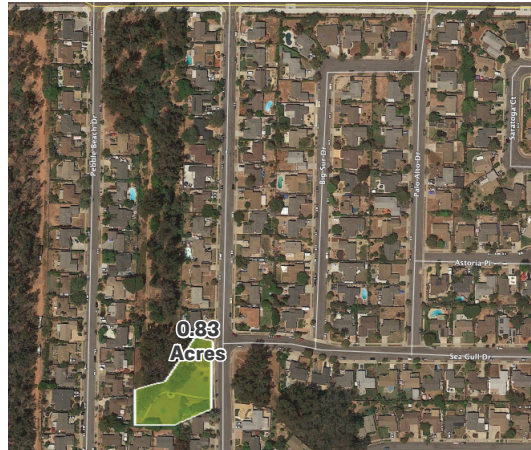


or amenity development. Uses should relate to the setting and be passive in nature but can include walking, hiking, biking, running, leashed dog walking, open play, picnicking, orienteering, geo-caches, distant nature viewing and education. Par-course exercise equipment, obstacle courses and adventure playgrounds with ropes courses should be allowed. Nature Centers, museums and cultural exhibits are allowed. Active sports fields, standard playgrounds, courts sports or skate parks would not be allowed. Lighting would be limited to security lighting only. Parklands in this category would be designated as neighborhood open space or regional open space if above 5 acres in size.

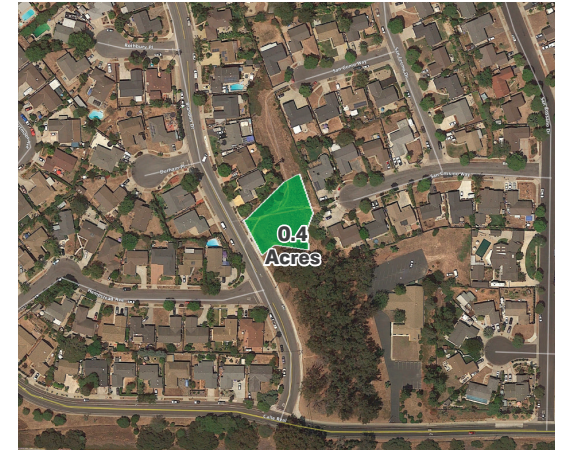
Non-maintained for Public Access- Areas where there are no natural resources, no park facilities, and no desire to add park facilities should be considered Non-maintained. There should be no expectation by the community of maintenance or the addition of park amenities. These facilities would generally not be counted as parks since they support no uses and provide no amenities.

Improved Parkland- All other parkland would be designated as improved parklands including mini-parks, neighborhood parks or community parks and community centers. All facility types would be allowed, depending on the development of individual park master plans and public outreach for park development proposals. Several of the existing open space areas (or at least some portion of these open space areas) should be reclassified as improved parklands. These would include: San Miguel, Evergreen, Winchester 1, Santa Barbara Shores, Oro Verde and San Jose Creek.

3 **Santa Barbara Shores Open Space** is currently categorized as a neighborhood open space. Although it is mostly vegetated natural land, it has a small active area with a playground, a swing set and a multi-purpose field. It should be divided into 0.83-acre mini park and a linear open space with a dirt trail.



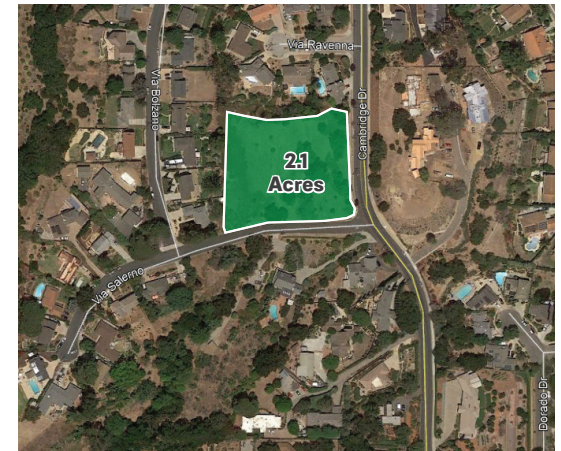
4 **Brandon Park** is a neighborhood open space under current categorization. Although it is mostly vegetated natural land, it has a small and relatively flat space. It should be divided into 0.4-acre mini park and an open space with a dirt trail. This mini park can also serve as a great connection between Brandon Drive and the two cul-de-sacs.



5 **Stonebridge Open Space** is currently categorized as a neighborhood open space. Although it is mostly vegetated natural land, it has a relatively flat area. It can be divided into 1.6-acre neighborhood park with some mature trees and a linear open space along San Pedro Creek.



6 **Oro Verde Park** is currently categorized as a neighborhood open space. The portion framed by Cambridge Drive and Via Salerno is a relatively flat and square space with sparsely distributed trees which is perfect for a 2.1-acre neighborhood park that alleviates local active park gaps.



Objective 1.2 Identify infill opportunities in open spaces

Goleta's residents take pride in the rich open space provision within the city, and want the existing open space to remain mostly undeveloped. However, under the current categorization, not all the open spaces are entirely natural undeveloped areas. Some have flat, disturbed and non-natural space which presents infill opportunities and may have already been used as multi-purpose fields. Three open space areas have been suggested to be made in neighborhood parks with the potential for infill of passive or active amenities. Number 4 through 6 in Figure 5-1 point out these areas. Any development on sites containing natural habitat areas should be sited and designed to be fully consistent with policies in the General Plan/Coastal Land Use Plan Conservation Element.

5.2.2 Recommendation Goal 2: Consider publicly funded parklands to meet deficiencies.

The city should consider the addition of publicly funded parkland to meet park acreage deficiencies. Figure 5-2 indicates a number of city or county lands that do not have major investments on them and that could be considered for future park development. This figure also shows privately held lands that have been designated for open space. If these are not resource based sensitive lands, then these areas could be considered for park development, including publicly accessible open space, dog parks, mini-parks or a natural resource based park with trails and educational/interpretive amenities associated with them.

Objective 2.1 Focus on identifying a potential park site in areas where a park equity gap currently exists. First focus on under-served areas.

The first metric or approach for new park development is to place park facilities in the part of town where existing geographic gaps exist in terms of proximity of parks to existing populations. This is particularly important for neighborhood parks in areas where the demographics indicate higher densities, families and overall shortages of services for under-served populations and disadvantaged communities.

Objective 2.2 Focus on identifying potential park sites in areas where major growth is likely to occur and where undeveloped land could be dedicated for public use as required as a condition of project approvals.

The second metric or approach should be used to identify where major increases in future populations are planning to be allowed. Future populations may result in an overall deficiency in future park standards, so it would be logical to place new parks in these areas. This should be the first metric to be used for new parklands. Where possible, future development should be used to fund and construct facilities directly. But if the development occurs in a park poor area, then it is logical to combine the resources provided by the new development with those of the city to identify new parkland. Often, developers are willing to provide parklands that they dedicate to the city. Having parks very near their new development is often a selling feature for housing buyers. In some cases, the park demand from the new population may warrant the project to fully develop the park using their own financial resources. However, state law only allows the city to insist on park investments commensurate to the development's fair share of any existing deficiency.

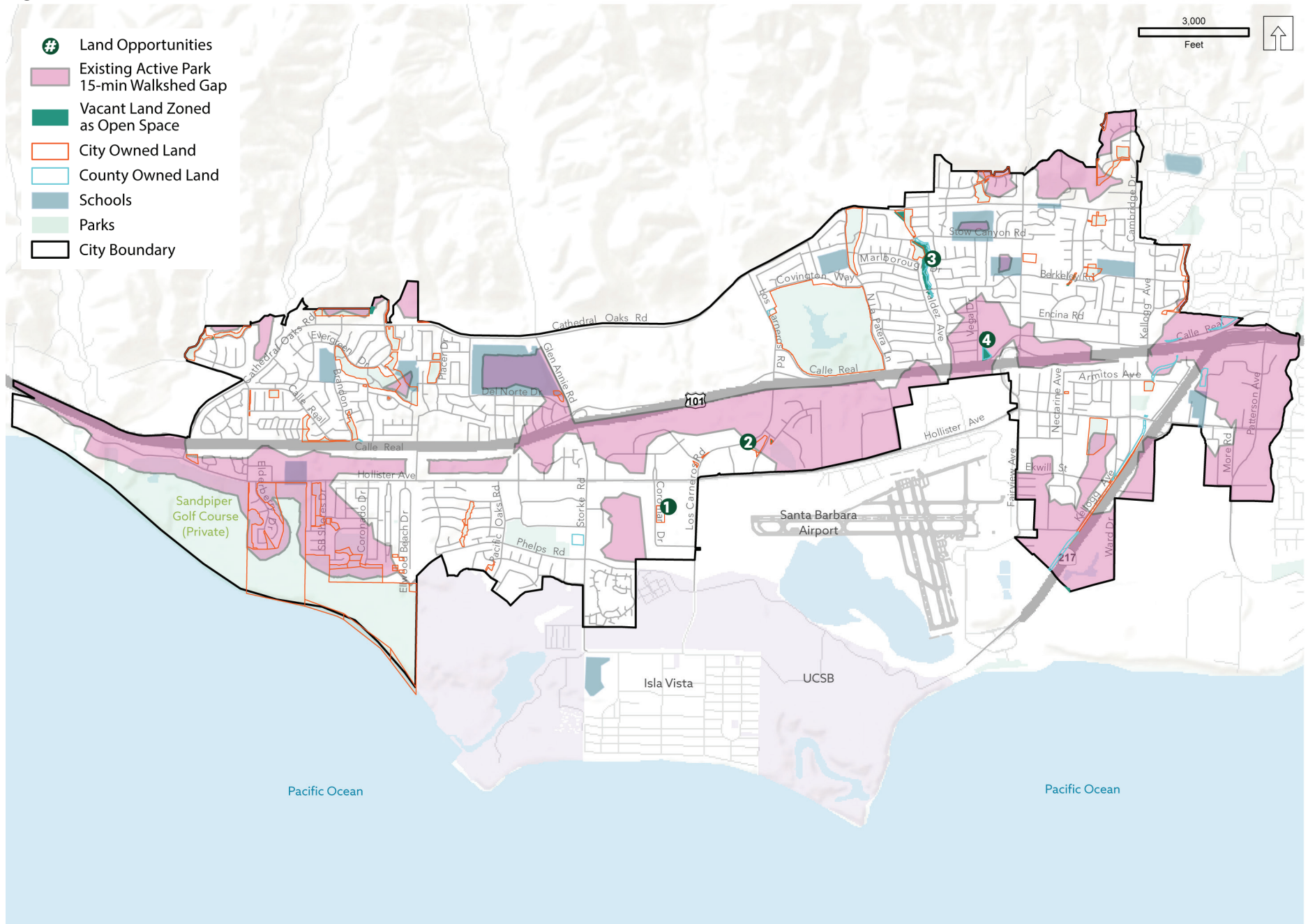
Objective 2.3 Focus on identifying park sites in areas where the City of Goleta currently owns undeveloped or under-developed lands.

This third metric or approach should be used to identify potential parklands when the first two methods have not identified enough lands to meet deficiencies. A review of all undeveloped or underdeveloped lands owned by the City of Goleta should be identified and determined if they are in the right location for parklands and if this use is compatible with other departmental needs. Having the ownership of the land can dramatically decrease park development costs.

Objective 2.4 Focus on identifying a potential park site in areas where lands are undeveloped and where the current land use or zoning designation is in a category that is fully served and where future demand is not likely to need these lands for future projects.

This fourth approach can be used to find parklands using or purchasing privately owned lands that may not be as expensive as other undeveloped lands in the city. A review of all undeveloped lands, especially in those areas where the current demand of land uses is being fully met should be identified. A review of future development trends may indicate the amount of available land for specific land uses is in excess of projected demand existing in some areas where a park deficiency is most acute.

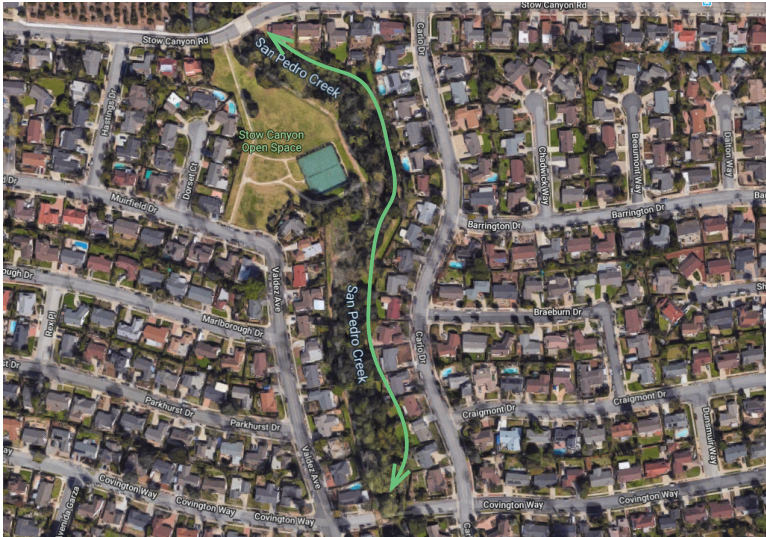
Figure 5-2: Potential Public Land Opportunities for New Parks



1 This city-owned parcel is adjacent to the existing Deckers Park, a privately owned park located near the airport. The parcel is 2.3 acres in size and currently occupied by a corporation yard, but almost half of the space remains undeveloped. This land opportunity makes potential expansion of Deckers Park possible, although it depends on further study and cooperation with the developer of Deckers Park.



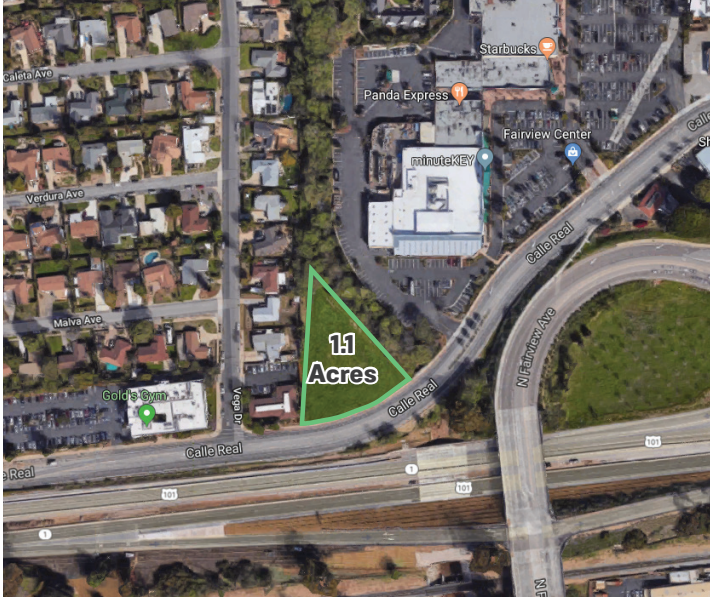
3 This county-owned parcel is currently a linear natural area along the San Pedro Creek that is unimproved. It is adjacent to the existing Stow Tennis Courts, which is a community park. This is a good opportunity for a dirt trail along the creek bank to connect Stow Canyon Rd and Covington Way, although further study and coordination with the county would be needed to test feasibility.



2 With the new residential development near Los Carneros Road, an increased demand for parks and recreational facilities in this "park-poor" area will occur. The 1.1-acre city-owned vacant land at the corner is perfect for a new neighborhood park to serve this area.



4 This county-owned parcel is adjacent to Calle Real and a retail complex. The 1.1-acre vacant land at the corner is perfect for siting a neighborhood park to serve this "park-poor" area.



5.2.3 Recommendation Goal 3: Develop and implement Joint Use Agreements (JUA)/Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with schools districts for use of amenities on school sites.

Schools are well distributed around the city and contain general open space , natural turf and amenities that work well for park and recreation requirements. Although the funds for schools and parks are distinctively different, they are all based on tax payer or user fees from the public. Potential joint use of facilities is the first area that should be explored for helping to fill in park gaps or amenity deficiencies.

Objective 3.1 Look for opportunities to create partnerships with schools.

The City should partner with the Goleta Union School District and the Santa Barbara Unified School District through MOUs or JUAs to provide open areas and use of school facilities for the community during after-school hours. The City should ensure that all future partnerships are accurately documented in a signed partnership agreement.

Objective 3.2 Work with school districts to develop neighborhood parks at local schools.

Provide additional leisure opportunities for residents through the development of school sites for community use during after-school hours. The use of school property as neighborhood parks would reduce the need to purchase and build new recreation facilities. Figure 5-3 indicates schools that are in or near the areas where geographic gaps for parks exist. These include:

- * 1. Brandon Elementary (Goleta Union)
- * 2. Ellwood Elementary (Goleta Union)
- * 3. Kellogg Elementary (Goleta Union)
- * 4. La Patera Elementary (Goleta Union)
- * 5. Goleta Valley Junior High and SB Charter School (S.B. Unified)
- * 6. Dos Pueblos High (S.B. Unified)

Objective 3.3 Foster discussions and agreements that are mutually beneficial for both sides and ensure that roles and responsibilities are defined for each organization.

Partnerships benefit both sides of the providers and users. For an agreement to be sustainable or even agreed upon, both sides need to be willing to give in order to get the benefits. The public will benefit from neighborhood-close facilities that were paid for by taxpayers, the school can obtain benefit from assistance in capital costs and/or maintenance costs, and the City can benefit from meeting their obligations for providing recreational experiences for it's citizens. The best items to focus on may be either assistance for adding capital investments or assistance for their maintenance requirements, depending on the school's priorities. Increased maintenance may result from increased use of their lands, so maintenance responsibilities to assist or take over on all maintenance of the shared facilities is a common approach.

Investments in facilities that a have a dual use for students during school hours and the general public in after school hours are better items to focus on for the City of Goleta to try and fund. Playgrounds make sense for elementary schools, while sports fields and court sports make the most sense for middle schools and high schools. Added facilities in these park areas could also be used by after school programs that would benefit from immediate access to these facilities.

Security and liability are two important aspects to address in all joint use agreements. All schools could benefit from increased security. If the district is already trying to improve controlled access to their school grounds, then perhaps the city's investment in gate requirements and automatic locking technologies could help them along in the process. Or the commitment for City staff to help monitor and secure the facilities during after school hours may also be part of an agreement. Generally, the more eyes on the park resulting from afternoon and weekend uses, the less likely that damaging or unsafe activities will occur. Finally, improved access through gates, trails and walkways benefit school users for improved walking and biking access to the schools, as well as the general publics access to these facilities. Creative thinking and communications are important for reaching agreements. A win-win with a give and take will be the only way an agreement can be reached and sustained into the future. The best way to approach these agreements is to start the conversation and identify what each party needs, what they are concerned about and what items they can not accept to occur. Solutions can then be developed that can benefit the City, the school and the community.

Figure 5-3: Expanding Park Distribution and Acres through Joint Use with Local Schools

