

4.15 Recreation

This section describes the existing recreation conditions of the project site and vicinity, identifies associated regulatory requirements, evaluates potential impacts, and identifies mitigation measures related to implementation of the proposed project. Information for this section's analysis comes from the City of Irvine (City) 2045 General Plan and information provided by Brookfield Residential.

4.15.1 Existing Conditions

Project Site

The project site consists primarily of active agricultural fields with equipment storage and laydown areas in the northern portion of the site. According to the California Department of Conservation, the site is designated prime farmland, with a small area of unique farmland (DOC 2025). The current General Plan designation for the project site is Recreation and the current zoning is 1.5 – Recreation, although no recreational uses are currently occurring on site.

Surrounding Parks, Trails, and Recreational Facilities

The City contains 22 community parks and more than 40 neighborhood parks. Many parks include amenities such as swimming pools, multi-use buildings, child/open play areas, amphitheaters, trail access, barbecues, and picnic areas. Park athletic facilities include soccer fields, tennis courts, pickleball courts, outdoor badminton courts, basketball courts, and volleyball courts (City of Irvine 2024a). The City also includes more than 6,500 acres of preserved open space (City of Irvine 2024b), including the forthcoming Gateway Preserve immediately north of the project site. It also contains regional parks and an extensive network of bike paths and trails, including the Jeffrey Open Space Trail (JOST).

Jeffrey Open Space Trail

The JOST is a recreational resource for the residents of the City. It is an important element in the City's overall Open Space system, linking the conservation and Open Space lands within the City. It provides a key linkage extending from the Pacific Ocean to the Santa Ana Mountains and Cleveland National Forest (City of Irvine 2024b). The existing JOST runs south to north along Jeffrey Road from Interstate (I) 5 to Portola Parkway. The JOST is currently being extended southward and over I-5 from Walnut Avenue to Barranca Parkway. The proposed project would include the extension of the JOST to its planned northern terminus, extending north 2,750 feet from Portola Parkway to South Park at the entrance to the forthcoming Gateway Preserve. A pedestrian bridge would be constructed over Portola Parkway similar to other pedestrian bridges connecting the JOST over freeways and arterial roadways throughout the City.

Gateway Preserve

The City is in the process of planning for the development of a separate project called the Gateway Preserve, which would create a 700-acre open space preserve in the hills above north Irvine adjacent to the proposed project site. The Gateway Preserve Project includes the redevelopment of the All American Asphalt plant, which has long been a concern of local residents, into a park, interpretive center, and staging area for hiking. Funds to acquire the All American Asphalt plant would come from the sale of developable land that the Irvine Company is transferring to

the City. This developable land constitutes the proposed project site. South Park, at the northern edge of the proposed project site, would act as a transitional space and entry point to the Gateway Preserve. Jeffrey Road would end in a cul-de-sac just beyond South Park, and Figure 4.15-1, Conceptual South Park Plan, shows the conceptual plan for the terminus of Jeffrey Road into the Gateway Preserve.

4.15.2 Relevant Plans, Policies, and Ordinances

Federal

There are no federal regulations regarding recreation that would apply to the project.

State

Quimby Act

California allows a city or county to pass an ordinance that requires, as a condition of approval of a subdivision, either the dedication of land, the payment of a fee in lieu of dedication, or a combination of both for park and recreational purposes if certain requirements are met (California Government Code Section 66477). One of these requirements is that the dedicated land or fees, or combination thereof, shall be used only for the purposes of developing or rehabilitating neighborhood or community park or recreational facilities to serve the subdivision for which the land was dedicated or fees were paid. This legislation, commonly called the Quimby Act, establishes a maximum parkland dedication standard of 3 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for a new subdivision development unless the amount of existing neighborhood and community parkland exceeds that limit.

California Government Code, Section 66000.5 – Mitigation Fee Act

The Mitigation Fee Act complements the Quimby Act by allowing separate impact and recreation facilities fees to be collected so that parks can be improved and recreation facilities can be maintained. The act also allows impact fees to be placed on non-subdivision residential developments.

Local

City of Irvine Parks Master Plan

Adopted in June 2017, the City of Irvine Parks Master Plan (City of Irvine 2017) provides guidance for the development, maintenance, and enhancement of Irvine's public parks over a 10-year period. It includes systemwide objectives and recommendations to guide the planning of park projects over the plan period. The Parks Master Plan recognizes that as the City approaches buildout, the focus of future park planning must focus on maintenance and enhancement of existing park resources but also identify several site opportunities for the construction of new parks. The Parks Master Plan identifies three community and two neighborhood park sites for development of new parks. One of the proposed development sites is Gateway Park, located on the proposed project site.

Irvine 2045 General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element

Adopted in 2024, the General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element (City of Irvine 2024b) outlines the goals, objectives, policies, and implementation measures for the preservation and conservation of open space and natural resources in the City. It includes various policies related to the establishment and maintenance of parks

and recreational areas. The following provides a summary of the most applicable goal/objective and policies that pertain to the project, and is not a comprehensive list:

Goal 6. Require developers of residential land to dedicate park land and/or improvements/amenities, and/or pay fees in lieu of dedication, at a rate of five (5) acres per thousand (1,000) population, consistent with the Quimby Act, Subdivision Map Act, Irvine Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances and General Plan standards.

Objective COS-6. Maintain and enhance the City's network of parks and recreational areas that provide a variety of recreational opportunities, and which link and integrate other conservation and open space areas into the land use fabric of the City.

Policy (a). Continue to coordinate parks and recreational opportunities through the General Plan and Parks Master Plan to ensure adequate and timely development of parks and recreational areas.

Policy (b). Expand opportunities and places for casual nature-related recreation and leisure (e.g., the Jeffrey Open Space Trail) that are distinct from turf parks and protected wildlands.

Policy (d). Provide for a broad spectrum of recreational opportunities and park facilities, in either public or private ownership, to accommodate a variety of types and sizes of functions and provide safe and easy access for their intended users.

Policy (e). Ensure that Irvine's park system is developed, maintained, and rehabilitated in a manner that is cost-effective and consistent with the community's needs and ability to pay.

Policy (f). Require developers of residential land to dedicate park land and/or improvements/amenities, and/or pay fees in lieu of dedication, at a rate of five (5) acres per thousand (1,000) population, consistent with the Quimby Act, Subdivision Map Act, Irvine Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances and General Plan standards.

Goal 9. Enhanced utilization of open space in existing development and new development projects.

Objective COS-9: Promote and, when suitable, mandate the incorporation of open space areas in multi-family, mixed-use, and office developments to supplement the available open space and recreational facilities in the City. Optimize the utilization of current public open space assets on a neighborhood scale and explore possibilities for private development to enrich neighborhood open space resources.

Policy (a): Continue to enforce zoning regulations mandating accessibility to open space for new residential, retail, and commercial developments.

Policy (b): Explore the potential for developers to contribute to the enhancement of existing open space accessibility through a fee payment instead of mandatory on-site parks provision for new developments, with the fee going towards enhancing access to existing open space.

Policy (d): Encourage the establishment of incentives for incorporating publicly accessible open space into private development initiatives.

Goal 10. Enhanced open space accessibility and utilization, and conservation efforts of resources.

Objective COS-10: The City commits to creating and fostering well-integrated and sustainable open space resources available to City residents and visitors.

Policy (a): Provide a variety of public and private parks to meet residents' needs.

Policy (b): Ensure that the City's park, recreation, and open space system is accessible to all residents, including users of different abilities and demographic characteristics.

Policy (c): Encourage the creation of dynamic parks as special and unique places, adding or incorporating art and historic resources, innovative features, diverse landscaping, nature, varied color palettes, and welcoming amenities.

City of Irvine Municipal Code

Park Dedication (Chapter 10, Section 5-5-1004 of the Irvine Municipal Code)

Chapter 10, Section 5-5-1004 of the City's Municipal Code outlines the required park dedication/in-lieu fee requirements for development of residential subdivisions. Part (C) explains the specific dedication requirements, which are at the rate of 5 acres per 1,000 population, apportioned as 2 acres for community parks and 3 acres for neighborhood parks.

Part (D) outlines how to calculate the required dedication/fee for a development. It states that when the requirements are complied with solely on the basis of providing park land, the minimum amount of land to be provided shall be based on the dedication standard and the density classifications and persons per dwelling unit included in the table below. It also states that when the requirements are complied with solely based on the payment of park fees, the amount of such fees shall be computed by multiplying the number of proposed dwelling units by the dwelling units shown in Table 4.15-1 and by multiplying the resultant acreage amount by the fair market value of land being developed. Lastly, it states that when the requirements are complied with by both the provision of park land and payment of a park fee, the amount of the park fee shall be computed by determining the required amount of park land and subtracting the amount of park land actually provided, with the remainder converted to a fee in accordance with the fee structure described herein.

Table 4.15-1. Population Calculations for Park Dedication Requirement

Dwelling Units per Net Acre	Average Number of Persons per Dwelling Unit
0 to 1.0	3.10
1.1 to 6.5	2.90
6.6 to 12.5	2.75
12.6 to 31.0	2.25
31.1 and above	1.46

Source: City Municipal Code Chapter 10, Section 5-5-1004.

4.15.3 Thresholds of Significance

The significance criteria used to evaluate the project impacts to recreation are based on Appendix G of the CEQA Guidelines. According to Appendix G, a significant impact related to recreation would occur if the project would:

1. Increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated.
2. Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

4.15.4 Impacts Analysis

1. ***Would the project increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility would occur or be accelerated?***

Less-Than-Significant Impact. The proposed project includes the development of a new residential community with 1,360 two- and three-story attached and detached homes. It is expected that the project population would use existing neighborhood parks, regional parks, and other recreational facilities in the City. However, the incremental impact of this additional population on the use of existing recreational facilities would not result in substantial physical deterioration of these facilities or acceleration thereof, even if the population exclusively used existing facilities. Also, pursuant to the Quimby Act (the goal of which is to reduce strain on existing parks and provide adequate park space to accommodate new residential development), the Conservation and Open Space Element of the General Plan (City of Irvine 2024b), and the Subdivision Ordinance (Chapter 10, Section 5-5-1004 of the Irvine Municipal Code), developers are required to dedicate park land and/or improvements/amenities and/or pay fees in lieu of dedication. Calculated using Table 4.15-1, such dedication would be at a rate of 5 acres per 1,000 persons, apportioned at 2 acres of community parks and 3 acres of neighborhood parks. Affordable housing projects have a reduced requirement of 3.5 acres of park land for every 1,000 population (2 acres of neighborhood park and 1.5 acres of community park). The project would have 1,020 units in the 12.6 to 31.0 range and 340 units in the 31.1 and above range, which equates to a total of 2,791 persons, as calculated using Table 4.15-1. For the proposed project, this equates to a requirement of approximately 5.58 acres of community park and 8.37 acres of neighborhood park. The proposed project includes approximately 7.2 acres of park land. The remainder of the requirements will be paid via in-lieu fees by the individual developers developing the project. Residents would likely most often use the project's recreational facilities close to their places of residence and would therefore not use existing facilities at a rate proportional to the population of the community. Construction of the project would also likely increase the usage of the Gateway Preserve, given the proximity to the trails and the fact that South Park would act as a gateway into the preserve. Furthermore, Jeffrey Road would dead-end into a cul-de-sac just beyond South Park, providing another opportunity for visitors to park and enjoy the preserve. Figure 4.15-1 shows the conceptual plan for this cul-de-sac. There may be additional hikers and off-road bicyclists that would use the trails in the preserve; however, funds collected from in-lieu park fees would help mitigate any physical deterioration to the Gateway Preserve, which would be an off-site impact of the implementation of the project. Additionally, the additional use of existing recreational facilities would be offset by the payment of in-lieu fees. Therefore, the project's impact on existing parks and recreational facilities would be less than significant and no mitigation is required.

2. *Would the project include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment?*

Significant and Unavoidable Impact. The proposed project anticipates the construction of five parks. One of the private parks would include amenities such as a clubhouse, pools, seating, and a playground. South Park would include parking, restrooms, and trail staging. The project also includes extension of the JOST northward from its existing northern terminus at Portola Parkway to South Park at the entrance to the forthcoming Gateway Preserve. Because the parks and JOST extension are part of the project, their potential adverse physical effect on the environment is assessed throughout this Draft EIR. Mitigation is required to reduce impacts in several environmental resource areas, as assessed throughout Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR and summarized in Chapter 1, Executive Summary. As such, those mitigation measures that would reduce an adverse physical effect on the environment are applicable to the construction and expansion of recreational facilities that is a part of the project.

The project would have significant and unavoidable impacts in several resource areas. Therefore, because the construction and expansion of recreational facilities is part of the project, impacts related to physical effects on the environment due to the construction or expansion of recreational facilities would be significant and unavoidable. See Chapter 1 for a summary of all significant and unavoidable impacts.

Impact Summary

The physical effects on the environment due to the construction or expansion of recreational facilities caused by the development of the proposed project would be a significant impact and feasible mitigation must be applied. Other impacts to recreation would be less than significant.

4.15.5 Mitigation Measures

Because the project includes construction and operation of recreational facilities, all mitigation within this document that addresses a physical effect on the environment would be applicable to recreational resource impacts. See Chapter 1, Executive Summary, for a summary of all mitigation measures required for the project.

4.15.6 Level of Significance After Mitigation

Despite implementation of mitigation, impacts relating to the construction or expansion of recreational facilities that might have an adverse physical effect on the environment would remain significant and unavoidable. Impacts related to the physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities do not require mitigation and would remain less than significant.

4.15.7 Cumulative Impacts

Other past, present, and reasonably foreseeable projects that involve the construction of recreational facilities would result in adverse physical effects on the environment due to the construction or expansion of such facilities. Because the project involves the construction and operation of recreational facilities, all significant and unavoidable cumulative impacts that would have a physical effect on the environment, as identified throughout Chapter 4 of this Draft EIR and summarized in Chapter 1, Executive Summary, would be considered cumulative impacts related to adverse physical effects on the environment associated with the construction and operation of recreational facilities.

As with the proposed project, all projects within the City that would increase the use of existing neighborhood and regional parks or other recreational facilities such that substantial physical deterioration of the facility could occur or be accelerated would be subject to the requirements of the Quimby Act, the City's General Plan, and the Park Dedication section of the Irvine Municipal Code (Chapter 10, Section 5-5-1004) requiring that developers dedicate park land and/or improvements/amenities and/or pay fees in lieu of dedication, at a rate of 5 acres per 1,000 persons, apportioned at 2 acres of community parks and 3 acres of neighborhood parks. Affordable housing projects have a reduced requirement of 3.5 acres of park land for every 1,000 population (2 acres of neighborhood park and 1.5 acres of community park). As such, impacts to existing recreational facilities would be mitigated to a less-than-significant level on a project-by-project basis. Therefore, the proposed project would not contribute to a cumulatively considerable impact related to the physical deterioration of existing recreational facilities.

4.15.8 References

City of Irvine. 2017. *Parks Master Plan*. Final. June 2017. Prepared by MIG for the City of Irvine.
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DOC (California Department of Conservation). 2025. "Important Farmland Categories." Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program website. Accessed January 6, 2025. <https://www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp/fmmp/Pages/Important-Farmland-Categories.aspx>.

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SOURCE: Brookfield Residential SWA
 * Conceptual, not approved and the plan is subject to revision

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