



*Photo of west side park site*



CITY of CALABASAS

## Section 6

### RECREATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

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- *Alternative Approaches to Identifying Needs*
- *Methodology of Assessing Park Land Needs*
- *Park and Open Space Needs*
- *Recreation Facility Needs*

## INTRODUCTION

This section summarizes the methodology and results of the recreation needs assessment. A detailed description of the methodology and how the conclusions were derived can be found in Appendix E.

Quantifying park and recreation facility needs is difficult because many different variables influence recreation needs. Community values, participation patterns, and willingness to pay for services vary widely from one community to another. One of the problems associated with determining needs is that overstating the demand can result in the development of underutilized facilities. Conversely, under-estimating the needs can result in overused facilities and a lack of usable park land and open space.

### **A. Alternative Approaches to Identifying Needs**

There are several approaches to estimating needs including use of national standards, measurement of participation levels, user trend analysis, input from surveys and public meetings, goal setting and participation models. The analysis on the following pages uses these methods, and a brief description of each is listed below.

#### **National Standards**

In 1983, the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) published the first recognized standards. These standards were developed by professionals in the field and based on “what seemed right”. In 1996, NRPA updated the approach based on a desired level of service or "LOS". LOS is expressed in terms of acres per population, but is driven by variables established by the providing agency, such as service areas and density of use.

#### **Participation Level Analysis**

Recognizing the need to reflect local conditions, MIG Inc., began measuring per capita participation levels in every community it studied. Participation level is measured in terms of the number of occasions occurring in a given 30-day period when that activity is in season. The activity level is then compared to other similar communities studied by MIG. The average activity level in the last 15 communities studied is called the MIG AVERAGE.

#### **Trend Analysis**

A facility demand estimate is extrapolated from historical use statistics. If local information is used, results can be reasonably accurate because they reflect use in the specific community.

#### **Recreation Surveys**

Recreation surveys are conducted using several different methods and approaches. These include mail-in, internet, telephone and door-to-door surveys. Each type of survey process has positive and negative attributes that include cost efficiency, return ratio, desired information and time frame. If the questionnaires are drawn from a statistically valid sample, a good reliable sampling of information can be derived. The difficulty with surveys is converting the data to quantifiable numbers of need.

**Public Meetings** General public or committee meetings can be used to identify perceived needs but often are attended by organized groups who may or may not represent the interests of the community.

**Goals** In some instances, community goals are expressed as the need without quantifiable or statistical analysis to support the goal.

**Population Models** Participation models are refined statistical formulas used for establishing a quantifiable standard, based on actual participation characteristics taken from individual uses. When a large sample is taken, a fairly accurate statistical profile can be made.

## B. Methodology of Assessing Park Land Needs

Developing a statement of land needs for parks and open space is difficult because it depends on availability of land, financial resources and desired service levels.

To determine land needs in Calabasas, several analytical methods were used. These included a comparison to other similar communities, results of the recreation survey, national trends, land availability and geographical deficiencies for parks and open space areas. It should be noted that even with all the statistical information available, a certain amount of subjective analysis and professional experience must be used to quantify the standards.

To determine land needs in Calabasas, an analysis was made of existing conditions. Current park land was expressed in terms of a comparison of acres of existing park land to the current population. This comparison is called *The Existing Ratio*, which was then used as a basis for recommending a desired ratio of park land to population. This is called *The Recommended Standard*. The Recommended Standard is based on a build-out population. The Existing Ratio and the Recommended Standard are expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 people. In developing these ratios, the following population estimates were used:

<b>Census Population (2000)</b>	<b>20,033</b>
<b>Current Population (2002)</b>	<b>20,390</b>
<b>Build-out Population (2020)</b>	<b>27,400<sup>1</sup></b>

By developing a desired level of service (the Recommended Standard) and applying it to a future population forecast, one can determine future needs. However, it should be noted the demand model used to create the Recommended Standard was based on a set of assumptions and desired service levels. For example, for community parks, the desired service level was to provide a community park within a mile of most residents. These assumptions are discussed in more detail in Appendix E.

<sup>1</sup> Peter A. Morrison, Calabasas Library Grant application

## C. Park and Open Space Needs

Below is a table indicating the Current Ratio and the Recommended Standard for each category of park land discussed in the Plan.

**Table 6.1**  
Comparison of Current Ratio and Recommended Demand Standard  
Park and Recreation Areas – City of Calabasas

Recreation Area	Current Ratio per 1,000 population	Recommended Standard per 1,000 population
Mini-Parks	0.11 Acres.	0.08 Acres
Neighborhood Parks	0.49 Acres.	0.22 Acres
Community Parks	0.39 Acres.	0.80 Acres
Special Use Areas	1.21 Acres.	1.01 Acres
Open Space Areas <sup>1</sup>	14.17 Acres.	15.00 Acres

<sup>1</sup>Ratio includes City-owned open space only. Does not include the 1400+ acres owned by non-profits and other public agencies.

By applying the Recommended Standard to the existing and future population base, a determination of park land needs expressed in acres can be derived, as shown in the table below.

**Table 6.2**  
Summary of Park Needs in Acres  
Park and Recreation Areas – City of Calabasas

Area or Facility	Existing Inventory	Year 2002 Demand	Current Additional Need <sup>1</sup>	Build-out Demand	Build-out Additional Need
Mini-Parks	2.2	1.6	(0.6)	2.2	0.0
Neighborhood Parks	10.0	3.0	(7.0)	6.0	(4.0)
Community Parks	8.0	16.2	8.2	22.0	14.0
Special Use Areas	34.6	20.5	(14.1)	34.6	0.0
Open Space Areas <sup>1</sup>	287.6	304.5	16.9	411.0	123.4
Undeveloped	1.8	NA	NA	NA	NA

<sup>1</sup> Additional need is indicated in plain text. Excess capacity is indicated with parentheses.

## D. Recreation Facility Needs

The establishment of the need for recreation facilities, such as sport fields, swimming pools and trails was derived from several analytical approaches. This included an analysis of present recreation participation levels, needs expressed in the community survey and at the public meeting, play and practice time requirements of sport teams and mathematical models developed over the years from other studies.

The *Existing Ratio* and *Recommended Standard* were used to quantify need. The existing ratio is the existing population divided by the number of facilities (e.g., fields, square feet, and miles). The recommended demand standard is the desired ratio of population to facilities based on the desired level of service. By establishing a desired level of service and applying it to existing and future population, one can determine appropriate recommended demand and ultimately future needs. To determine the existing ratio for facilities, the population within the City was used.

**Table 6.3**

Comparison of Current Ratio and Recommended Demand Standard  
City of Calabasas – Recreation Facilities

Recreation Area	Current Ratio	Recommended Standard
Baseball Fields	1 field per 2,549 people	1 field per 3,400 people
Softball Fields	1 field per 6,797 people	1 field per 7,000 people
Soccer Fields	1 field per 2,549 people	1 field per 1,500 people

The difficulty of calculating sport field needs in Calabasas was the regional nature of organized sport leagues serving the youth in Calabasas. In addition, Calabasas relies heavily on Las Virgenes Unified School District to meet sports field needs in Calabasas.

To determine the need for sport fields, a demand model was created that compared the supply of fields against the demand created by the number of teams. Within this demand model there are many variables (or service levels) that will affect the eventual need statement. These variables include:

- **Demand Variables**
  - \* Number of teams
  - \* Number of games and practices permitted per team per week
- **Supply Variables**
  - \* Number of fields
  - \* Number of games/practices permitted on each field per week
  - \* Existence of lighted or unlighted fields

Specific needs for each type of facility are shown in Table 6.4

**Table 6.4**

City of Calabasas - Summary of Recreation Facility Needs

Area or Facility	Existing Inventory	Year 2002 Demand	Current Additional Need	Build-out Demand	Build-out Additional Need
Baseball Fields <sup>1</sup>	8	8	0	11	3
Softball Fields <sup>1</sup>	3	3	0	4	1
Soccer Fields	8	14	6	18	10

<sup>1</sup> This excludes multi-use backstops that, if upgraded, could satisfy a portion of the need.

## Special Use Facilities

Calabasas provides a high level of service, and owns several specialized facilities for recreation use. These include: the Agoura Hills/Calabasas Community Center, the Tennis & Swim Center, Bark Park (lease from Las Virgenes Municipal Water District), and Creekside Park (used for a City-run pre-school operation). Based on the results of the planning process, several additional special use facilities appear to be needed in Calabasas. These include:

- \* A teen center (identified in survey and through youth workshop)
- \* Additional dog off-leash areas (identified in survey)
- \* West side day care facility (identified by City officials)
- \* A senior center or senior citizen facilities (identified in survey and by City officials)
- \* A permanent, in-ground skate park (identified in survey and through youth workshop)
- \* Cultural arts facilities

There also appears to be a need for more aquatic facilities in Calabasas, and if possible, expansion of membership opportunities at the Tennis & Swim Center. Additional special use facilities identified during the planning process include community gardens and a special play environment fully accessible to youth with disabilities.

Some of these special use facilities could be incorporated into other park sites or facilities.

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA MAP

## COMMUNITY PARK SERVICE AREA MAP