

IV.O RECREATION

INTRODUCTION

This section provides an overview of the park and recreation facilities (e.g. play fields and recreation centers) serving the Specific Plan area. The potential impacts of the proposed project on these park and recreational facilities are evaluated based on the adequacy of existing and planned facilities needed to meet any additional demand generated by the proposed project. In addition, mitigation measures are identified, where feasible and necessary.

ENVIRONMENTAL SETTING

The City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks (LADRP) and the County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation (County DPR) manage and provide park and recreation services to the Specific Plan area. City and County park and recreation facilities include, but are not limited to, soccer and baseball fields, basketball courts, swimming pools, and recreation centers.

The LADRP provides over 16,000 acres of parkland which include approximately 150 recreation centers and 386 park sites throughout the City.¹ The City has four park classifications: Neighborhood Park, Community Park, Regional Park, and school playgrounds. Neighborhood parks typically have service radii of a half mile. The minimum size of a neighborhood park is five acres and the ideal size for a neighborhood park is 10 acres. Community parks typically have service radii of two miles. The minimum size of a community park is 15 acres and the ideal size for a community park is 20 acres. Regional parks have specialized facilities such as lakes, golf courses, camping grounds, wilderness areas, and museums. Regional parks are generally over 50 acres in size and serve persons living throughout the Los Angeles basin. School playgrounds can be used to supplement local recreation sites (neighborhood and community). Typically, school playgrounds are open for limited hours after school hours and are available to the community full-time during the summer.²

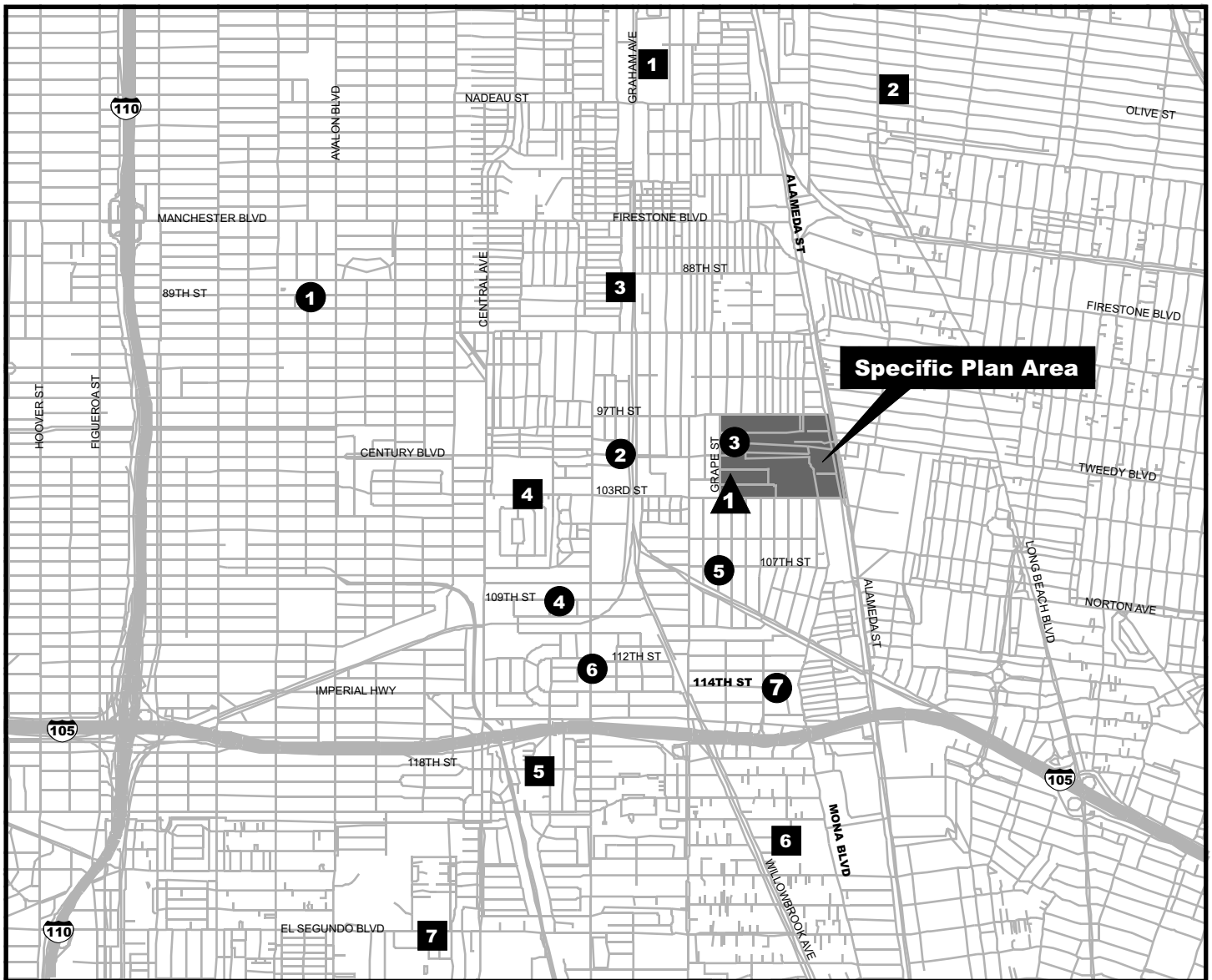
The County DPR maintains over 65,528 acres of recreation space within the County of Los Angeles. The County DPR has 11 types of parks, recreational areas, and facilities including: pocket parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, regional parks, trails, greenways, special use facilities, historic and cultural facilities, natural areas and habitat preservation areas, multi-benefit facilities, arboreta and botanic gardens.

Public Parks within the City of Los Angeles and the Watts Community

The majority of the Specific Plan area is located within the Watts Community in the City of Los Angeles. The Specific Plan area encompasses approximately 118 acres of land with approximately 2,430 existing residents at the Jordan Downs housing complex. LADRP park and recreation facilities serving the Specific Plan area are shown in **Figure IV.O-1** and listed in **Table IV.O-1**. As indicated in **Table IV.O-1**, the aggregate size of the seven neighborhood recreation sites within a two-mile radius of the Specific Plan area is 22.46 acres. Of these seven neighborhood park sites, only three are within a half-mile radius of the Specific Plan area, which is considered walking distance.

¹City of Los Angeles. *City of Los Angeles CEQA Thresholds Guide*. 2006.

²City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning. *Public Recreation Plan*. October 1980.



LEGEND:

Specific Plan Area

City of Los Angeles Parks

- 1. Green Meadows Recreation Center
- 2. Watts Senior Citizen Center
- 3. Jordan Downs Recreation Center
- 4. 109th Street Recreation Center
- 5. Grape Street Pocket Park
- 6. William Nickerson Gardens Recreation Center
- 7. Imperial Courts Recreation Center

County of Los Angeles Parks

- 1. Franklin D. Roosevelt Park
- 2. Walnut Nature Pocket Park
- 3. Col. Leon H. Washington Park
- 4. Ted Watkins Park
- 5. George W. Carver Park
- 6. Mona Park
- 7. Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Center

Community-Based Recreation

- 1. Mudtown Farms

SOURCE: TAHA, 2010.

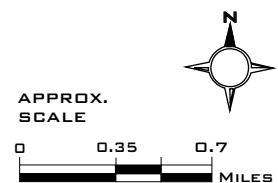


FIGURE IV.O-1

TABLE IV.O-1: PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES WITHIN TWO MILES OF THE SPECIFIC PLAN AREA			
Facility Name	Location	Distance From Project Site (miles)	Size (acres)
CITY OF LOS ANGELES DEPARTMENT OF RECREATION AND PARKS FACILITIES /a/			
Green Meadows Recreation Center	431 E. 89th St.	2.00	7.63
Watts Senior Citizen Center	1657 E. Century Blvd.	0.39	1.29
Jordan Downs Recreation Center	9900 Grape St.	Within	3.16
109th Street Recreation Center	1464 East 109th St.	1.09	3.17
Grape Street Pocket Park	10726 Grape St.	0.35	0.12
William Nickerson Gardens Recreation Center	11251 Compton Ave	1.25	4.73
Imperial Courts Recreation Center	2250 E. 114th St	1.05	2.36
Total Acres in City of Los Angeles			22.46
LOS ANGELES COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES			
Franklin D. Roosevelt Park	7600 Graham Ave.	1.59	24.58
Walnut Nature Pocket Park	2642 E. Olive St.	1.52	1.37
Col. Leon H. Washington Park	8908 S. Maie Ave.	0.80	13.2
Ted Watkins Park	1335 E. 103rd St.	0.97	27
George W. Carver Park	1400 E. 118th St	1.67	7.22
Mona Park	2291 E. 121st St.	1.62	8.4
Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area /b/	905 E. El Segundo Blvd.	2.06	94
Total Acres in County of Los Angeles			175.77
WATTS LABOR COMMUNITY ACTION COMMITTEE			
Mudtown Farms	2051 E. 103 rd St.	Within	2.48
/a/ All LADRP facilities within two miles of the Specific Plan area are classified as neighborhood parks.			
/b/ Although the Earvin "Magic" Johnson Recreation Area is technically beyond the two-mile radius, it was identified by the County DPR as a park and recreation facility that serves the Specific Plan area.			
SOURCE: City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks and County of Los Angeles Parks and Recreation, 2010.			

The Watts community is a highly urbanized area of the City with few recreation options and does not meet the City's recommended neighborhood park and community park acreage planning standards.³ With a population of 38,610, the community of Watts is serviced by seven City neighborhood parks and is not within the service radius of any City community parks. Furthermore, there are no LADRP-maintained regional parks within the immediate vicinity of the Watts community. The closest city-run regional park, the 604-acre Elysian Park, is located approximately 8.5 miles north of Watts. The total acreage of parks serving the Watts community is 14.71 acres. The Watts community would need to be served by approximately 77 acres of neighborhood and 77 acres of community parks to meet the City's local recreation standards. The comparison of the existing parkland serving the Watts community to the amounts recommended under the local recreation park standards indicates that the Watts community is deficient by 62.29 acres of neighborhood parks and by 62.29 acres of community parks. In addition, LADRP has determined that the level of service (e.g., condition of facilities and the number of facilities) of existing park and recreation facilities in the Watts community are inadequate. The existing facilities maintained by the LADRP need improvements to meet community needs and prevent future maintenance problems. To address the need to adequately serve its residents, the LADRP has been investigating potential locations for new parks. However, the LADRP does not have any plans to develop new parks and recreation facilities or expand existing park and recreation facilities at this time.⁴

³City of Los Angeles, Department of Recreation and Parks, Superintendent Michael A. Shull, written correspondence, dated March 25, 2010.

⁴*Ibid.*

Public Parks within the County of Los Angeles – Florence-Firestone Community

The Annexation Area of the Specific Plan area is within the Los Angeles County Florence-Firestone Community Plan Area (CPA). As listed in **Table IV.O-1** above and shown in **Figure IV.O-1** above, the County has seven parks that within a two-mile radius of the Specific Plan area that are available for use by existing residents of the Jordan Downs public housing complex. The acreage of these seven parks totals 175.8 acres. Of the seven parks within the vicinity of the Specific Plan area, only three are within the Florence-Firestone CPA.⁵ In total, the Draft Florence-Firestone Community Parks and Recreation Plan identifies five parks within the Florence-Firestone CPA, and states that the Florence-Firestone CPA is deficient by 245 and 343 acres of local and regional parkland, respectively.⁶

Although residents of the Jordan Downs public housing complex do not reside within the jurisdictional boundaries of the County, they still would use County public resources. County DPR park facilities available to residents of the Jordan Downs public housing complex are listed in **Table IV.O-1** above. These County DPR park facilities are located between 0.8 miles and two miles of the Specific Plan area. Colonel Leon H. Washington Park is closest to the Specific Plan area. Usage and demand of existing County parks and recreation facilities by residents of the Specific Plan area is compounded by the residential population of the adjacent cities of Lynwood and South Gate and the communities of Florence-Firestone and Watts.

Community-Based Recreation

The Watts Labor Community Action Committee (WLCAC) is a non-profit, community-based organization that provides leadership and community programs to residents of South Los Angeles. The WLCAC operates Mudtown Farms, a 2.5-acre community garden located in the southwestern portion of the existing (**Table IV.O-1** above). Community gardening at Mudtown Farms is not only a recreational outlet for residents of the existing Jordan Downs public housing complex and the surrounding community, but also a source of fresh fruits and vegetables. Mudtown Farms is predominately tended and maintained by residents of the Jordan Downs public housing complex.⁷

Regulatory Framework

State Regulation

Quimby Act. The Quimby Act was established by the California State Legislature in 1965 and codified as California Government Code Section 66477. The Quimby Act allows the legislative body of a city or county, by ordinance, to require the dedication of land or impose a requirement of the payment of fees in lieu thereof, or a combination of both, for park or recreational purposes as a condition to the approval of a tentative tract map or parcel map. Sections 12.33 and 17.12 of the City of Los Angeles Municipal Code (LAMC) are codified City ordinances that were enacted by the City as a way to implement the Quimby Act. Sections 12.33 and 17.13 of the LAMC are colloquially referred to as the City's "Quimby Code."⁸

⁵The County DPR Franklin D. Roosevelt, Ted Watkins, and Colonel Leon Washington parks are within the boundaries of the Florence-Firestone CPA.

⁶County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation, *Draft Florence-Firestone Community Parks and Recreation*, August 2, 2010.

⁷Watts Labor Community Action Committee WLCAC – Mudtown Farm website, http://www.wlcac.org/mudtown_w.html, accessed April 20, 2010.

⁸City of Los Angeles Department of Recreation and Parks, Quimby Program Frequently Requested Information/ Quarterly Report September 2009 website, <http://www.laparks.org/planning/Quimby/>, accessed July 13, 2010.

Local Regulation

City of Los Angeles General Plan, Service Systems Element Public Recreation Plan. The City of Los Angeles General Plan provides growth and development policies by providing a comprehensive long-range view of the City as a whole. The General Plan provides a comprehensive strategy for accommodating long-term growth should it occur as projected. Applicable goals and policies that apply to all development within the City of Los Angeles include a balanced distribution of land uses, adequate housing for all income levels, and economic stability.

The Public Recreation Plan of the General Plan consists of an identification and analysis of the existing recreational facilities and parks in the City of Los Angeles. The Public Recreation Plan includes two types of park and recreation facility planning standards: community plan and local recreation standards. Community plan standards require one acre of neighborhood park space per 1,000 persons and one acre of community park space per 1,000 persons for a combined total of two acres of park space. Local recreation standards require two acres of neighborhood park space per 1,000 persons and two acres of community park space for a combined total of four acres of park space.⁹ Local recreation standards are long-range and may not be reached during the life of the existing Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan and the General Plan. Since development associated with the Specific Plan would exist beyond the life of the Southeast Los Angeles Community Plan and the General Plan, local recreation standards would be used to evaluate impacts related to parks and recreation. In addition to the park acreage standards, the Public Recreation Plan also states that the types of amenities (e.g., recreation center, gym, basketball courts, etc.) that are offered on public parks and recreation land should also be considered when determining the adequacy of park space.

County of Los Angeles General Plan, Conservation and Open Space Element. The County of Los Angeles General Plan provides growth and development policies by providing a comprehensive long-range view of the County as a whole. The General Plan provides a comprehensive strategy for accommodating long-term growth should it occur as projected. Applicable goals and policies that apply to all development within the County of Los Angeles include a balanced distribution of land uses, adequate housing for all income levels, and economic stability.

The Conservation and Open Space Element of the County General Plan intends to guide the County's long range preservation of its natural resources and open space and sets policy direction for the open space, natural, and energy-related resources within unincorporated Los Angeles County.¹⁰ The Conservation and Open Space Element established standard ratios of four acres of parkland per 1,000 residents and six acres of parkland per 1,000 County residents to plan for local and regional parkland, respectively

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.21(G). Section 12.21(G) of the LAMC is lists the open space requirements for multiple residential dwelling units. Section 12.21(G) of the LAMC requires new construction of a building, or a group of buildings, to provide a minimum amount open space, based upon the number of dwelling units of the new construction of more than six dwelling units. Section 12.21(G) of the LAMC requires 100 square feet of open space for dwelling units with less than three habitable rooms, 125 square feet of open space per dwelling unit with three habitable rooms, and 175 feet of open space per dwelling unit with more than three habitable rooms. In addition, Section 12.21(G) of the LAMC indicates specific provisions with respect to the design and intended use of required open space for new construction.

⁹City of Los Angeles Department of City Planning, *General Plan Public Recreation Plan*, 1980.

¹⁰County of Los Angeles Department of Region Planning, *Draft General Plan Conservation and Open Space Element*, 2008.

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 12.33. Section 12.33 of the LAMC is part of the City's implementation of the Quimby Act. Section 12.33 of the LAMC was established by the City in 1985. Section 12.33 of the LAMC is a park impact fee, separate from the fees established in Section 17.12 of the LAMC and applies to the finalization of zone changes for multi-unit residential projects, including rental projects.¹¹ The amount of land to be dedicated, or fees paid in lieu, in the manner that is provided in Section 17.12 of the LAMC.

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 17.12. Section 17.12 of the LAMC is part of the City's implementation of the Quimby Act. Section 17.12 of the LAMC was established by the City in 1971. Section 17.12 requires that the residential developments requesting a subdivision or zone change are required, as a condition for approval, to either dedicate land for park and recreation purposes or pay a fee in lieu. The amount of land to be dedicated is based upon the table found in Section 17.12(B) of the LAMC. Fees in-lieu are determined annually on March 1st by the City Planning Department.

City of Los Angeles Municipal Code Section 17.58. Section 17.58 of the LAMC requires land to be dedicated or a fee paid in lieu, or in some other manner set forth in Section 17.12, prior to the final parcel map being approved by the City Council and/or its filing with the Los Angeles County Recorder.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

Significance Thresholds

In accordance with Appendix G of the State CEQA Guidelines, the proposed project would have a significant impact on recreation if the proposed project were to:

- 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; and/or
- Include recreational facilities or require the construction or expansion of recreational facilities which might have an adverse physical effect on the environment.

Project Design Features

The proposed project would provide open space, parkland, and recreation facilities to the residents of the Specific Plan area and the community. Recreation related components of the project would be centrally located within the Specific Plan area and include:

- A 6.38-acre Central Park which would be dedicated to the City as a neighborhood park
- 2.57 acres of other open space and plazas
- A new 50,000-square-foot Family Resource Center located on 0.91 acres
- A new 17,000-square-foot joint-use gymnasium located on 0.73 acres
- A new 3,000-square-foot pool facility located on 0.77 acres
- A bike lane along the Century Boulevard extension (approximately 0.57 acres)
- Retain Mudtown Farms (2.5 acres)

Analysis of Proposed Project Impacts

The proposed project would result in a residential population of 6,191 residents at full project buildout. Based on the LADRP local recreation standard, approximately 25 acres of park space (i.e., 12.4 acres of neighborhood park space and 12.4 acres of community park space) would be needed to serve the

¹¹*Ibid.*

proposed project. As detailed above, the proposed project includes the development of a new 6.38-acre neighborhood park (Central Park), as well as 2.57 acres of additional open space areas throughout the Specific Plan area. The proposed project also includes the development of other recreational facilities and improvements on 2.41 acres of additional land within the Specific Plan area, including a 50,000-square-foot Family Resource Center, a 17,000-square-foot joint-use gymnasium, and a 3,000-square-foot pool facility. Therefore, a total of 11.36 acres of land within the Specific Plan area would be dedicated for park and recreational uses.¹² These recreational facilities would be available to all City residents.

The proposed project would make substantial improvements to the 11.36 acres of land dedicated for parks and recreation, including landscaping, hardscaping, walking and jogging trails, benches and other amenities, as well as the construction of the Family Resource Center, gymnasium and pool facilities. The total value of these park and recreation facilities improvements (land and construction costs) is approximately \$40 million.¹³ If used to purchase an equivalent value of land in Watts and surrounding area (assuming \$30 per square-foot), this investment in recreation improvements would equal approximately 30 acres of additional park space. Thus, the parks and open space area dedication plus the equivalent amount of land represented by park and recreation improvements would exceed the LADRP's local planning standard for park space and the anticipated population. As a result, the proposed project would have a less than significant impact on recreation.

The proposed project's provision of open space and improved and expanded park and recreation facilities represent a substantial improvement over existing conditions (Jordan Downs Recreation Center that is a 3.16-acre park with a 7,000 recreation center building). As discussed above, the proposed project features a Central Park and other community facilities that are centrally located within the Specific Plan area and accessible to Specific Plan area residents by foot or bicycle. Typically, LAMC open space requirements and/or in-lieu fees would apply during the various phases of residential development within the Specific Plan area. However, open space and park and recreation facilities of the proposed project would be provided within the Specific Plan area and, thus, would be an amenity to all proposed housing units. Furthermore, because the proposed project's open space and park and recreation facilities would be an amenity to the proposed housing units, the Specific Plan includes a provision to waive open space requirements of the LAMC.

CUMULATIVE IMPACTS

Cumulative impacts of the proposed project would be evaluated by comparing the proposed project's impacts to the project impacts of the related projects identified in Section III Environmental Setting of this Draft EIR. Of the nine related projects, two are within the City: the Wattstar Theater and Education Center, and a Public High School. The two related projects are commercial and institutional projects that would not add new residential population to the City and, therefore, would have a less-than-significant impact upon public parks. Since the proposed project would not have a significant impact upon public parks and recreation, impacts would not be considered cumulatively considerable.

MITIGATION MEASURES

Impacts related to recreation would be less than significant. Therefore, no mitigation measures are necessary.

¹²The 2.5 acre community garden (Mudtown farms) and 0.57 acres of bicycle lanes included within the Specific Plan area have not been included in this land area calculation.

¹³Davis Langdon, *Master Plan Horizontal and Public Investments, Residential and Commercial Development – Draft Cost Study for Jordan Downs Development Los Angeles, California*, March 31, 2010.

LEVEL OF SIGNIFICANCE AFTER MITIGATION

Impacts related to recreation would remain less than significant.