3.0

CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND RECREATION

3.0 CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND RECREATION

Introduction



Some of the most valuable assets of Avenal include its agricultural land, parks, historical and architectural resources. The Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element focuses on the protection and enhancement of open space, natural and recreational resources to ensure a high quality living environment in Avenal.

Purpose of the Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element

The Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element meets the state requirements for Conservation and Open Space Elements as defined in Sections 65302(d) and 65301(e) of the Government Code. According to these requirements, the Conservation element must contain goals and policies to protect and maintain natural resources such as water, soils, wildlife and minerals, and prevent wasteful resource exploitation, degradation and destruction. The Open Space Element must contain goals and policies to manage open space areas, including undeveloped lands and outdoor recreation areas. Specifically, the Open Space Element must address several open space categories, such as those used for the preservation of natural resources and managed production of resources, as well as open space maintained for public health and safety reasons. This last category of open space is addressed in the Safety Element. Because the subjects required to be addressed under the Conservation Element and Open Space Element overlap substantially, the two elements, and the Parks and Recreation Element have been combined for this Plan.

Scope and Content of the Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element

The Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element expresses community policies to protect environmental, open space and recreational resources. Resources addressed in this element include: water resources; agricultural resources; cultural resources; ecological and biological resources; mineral resources; and parks and recreational facilities.

The Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element is comprised of four sections: the Introduction; Purpose of the Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element; Scope and Content of the Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element; and the Objectives, Policies and

Standards. In the Objectives, Policies and Standards section, community open space needs and resource management issues are identified and corresponding policies are established. The objectives, which are overall statements of the City desires, are comprised of broad statements of purpose and direction. The policies serve as guidelines for planning and maintaining recreational facilities, enhancing the natural amenities of Avenal and minimizing the environmental effects of planned development.

3.1 Natural Resources

Objectives

A. Protect natural resources, including groundwater, soils and air quality, to meet the needs of present and future generations.

B. Ensure that environmental hazards, including potential flooding and impacts from agricultural practices, are adequately addressed in the development process within the City and Planning Area.

Policies and Standards

1. Allow for adequate groundwater recharge by developing storm pond and retention basins where feasible. In some areas these ponds or basins can be incorporated into recreational areas or used as wildlife habitat areas.

2. No new urban level development shall be approved in the urbanized portion of the City unless the development is, or can be, served by the City sewer system.

3. Water conservation methods shall be encouraged and continued.

4. To assist the City in meeting the clean air quality requirements of the Federal and State Clean Air Acts, the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District will be consulted to provide community planning guidance to help reduce potential air quality impacts. In conformance with State legislation, an Air Quality Element shall be developed based on the Air District's Air Quality Guidelines for General Plans.

5. Promote biological diversity and the use of plant species compatible with the bio-region.

6. New construction activities shall comply with the standard and optional PM-10 control measures as set forth by the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District's *Guide for Assessing and Mitigating Air Quality Impacts*.

7. To protect human health, the City's water resources will be monitored on a regular basis to test for bacteriological and toxic chemical components.

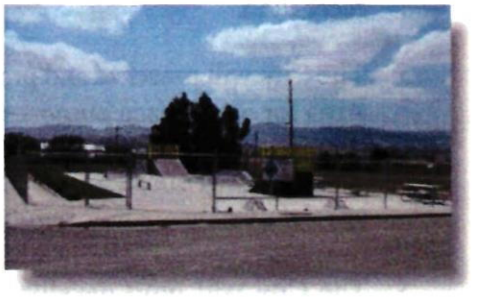
8. Maximize farmland, open space and wildlife habitat preservation on lands outside of the City by establishing a greenbelt, including all lands not designated for future annexation on the General Plan Land Use Diagram. The City shall use natural or manmade features to transition from urban to non-urban uses.

9. Initiate and/or support local and regional recycling programs.

10. The City will require drought tolerant plants, xeriscape principles and other water conserving landscape techniques for all new public facilities and private projects.

3.2 Parks and Recreation

Objectives



A. Develop a high quality public park and recreation system that is convenient, accessible and affordable to all residents and visitors.

B. Provide a range of leisure, recreation, and cultural programs and facilities that are accessible and affordable to all segments of the community.

Policies and Standards

1. It is the objective of the City to provide parks at a minimum rate of 5.0 acres of park per 1,000 population, including 1.0 acre/1,000 population for mini parks, 3.0 acres/1,000 for neighborhood parks, and 1.0 acre/1,000 for regional parks. Neighborhood parks shall be at least 5 acres. Landscape and Lighting Districts shall be used to ensure that the park facilities are adequately maintained.

2. Parks shall be developed as growth and fiscal resources warrant (i.e. availability of water), which respond to the needs of the City's diverse population.

3. Locate park and recreational facilities so that they do not conflict with adjacent land uses.

4. The City will maximize opportunity for joint use of public land and facilities such as schools, stormwater ponding basins and other recreation areas under public jurisdiction suitable for recreation.

5. All parks should be designed to meet the needs of the handicapped per the Americans with Disabilities Act.

6. Parks shall provide bermed landscaped areas to reflect the natural setting of the hillsides surrounding the City as well as provide some relief to the non-sloping areas within the urbanized portion of the City.

3.3 Open Space

Objective

A. Create and preserve open space in the Avenal area to meet the needs of the community now and in the future.



Policies and Standards

1. The City will create and protect open space for the preservation of natural resources.

2. The City will create and preserve open space for outdoor recreation.

3. The City will preserve and protect agricultural use on lands in and surrounding the Avenal Planning Area for open space purposes and for the managed production of resources.

4. The City will create and maintain open space for public health and safety in areas which require special management or regulation.

5. The City will limit development of sensitive or constrained lands i.e. hillsides, floodpains and steep slopes.