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## Parks and Open Space

### Background

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4 Blessed with spectacular vistas, and extremely mild weather, Goleta Valley residents  
5 enjoy a wide range of year round, passive and active, recreational opportunities. In  
6 addition, we are fortunate that the availability of park and recreational facilities extends  
7 beyond political and jurisdictional boundaries to those that are operated and maintained  
8 by various government agencies (the Cities of Goleta and Santa Barbara, County of Santa  
9 Barbara, State of California and Federal Government.)

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11 **Active Recreation**<sup>1</sup>: At present, the unincorporated eastern Goleta Valley has 148 acres  
12 of developed parks, with an additional 180 acres of public open space<sup>2</sup>, and 5 miles of  
13 designated trails. Unfortunately, when evaluated against County adopted park acreage  
14 standards of 4.7 acres/1,000 residents, these numbers represent a 25% shortfall in active  
15 recreation facilities. Deficits have been identified in four of seven activities (e.g., Youth  
16 T-Ball, Youth Softball and Youth Football<sup>1</sup>.) At the present time, sufficient active  
17 recreation zoned land is available, but funding has not been provided for developing the  
18 required facilities.

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20 **Passive Recreation**<sup>3</sup>: The community benefits from over 180 acres of publicly owned  
21 passive open-space. These areas provide visual relief and recreational opportunities such  
22 as hiking, walking, and bird and wildlife observation. Flood control and retention basins  
23 owned by the County also represent an opportunity for dual use, serving as control  
24 mechanisms during the rainy season and recreation areas during dry periods.

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26 In 2004, the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Natural Resources Advisory Council (N.R.A.C) inventoried a  
27 number of open spaces selected for enhancement opportunities within six watersheds.  
28 These areas were considered valuable because of their strong potential for resource  
29 improvements, benefits to neighborhoods, and potential for funding<sup>4</sup>. More Mesa County  
30 Park (35 acres) was identified as a high priority site for ecological enhancement, along  
31 with Calle Barquero, San Antonio Creek Trail, and the Fremont/San Jose Creek  
32 Confluence Area.

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<sup>1</sup> Active Recreation – Active recreation refers to a mix of uses in a park or public openspace that includes the following facilities or facility types: athletic fields, building or structures for recreational activities, concession, community garden, courses or courts, children's play area, dog play area, or a bike path.

<sup>2</sup> Article III, Public Open space shall include but not limited to public parks, recreational support facilities (restrooms, stairways, picnic tables, etc,) public parking lots, beaches, access corridors such as bike paths, hiking, or equestrian trails, usable natural areas, and vista points which are accessible to members of the general public.

<sup>3</sup> Passive Recreation - A passive recreation area refers a mix of uses in a park, undeveloped land or minimally improved lands which includes the following: landscaped area, natural area, ornamental garden, non-landscaped greenspace, stairway, decorative fountain, picnic area, water body, or trail without recreational staffing

<sup>4</sup> Second District Open Space, *Recommendations Report: 2004 Draft County Lands Inventory with Enhancement Opportunities*. Pg: 4

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2 While available to the community, the 265 acre bluff top known as More Mesa, is  
3 privately held, and the largest open space remaining in the Goleta Valley. This area  
4 contains a variety of environmentally sensitive habitats that include wetlands, oak  
5 woodlands, grasslands and roosting/nesting sites for white-tailed kites. Under the  
6 existing Goleta Community Plan, most of the bluff top (225 acres) has been identified as  
7 environmentally sensitive habitat and cannot be developed. More-Mesa currently serves  
8 as a passive recreation area for hikers, runners, cyclists, equestrians, bird watchers, artists  
9 and beach users.  
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## 11 **The Future**

12 Over the course of our discussions, GVC members repeatedly cited the extraordinary  
13 outdoor and recreational opportunities available in our area, and their desire to enlarge  
14 and improve them. First, for active recreation, we want expanded and accessible parks  
15 and recreation areas (indoor and outdoor) that provide for sports, fitness, family  
16 activities, and relaxation. In these environments, children and young adults can  
17 participate in activities that promote socialization and develop leadership skills.  
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19 Second, we are keenly aware that remaining open spaces represent remnants of large and  
20 complex ecological systems. As such, they provide our community with a fleeting and  
21 nostalgic glimpse of what large land tracts once looked like, and how they operated as  
22 ecological systems. While some areas have been greatly compromised by encroaching  
23 urbanization, others still function well. It is these areas that are the best teachers about  
24 our natural world.  
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26 Most importantly, our open spaces represent an opportunity for a rejuvenating respite  
27 from the cares of everyday life. We are fortunate to be able to take advantage of these  
28 pockets of calm and quietude, whether they be large or small. Our vision is to preserve  
29 and protect all those that remain.  
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31 In the following pages, we have elaborated upon our vision for Parks and Open Space.  
32 First, we have delineated a series of six goals. Each goal, in turn, offers a number of  
33 outcomes that, taken as a whole, would represent the realization of our vision. Lastly, we  
34 suggest the action steps necessary to meet our goals.  
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**Vision Statement**

Our community has preserved and enhanced our public lands. Open space, protected habitats and parks are plentiful. tranquil and accessible to the neighborhoods they serve.

**Goal #1:** Increase amount of open space available to residents of the Eastern Goleta Valley

**How Will We Know a Success**

- 1. Open space land has increased significantly from the current number of 180 acres
- 2. Flood control basins also serve as passive recreation areas, when seasonally appropriate

**Steps to Achieve Goal**

- 1. Work with public and private funders to bring open lands currently under private ownership into the public inventory; e.g., More Mesa and San Marcos Foothills
- 2. Work with the County to reaffirm recreational zoning of the County Campus and bring additional public properties (e.g., MTD and Tatum) into the recreational designation
- 3. Establish greenbelt and wildlife corridors wherever possible

1 **Vision Statement**

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Our community has preserved and enhanced our public lands. Open space, protected habitats and **parks are plentiful**, tranquil and accessible to the neighborhoods they serve.

7 **Goal #2:** Provide additional indoor and outdoor, active recreational opportunities to meet  
8 the community’s needs

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10 **How Will We Know a Success**

- 11 1. Outdoor sports facilities exist to
- 12 accommodate the athletic needs of
- 13 the eastern Goleta Valley
- 14 2. Neighborhood parks/active parks
- 15 have been appropriately
- 16 distributed throughout eastern
- 17 Goleta Valley
- 18 3. Passive and active “pocket parks”
- 19 have been created adjacent to
- 20 linear bicycle paths

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37 **Steps to Achieve Goal**

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- 39 1. Identify sensitive natural resources,
- 40 avoiding impacts, and then
- 41 developing multi-use parks and
- 42 recreation areas throughout
- 43 neighborhoods in the eastern Goleta
- 44 Valley (???)
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- 46 2. Create a south-coast parks and
- 47 recreation plan with neighboring
- 48 jurisdictions and agencies, taking
- 49 into account existing resources,
- 50 constraints and opportunities for
- 51 joint use and collaboration.
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1 **Vision Statement**

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3 Our community has preserved and enhanced our public lands. Open space, protected  
4 habitats and parks are plentiful, tranquil and **accessible to the neighborhoods they**  
5 **serve.**

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7 **Goal #3:** Provide easy access to trails, beaches and other open spaces

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9 **How Will We Know a Success**

- 10 1. Neighborhood parks/active parks  
11 have been appropriately distributed  
12 throughout eastern Goleta Valley
- 13 2. Passive and active “pocket parks”  
14 have been created adjacent to linear  
15 bicycle paths

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17 **Steps to Achieve Goal**

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- 19 1. Implement improvements identified  
20 in the South-Coast Bicycle Master  
21 Plan
- 22 2. Coordinate bus routes and expand  
23 bike and other vehicle parking areas

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**Vision Statement**

Our community has preserved and enhanced our public lands. Open space, protected habitats and parks are plentiful, tranquil and accessible to the neighborhoods they serve.

**Goal #4:** Link open spaces to provide recreational corridors

**How Will We Know a Success**

- 1. A network of bike trails links recreation areas and neighborhoods, providing both recreation and alternative transportation opportunities
- 2. Bike lanes are constructed to provide additional ocean vistas
- 3. Passive and active “pocket parks” have been created adjacent to linear bicycle paths
- 4. Trails are linked to provide access to the coast and mountains

**Steps to Achieve Goal**

- 1. Coordinate bus routes and expand bike and other vehicle parking areas

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**Vision Statement**

Our community has preserved and **enhanced our public lands**. Open space, protected habitats and parks are plentiful, tranquil and accessible to the neighborhoods they serve.

**Goal #5:** Sensitive habitat areas have been restored and provide passive recreation opportunities.

**How Will We Know a Success:**

- 1. Visitor centers in parks will allow kids to get better acquainted with nature
- 2. Existing environmental overlays have been preserved. Environmental overlays have also been placed on additional sensitive open space

**Steps to Achieve Goal:**

- 1. Develop restoration plans, identify funding and implement restoration plans for the five areas identified in the County Lands Inventory with Enhancement Opportunities prepared in 2004 by the 2<sup>nd</sup> District Natural Resources Advisory Committee
- 2. Visitor centers in parks will allow kids to get better acquainted with nature

1 **Vision Statement**

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3 Our community has preserved and enhanced our public lands. Open space, protected  
4 habitats and parks are plentiful, tranquil and **accessible to the neighborhoods they**  
5 **serve.**

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7 **Goal #6:** Neighborhood parks/active parks have been appropriately distributed  
8 throughout eastern Goleta Valley.

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10 **How Will We Know a Success**

- 11 1. Passive and active “pocket parks”
- 12 have been created adjacent to linear
- 13 bicycle paths
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- 15 2. There will be community use of
- 16 existing school recreation facilities,
- 17 maximizing taxpayer dollars
- 18 through conjunctive recreation use

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44 **Steps to Achieve Goal**

- 45 1. Pursue joint-use agreements with
- 46 schools to allow multi use of
- 47 existing school facilities.

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