

VI. PARKS

Level of Severity Criteria

Level of Severity	Parks Criteria
I	<p>Regional Parks. The county provides between 10 and 15 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 persons in the entire county (i.e., incorporated and unincorporated population).</p> <p>Community Parks. An unincorporated community has between 2.0 and 3.0 acres of community parkland per 1,000 persons.</p>
II	<p>Regional Parks. The county provides between 5 and 10 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 persons in the entire county (i.e., incorporated and unincorporated population).</p> <p>Community Parks. An unincorporated community has between 1.0 to 2.0 acres of community parkland per 1,000 persons.</p>
III	<p>Regional Parks. The county provides less than 5 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 persons in the entire county (i.e., incorporated and unincorporated population).</p> <p>Community Parks. An unincorporated community has 1.0 acre or less of community parkland per 1,000 persons.</p>

County Parks

Parks are an important part of our communities. The Parks and Recreation Element (PRE) of the County General Plan, adopted in 2006, states:

“Recreation and exercise are fundamental to a healthy life. The benefits include greater productivity, less disease, and a brighter future. As the population grows, competition for recreational resources increases. Wide open spaces, once the haven of the equestrian, hiker and poet, are more often fenced and the right of exclusivity enforced. As the development and formality of our area increases, so must the provision of recreation spaces that are available to all people.”

With the acknowledgement of the importance of parks in our lives, the RSR is a useful way to assess our success in providing this important community resource.

Residents of San Luis Obispo County enjoy a diverse array of outdoor recreation opportunities provided by public agencies and non-profit organizations. These resources include:

- County parks (described below)
- State parks and beaches
- City parks
- Parks provided by Community Services Districts
- School district properties
- Federal lands such as the Los Padres National Forest and the Carrizo Plain National Monument

- Natural preserves managed by non-profit organizations

Although County residents use all of these resources regardless of ownership or jurisdiction, this RSR addresses only those parks operated by the County Parks Department.

The County provides different types of parks, recognizing the different roles that parks play in the recreational needs of county residents. As discussed in the Parks and Recreation Element, part of this role is related to the size of the park. A community park which tends to be 5 to 25 acres in size cannot provide the same recreational opportunities as a regional park which may consist of hundreds or even thousands of acres.

The types of parks assessed by this RSR are described below and summarized by park type and acreage on Table VI-1. The location of these parks throughout the county is shown on Figure VI-1. Other county park land is summarized in Table VI-2.

Community Parks

By definition, community parks are meant to meet the recreation needs of a community, providing recreation facilities that serve the community and in some cases visitors from outside the local community. For example, a community park with numerous sports fields will draw people from a wide area for tournament play. Community parks also tend to be active in nature and/or provide a mix of active recreation. Typical facilities might include a skate park, sports fields (football, baseball, soccer, and softball), a swimming pool, a sufficient number of tennis courts for tournament play, group picnic areas, and/or a community center as well as facilities for some passive uses such as a trails, scenic overlooks, benches and interpretive displays.

Although the Parks and Recreation Element distinguishes among mini-, neighborhood and community parks for planning purposes, they are treated as one category (“community parks”) for the purpose of assessing Levels of Severity.

Regional Parks

Regional Parks are the largest parks provided by the County. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, there can be two types of regional parks, urban and rural. However, for purposes of assessing Levels of Severity, urban and rural regional parks are treated as one category (“regional parks”). Regional parks may vary in size from 200 acres to over 1,000 acres. Facilities provided at regional parks may include play areas, picnicking, boating, fishing, swimming, camping and trail use. The larger regional parks may include nature oriented outdoor activities, such as viewing and studying nature, wildlife habitat, conservation, swimming, picnicking, hiking, fishing, boating, camping, and trail use. Because of the types of recreation provided, regional parks not only draw from the County’s population, but also from the economically important tourist population.

Table VI-1 – Developed Regional and Community Park Land Acreage		
Park Type	Location	Total Park Acres ¹
<i>Regional Parks</i>		
Biddle Park	Arroyo Grande	47
El Chorro Park	San Luis Obispo	490
Heilmann Park	Atascadero	102
Lopez Lake Recreation Area	Arroyo Grande	4,276
Santa Margarita Lake Park	Santa Margarita	7,122
Total Regional Parks:		12,037
<i>Community Parks</i>		
Avila Park/Plaza	Avila	2.5
C. W. Clarke Park	Shandon	11.5
Hardie Park	Cayucos	4.0
Lampton Cliffs Park	Cambria	2.2
Los Osos Community Park	Los Osos	6.2
Nipomo Community Park	Nipomo	154
Norma Rose Park	Cayucos	1.5
Oceano Memorial Park	Oceano	11.8
Paul Andrew Park	Cayucos	1.0
San Miguel Park	San Miguel	4.3
Santa Margarita Community Park	Santa Margarita	2.0
Shamel Park	Cambria	6.0
Templeton Park	Templeton	3.5
Total Community Parks:		210.5
Total Park Acreage:		12,247.5

Source: San Luis Obispo County General Plan Parks and Recreation Element

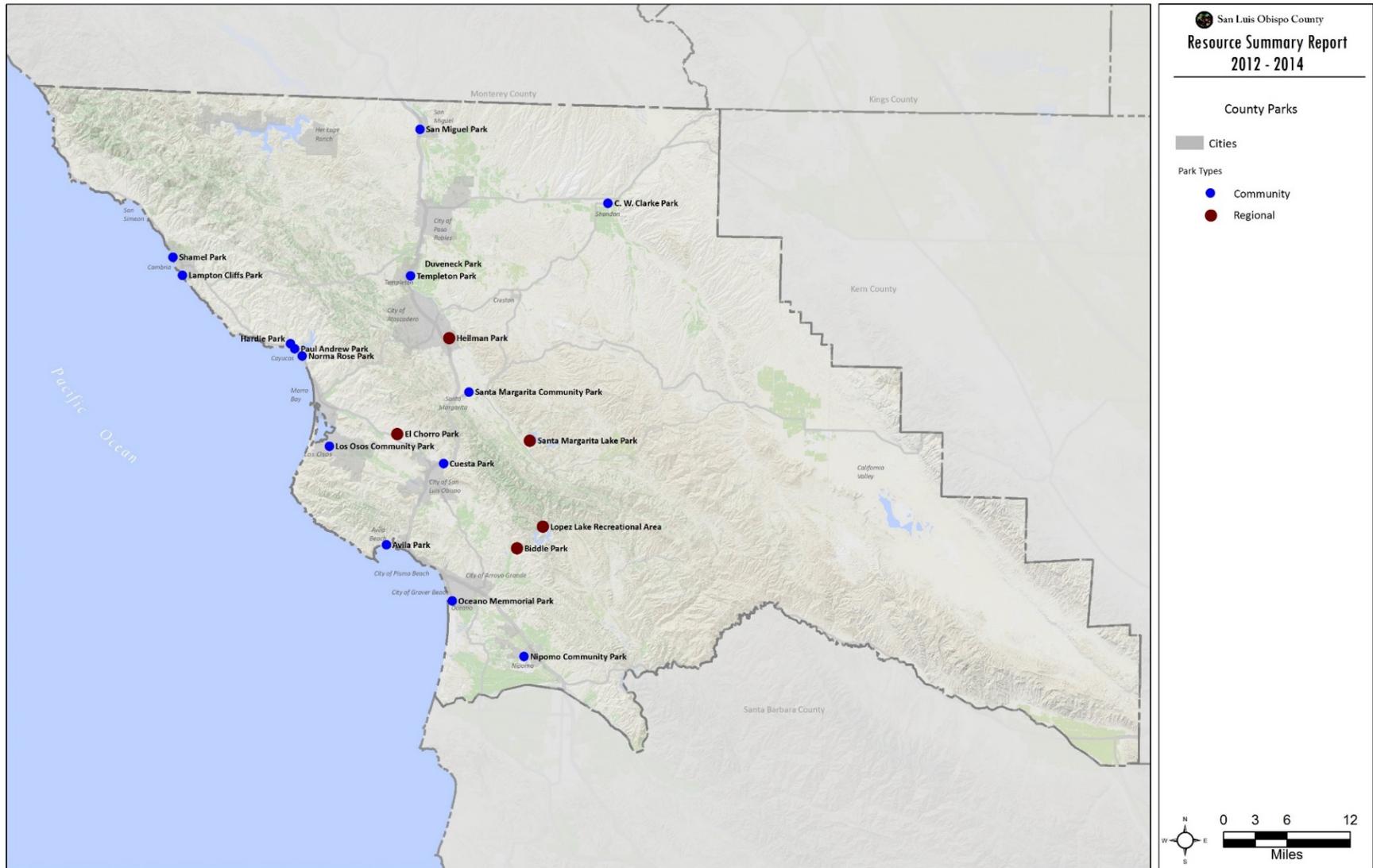
Notes:

1. The list of parks and park acreage is for the purpose of recommending Levels of Severity, only.
2. The table includes “developed” parks only. Land acquired by the County for the purpose of developing parks is not included. However, undeveloped land and natural features within developed parks are included as part of the total acreage.
3. Golf courses, natural areas, linear parks, RV parks and other recreation lands managed by the County are not included.
4. Cuesta Park is not included because it does not serve an unincorporated community.

Table VI-2 – Other County Park Land		
Park Type	Location	Total Park Acres ¹
<i>Regional Parks</i>		
Duveneck Park (undeveloped)	Templeton	80.0
<i>Community Parks</i>		
Cuesta Park	San Luis Obispo	5.0
Jack Ready Park (undeveloped)	Nipomo	30.0
See Canyon Park (undeveloped)	Avila Valley	8.7
Total Additional Park Acreage:		123.7

Source: San Luis Obispo County General Plan Parks and Recreation Element

Figure VI-1 – County Parks



Recommended Levels of Severity

Regional Parks

For regional parks, the total acreage was divided by the estimated 2014 total county population (including cities and unincorporated areas). Applying these criteria, the County currently provides well more than 10-15 acres of regional parkland per 1,000 residents. No recommended Level of Severity.

Table VI-3 – Recommended Levels of Severity for Regional Parks			
Total Acres of Regional Parks ¹	2014 Total County Population	Ratio of Regional Park Acreage Per 1,000 Population	Recommended Level of Severity
12,037	272,859	44.1	None

Source: San Luis Obispo County General Plan Parks and Recreation Element

Notes:

1. See Table VI-1. Total acreage for the purpose of assessing Levels of Severity, only. Does not include undeveloped park land, golf courses, natural areas, linear parks, or other recreational lands managed by the County.

Community Parks

To assess the level of severity for community parks, the population within a five-mile radius of the urban reserve line for the ten unincorporated communities was determined using 2010 census block data. The resulting population was adjusted by applying the population growth rate for 2010 to 2014 to reflect the 2014 population. The total park acreage within the particular unincorporated community was then divided by this population, which in some cases includes residents of incorporated cities, to derive the ratio of parks per 1,000 residents within the five-mile radius and the results are summarized in the following table. Overall, the unincorporated communities provide a ratio of about one acre of developed parkland per 1,000 residents. Nipomo and Shandon provide more than three acres per 1,000.

Figure VI - 2 - Five-Mile Service Areas Around Community Parks

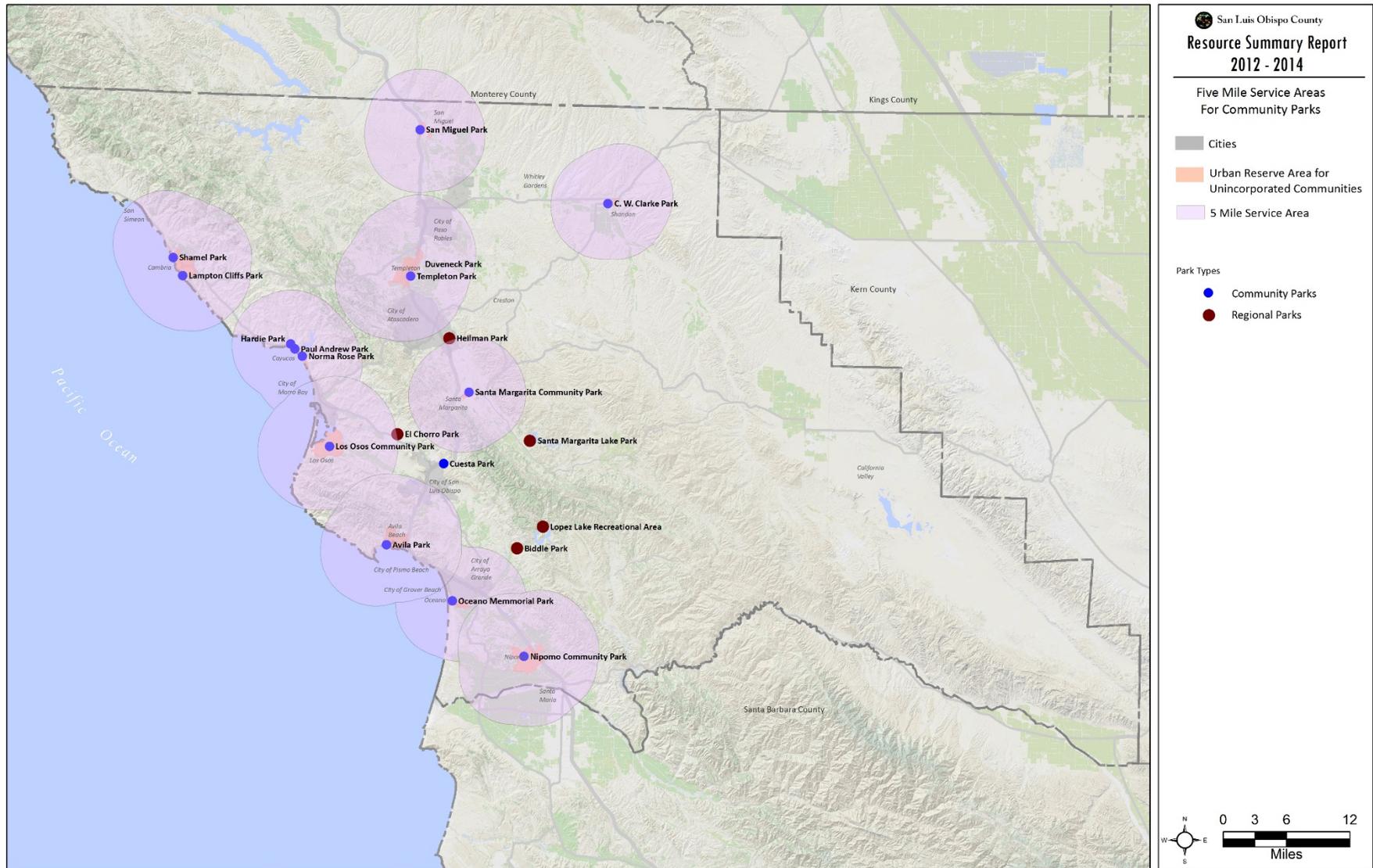


Table VI-4 -- Recommended Levels of Severity for Community Parks				
Community	Total Community Parkland ¹	Total Population Within 5 Miles of Community URLs ²	Acres of Community Parkland Per 1,000 Population	Recommended Level of Severity
Avila	2.5	22,462	0.11	III
Cambria	8.2	6,786	1.21	II
Cayucos	6.5	3,519	1.85	II
Los Osos	6.2	25,257	0.25	III
Nipomo	154.0	28,812	5.34	None
Oceano	11.8	42,506	0.28	III
San Miguel	4.3	4,440	0.97	III
Santa Margarita	2.0	9,806	0.20	III
Shandon	11.5	1,546	7.44	None
Templeton	3.5	61,909	0.06	III
Overall:	210.5	207,042	1.02	II

Sources: San Luis Obispo County General Plan Parks and Recreation Element, 2010 US Census of Population and Housing, SLOCOG

Notes:

1. Total acreage for the purpose of assessing Levels of Severity, only. Does not include undeveloped park land, golf courses, natural areas, linear parks, or other recreational lands managed by the County.
2. Total population within five miles of urban reserve lines for unincorporated communities, including populations within cities. Does not include village areas.

Summary of Recommended Levels of Severity and Recommended Actions

Table VI-5 -- Summary Recommended Levels of Severity and Recommended Actions		
Area/Community	Recommended Level of Severity	Recommended Actions
<i>Community Parks</i>		
Avila	III	Continue to pursue strategies for the acquisition and development of parks, including the dedication of parkland and the collection of development impact (Quimby) fees.
Cambria	II	
Cayucos	II	
Los Osos	III	
Oceano	III	Collaborate with County Parks to review the Parks and Recreation Project List in the Parks and Recreation Element and make recommendations to the Board of Supervisors regarding which park projects to implement.
San Miguel	III	
Santa Margarita	III	
Templeton	III	<p>Collaborate with other potential parks operators such as CSDs and school districts to provide park and recreation opportunities.</p> <p>When preparing Resource Capacity Studies for parks, address the following issues:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide an updated inventory of existing parkland in the affected unincorporated community. b. Document existing shortfalls in park acreage.