

**CHAPTER SEVEN: RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

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## **CHAPTER SEVEN: RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE**

This chapter addresses recreation facilities and open space resource issues pertaining only to the Specific Plan Area, as shown in Figure 7.1: Recreation and Open Space Concept. The Master Plan provides, objectives, policies and implementation measures which apply to all parks and open space areas within the Mountain House community, and as further defined in the CSD's "Parks, Leisure and Open Space Plan."

### **7.1 PARKS AND RECREATION**

#### **7.1.1 Recreation System**

Figure 7.1: Recreation and Open Space Concept illustrates the park usage and configuration for the Specific Plan Area. Tables 3.1: Summary Land Use Program, and Table 3.2: Land Uses by Subarea provide acreages of park uses.

The park provisions for this Specific Plan Area are intended to meet the standards for acreage, usage, service area, access and total program as described in the Master Plan. The Parks and Open Space Plan, located in Chapter 7 of the Master Plan contain more detailed provisions for parks and open space within the Specific Plan I boundaries.

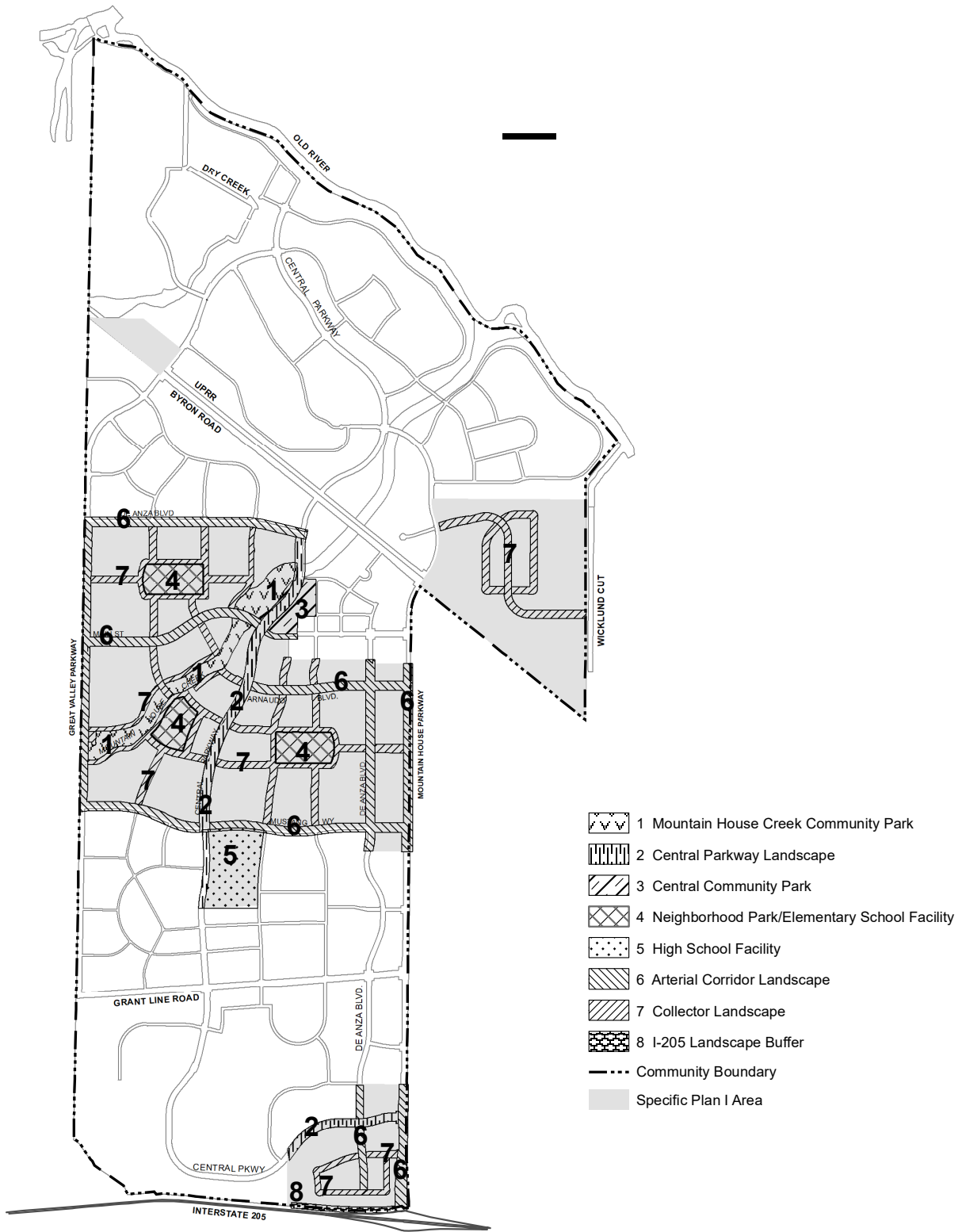
Master Plan standards call for five acres of community and neighborhood park combined per 1,000 people. Given the projected Specific Plan I population of about 11,000 people, this standard would require 55 acres of community and neighborhood parks. This Specific Plan allocates 15 acres to neighborhood parks and 74 acres to community parks, for a total of 89 acres. While this number is in excess of the minimum standard, it is expected that most acreage within the Mountain House Creek corridor will function as wildlife habitat and storm water control, and will not be available for active park uses. The only active recreation features planned in this corridor are a multi-use path and picnic areas.

The Master Plan provides a definition of requirements for Conceptual, Preliminary, and Final/Construction Park Plans as used below.

#### **7.1.2 Neighborhood Parks**

Three five-acre neighborhood parks, one in each neighborhood, will be located, planned, designed and constructed consistent with General Plan and Master Plan policies.

Conceptual layouts for each neighborhood park are shown in Chapter 4, Figures 4.3 to 4.5. These layouts are intended as preliminary concepts only and are subject to revision as described below.



**FIGURE 7.1 – RECREATION AND OPEN SPACE PLAN**

- a) Neighborhood Park Plans. Preliminary Plans shall be included in each Neighborhood Center Special Purpose Plan. Facilities programs for each park shall be as specified in the CSD's "Park, Leisure and Recreation Plan." Timing for the neighborhood parks will be as indicated in the Master Plan.

### 7.1.3 Community Parks

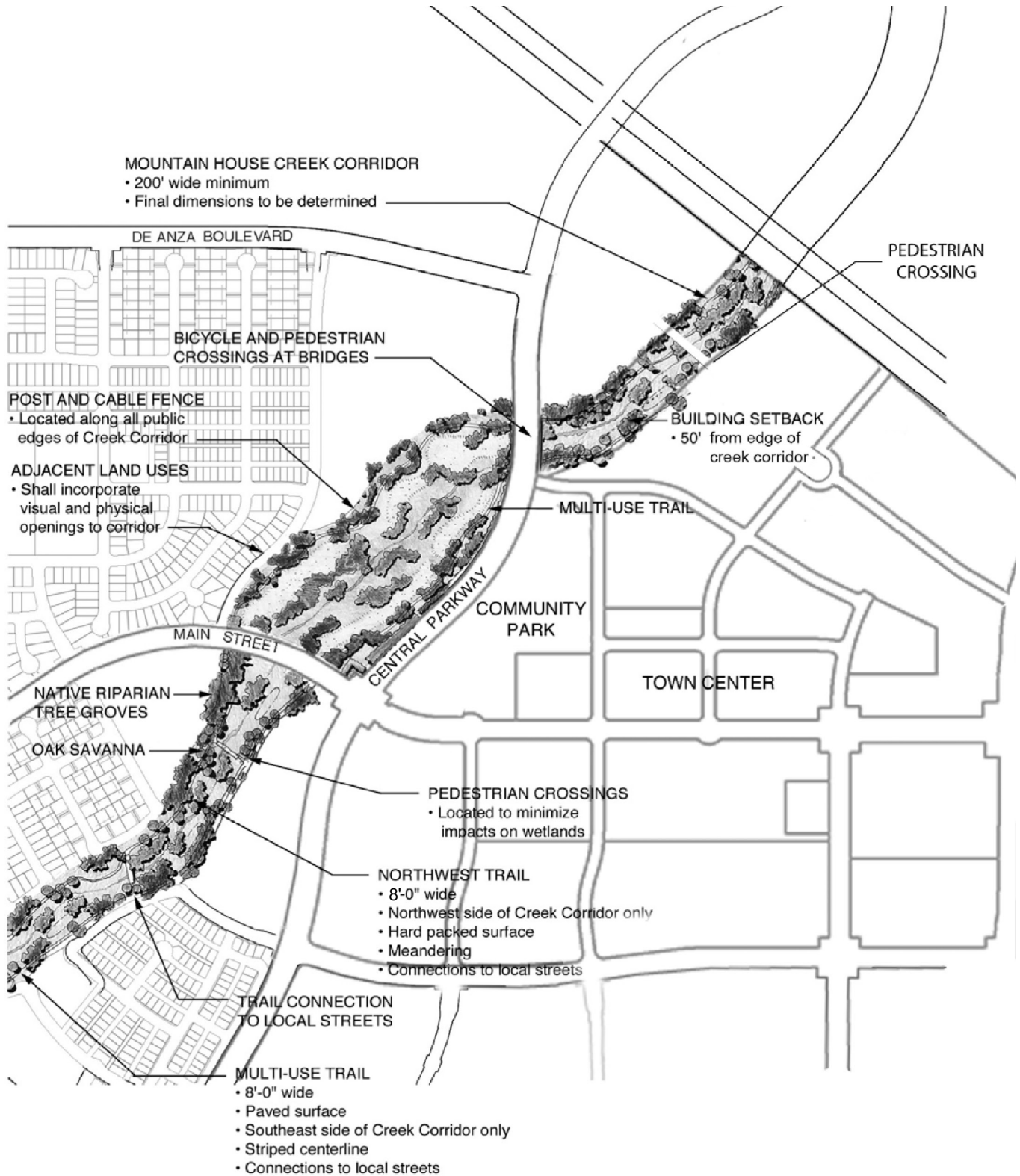
The Specific Plan allocates 74 acres to community park use. Most of the community park acreage is concentrated along the Mountain House Creek Community Park, establishing the first portion of the primary open space spine through Mountain House (see Figure 7.2: Mountain House Creek Linear Park Concept). Specific Plan I will include restoration of a primary portion of the Mountain House Creek corridor. The Specific Plan I portion of the Mountain House Creek Linear Park will provide a continuous trail along the creek and allow for extensions to community and regional parks and other facilities developed as part of future Specific Plans. The plan for creek habitat restoration is contained in Appendix SP-7-A: Mountain House Creek Phase One Habitat Restoration Plan ("Restoration Plan").

In addition to community park areas along Mountain House Creek, a 14.5-acre community park is located within the Specific Plan Area on the east side of Central Parkway, on the north edge of the future Town Center (see Figures 7.3: First Phase Community Park Concept and 7.4: Permanent Community Park Concept). Initial, interim improvements to this park may include ballfields (if there are no other community-wide ballfields available in the community by the time the 800th building permit has been issued), although long term plans call for multi-purpose open areas and facilities including an open amphitheater, that will reinforce the Town Center's function as a central community gathering area. Ultimate development of the park shall be more urban in nature, compatible with the intensive development of the future Town Center.

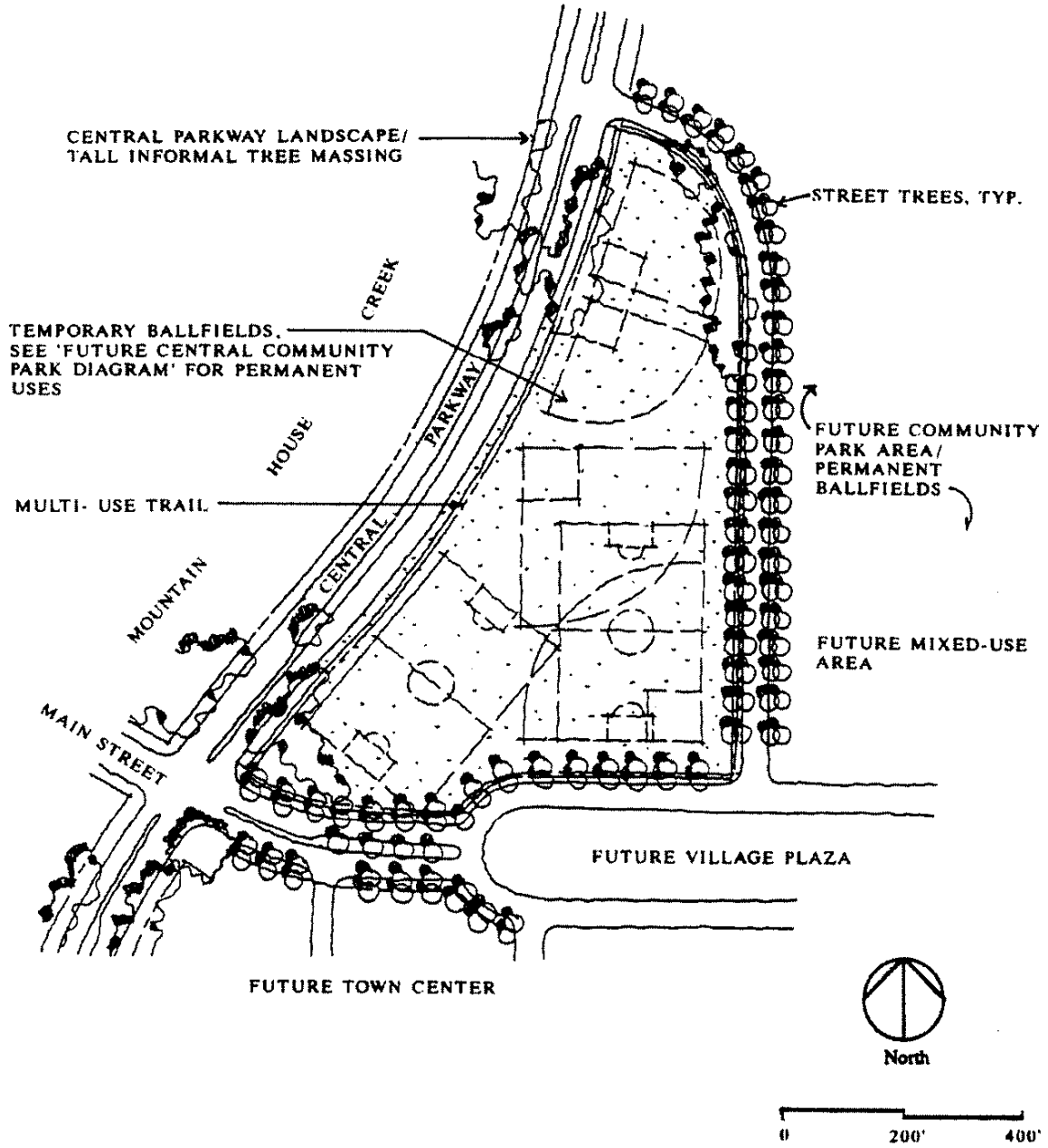
- a) Community Park Plans. Conceptual site plans for the Mountain House Creek Linear Park and the 14.5-acre community park located at Central Parkway and Main Street, adjacent to the future Town Center, are shown on Figures 7.2, 7.3, and 7.4. Final and construction plans for either the 14.5-acre community park or the high school site, shall be prepared by the CSD prior to issuance of the 500th dwelling unit permit, for the construction of interim sports fields. If sports fields are located at the high school site, Final and Construction Plans for this park will be submitted with issuance of the 1,500th dwelling permit.
- b) Park Adjacent to Town Center. The 14.5-acre community park adjacent to the future Town Center shall include passive and active facilities for the entire community. These facilities shall be compatible with, and reinforce the uses anticipated in the future Town Center. Interim use of the community park shall be encouraged by focusing community-wide activities at this location.



**FIGURE 7.2 (A) – MOUNTAIN HOUSE CREEK PARK PLAN**



**FIGURE 7.2 (B) - MOUNTAIN HOUSE CREEK PARK PLAN**



**FIGURE 7.3 – FIRST PHASE COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT  
INITIAL LOCATION OF COMMUNITY SPORTS FIELDS**

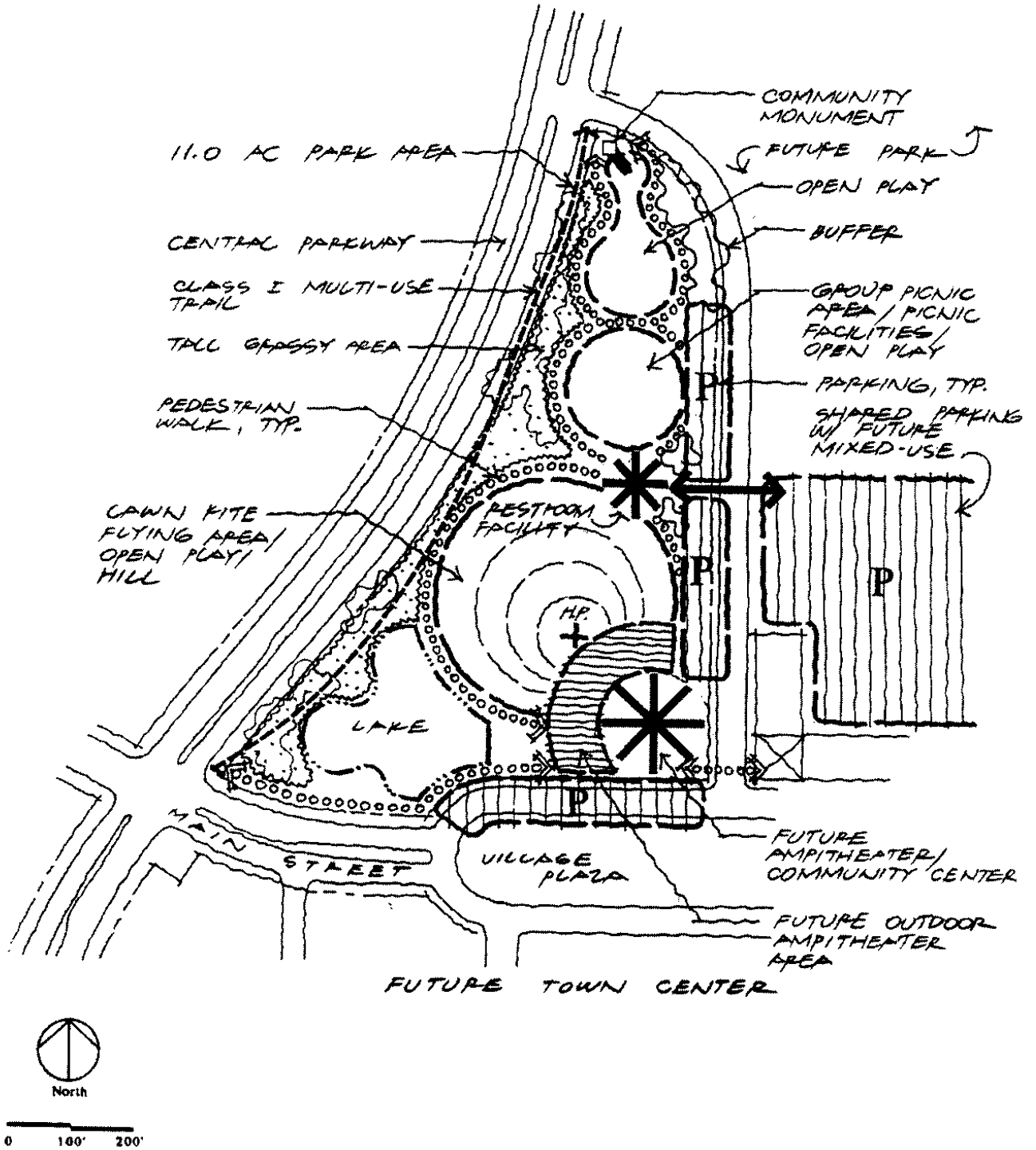


FIGURE 7.4 – PERMANENT COMMUNITY PARK CONCEPT



- c) Mountain House Creek Community Park. Mountain House Creek improvements shall be constructed consistent with provisions specified in the Master Plan. At a minimum, any phased construction shall include concurrent habitat restoration, community park development, and related storm drainage improvements as appropriate.
- d) Timing of Park Facilities. Temporary sports fields and open play areas shall be provided prior to issuance of the 800th dwelling unit permit. These temporary sports fields may be constructed either at the 11 acre community park site, or on a portion of the high school site within the Specific Plan Area for use until such time as the land is needed by the high school. Whether or not sports fields are constructed at the 11-acre community park location, the construction of the permanent park shall occur prior to the issuance of the 2,000th dwelling unit permit. Further provisions for timing of community parks shall be established in the CSD's "Park's, Leisure and Recreation Plan."

#### **7.1.4 Old River Regional Park**

Regional park fees will be collected by the Community Services District to provide for a regional park along Old River. Early access during development of Specific Plan I to provide regional park facilities shall be provided as early as deemed feasible by the CSD, and as specified in the Parks and Open Space Plan in the Master Plan.

## **7.2 BIOLOGICAL RESOURCES**

### **7.2.1 Habitat Management Plan and Swainson's Hawk Mitigation**

Chapter Seven of the Master Plan discusses a Habitat Management Plan (HMP) for multi-purpose use of mitigation lands for agricultural preservation including use of reclaimed wastewater for crop irrigation, and wildlife habitat enhancement. The HMP addresses preservation and enhancement of Swainson's hawk habitat and the Master Plan contains additional provisions addressing mitigation for impacts to the hawk.

Development of Specific Plan I shall be subject to mitigation for impacts to Swainson's hawk foraging habitat in accordance with the HMP.

- a) Habitat Mitigation. The location and timing of habitat mitigation shall be as provided in the HMP, unless modified pursuant to the provisions of the Master Plan.
- b) Interim Mitigation. Until such time as the HMP is implemented, mitigation for these impacts to Swainson's hawk foraging habitat, as well as for the other special-status species referenced in the Master Plan, shall occur in compliance with the applicable implementation measures set forth in the Master Plan.

### 7.2.2 San Joaquin Kit Fox

Based upon the biological surveys conducted to date, development of the Specific Plan Area will not adversely impact known kit fox denning or foraging habitat. Nevertheless, the measures contained in Master Plan Appendix 7-C: Kit Fox Pre-Construction and Construction Protocol shall be applied to Specific Plan I to ensure, to the extent possible, that project construction does not result in harm or injury to this species.

### 7.2.3 Wetlands

The Master Plan provides provisions for the preservation and enhancement of wetlands within Mountain House. The following section addresses measures for wetlands within the Specific Plan Area.

There are two broad types of wetlands - seasonal wetlands and emergent marsh - existing within the Specific Plan Area. In addition to these wetlands, there are channelized stream channels which carry flows but do not support adjacent wetlands. Figure 7.5: Wetlands Location Map depicts the wetlands within the Specific Plan Area.

An emergent marsh approximately 5.18 acres in size is located within Neighborhood G along Mountain House Creek. This emergent marsh was created historically by construction of a low-level dam across Mountain House Creek. Seasonal wetlands comprising approximately 2.14 acres in size are located within Neighborhood E along Mountain House Creek near the western boundary of the Specific Plan Area.

Along Mountain House Creek in Neighborhood E, there are several expanses of pasture which have been subject to flood irrigation for many years. Such areas are not considered to be wetlands for purposes of Section 404 of the Clean Water Act, and will become part of the drainage channel.

There are three existing dams along Mountain House Creek. One of these dams is located within Neighborhood G, one is located immediately upstream of the Specific Plan Area boundary at Neighborhood E, and the third is located off-site further upstream but downstream of the California Aqueduct. Each of these dams supports emergent marshes.

A small wetland is located north of the Old River Industrial Park, outside the Specific Plan Area. The total acreage of the wetlands and surrounding vegetated area is 1.5 acres.

- a) Preservation of Wetlands. The wetlands located in Neighborhoods E and G shall be restored within the Mountain House Creek corridor. The wetlands located north of the Old River Industrial Park outside the Specific Plan Area shall be preserved. Protection of the Dry Creek wetland adjacent to the proposed water treatment plant shall be addressed in the treatment plant's Use Permit.

- b) Dam Reconstruction. The spillways of the three existing dams on Mountain House Creek shall be reconstructed, with elevations corresponding to the elevation of the existing spillways. Wetlands shall not be disturbed. This type of maintenance activity is exempted from Section 404 permitting requirements [33 CFR 323.4(a)(2)]. Therefore, the reconstruction of these dams shall not require authorization by the Corps of Engineers.
- c) Flood Protection. In order to accommodate projected 100-year flood flows, the floodplain of Mountain House Creek shall be deepened at various locations within Neighborhoods E and G (see Master Plan for creek cross-sections). This floodplain deepening shall be accomplished by excavating upland areas adjacent to Mountain House Creek while avoiding excavation within the channel itself. No wetland areas shall be excavated, nor shall excavation occur adjacent to wetland areas which could result in their draining. As a result, the floodplain deepening shall not require authorization by the Corps of Engineers.
- e) Streambed Alteration Agreement. A Streambed Alteration Agreement (also known as a 1603 Agreement) pursuant to Section 1601-1607 of the California Fish and Game Code shall be secured for any work in, over, or adjacent to Mountain House Creek. The following will require streambed Alteration Agreements:
- The three bridge crossings;
  - The reconstruction of the three dams;
  - Creek channel rehabilitation work, should it be required.
- f) Coordination of Creek Improvements. All Mountain House Creek improvements shall fall under the responsibility of the CSD and shall be implemented on a schedule that corresponds to the requirements for creek flood control improvements as required by each Tentative Map.

#### **7.2.4 Other Special-Status Species**

The special-status species surveys conducted as part of the Master Plan identifies the following species as potentially occurring within the Specific Plan Area: northern harrier, black-shouldered kite, burrowing owl, and Western pond turtle. With preservation and enhancement of Mountain House Creek, habitat for the Western pond turtle (which has not been observed along Mountain House Creek in surveys conducted to date) will be improved.

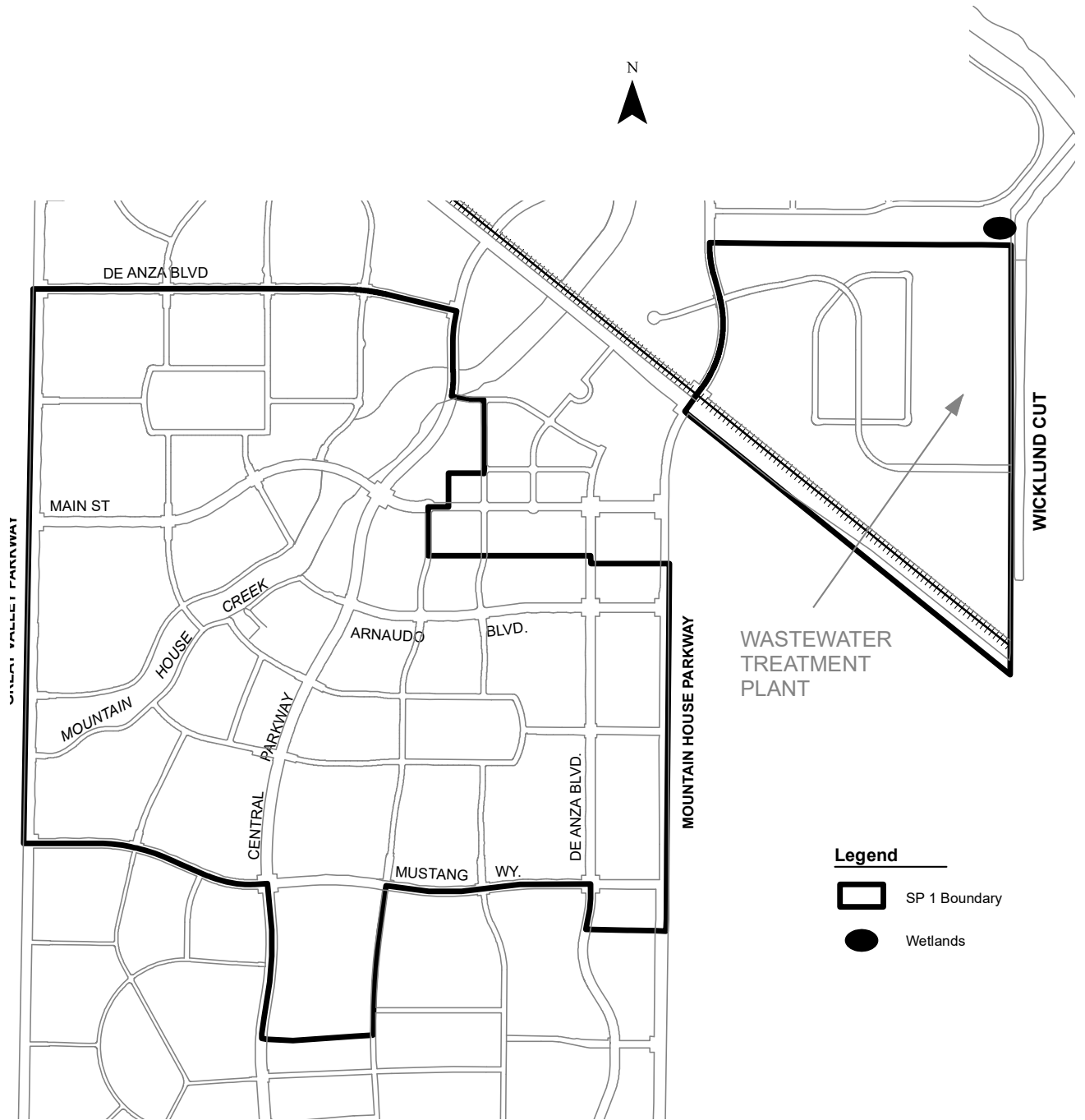
Implementation measures are specified in the Master Plan.

### **7.2.5 Other Open Space Areas**

All other open areas within the Specific Plan Area are associated with the various adjacent land uses and are covered in the appropriate chapters of this Specific Plan.

## **7.3 CULTURAL RESOURCES**

The Final EIR for the Master Plan and Specific Plan I required additional site specific surveys of the Old River industrial area and Mountain House Creek based on findings from earlier, more preliminary surveys. The results of these surveys in late 1996 confirmed that there were no significant prehistoric or historic resources within the boundaries of Specific Plan I. The requirement for a site specific reconnaissance along the raw water intake and pipeline alignment has been completed.



**FIGURE 7.5 – WETLANDS LOCATION MAP**