

## CHAPTER 4 • CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE, PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT

### INTRODUCTION

Open space, parks, and recreation facilities enhance the quality of life in a community. The conservation of these types of resources is an integral part of providing for the needs and welfare of a community. Conservation of open space takes planning for the future. If these areas are not planned for at this time and set aside for the future, a city runs the risk of losing them to development. Open space lands are undeveloped areas that provide a low density perception in an urban area, define the edge of a community, and provide the sight lines that allow long distance vistas to the Sierra Nevada and the Coast Range, agriculture fields, or other local view-points. Most people think of open space as park areas, but a large portion of a city's open space is provided by residential yard areas and right-of-way along streets.

A park is an open area that provides an assortment of recreation and leisure opportunities for a community. A park can include school playgrounds, community recreation parks, community centers, and other publicly-owned outdoor recreation areas. Parks can supply active as well as passive recreation. Activities can range from family picnics to organized sporting events.

One of the primary purposes of parks is to contribute to Kerman's quality of life. The City accomplishes this through the provision of convenient, well-equipped and maintained sites and facilities, conservation of natural resources, and a comprehensive and quality program of recreational activities and services for all citizens of the community.

### THE ELEMENT

The open space portion of this Element identifies lands that are appropriate for open space and parks acquisition as well as the development of recreation programs on these lands. The Element establishes goals, policies, action programs and standards for the conservation and treatment of open space.

Government Code Section 65560 et seq. defines open space as land that can be used for any of the following uses:

- Conservation of natural resources.
- Managed production of resources.
- Outdoor recreation.
- Preservation of lands for the purpose of protecting the public's health and safety.

Specific requirements of the conservation portion of the Element are identified in Government Code Section 65302 (d). This portion of the element includes "the conservation, development and utilization of natural resources, including water, forests, soils, rivers and other waters, wildlife, and other natural resources." Items that are addressed in this category include the conservation of:

- View opportunities.
- Soils.
- Agricultural lands.
- Mineral resources.
- Air quality.
- Wildlife habitat.

The Parks and Recreation Element is an optional element of the General Plan. This Element identifies existing and potential recreational opportunities within the community. Since it is closely related to the City's open space system, integration of the three documents into one element makes good planning sense.

## EXISTING CONDITIONS

The City of Kerman is located in the central San Joaquin Valley on level terrain. The closest significant topographical feature is the bluffs of the San Joaquin River, about ten miles north of Kerman. The mountains of the Coastal Range and the Sierra Nevada begin about 35 miles southwest and northeast of Kerman, respectively. The city is entirely surrounded by agricultural land mixed with farmhouses and small ranches. The surrounding agricultural land lends the effect of a greenbelt around Kerman.

Discussed below are specific issues relating to the Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element. A more detailed description of these issues can also be found in Part 2 of this document.

### Air Quality

Kerman has a moderate climate with warm summers and generally mild winters. The City is located within the San Joaquin Valley Air Basin. The closest California Air Resources Board (CARB) air monitoring stations are located in Fresno, where all criteria air pollutant levels are measured. According to CARB, the San Joaquin Valley exceeds standards for two important pollutant criteria: ozone and particulate matter, and is

therefore designated as a non-attainment area (meaning the Valley has not attained or achieved, required air quality standards). There are several factors which cause this to occur. They are:

1. The topography of the valley as a basin surrounded by mountains has the effect of trapping stagnant or polluted air.
2. The local climate (abundant sunshine and high atmospheric pressure) is favorable for the formation of smog.
3. The primary factor is the growth of population in the Valley. With more and more people moving to the valley, smog is produced by fossil fuel burning and emissions from factories and other combustion processes.

### Water Resources

The City withdraws groundwater from five deep wells. The wells penetrate underlying aquifers, located at depths from 300 to 900 feet.

The total production capacity of these wells is approximately 5,700 gallons per minute (gpm). The current static water level in the wells is 85 to 90 feet. According to city staff, the depth to groundwater in Kerman has remained fairly stable over the past 10 to 15 years. The upper aquifer is contaminated with Uranium. The City recently completed a major water project to drill three new wells much deeper than the previous wells. The replenishment of the deeper aquifer is unknown.

The United States Bureau of Reclamation reported in 2000 that the depth to groundwater in the Kerman area ranged from 80 to 100 feet. The water table is recharged primarily by water moving downhill from the watersheds of Sierra Nevada streams. Irrigation waters also help to recharge the water table. Rainfall in the Kerman area provides only a small amount of groundwater recharge.

There are no natural surface water features such as streams or lakes in the Kerman area. There are several irrigation canals which traverse the planning area. These could be given consideration for use as parkways, as development occurs around them.

The City is exploring the possibility of supplementing its groundwater supply with treated surface water supplied by Fresno Irrigation District (FID). FID supplies irrigation water to surrounding agricultural users. As the City develops and the agricultural uses are replaced by urban development, the water that was once used to irrigate crops could now be used to meet the municipal needs.

One concept which may help the city make better use of its resources is a dual water system. The primary system would provide potable water for domestic uses from deep

wells. The secondary system would carry non-potable water for landscaping, industrial and fire protection from surface water and/or shallow ground-water. The secondary system would have its own mains, services, pumps, wells and storage tanks.

### Agricultural Resources

Kerman is surrounded by thousands of acres of producing cropland. Agricultural lands have provided a strong economic base for the community as well as a rural landscape and open space "system" that surrounds the City. As Kerman continues to grow, the surrounding agricultural lands are taken out of production to accommodate residential, commercial, and industrial growth.

In 1965, California adopted the Williamson Act to address the loss of agricultural lands due to urbanization. The Williamson Act provides property owners with a reduction in their property tax if they agree to maintain their land in agriculture for a ten-year period. This ensures, at least for the near-future, that agricultural lands will remain undeveloped, thereby enhancing the sense of open space around Kerman as well as continuing agricultural production. Map 1 shows properties within the Kerman Planning Area that have a Williamson Act contract.

### Mineral Resources

There are no significant mineral resources within the planning area and no known mining of mineral resources has occurred in the planning area. The closest significant mineral resources consist of petroleum deposits in the Raisin City field about five miles south of the planning area. Oil wells have been extracting petroleum from this field for many years.

### Soil Resources

The soils in the Kerman area are described by the Soil Survey of Eastern Fresno County, prepared by the Soil Conservation Service, Department of Agriculture (see Map 16). The general soil map of this Survey shows three major soil groups, the Hanford, Hesperia and Traver Series, encompassing seven specific soil types in Kerman. The Hanford series consists of soils that are well-drained, fertile, moderately coarse textured, and are derived from recent granitic alluvium. The Hanford soils are generally located on nearly level alluvial fans. Conservation of soils is an important aspect of maintaining the development potential of certain areas as well as maintaining viable agricultural lands.

The Hesperia series consists of soils that are well-drained, moderately textured and are formed from granitic alluvium. Some of the soils in this series are saline-alkaline affected. They are generally found on alluvial fans.

The Traver series consists of soils that are well-drained that are typically saline-alkali affected. These soils are deep to moderately deep over compact silt. This series occupies young alluvial fans of the San Joaquin and Kings Rivers.

Seven specific soils are found within the context of the three major soil groups listed above. They are Hanford course sandy loam (Ha); Hesperia sandy loam, moderately deep (Hsm); Hanford sandy loam (Hc); Hesperia sandy loam, moderately deep, saline-alkaline (Hsn); Traver sandy loam, moderately deep (Ts); Tujunga loamy sand (Tzba); and Hesperia sandy loam, shallow (Hso).

Hanford course sandy loam (Ha) is a very deep soil that is well drained and is located on alluvial fans. This soil has a Class II agricultural rating (Class I soils have the fewest limitations for agriculture; Class VIII have the most limitations for agriculture) and a Storie Index rating of 80 (A Storie Index rating of 80-100 has the greatest suitability for intensive agriculture; less than 10 has the least suitability). Limitations for urban development are moderate foundation support.

Hesperia sandy loam, moderately deep (Hsm) is a moderately deep soil that is well drained and is located on the central parts of the young fans of the Kings and San Joaquin Rivers. Under natural conditions these soils were subject to seasonal flooding and a fluctuating high water table. It has a Class II agricultural rating and a Storie Index of 90. Limitations for urban development are moderately slow permeability, moderate to severe foundation support, and moderately slow substratum permeability.

Hanford sandy loam (Hc) is a very deep soil that is well drained and is located on alluvial fans. This soil has a Class II agricultural rating and a Storie Index rating of 95. Limitations for urban development are moderate foundation support.

Hesperia sandy loam, moderately deep, saline-alkaline (Hsn) is a moderately deep soil that is well drained and is located on the central parts of the young fans of the Kings and San Joaquin Rivers. The underlying material is strongly alkaline and normally is slightly saline from accumulations of salts. It has a Class III agricultural rating and a Storie Index of 50. Limitations for urban development are moderately slow permeability, moderate to severe foundation support, and moderately slow substratum permeability.

Traver sandy loam, moderately deep (Ts) is a well-drained soil that is saline-alkaline affected. Over long periods of time, sodium salts were accumulated in the soil material. It has a Class II agricultural rating and a Storie Index of 34. Limitations for urban development are moderate to severe saline-alkaline affected, high conductivity, and moderate soil pressure.

Tujunga loamy sand (Tzba) consists of excessively drained loamy sand and sandy soils that were formed in recent alluvium derived from granitic rocks. These soils normally occupy flood plains and fans of rivers and smaller streams. The material below the surface layer is mainly loamy sand to a depth of 5 feet or more, but in many places it is

stratified with sand, course sand, or loamy course sand. It has a Class III agricultural rating and a Storie Index of 76. Limitations for urban development are severe for foundation support and severe for soil pressure.

Hesperia sandy loam, shallow (Hso) consists of well-drained moderately course textured soils that formed in granitic alluvium. The soil is underlain by a compact, silty layer that ranges in depth of 2.5 to 3 feet. It has a Class III agricultural rating and a Storie Index of 77. Limitations for urban development are severe for septic tanks and moderate for soil pressure.

Conservation of soil resources in the planning area is critical in maintaining the agricultural resources and development potential of differing soils. In most cases, proper grading techniques can achieve this goal.

**TABLE 14**  
**DEVELOPMENT POTENTIAL OF SOILS**

Soil Type	Shrink/Swell	Streets	Parks	Irrigation	Water Retention	Landscaping
Hanford course sandy loam	low	favorable	moderate	mod. to high water-holding	high seepage	slight
Hesperia sandy loam, mod. deep	low	favorable	moderate	low to high water-holding	moderate	moderate
Hanford sandy loam	low	favorable	slight	mod. to high water-holding	high seepage	slight
Hesperia sandy loam, mod. deep, sal-alk	low	favorable	moderate	low to high water-holding	moderate	moderate
Traver sandy loam, mod. deep	low to mod.	favorable	moderate	mod. water-holding	mod. seepage	mod. to severe
Tujunga loamy sand	low	favorable	moderate	low to very low water-holding	high seepage	severe
Hesperia sandy loam, shallow	low	favorable	slight	low to high water-holding	mod. to high	moderate

*Source: United States Soil Conservation Service, 1980*

Natural Plant and Animal Communities

The Conservation Element is required to discuss the presence of native plants and animals and in particular, native species regarded as rare, threatened, or endangered. In addition to inventorying these species, the element must plan for their preservation.

Associations of plant species that grow in assemblages under similar ecological conditions are called communities. Generally, they are named for the dominant species found in the association. Definition of natural communities is important, not only because it identifies the types of plants that are present, but also because it indicates the habitat types and animal species that may be found in the community. Only two natural communities were found near the Kerman planning area: Valley Sink Scrub and Non-Native Grassland. The community descriptions listed below follow Holland's 1986 report for the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and the State's Natural Diversity Data Base.

ELEMENT NAME: Valley Sink Scrub      ELEMENT CODE: 3621

**DESCRIPTION:** Low, open to dense succulent shrublands dominated by alkali-tolerant Chenopodiaceae, especially *Allenrolfea occidentalis* or several *Sueda* species. Understories usually are lacking, though sparse herbaceous cover dominated by *Bromus rubens* develop occasionally. The annuals are most active from January to April; the perennials from March to September.

**SITE FACTORS:** Heavy, saline and/or alkaline clays of lakebeds or playas. High ground water supplies provide capillary water for the perennials. Soil surfaces often have a brilliant white salty crust over dark, sticky clay. Climate is characterized by hot, dry summers, damp winters with long periods of tule fog.

**CHARACTERISTIC SPECIES:** *Allenrolfea occidentalis*, *Delphinium recurvatum*, *Distichlis spicata*, *Kochia californica*, *Lasthenia chrysantha*, *L. ferrisae*, *Nitrophilia occidentalis*, *Salicornia subterminalis*, *Sporobolus airoides*, *Sueda fruticosa*, *S. torreyana*.

**DISTRIBUTION:** Formerly surrounded the large San Joaquin Valley lakes (Kern, Buena Vista, Tulare, Goose) and north along the trough of the San Joaquin Valley through Merced County to the gooselands of the Sacramento Valley (Solano to Glenn County, west of the Sacramento River); but now essentially eliminated due to flood control, agricultural development, and ground water pumping.

ELEMENT NAME: Non-Native Grassland      ELEMENT CODE: 42200

**DESCRIPTION:** A dense to sparse cover of annual grasses with flowering culms .2 to .5 meters high. Often associated with numerous species of showy-flowered, native annual forbs (wildflowers), especially in years of favorable rainfall. Germination occurs with the onset of the late fall rains; growth, flowering, and seed-set occur from winter through spring. With a few exceptions, the plants are dead through the summer-fall dry season, persisting as seeds.

**SITE FACTORS:** On fine-textured, usually clay soils, moist or even waterlogged during the winter rainy season and very dry during the summer and fall. Oak Woodland is often adjacent on moister, better drained soils.

#### Rare, Threatened, and Endangered Species

On March 1, 1993, the Natural Diversity Database (NDDB) was consulted for a report of occurrences of any rare, threatened, endangered, or sensitive plants, animals or natural communities within the Kerman Quad. The NDDB is a computerized inventory available through the California Department of Fish and Game, Natural Heritage Division.

Two plant species occurrences were reported: one occurrence of *Eriastrum hooveri* (Hoover's woolly star) and one occurrence of *Cordylanthus palmatus* (Palmate-bracted bird's beak). A brief description of each species and its occurrence record, as well as its presumed current status within the Kerman planning area, is included below.

<i>Eriastrum hooveri</i>	(Jepson) Mason. "Hoover's eriastrum", "Hoover's woolly star"
Family:	Polemoniaceae
Status:	CNPS - List 1B (Rare, Threatened or Endangered in California and Elsewhere) Federal - Threatened. State - None
Flowering period:	April - June
Habitat:	Saltbush scrub, Alkaline playas
Historic Range:	Fresno, Kings, Kern, San Luis Obispo and Tulare Counties
Known Occurrence:	1979; Fresno Co., "4.7 mi. S of Kerman RR Station along Hwy. 145 (Madera Ave.)"

Discussion:

This small cyclical, ephemeral annual, of the family Polemoniaceae (Phlox family), was once fairly widespread throughout the alkaline soils of the San Joaquin Valley. This plant is often found in openings in *Atriplex* scrub where cryptogamic crusts have developed on the soil surface (Stebbins et al., 1992). Much of its native habitat has been converted to agriculture. It was known to exist at 23 sites throughout the San Joaquin Valley in 1986 (Taylor and Davilla).

The Fresno County occurrence of *Eriastrum hooveri* described above, lies approximately 3 3/4 miles south of the Kerman Urban Area Boundary, "on slight hummocks (where less alkaline) in alkaline plain". The habitat that supported this population of *E. hooveri* has probably been eliminated due to agricultural conversion. No habitat capable of supporting this species is expected to be found within the Kerman General Plan Update Planning Area, although habitat may exist on the KMJ (radio tower) property (2/3 mile south of the Sphere of Influence (SOI) boundary).

*Cordylanthus palmatus* (Ferris) J. F. Macbride. "Palmate-bracted bird's beak"

Family: Scrophulariaceae

Status: CNPS - List 1B (Rare, Threatened or Endangered in California and Elsewhere). Federal – Endangered. State - Endangered

Flowering period: June - July

Habitat: Alkaline scrub in seasonally flooded lowlands

Historic Range: Fresno, Madera, Alameda, Colusa and Yolo Counties

Known Occurrence: 1965; Fresno Co., "6 Mi. S of Kerman (on Madera Ave.)"

#### Discussion:

Palmate-bracted birds-beak (*Cordylanthus palmatus*) is a hemiparasitic species in the family Scrophulariaceae (Figwort family) that has been severely impacted by the conversion of its native habitat (alkaline playas) to agriculture (Heckard 1977). The Madera Avenue site south of Kerman was last visited in 1983 and plants were not observed. It was reported that the habitat was lost due to soil reclamation and the area was under cultivation.

Suitable habitat may exist for this species on the KMJ property approximately 2/3 mile south of the Kerman SOI.

#### Other Species of Concern

Another species, not reported by NDDDB, that is likely to occur in the general area is the San Joaquin Kit Fox (SJKF), a federally endangered species (J. Stebbins, pers. comm. 1993). It is known to occur on the KMJ property within one mile of the Kerman SOI. If the KMJ property supports SJKF dens, it is likely that San Joaquin Kit Fox could forage at times within the SOI. This, however, has not been previously documented.

The kit fox is endemic to central California and was once common in the southern San Joaquin Valley. Their population has declined dramatically due to habitat loss caused by urbanization and cultivation of their native habitat. The kit fox is listed as "threatened" by the State of California and "endangered" by the Federal government.

The San Joaquin kit fox is a burrow dweller and is known to occur in both of the natural communities found within the planning area. It is an opportunistic feeder, eating whatever prey species are locally abundant. Prey can include insects, birds, rodents and other small mammals.

Burrowing owl is a state-listed "Species of Special Concern" and is also known to occur at the KMJ property (J. Stebbins, pers. comm. 1993).

### Park and Recreation Resources

The City of Kerman currently has ten developed park sites and one undeveloped park sites (see Map 9). According to the National Parks and Recreation Service, a four acre park would be categorized as a neighborhood park, which has a service area of approximately 1/4 to 1/2 mile radius.

*Kerckhoff Park* (5.75 acres) site is located at the intersection of "G" Street and Third Street. Kerckhoff is considered a neighborhood park. Facilities at Kerckhoff Park include a baseball field with bleachers, a skate park, several picnic shelters, a stage, barbecue pits, picnic tables, booths used for events such as the Harvest Festival playground equipment, restroom and a meeting/recreational facility known as the Scout Hut. In 2007, the City has plans to renovate the shelters, stage and the booths. The old swimming pool dressing and equipment room is being renovated as Teen Center which will be utilized in conjunction with the park facilities, Community/Teen Center and the skate park.

*Lions Park* (18.3 acres) is a neighborhood park as well as a ponding basin. It is located at the northeast corner of E Street and Park Avenue and includes picnic facilities, a pavilion, restroom/concession, playground equipment and horseshoe pits. A 6.5-acre addition to the park was recently completed.

*Plaza Park* (1.3 acres) is a linear park that forms the median divider for Madera Avenue between California Avenue and C Street. It contains a number of mature trees, lawn areas, picnic tables and restrooms. In 2004, the park was renovated to reflect its place as the historical center of Kerman. A wrought iron fence now surrounds the park and buffers it from Madera Ave. (SR 145). A 15 ft old-fashioned clock tower was placed at the north end and a replica of the original "Kerman" arch sign was installed at the south end to welcome people into the City. The renovation also included a large gazebo was placed at the south end, a 10-foot walking path that meanders through the park and a central Veterans' circle with monuments honoring Kerman's War Veterans.

*Wooten Park* (1.5 acres) is located at the corner of C Street and Manor Drive. It includes a playground, and a baseball diamond.

*Rotary Park* (4.5 acres) includes two lighted baseball fields, bleachers, a restroom/concession building and playground and is located on the campus of Kerman Floyd Elementary School. The City and KUSD maintain a "Facilities Use Agreement" which guides the use of the park..

*Soroptomist Park* (2.95 acres) is currently being built out at the northeast corner of Siskiyou and Kearney Boulevard and will include walking paths, a covered picnic area and universally-accessible playground equipment.

*Kiwanis Park* (2.12 acres) is a pocket park located within a subdivision at the intersection of San Joaquin and El Mar Avenues. It includes a ball field back-stop, playground equipment, benches and a future basketball court.

*“B” Street Park* (1.75 acres) is located at 16<sup>th</sup> & “B” Streets. A playground will be placed on the site in 2007

*Sunset Playground* (0.35 acres) is a combination park and ponding basin. It is located at the southeast corner of Sixth Street and Sunset Avenue.

*Vineland Playground* (0.62 acres) is another park/ponding basin. It is located on Vineland Avenue, north of California Avenue. Both Sunset and Vineland parks include playground equipment.

In addition to these existing parks, three (3) additional parks are in the planning stages:

- 1.75 acre neighborhood park adjacent to the east side elementary school which will be scheduled to open in either August 2007 or '08. The park will be developed in conjunction with the 5-6 acres ball fields that the City and School District will develop on the 20-acre school site.

- 2.6-acre “Gateway Park” will be developed in conjunction with the “Smart Growth” development at the southwest corner of Park Avenue and the new Gateway Boulevard just south of Whitesbridge Road (180).

- 3-acre park located at the western city limits is slated for development in 2007-8. It is located at the intersection of San Joaquin and Kenneth Avenues and is expected to expand to 6- 7 acres as development proceeds to the west.

The City is also exploring the acquisition of property for a regional park and continues to maintain park facilities. The City's Parks and Recreation Department supervises and coordinates a wide variety of programs and activities.

#### Community Events

The Department helps sponsor family-oriented and special community events throughout the year, including the Harvest Festival, May Day Festival, Festival of the American Spirit, community blood drive, a Christmas toy and food drive for the needy and many other local events honoring the history and culture of the community

#### Sports Programs

The City provides organized men's and women's sports leagues and youth sports leagues as well as a swimming program. A strong emphasis has been placed on community

participation in the planning, organization and implementation of these programs. As these programs grow and participation increases, additional fields, personnel and facilities will be needed.

In 1999, the Kerman Teen Community Center was completed at the corner of Kearney Blvd. and Madera Avenue, serving as Kerman's newest recreational facility that also shares a campus with the city library. The facility hosts numerous private events such as weddings, quincinieras, birthday and anniversary celebrations as well as fundraising events. Sports and community programs for both teens and adults are held at this new facility in addition to local government meetings for the City Council, Planning Commission and other State and regional public agencies..

The community has shown strong support for programs of the Recreation Department, including activities such as the adult softball program, the public swimming program, T-ball, soccer, gymnastics, basketball, volleyball, cheerleading, self-defense dance classes and other similar activities.

The City also operates a senior citizens program with a number of activities. Daily lunches are provided for a donation (typically \$1.00, although persons who cannot pay are not turned away). Other programs include bingo, movies, public transportation, dances, birthday parties, homebound lunches and visitations, and activities at the new Kearney Palms Senior Citizen apartment complex among others. Many of the daily activities are conducted at the Seniors Center at 720 South 8th Street..

#### Joint Use of School Facilities

In addition to City-owned park and recreation facilities, Kerman residents have access to grounds and playing fields at Kerman Unified School District (KUSD) schools. The City and the school district have executed a joint use agreement for the use of school district facilities for city recreation programs and the City manages the facilities at Rotary Park which is located at the Kerman-Floyd Elementary school campus. Table 15 summarizes the sports facilities on school grounds.

**TABLE 15**  
**KERMAN UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT RECREATION FACILITIES**

<u>School</u>	<u>Total Acres</u>	<u>Recreation Facilities</u>
Kerman-Floyd Elementary (Rotary Park)	20 ac.	Two softball diamonds, 2 soccer fields, assorted playground equipment
New Elementary School (Kearney Blvd. & Goldenrod Ave.)	20 ac.	Baseball & softball diamonds and soccer field, with outdoor play areas (in planning stage)
Liberty Intermediate School	10 ac.	One softball field, one soccer field, playground
Kerman Middle School	10 ac.	Baseball diamond, basketball courts, gym, outdoor play areas
Kerman High School	20 ac.	Baseball diamonds, softball diamonds, 8 tennis courts, basketball courts, track, football stadium, gym, volleyball courts.

Source: Kerman Unified School District, 2007.

#### Other Area Recreation and Open Space Facilities

Portuguese Hall: The Portuguese Hall is a meeting hall with banquet facilities located on C Street between Madera Avenue and Sixth Street.

#### Regional Parks Facilities

There are several regional parks that are within driving distance to Kerman. Generally speaking, at a maximum, most people are willing to travel thirty minutes to get to a regional park facility, and possibly one hour if there was some type of event scheduled there, such as a church gathering, family reunion, or school function. Kerman has two regional parks operated by Fresno County within ten minutes driving time. Kearney Park is a historic 225-acre park originally developed as the estate of Fresno County pioneer M. Theo Kearney. This facility is located on Kearney Boulevard about seven miles east of Kerman. The park contains the former home of Kearney, which is operated as a museum. It is lavishly landscaped with mature trees and shrubs. The park has picnic facilities, tennis courts, soccer fields horseshoe pits, two softball fields and four playground areas.

Skaggs Bridge Park is located about seven miles north of Kerman where Madera Avenue (State Highway 145) crosses the San Joaquin River. The park includes 17 acres on the bank of the San Joaquin River. It includes a large grassy area suitable for picnicking, softball and other open-field play. Skaggs Bridge Park has been suggested as the western anchor of the San Joaquin River parkway.

Roeding Park, operated by the City of Fresno is located about fifteen miles east of Kerman. This 157-acre regional park includes Chaffee Zoological Gardens, Rotary Playland (an amusement park with rides), boating and fishing lakes, Storyland (children's play area with buildings, sculptures and landscaping based on popular fairy tales). There are also picnic tables, barbeque pits and tennis courts.

The Fresno West Golf Course is an 18-hole course located on Whitesbridge about ten miles west of Kerman, while a new golf course, Running Horse, is currently under development that is also located on Whitesbridge about 10 miles west of Kerman. The Mendota Wildlife Area is a multi-purpose state wildlife area located about eighteen miles west of Kerman on the south side of Whitesbridge Road. This facility was first established in 1954 as a habitat area for wildlife - primarily migrating waterfowl. Hunting is permitted at certain times and some areas are grazed by cattle. Additional land acquisitions since 1954 have increased Mendota Wildlife Area to over 12,000 acres.

Two state ecological reserves also lie west of Kerman. The Kerman Ecological Reserve is located seven miles west of Kerman on the north side of Whitesbridge Road and covers over 1,700 acres. Alkali Sink Ecological Reserve is located 12 miles west of Kerman on the south side of Whitesbridge Road and covers over 900 acres. These reserves were established to preserve native habitat - human use is generally not encouraged. However, the value of these sites in preserving the valley as it once was is significant. Map 10 shows the general location of regional parks, recreation and reserve facilities.

#### Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation: Future Needs

A primary objective of this Element is the establishment of criteria that will guide the acquisition and development of future open space areas. These standards should be realistic and represent the actual amount of area and facilities necessary to meet the needs and desires of the community. These open spaces can be provided in a variety of ways, and do not need to be under the control of the City to meet Kerman's needs.

State Government Code Section 66477 (b) requires a minimum of three acres of open space for every one thousand residents. Each jurisdiction can require that a maximum of five acres of open space be set aside per one thousand residents if the current land use exceeds the three acres per thousand standard. Presently, Kerman has a total of 41.1 acres of developed parkland. With a current (2007) estimated population of 12,000 persons, Kerman has approximately 3.4 acres of park land per one thousand residents. To meet the city's recently established goal of four acres of parkland per thousand

residents, the acreage of parkland must be increased over time to meet the growing population.

Projections of a community's open space and park needs involves many factors. Population, income, education, accessibility, and age must all be considered in determining the correct amount of open space/parks for a community. In this case more is not necessarily better. Park acquisition must strike a balance between use and the maintenance available to sustain the park. Generally speaking, city parks cost approximately \$7,000 to 8,000 acre per year to maintain. A city may have 10 acres of open space per 1,000 persons; however, if this acreage is not maintained properly, its value as usable open space will be greatly diminished. As Kerman acquires more parkland, it must also dedicate the resources to adequately maintain that land. Americans today are spending more of their time in recreation leisure activities than ever before. This emphasis has created a much higher demand than ever for quality open space, parks and recreation facilities. In response to this, cities must designate areas for such uses, before development occurs.

Parkland

In order to determine the type, location and amount of parkland that will be required by Kerman within the 20-year planning period, population projections are required. Two population projections (low and high) are displayed in Table 16. The table shows that as population increases, so does the need for facilities and programs. Table 16 also shows the required number of acres of parkland for each of the projections listed.

**TABLE 16**  
**PROJECTED PARK ACREAGE NEEDS**

Year	<u>Low Population Projection</u>		<u>High Population Projection</u>	
	Population	Req. Acreage	Population	Req. Acreage
2006	12,663	51	12,663	51
2012	15,657	63	17,660	71
2017	18,685	75	23,300	93
2022	22,299	89	30,742	123
2027	26,613	106	40,561	162

Source: Collins & Schoettler, 2007

The ability to forecast population growth allows for the planned acquisition and development of park sites. While State standards require a minimum of three acres per one thousand residents, Kerman has recently established a goal of four acres per thousand

residents. To accomplish this, facilities must be planned, developed, and maintained to ensure adequate recreational facilities for existing and future residents.

#### Accessibility

Another important factor in the planning of future parks is to insure that parks are accessible to all citizens of the community. For instance, although a city may currently meet the standards regarding the amount of parkland required; the existing park sites may not be easily accessible from all areas of the community.

Map 9 shows the location of existing City-owned parks. Generally, a community park will have a one-half mile service area, and a neighborhood park has a one-quarter mile radius service area.

### **ISSUES, POLICIES AND ACTION PROGRAMS**

This portion of the Element incorporates policies into implementing action programs. These policies are a guide to the future development of parks and recreation facilities as well as the preservation of Kerman's natural resources.

The first part of the Plan is the identification of issues relating to conservation, open space, parks and recreation facilities. The second part is the identification of policies that will guide future decisions regarding these issues. The third part of the Plan is the action program. These programs will serve to implement the policies. For example, the action program will provide a framework for the development of future capital improvement programs and department budgets.

### **GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND ACTION PROGRAM**

The following goals, have been used as a guideline in the preparation of this Element:

1. CONSERVE, RESTORE, AND ENHANCE SIGNIFICANT NATURAL, CULTURAL AND HISTORIC RESOURCES IN KERMAN.
2. CREATE AND PRESERVE OPEN SPACE IN THE KERMAN AREA TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY NOW AND IN THE FUTURE.
3. DEVELOP A HIGH QUALITY PUBLIC PARK AND RECREATION SYSTEM THAT IS CONVENIENT, ACCESSIBLE AND AFFORDABLE TO ALL SEGMENTS OF THE CITY.

4. IMPLEMENT THE CONSERVATION, OPEN SPACE AND PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENT THROUGH A COMBINATION OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE FUNDS, REGULATORY PROCESSES, AND INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES.
5. PRESERVE THE EXISTING SCENIC QUALITIES OF THE COMMUNITY BY ADOPTING STANDARDS REGULATING ENTRYWAYS, VIEW PRESERVATION AND LANDSCAPING.

#### A. AIR QUALITY

The City of Kerman exceeds two important air pollution standards - ozone and particulate matter. As growth occurs, more smog is produced by fossil fuel burning and emissions from factories. The City must encourage development that will minimize vehicular emissions by providing an adequate circulation system.

1. **POLICY:** Participate in the regional planning efforts to meet air quality goals by working to improve air quality for the entire planning area.  
  
*ACTION:* *The planning and public works departments will send proposed development plans to the San Joaquin Valley Unified Air Pollution Control District for review of potential air pollution impacts.*
2. **POLICY:** Consider traffic flow in the planning of residential, commercial and industrial developments.  
  
*ACTION:* *The planning and engineering divisions will review all new projects to insure that traffic flow is not unnecessarily impeded, thereby causing increased vehicle-related air emissions.*
3. **POLICY:** Maintain adequate roadway levels of service (LOS) to avoid congestion which contributes to the air pollution problem.  
  
*ACTION:* *The Public Works department will review all proposed development projects to insure that roadway service levels do not fall below Level C for arterials and collectors and Level B for intersections. The department will utilize gas tax and transportation funds to maintain these transportation standards.*
4. **POLICY:** Develop an organized and efficient circulation system to reduce vehicle trips in the planning area, idling time, intersection delays, and other emissions-producing activities.

*ACTION: The City shall review all new projects for consistency with the adopted Circulation Element.*

5. POLICY: The City shall encourage residents to use alternative modes of transportation.

*ACTION: The City will seek funds to implement the city-wide bikepath system consistent with the Circulation Element map.*

## B. WATER QUALITY AND CONSERVATION

The City of Kerman obtains its water supply from a vast aquifer underlying the San Joaquin Valley. The quantity of water appears to be adequate; however, there have been some quality problems particularly related to uranium content. Certain stratas of the water table underlying Kerman are unfit for domestic purposes due to the contamination problem. The City has been required to drill several new wells recently to obtain usable water. In the future, Kerman must provide for long-range community water needs and protect water quality and quantity. It must also maximize the efficient use and conservation of the community's water resources.

1. POLICY: Promote a community awareness program that will educate the community in water-saving methodologies at the home and the work place.

*ACTION: The Public Works department will provide the community with information brochures containing water-saving techniques. Further the department should prepare a Water Conservation Ordinance for adoption by the City Council.*

2. POLICY: Require the use of native and drought-tolerant new landscaping in existing and future parks.

*ACTION: Implementation of the City's Water Conservation Ordinance shall require the use of native and drought-tolerant species.*

3. POLICY: Allow for adequate groundwater recharge by developing storm ponding and retention basins where feasible. In some areas these ponds or basins can be incorporated into a recreational area or used as wildlife habitat area.

*ACTION: The Engineering Department shall implement the policies of this Element with regard to locations of future park/pond basins.*

4. POLICY: The City should develop a secondary water source system (“purple pipe system”) that can be incorporated into new development in order to use less potable water for the irrigation of parks, schools and public landscaping.

### C. HISTORICAL RESOURCES

Although the City of Kerman does not have any structures designated as "historic" by the Fresno County Historical Society, there are some architecturally significant structures that enhance Kerman's identity. Several structures along Madera Avenue, between California Avenue and "G" Street display an interesting architectural character. These buildings, in contrast to newer commercial development, come right out to the back of the sidewalk, helping to create a pedestrian shopping atmosphere. Contrast this with most new commercial development where a parking lot often surrounds the building.

1. POLICY: Work with developers and architects in creating new buildings and renovating old buildings in a manner that is sensitive to the architectural character of the surrounding neighborhood.

ACTION: a. The Planning Department, through the site plan review process shall encourage project design that complements the character of the surrounding neighborhood. The Department shall revise application forms to require applicants to state how their project "fits in" with the character and architecture of the surrounding area.

### D. OPEN SPACE RESOURCES

The City of Kerman and its surroundings have locally significant natural resources that must be preserved. Chief among these natural resources are the surrounding agricultural lands and the city's outdoor recreation areas. As the city grows, increased pressure to develop these areas can result in conflicts which may lead to the permanent loss of these resources. The City will designate some of these areas for open space uses so that these precious resources can be conserved.

1. POLICY: Preserve and protect agricultural lands as a means for providing open space and for the managed production of resources.

ACTION: a. *The City of Kerman should consider the option of using the purchase of agricultural conservation easements on land of at least equal quality and size as partial compensation for the direct loss of agricultural land, as well as for the partial compensation*

*for the direct loss of agricultural land, as well as for the mitigation for growth inducing and cumulative impacts on agricultural land.*

*: b. This policy will be implemented through adoption of the Land Use Element and Land Use map.*

*c. The Planning Department shall conduct an annual review of cancelled Williamson Act contracts and development proposals on agricultural land within the City Limits and Sphere of Influence.*

2. POLICY: Develop buffers and transition areas between urban uses and agricultural land to reduce incompatibility issues that are associated with cultivation, pest control and harvesting of crops.

*ACTION: Adoption of the Land Use Element and Land Use map will provide the implementation of this policy.*

3. POLICY: Explore with owners of agricultural parcels that are not within the 2027 growth boundary of Kerman's Land Use Element the possibility of entering the agricultural preserve program.

*ACTION: Adoption of the Land Use Element will provide the implementation of this policy.*

4. POLICY: Promote infilling and increase overall residential densities in the City of Kerman to reduce the rate of urbanization of surrounding agricultural lands.

*ACTION: Adoption of the Land Use Element will provide the implementation of this policy.*

5. POLICY: Establish and maintain "hard edges" around Kerman that define where urbanization stops and agricultural open space begins.

*ACTION: Where appropriate, the City will discourage zoning requests in the Sphere of Influence and surrounding County areas to permit further parcelization for development of large lot residential purposes i.e.; ranchettes. The City will also implement the annexation policy described in the Land Use Element (Policy C-3).*

## E. DESIGNATION OF ADEQUATE FACILITIES

The City's General Plan must designate adequate recreational facilities for future development. The Land Use Element and this Element must provide locations for the future development of conservation, open space, parks and recreation facilities. If adequate sites are not designated in advance, the City will continue to grow with no property set aside for these uses.

1. POLICY: Maintain compliance with adopted City park standards as the City grows.

*ACTION:* The City shall review and, if necessary, increase its park impact fees in order to insure that it achieves its adopted ratio of 4 acres of parkland per 1,000 people.

2. POLICY: Acquire and develop adequate park sites to serve future City growth.

*ACTION:* The City shall use park development impact fees towards acquiring and developing new park sites.

3. POLICY: Provide a variety of park sites and recreational facilities to accommodate the City's diverse population.

*ACTION:* Adoption of this Element will provide implementation of this item.

4. POLICY: Acquire park sites in the north and east parts of Kerman within the planning area. Also, work with KUSD in order to maximize the joint use of space and facilities

*ACTION:* Adoption of this Element and the Land Use Element will provide implementation of this item.

5. POLICY: Plan for the acquisition of parks prior to urban growth and development. These lands may be acquired and left vacant until funding for development is available.

*ACTION:* Adoption of this Element and the Land Use Element will provide implementation of this item.

6. POLICY: Encourage private or commercial development of recreational opportunities such as racquetball courts, golf, commercial softball, etc., that are available to the public.

- 
- ACTION:*                    *The City will encourage the development of private recreation facilities.*
7. POLICY:                Work with all levels of government and private sources toward the acquisition and development of a regional park in Kerman. The Regional Park should be within the new Sphere of Influence lines or immediately adjacent and should consist of 35 to 45 acres. The City should examine several locations to judge the most appropriate based upon several factors: cost of property, willingness of property to donate, infrastructure availability, direct access from major collector streets or arterials, access with certain buffer zones and cost to develop. The City should do a study of several sites and present the study to the Planning Commission for a recommendation of three potential sites.
- ACTION:*                    *a. Large recreational parks and regional parks shall be separated from residential uses by solid masonry walls and a buffer zone to prevent conflicts of noise and traffic in residential neighborhoods.*
- b. The City will plan and work towards the funding of a future regional park and recreation facility (35 to 50 acres)*
9. POLICY:                Develop an "adopt a park" program throughout the City.
- ACTION:*                    *The parks and recreation department shall implement an "adopt a park" program in which private citizens or organizations (i.e.; service clubs, churches, scouting groups, etc.) help with the development of open space, parks, and recreation facilities. The City should continue its practice of engaging other local funding sources and volunteers in park developments.*
10. POLICY:                The City shall continue to seek out donations of land or money towards park facilities. The City may announce these efforts in recreation schedules, publications, plaques or notices at existing parks, etc.
- ACTION:*                    *The City shall develop a policy of public notice of construction of lighted active recreational use lights at all new "Active Parks" of 5 acres or more.*
11. POLICY:                Coordinate efforts to acquire and develop park and recreational

facilities with the Kerman Unified School District to insure that there is coordination, cooperation and maximization of space, facilities and programs.

*ACTION: The City of Kerman shall coordinate the development of recreation facilities with the Kerman Unified School District.*

#### F. PARK LOCATION AND DESIGN

Active park sites and passive open space areas should be accessible to all segments of the community (for specific locations of future parks see, "Plan Recommendations" on page 67.)

1. POLICY: Locate future parks in such a way as to be accessible and available to all the citizens of Kerman.

*ACTION: Adoption of this Element and the Land Use Map and its policies will provide implementation of this policy. The City must observe this policy when considering the location of new parks.*

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

*ACTION: Adoption of this Element and its policies will provide implementation of this policy. Factors to consider include streets with high traffic, industrial uses, and noise sensitive uses.*

3. POLICY: Fencing and landscaped buffers shall be used to minimize any negative impacts a park may have on an adjacent residential neighborhood.

*ACTION: The Planning Department will review all park plans to insure that any negative impacts on surrounding properties are minimized. Additionally, the public hearing required under Policy #1 will give neighboring property owners the opportunity to voice their concerns on this matter.*

4. POLICY: When possible, locate community parks on arterial roadways and neighborhood parks on collector streets to ensure adequate access for the community.

*ACTION: Adoption of this Element and the Land Use Map will provide implementation of this policy.*

5. POLICY: All parks should be designed to meet the needs of the handicapped.

*ACTION: The Building Department shall review plans for proposed facilities for compliance with handicap/accessibility requirements of the Uniform Building Code.*

6. POLICY: Parks and other facilities that may require a significant amount of night lighting, such as ball parks and tennis courts, should be designed in such a way as to minimize the impacts of lighting on the surrounding neighborhood.

*ACTION: The City Planning, Public Works and Engineering Departments shall review lighting schemes for all projects.*

7. POLICY: Park design shall consider the incorporate the use of berms and small hills where appropriate to provide relief to the otherwise flat terrain of Kerman.

*ACTION: City staff shall review the grading plans of all park sites to consider that areas of bermed landscaping are provided. Earth moved from ponding basins can provide a ready source for berms and hills.*

8. POLICY: Parking lots in new City parks shall be landscaped per current City Zoning Ordinance parking lot landscaping requirements. Furthermore, these parking lots can be used as an example of Zoning Ordinance parking standards for private developers.

*ACTION The Planning Department shall review parking lot design in new parks to insure that they meet Zoning Ordinance requirements.*

## G. PARK ACQUISITION AND FUNDING

### Issues

Adequate funds are the major obstacle in developing and operating park and recreation facilities. With the competition for state and federal dollars, there is a need to find new and expanded sources of funds for development. Cities must work to develop more effective finance mechanisms to meet the growing needs of the community. Kerman's main source of park funding is the City's "Quimby Act Fee", Park Acquisition Impact Fees and Park Development Impact Fees) The Quimby and other fees permits the City to levy a fee against each new dwelling unit. Funds derived from this fee are placed into an

account used solely for park acquisition. Development Impact Fees are utilized for development.

Other financing mechanisms available for park acquisition and development include: 1) Proposition 70 monies, 2) Redevelopment tax increment funds (KUSD/RDA Recreational Facilities Increment) and 3) Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 allows the creation of assessment districts.

Passage of Proposition 84, along with earlier park bond propositions (such as Prop 40), has made monies available for the construction of park, educational and recreation facilities, and acquisition of lands for parks, nature preserves and open space. Some of these funds will automatically accrue to the City of Kerman while other funds are awarded through a competitive selection process. Redevelopment Law allows cities to utilize tax increment revenue to finance land acquisition for public purposes; construction of public facilities, such as parks, sewers and streets; and administration.

The Landscaping and Lighting Act of 1972 can be used to finance the construction of landscaping, lighting and park and recreational improvements, and the maintenance and servicing of any of these improvements. The Act provides for the creation of a district which can be broken down into zones. A zone can be exempted from the district or assessed differently based on the level of benefit to properties within the zone. This financing mechanism is an excellent means of maintaining and servicing the common open space and recreation improvements in each residential development. Another option would be to consider forming a maintenance district which encompasses the entire community; however, the funds generated would only apply to the maintenance of public improvements as specified by the City.

1. **POLICY:** Kerman shall continue to require developers to pay park impact fees (Quimby fees & Park Development Impact Fees) or dedicate land in lieu thereof. The State of California adopted Section 11546 of the Business and Professional Code which allows a jurisdiction to require the dedication of parkland by a subdivision developer, or in lieu of dedication, to pay a fee of equivalent value.
  2. **POLICY:** Ensure that the City of Kerman receives its full share of federal and state grant funds including matching and competitive grants. The City shall also seek out available charitable contributions for parks and open space facilities. This could include donations of property in conjunction with new residential development.
- ACTION:** The City shall annually review its fees for recreational programs, park lands and rentals to insure that they are sufficient to finance future park needs. Areas that could be considered for review include:

- Charging user fees for use of a facility or participation in an activity,
- Entrance fees for admission to a large park or other developed recreation area,
- Charging rental fees for the use of recreation equipment or property, and
- Admission fees can be charged for special events, exhibits, or rallies.

3. POLICY: Insure that the City of Kerman receives its full share of federal and state grant funds including matching and competitive grants. The City shall also seek out available charitable contributions for parks and open space facilities. This could include donations of property in conjunction with new residential development.

ACTION: The City shall apply for available state and federal grants as they become available.  
b. Kerman should explore securing gifts from foundations and individuals to support special interest recreation programs or park projects.

4. POLICY: Kerman should explore the financing of park and recreational facilities through the use of tax-increment funds, generated by the sale of tax-allocation bonds.

ACTION: The City shall conduct a feasibility study of financing park and recreation facilities by the sale of tax-allocation bonds.

5. POLICY: Kerman should explore the opportunities to enter into joint powers agreements or Facilities use agreements with other agencies to share the costs of park and recreation facilities development and maintenance.

ACTION: a. Park development will include the installation of Secondary Water Supply/Purple Pipe Delivery System.

b. The City shall continue to work with KUSD contact the Kerman Unified School District and Fresno County Parks Department to regarding Facilities Use Agreement to discuss a

joint powers agreement for the sharing of park and recreation facilities.

5. POLICY: Kerman should utilize, where appropriate, landscape and lighting districts to maintain parkways, landscaped medians .

ACTION: a. Where appropriate, the City shall require proposed subdivisions to establish landscape and lighting districts to maintain open space areas.

### **PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

The City of Kerman currently is currently exceeding the minimum acreage requirement standards (3 acres per 1,000 residents) for open space with an average of 3.45 acres of parkland per thousand residents. The document recommends the goal of preserving four acres of parkland per thousand residents. To accomplish this, the Element is proposing several new park locations that would continue the even distribution of open space throughout the community. Map 9 provides the generalized locations of proposed future conservation, open space, parks and recreation facilities.

### **CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, the Conservation, Open Space, Parks and Recreation Element will provide guidelines for the provision of convenient, well-equipped, and maintained sites and facilities, conservation of natural resources, and a comprehensive and quality program of recreational activities and services for all citizens of the community. The implementation of the Plan's goals and objectives will contribute to and maintain the quality of life that exists in the City of Kerman.