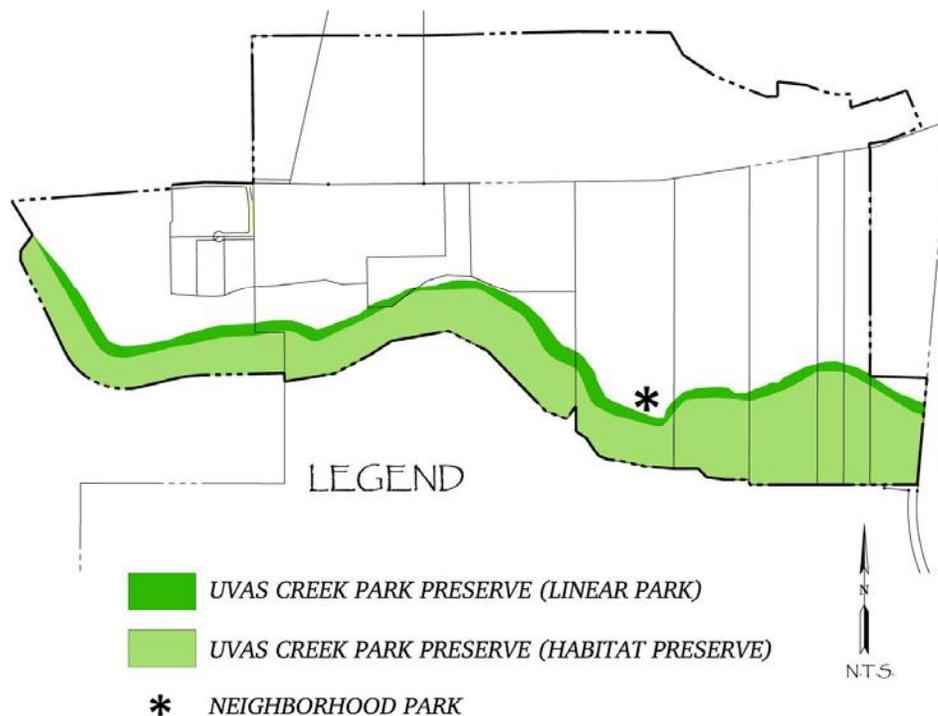


6 COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

6.1 PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The *Hecker Pass Specific Plan* provides over 98 acres of public parks and open space as shown in Figure 6-1. The bulk of this acreage is located within the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and the linear park that runs adjacent to the park preserve. A future 3-acre neighborhood park makes up the remaining acreage.

Figure 6-1: Public Parks and Open Space



The extension of the existing Uvas Creek Park Preserve and planned 3-acre neighborhood park meets the *General Plan* standard of 5 acres of developed park land per thousand population by providing sufficient park land for project residents and by adding park land to the City's overall park acreage inventory. The *Hecker Pass Specific Plan* allows for up to 521 residential units. This equates to a maximum population of 1,824, based on a 3.5 average family size. In order to meet the *General Plan* standards, the City should provide approximately 9.12 acres of parkland in this area. The linear park provides approximately 15 acres of active park space in addition to the approximate 80 acres of passive habitat area. In accordance with the *City of Gilroy Draft Parks and Recreation System Master Plan* dated April 2, 1999, the passive recreational open space provides limited active recreational uses and may only be valued at 5% of its total acreage when calculating park acreage per thousand population. Thus the 80 acres of habitat preserved by the *Specific Plan* equates to 4 acres of recreational park space for purposes of



meeting the *General Plan* standard. Therefore the Park Preserve and Linear Park add a total of 19 acres to the City's overall total park acreage inventory. The additional 3 acres of neighborhood park increases the amount of parkland provided by the *Specific Plan* to 22 acres. Although the City's "5% formula" does not value the natural habitat as highly as recreational park space, the habitat area is still a valuable community resource because it provides scenic and educational opportunities and helps preserve the rural character of the Hecker Pass Area. The park preserve and linear park will be within walking distance (less than 0.5 miles) of all residents within Hecker Pass and the surrounding areas, furthering the goals and policies of the *City of Gilroy General Plan* and *City of Gilroy Draft Parks and Recreation System Master Plan*.

In addition to the 98 acres, approximately 59 acres of agricultural and 47 acres of private open space throughout the Specific Plan Area will be preserved as agricultural fields or natural habitat. For a more detailed description of parks and open space, please refer to Section 5.2 of the Conservation and Resource Management Chapter and Section 3.3 of the Land Use Chapter. For more information on agricultural land uses, refer to Section 3.4.

Goal 6-1: *Extend the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and Trail into the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area.*

Goal 6-2: *Encourage development of "walkable" communities within the Specific Plan Area by establishing a network of public trails.*

6.1.1 UVAS CREEK PARK PRESERVE AND LINEAR PARK



The existing Uvas Creek Park Preserve and Levee Trail, which currently runs 1.75 miles along Uvas Creek between Santa Teresa Boulevard and the Thomas Road bridge, will be extended approximately 1.7 miles into the Specific Plan Area along the Uvas Creek riparian corridor, adding approximately 98 acres to the park. According to the *City of Gilroy Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan*, the existing sanitary sewer maintenance road on the north side of Uvas Creek will be upgraded to a Class I trail and provide the major component of the public trail system in the Specific Plan

Area. This trail will continue to serve as a City maintenance road but vehicle activity will be limited and should not interfere with pedestrian/bicycle use of the trail. The adjacency of this trail to natural and agricultural areas and the design of the trail will enhance appreciation and provide protection of these valuable resources while preserving the rural character of the Hecker Pass Area (see Chapter 7, Community Design). The Uvas Creek Park Preserve and Class I trail will terminate at the intersection of Hecker Pass Highway (State Route 152) and Burchell Road. The Uvas Creek Park Preserve consists of two separate areas. The habitat preserve area includes the riparian corridor, buffer area, and all other areas south of the existing sanitary sewer maintenance road. The linear park area includes the future Class I trail and all lands between the





trail and the future Third Street Extension right-of-way. Section 3.3.3 discusses these areas in further detail.

The habitat preserve provides passive recreation and environmental education opportunities. Narrow dirt trails and wildlife corridors within the habitat area will allow limited public access. Split rail or other open types of fencing will be located along the future Class I trail to restrict access to particularly environmentally sensitive areas of the creek. Signs should be posted that prohibit bicycling, motor vehicles, and other inappropriate

activities determined by the City of Gilroy, SCVWD, and the California Department of Fish and Game within the habitat preserve. Interpretive signs may be installed to provide environmental education but should be limited.

The linear park will include numerous amenities for residents and visitors recreational enjoyment. The linear park consists of a Class I recreational trail that can be used for bicycling, running, and walking. The existing paved sewer maintenance road will be improved to meet Class I Trail design standards and will be opened to the public. Motorized vehicles will not be permitted along this trail except for limited City maintenance purposes. Numerous recreational areas can be provided in the flatter lands of the linear park that are free of vegetation and can serve as picnic areas, exercise stations, or dog off-leash areas. Active recreational areas such as playgrounds and play fields that include pavement, large structures, and/or non-native vegetation such as turf grasses should be located outside the Uvas Creek Composite Setback since areas within the setback are either geotechnically or environmentally sensitive. These may occur along the trail in the form of pocket parks. The public park area could also be a potential permanent location for an environmental education center. Public trail connections to pathways through residential clusters and commercial developments provide additional bicycling and/or walking opportunities for residents and visitors throughout the Specific Plan Area. The Class I trail should serve as part of the regional trail network and should be designed to allow for the possible future connection to the Bay Ridge Regional Trail. Kiosks and signage should be located along this trail indicating permitted and prohibited uses, hours, names of trails, local connecting routes and mileposts, historic points of interest and descriptions, environmental education, and other visitor information.



A staging area for the Class I trail and park preserve is currently planned on the east side of Santa Teresa Boulevard. Although this staging area is not part of this *Specific Plan*, visitors to the Hecker Pass Area who wish to use the recreational trail may park at this staging area and



travel under the Santa Teresa bridge to access the Specific Plan Area portion of the Uvas Creek Park Preserve. The staging area will include parking for cars and bicycles, restrooms, interpretive signage, regulatory signage, directional signage, and shaded structures.

Policy 6-1: Development proposals for properties within the Specific Plan Area will be required to dedicate land within the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and the designated linear park area to the City of Gilroy for public open space use and public park use.

Policy 6-2: The City of Gilroy shall amend the Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan to include the Hecker Pass Specific Plan portion of the Uvas Creek Park Preserve, Linear Park and public trails.

The Uvas Creek Park Preserve extension should provide recreational and environmental education opportunities to all residents in Gilroy and all visitors to the Hecker Pass Area, including diverse cultures and age groups. To ensure that the greatest number of people possible can enjoy this area, the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and linear park area shall be dedicated to the City of Gilroy as a public park and shall be free and open to the public.

Policy 6-3: The Class I recreational trail shall be constructed in accordance with State and Federal accessibility codes and standards, including those established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California Access Codes (Title 24, California Code of Regulations).

Policy 6-4: Encourage property owners and project developers to provide environmental education opportunities in the form of an environmental education center and trail that includes an educational center or kiosk, trail monumentation and informational signage.

6.1.2 HECKER PASS NEIGHBORHOOD PARK



In addition to the Uvas Creek Park Preserve and linear park, the *Specific Plan* suggests the development of a 3-acre neighborhood park in the eastern development cluster. The exact location and configuration of this park will be determined during the design of this residential neighborhood to ensure that the design is consistent with the future residential development. This neighborhood park will be offered for purchase to the City of Gilroy and designed and built by the City of Gilroy. The developers are not expected to dedicate this land or build the park, because the requirement to



offer to dedicate and improve the Uvas Creek Park Preserve, including the habitat preserve and linear park, exceed applicable State and City standards for development obligations. If the City decides not to develop the park, the designated land area will revert to Residential Cluster uses. The reversion of this land to a residential designation does not increase the overall number of homes allowed within the Specific Plan Area.

Policy 6-5: The City of Gilroy shall amend the Draft Parks and Recreation Master Plan to include the 3-acre neighborhood park in place of the community park within the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area.

6.1.3 OTHER PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

In addition to the parks and open spaces designated by the land use chapter, new developments within the Residential Cluster (RC) land use designation are required to incorporate parks, paseos, squares, greens and other types of open space as part of the “Livable Communities” principles and per Land Use Policy 3-16. These additional open space areas should be strategically located to conveniently serve all residents while also preserving view corridors through the site to the greatest extent possible. These areas will be privately owned and maintained as part of a homeowners association (HOA) Landscape and Lighting Maintenance District (LLMD) or other such entity.

6.2 SCHOOLS

The Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area is within the jurisdiction of the Gilroy Unified School District (GUSD). Children from the Specific Plan Area will attend the School District’s designated attendance area schools or may attend private schools. Although private schools are not publicly owned, operated or funded, they are considered a quasi-public facility and provide an important service to the community.

6.2.1 PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Gilroy Unified School District operates nine elementary schools, three middle schools, one high school, one continuation school, and one community day school. El Portal Charter School, a charter high school housing 90 students, has been established on the South Valley Junior High School site. Expansion of the temporary facilities is scheduled during the summers of 2002, 2003, and 2004. Gilroy Unified School District recently switched from a magnet school system to a traditional “neighborhood” school system. The attendance area schools for the Hecker Pass Area are Antonio del Buono Elementary School, Ascension Solorsano Middle School and Gilroy High School.

6.2.2 PROJECTED PUBLIC SCHOOL FACILITIES

Gilroy Unified School District updated its *School Facilities Master Plan* in July 2002 in order to provide capacity for nearly 6,400 elementary and middle school children and 2,500 high school students during the next ten years. A new elementary school (K-5) is planned in the



southwesterly area of the City by the 2006-2007 school year. A fourth middle school is planned in the north central area of the City. A second high school is planned for the 2007-2008 school year and will likely be located in the Northwest Quadrant of the City. In addition to the new schools, the ten-year *Master Plan* calls for modernization and upgrading most of the existing facilities, including major upgrades to the high school.

6.2.3 FINANCING PUBLIC SCHOOL IMPROVEMENTS

The development of the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area will increase the demand for additional school facilities. A significant number of new residents to the Hecker Pass Area will have school age children. The acquisition of new school sites and construction of facilities can be a hardship for school districts with the high cost of land and limited funding. To ease this burden, all projects within the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area will be required to pay development impact fees to Gilroy Unified School District.

Policy 6-6: All future developments shall pay school impact fees required by Gilroy Unified School District to mitigate impacts on the public school system.

6.3 POLICE PROTECTION

The City of Gilroy Police Department serves the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area. The response time to the Specific Plan Area for emergency calls is 2-3 minutes maximum. The Police Department currently consists of 58 full-time officers and 6 reserve officers. There are usually at least 3 teams consisting of 18 officers on duty at one time. Additional officers may need to be hired and new beats may need to be established as the Hecker Pass Area is developed.

6.4 FIRE PROTECTION

The City of Gilroy Fire Department serves the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area. The Fire Department consists of 30 uniformed firefighters and 15 paid on-call firefighters. The Fire Department currently operates 2 stations out of 2 locations: the existing Chestnut Station and the Las Animas Station. The newest fire station, Sunrise Drive, has been completed but is not yet fully staffed. An emergency team of paramedics is temporarily housed on the site. The Gilroy Fire Department also has a Mutual Aid agreement with the South Santa Clara County Fire Department. SSCCFD currently has a fire station located at Bonfante Gardens but is considering moving this station to an undetermined location.

The City of Gilroy Fire Department considers 4 minutes a reasonable response time. The closest fire station to the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area is the SSCCFD station at Bonfante Gardens. Response time from this station to the Specific Plan Area is 3-4 minutes. The new Sunrise station will be the second closest station to the Specific Plan Area and is within a 4-minute response time. If the SSCCFD decides to relocate the Bonfante station further away, the Sunrise station will likely be the first station to respond to emergency calls once the station is fully operational. The Las Animas station at the corner of Wren and Welburn is the closest operational City fire station and has a response time of approximately 6 minutes to the Specific



Plan Area. Refer to Section 5.7 for a detailed discussion of fire hazards in the Hecker Pass Area, including policies related to fire prevention and safety.

6.5 CHURCH

Churches, although not a public facility, provide an important quasi-public facility to the community. Churches serve as a gathering place for residents and can address numerous community needs. One church already exists in the Specific Plan Area. The Good Shepherd Lutheran Church and vineyard preschool are located on the north side of Hecker Pass Highway, near the Santa Teresa Boulevard intersection. A second church was proposed within the Specific Plan Area. South Valley Community Church purchased the properties formerly owned by the Conrotto and Takeyatsu families with the intent to build a new church and private school. The church was an active participant in the specific plan process and was represented by a member of the Advisory Committee. In 2014, South Valley Community Church determined it was not feasible to develop their church and school on that the subject property. Subsequently the property has been re-designated for Residential Cluster use.

6.6 NEARBY COMMUNITY SERVICES AND FACILITIES

The Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area is adjacent to two additional community facilities that provide considerable recreational opportunities for area residents and visitors: Bonfante Gardens Theme Park and the Gilroy Municipal Golf Course. Although both facilities are not part of the Specific Plan Area they provide benefits to the area and were considered during the planning process for the *Specific Plan*.

6.6.1 BONFANTE GARDENS AND THEME PARK

Bonfante Gardens Theme Park provides a major tourist draw for the Hecker Pass Area and exciting recreational opportunities for Gilroy residents. The 75-acre theme park features beautifully landscaped grounds, rides, picnic grounds, amusements, miniature golf, food, animal characters, and entertainment. Bonfante Gardens offers valuable resources to the *Hecker Pass Specific Plan* by providing a major attraction for tourism. Tourists visiting Bonfante Gardens are potential customers for all of the agri-tourist uses proposed in the Specific Plan Area. To take full advantage of these visitors, the Specific Plan Area should maximize the interface between the agri-tourist uses and the theme park. This must be done carefully, however, so as not to compromise the rural character of the overall Hecker Pass Area. To achieve this goal, pedestrian connections should be provided between the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area and Bonfante Gardens in strategic locations. These access points should encourage free and easy movement between the two areas. Agri-tourist uses should be visible to these access points and along Hecker Pass Highway to the greatest extent possible.



6.6.2 GOLF COURSES



Gilroy Municipal Golf Course is located immediately adjacent to the Hecker Pass Specific Plan Area. The golf course currently consists of 50 acres of fairway and rough, 40 acres of surrounding land, 10 holes, a 2,880 square foot clubhouse, and a driving range. The entrance to the golf course exists on Hecker Pass Highway. The City has expressed a desire to relocate the entrance from Hecker Pass Highway to the easterly property line of the Golf Course adjacent to the Hoey Property. The *Specific Plan* requires that development of the Hoey Property provide this new golf course access via public streets.

The Eagle Ridge Golf Course is located immediately south of the Specific Plan Area, across Uvas Creek and is easily accessible. Eagle Ridge is an 18-hole Championship Golf Course designed by golf legend Johnny Miller with a driving range, practice area, clubhouse, banquet facilities, restaurant, bar, and pro-shop. Eagle Ridge offers tournaments, lessons, weddings and other events.

