

INTRODUCTION:

As a result of shrinking work weeks, increasing leisure time, more people and higher incomes within the last several years, there has been a growing pressure on the land for uses as urban development and a resulting concern about the environment. This concern has focused not only on air, noise, and water pollution but also on the ratio of land in open space to that which is used for housing development, industries and commercial facilities. The rapid growth of cities during the 1960's and the persisting speculation that the urban region will spread have lent momentum to public interest in open space. In order to limit this spread and to preserve open spaces both within and outside of the urban areas, it is therefore necessary to formulate guidelines to help preserve the quality of the environment.

There exists a unique condition to preserve open space in Montebello: it is a close-in community with a large amount of vacant land, located in an urbanized region. This unique condition gives a feeling of open space. The main contributors to this perception are the large amounts of vacant land located in the Montebello Hills, gas storage facilities, oil fields, Whittier Narrows Dam and the settling basins along the Rio Hondo Channel; however, this condition can not be expected to last indefinitely as much of the vacant land, particularly in the Hills, is currently being planned for subdivisions by private land owners.

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this open space element is to comply with California law (Government Code Section 65560-70) by adopting goals and policies relating to open space, identifying open space, and formulating an action program for implementation of the open space plan.

DEFINITIONS OF OPEN SPACE LAND AND OPEN SPACE USE:

According to California State Law (Government Code Section 65560), open space land includes:

production. Use of the oil fields, now in the last phases of secondary recovery operation and production, is expected to end in the next 10-12 years. The oil fields have been a great asset to the City by acting as a holding agency; the hill area is almost the only part of the City still open and undeveloped.

Agricultural land amounts to only 1.2% of total area of the City. Dairying and orchards are the primary agricultural land in the City.

Approximately 4.1 percent of the area of the City is classified as recreational. This land is largely composed of the six parks located throughout the City plus the Montebello Municipal Golf Course.

Much of the land in Montebello is considered scenic in nature. The hills provide a vantage point from which to view vistas of Montebello and surrounding communities as well as a landmark, an immediate point of identification, large enough to be seen from almost every location. The bluff adjacent to the Rio Hondo contains a scenic route overlooking a water course with natural vegetation. Mission Viejo and Sanchez Adobe, aside from providing cultural and historic landmarks to the City, add to the scenic qualities worthy of preservation. Park sites such as City Park and Bicknell offer residents recreational uses as well as contribute to the satisfiable perception of open space.

Necessary watershed and water recharge areas also exist within the City limits of Montebello. Settling basins on the east side of the City act as an important factor in the hydrological cycle. The water held in these basins percolates into the soil and thus raises and replenishes the water table. These basins are important to the maintenance of the quality of water necessary for the people of the region.

Certain locations within the City offer habitats to a variety of wildlife species; such animals as quail, rabbits, hawks and coyote utilize the vacant hill area as a habitat. Other types of small wildlife, located in the Whittier Narrows Dam area and the water basins, are a variety of birds and rabbits.

1. Natural resource land, which is land that possesses or encompasses natural resources, the use or recovery of which can best be realized by restricting the use of the land.
2. Agricultural land, which is land actively used for the purpose of producing an agricultural commodity for commercial purposes.
3. Recreation land, which is land actively used for recreation purposes and open to the public for such purposes with or without charge.
4. Scenic land which is land that possesses outstanding scenic qualities worthy of preservation.
5. Watershed or ground water recharge land, which is land important to the state in order to maintain the quantity and quality of water necessary to the people of the state.
6. Wildlife habitat, which is land unusually valuable or necessary to the preservation or enhancement of wildlife resources of the state.

Open space uses may include:

1. Public recreation, including playgrounds associated with schools.
2. Enjoyment of scenic beauty.
3. Conservation or use of natural resources.
4. Utility rights-of-way, substations and storage facilities and underground gas storage.
5. Production of food or fiber.
6. Cemeteries.
7. Residential development in lots of 1/2 acre or larger.

Distribution and quality of these types of uses in the City of Montebello is varied. A large portion of acreage in the Montebello Hills can be classified as natural resource land. At the present time this land is utilized for the purpose of oil

MONTEBELLO GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM:
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

EXISTING RECREATIONAL, VACANT, AND OPEN SPACE LAND

	<u>Acres</u>
Montebello Municipal Golf Course and Bicknell Park	139.49
Gas storage field	29.57
Cemetary	98.26
Southern California Edison Right-of-Way	90.12
Acuna Park	6.50
Taylor Ranch	4.50
City Park	16.00
Whittier Narrows Dam	80.50
Grant Rea Park	22.06
Settling basins and horsekeeping property	47.70
Holifield Park	7.00
Ashiya Park	8.00
Sanchez Adobe	1.36
Agricultural (primarily scattered fig groves)	50.96
Open Useable (vacant land in hills and vacant parcels throughout city)	891.89
Open Unuseable (primarily steep slopes on Rio Hondo and spreading rounds)	<u>194.38</u>
City Total:	1,688.29

Source: *Koebig & Koebig and City of Montebello Planning
Division*

GOALS:

1. To insure the preservation and conservation of sufficient open space to introduce relief from the otherwise uninterrupted urban development of the Southern California region.
2. To insure the preservation and conservation of sufficient open space to serve the recreational, health, and welfare needs of the residents.

OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify existing open space that is important to welfare of the community.
2. Establish standards and criteria for the location and development of open space and recreation land.
3. Provide open space and a full range of recreation facilities and programs which are easily accessible to all residents.
4. Determine the location, size and type of recreational facilities and programs on the basis of the needs of the people.
5. Identify unique natural features, scenic areas and historical sites.
6. Identify methods for the preservation and acquisition of open space.

CONSTRAINTS:

1. The City of Montebello is approximately 68% developed; the remaining 32% of undeveloped land is composed of the following: 4.1% recreation, 1.2% agriculture, 5.7 % open unuseable, and 21% open useable.
2. The hill area, which is the site of much of the 21% remaining open usable acreage, offers an opportunity to acquire land at relatively lower prices than would be required for developed flatland areas. The Citizen Attitude Survey, conducted in January, 1973, indicated that 72% of the citizens responding want playgrounds, parks and open space in the hills.

3. Purchase of full or partial rights to land may prove expensive, and may limit the ability of a community to acquire land for open space and recreation.
4. Difficulty in coordinating extracurricular use of school facilities may limit the City's ability to provide adequate recreational land.
5. Spreading grounds in the Rio Hondo Channel may not be used for recreation or other purposes unless and until technological and legal obstacles, if any, are overcome.

POLICIES:

1. Two hundred (200) acres of land in the hills should be acquired by the City for parks, playgrounds and open space.
2. Ecologically important areas should be viewed as areas of critical concern and should be preserved wherever possible.
3. Open space areas should be provided or developed to serve the needs appropriate to their location.
4. In addition to obtaining new open space areas, the City should seek to make more use or multi-use of the existing open space areas of the community. This program would include recreational use of school playground facilities during non-school hours.

DESCRIPTION OF THE PLAN:

The Open Space Plan proposes expansion of the parks and recreation facilities system and conservation of some of the unique features and areas of Montebello. It is characterized by proposed multiple use of lands in an attempt to amass as much recreational land as possible to meet the standards set by the City.

Existing parks, as described in the Montebello Inventory Report, would be retained; in summary, they include proposed Acuna Park, Ashiya Park, Bicknell Park, John Dutcher Tot Lot, Grant Rea Park, Holifield Park, Montebello (City) Park, and Northridge Mini Park. Special facilities to be retained as open space land would be Taylor Ranch and Montebello Municipal Golf Course. Additional open spaces proposed to be retained as they now exist are the cemetery in northern

Montebello, gas storage facilities and the Whittier Narrows Dam. The horse-keeping properties along the Rio Hondo Channel, south of the Union Pacific Railroad, are also recommended to be maintained.

New open space lands are proposed to be located in the Montebello Hills, which contain most of the existing open land in the City.

Multiple use of some existing open land and of most school recreation areas is proposed throughout the flatlands. The Southern California Edison Right-of-Way and the settling basins in the Rio Hondo Flood Control Channel would be maintained as open space and investigated for possible multiple use depending on the ability to overcome any technological and/or legal obstacles. The park playground portion of the schools in Montebello are proposed to be available for public recreational use outside of school hours.

Notwithstanding any other provision of the plan, nothing contained herein shall be deemed or construed to in any manner, indicate or evidence any intention on the part of the City of Montebello to, at any time in the future acquire, by purchase, eminent domain or any other means, any real property and/or appurtenances for purposes of implementing any provision of this plan.

ACTION PROGRAM:

The open space plan is not a static entity; rather, it requires the active review and re-evaluation in order to be effective. In order to implement the open space plan and provide an effective program to insure that permanent open space be provided in the community, it will be necessary to use various tools, policies, programs:

1. The City should increase required park dedication from individual developers who are developing or redeveloping various parts of the City.
2. One technique which should be considered is increasing the amount of land dedicated under the provisions of the Quimby Act (current Montebello Park Dedication Requirements). Standards for land dedication or in lieu cash payment should be sufficiently high so as to make land dedication preferable to cash payment.

3. As an alternative to increasing park dedication standards under provision of the Quimby Act, the City should consider adopting a fee formula for park land similar to the one recommended by the League of California Cities as utilized by Arcadia and Downey. This fee formula would create a per unit tax and would include apartment and condominium projects currently not covered by provisions of the Quimby Act.
4. The land use and housing element maps indicate a range of per acre densities over generalized areas. In order to preserve park and open space land within the generalized areas, developers should be encouraged to cluster housing units in selected areas and thereby create open space land in the remainder. This development technique, commonly referred to as the PUD or Planned Unit Development, would have its greatest applicability in the Montebello Hills.
5. The City of Montebello and the Montebello Unified School District should work closely together to develop an on-going program for recreational use of school recreational facilities during non-school hours. Planning, designing, and development or redevelopment of school recreation facilities should consider the recreational needs of the particular area as well as the recreational needs of the neighborhood or community; similarly, planning of city parks and playgrounds adjacent to schools should relate to the recreational needs of school children.
6. Other techniques which should be considered to implement the park and recreation portion of the open space element include:

Gift or dedication

Bond issue

Purchase of development rights

Zoning, subdivision regulations

California State Redevelopment Law

MONTEBELLO GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM:
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

PROPOSED PROVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL LAND*

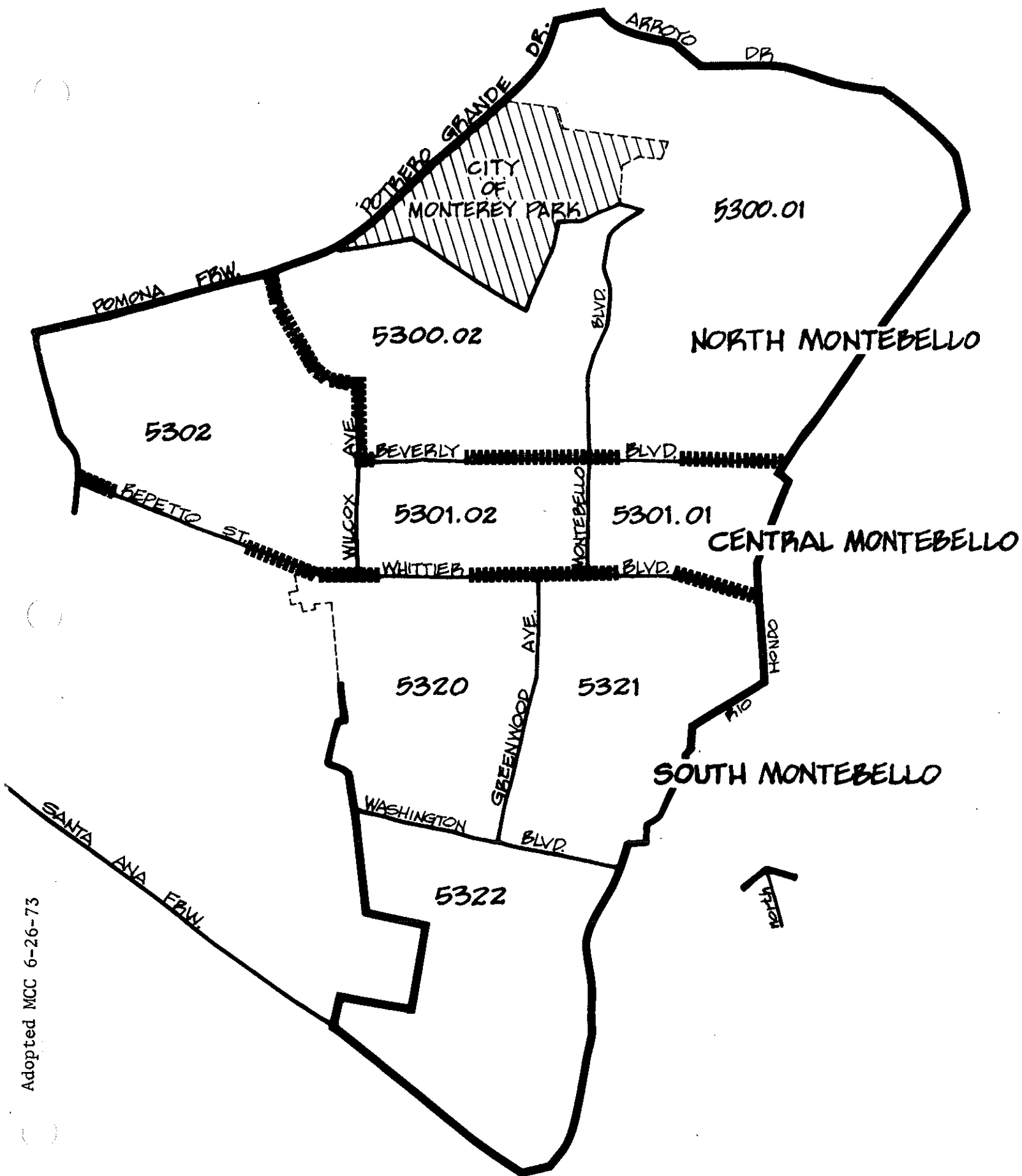
<u>Sub-Area</u>	<u>Projected Deficiency (In Acres)</u>	<u>Proposals to Alleviate Projected Park and Recreation Deficiency</u>
<u>North</u>		
	106	50-80 acres proposed park in hills next to Whittier Narrows Plan
		30-50 acres proposed park in hills
		50-70 acres proposed park in hills
		13 acres proposed multi-use at La Merced Elementary
		23 acres proposed multi-use at Schurr High School
		6 acres proposed use at Edison Right-of-Way
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Sub-Total:	106	172-242 (Surplus: 66-136 acres)
<u>Central</u>		
	57	5 acres proposed multi-use at Eastmont Intermediate School
		8 acres proposed use of Edison Right-of-Way
		1 acre proposed multi-use at Fremont Elementary School
		9 acres proposed park adjacent to spreading grounds
		14 acres proposed multi-use at Montebello High School
		4 acres proposed multi-use at Washington Elementary School
		6 acres proposed multi-use at Montebello Intermediate School
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Sub-Total:	57	47 (Deficiency: 10 acres)

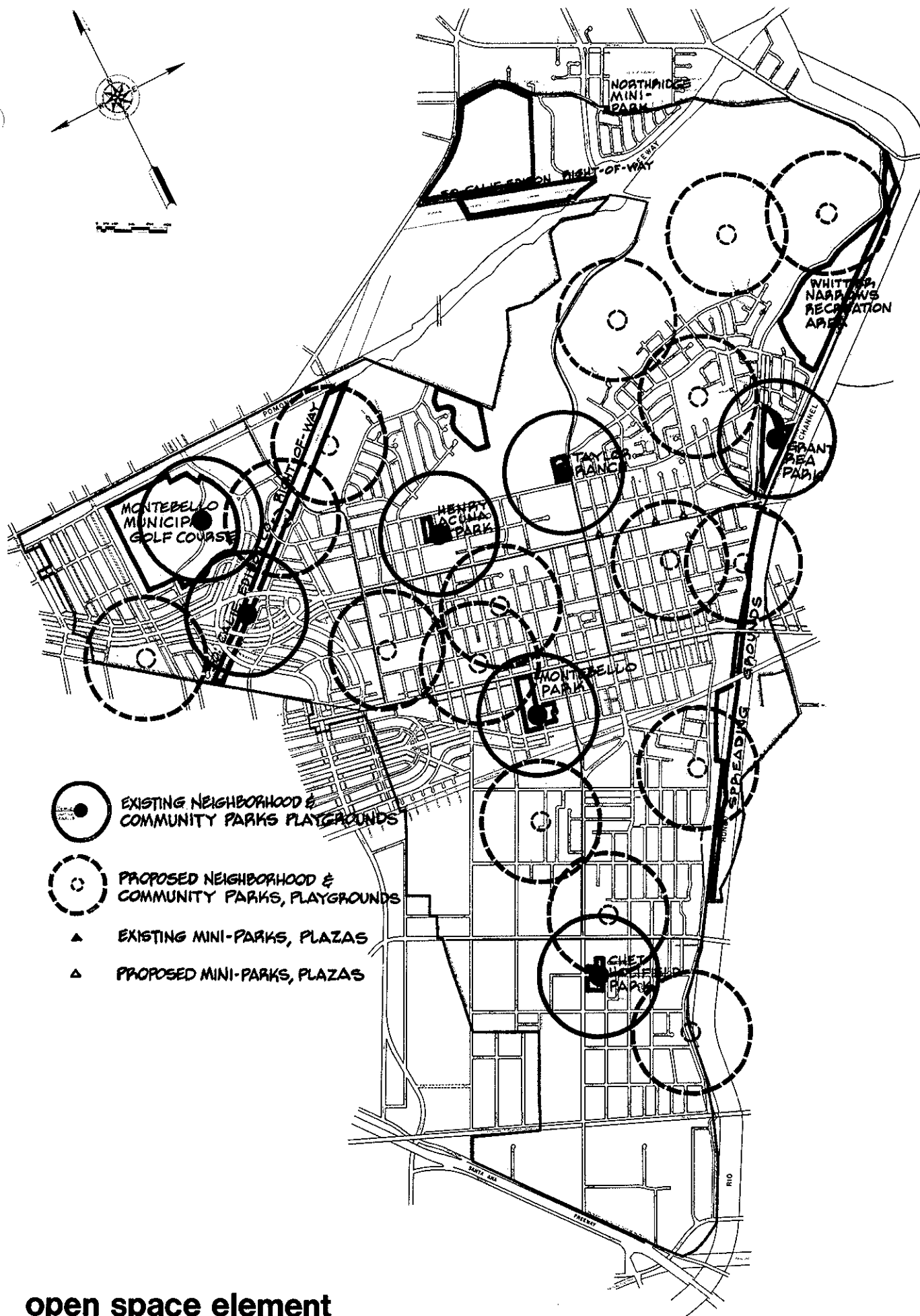
PROPOSED PROVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATIONAL LAND* (Continued)

<u>Sub-Area</u>	<u>Projected Deficiency (In Acres)</u>	<u>Proposals to Alleviate Projected Park and Recreation Deficiency</u>
<u>South</u>	54	8-10 acres proposed park land acquisition 5 acres proposed multi-use at Greenwood Elementary School 8-10 acres proposed park land acquisition 10 acres proposed park land acquisition or multi-use of spreading
Sub-Total:	54	31-35 (Deficiency: 19-23 acres)
TOTAL:	217	250-324 (Surplus: 33-107 acres)

**In order to meet City's standard of 4.0 acres per 1,000 residents for projected population of 67,500.*

Source: Koebig & Koebig, Inc.





MONTEBELLO, CALIFORNIA GENERAL PLAN PROGRAM