



OPEN SPACE PERFORMANCE STANDARDS

These guidelines apply to open space elements that taken together create an overall system within a city: parks, connecting green corridors, staging areas, activity nodes and small neighborhood greens. The aim is to enhance a community's use of trails, greenways and outdoor spaces, improve how those areas complement or supplement a city's park system and natural areas, and make a city more walkable. See Trail Systems Design Guidelines for more specific details, including ADA requirements.

Open space systems must meet the needs of individual people in their daily lives; guidelines can ensure that the open space system actually provides the expected benefits. The guidelines will assist in designing open space systems that meet individual human, biological, social and cultural requirements.

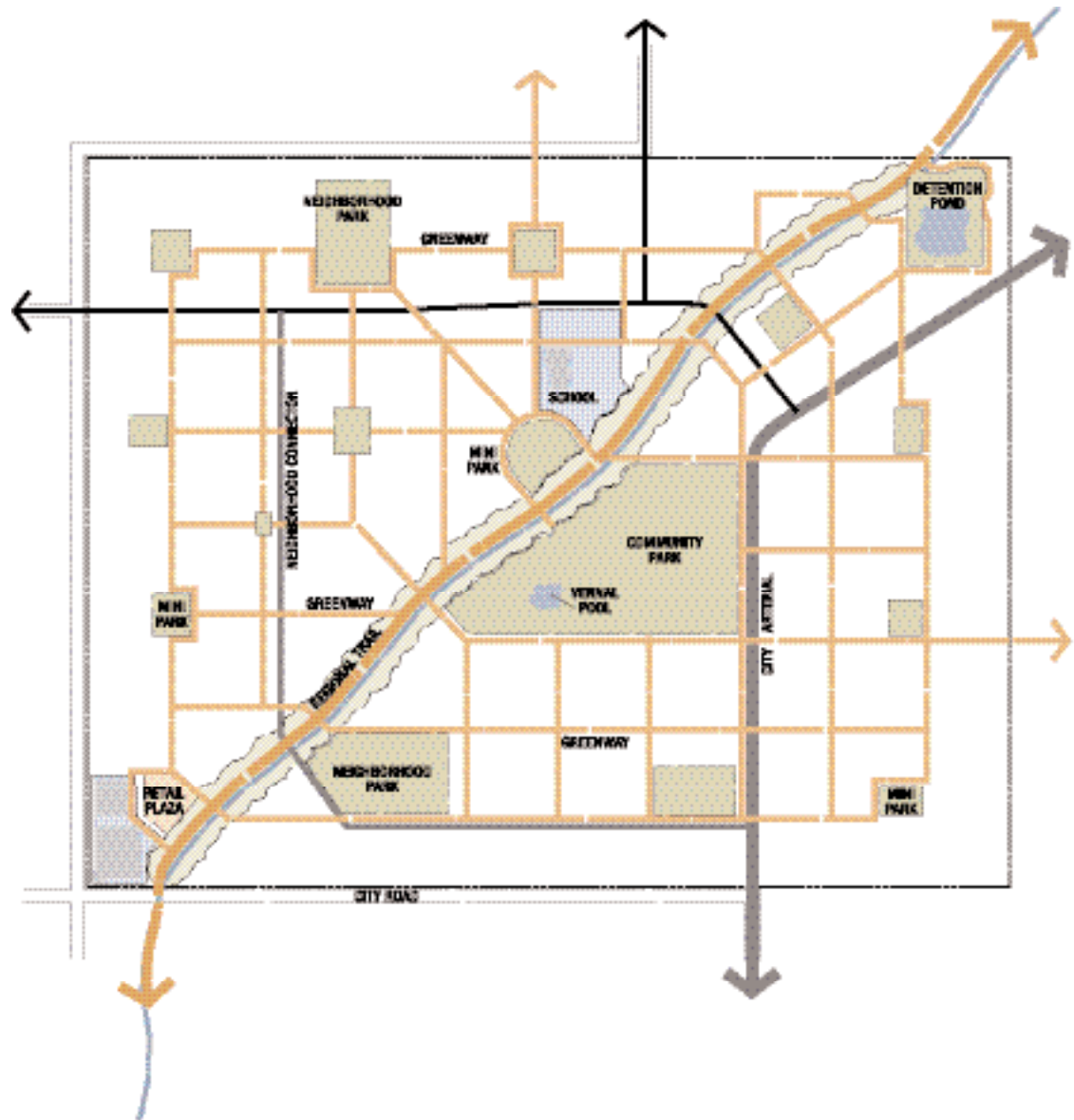


Figure 40. An open space system connects green corridors, gathering areas, trails and parks, as well as amenities such as commercial areas and schools.

Open space elements include:

- *Parks.* Parks provide space for people to come together across cultural and socio-economic lines to enjoy recreational activities, appreciate nature, relieve stress, learn about the natural environment and feel a sense of identity and connectedness to nature and their community. Park design should provide activity settings that take into account the site's physical, social and cultural conditions. (Also see the Play Areas Design Guidelines, page 417, for more detailed information about designing areas for children.)

- *Regional Trails.* These multi-use facilities are the backbone of open space connections throughout a community. New developments should be required to extend or connect to a regional trail system. The goal is to allow a person to travel or commute safely from one side of the community to the other, without leaving a city's open space network. (Also see Trail Systems Design Guidelines, page 425, for more detailed information about trails.)
- *Green Infrastructure.* Development sites often have public facilities that should be incorporated into the site

design, such as drainage channels and utility corridors. Public infrastructure should be developed for multi-use, thus adding neighborhood and community connectivity.

- *Greenways.* These smaller-scale linear corridors are pathways within or between developments. They are generally linear in nature and connect different site locations, encouraging walking or biking between them. Greenways should terminate at a regional trail, a park or a major activity node such as a town center.

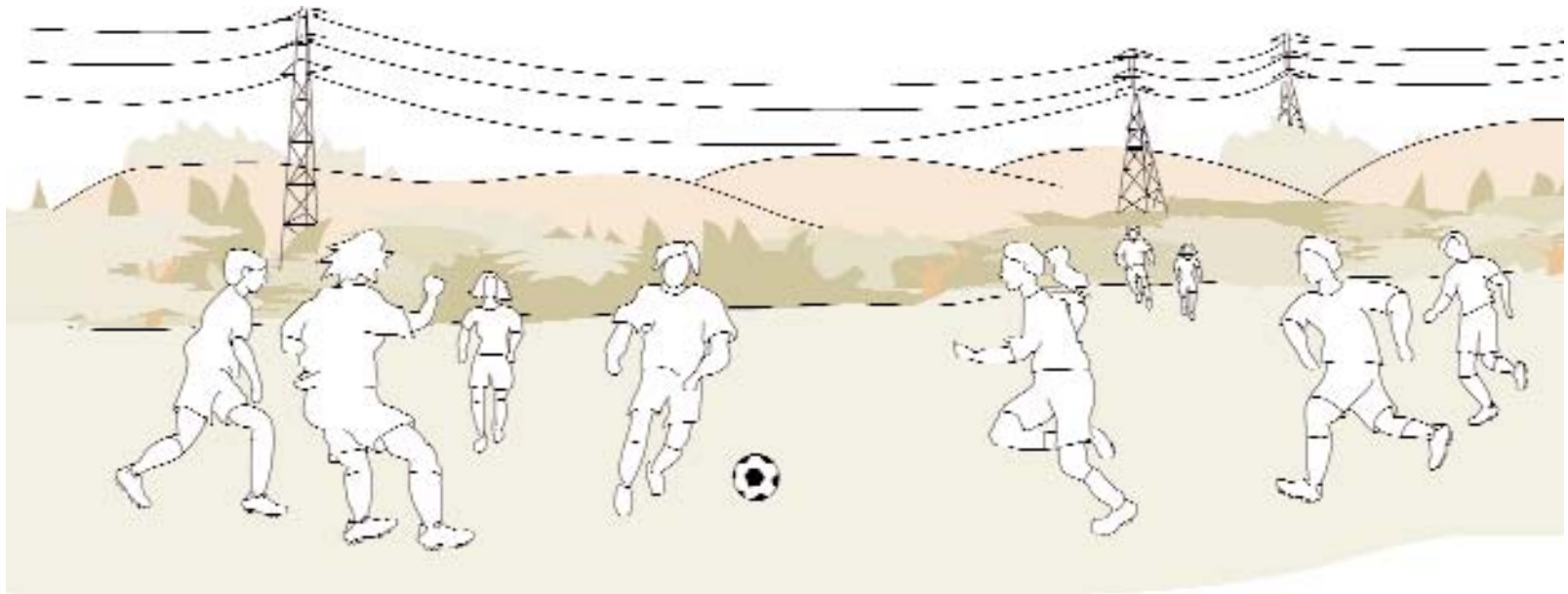


Figure 41. Utility corridors can provide multi-use open space, strengthening community connectivity.

- *Neighborhood Greens.* These small open space areas (sometimes called pocket parks) should be dispersed throughout neighborhoods and within close proximity to residential units. They should provide opportunities for passive or small-scale active recreation (for example, play equipment) and staging for activities within the greenway system. (Also see the sections on Plazas and Gathering Spaces in the Cityscapes Design Guidelines, pages 463–464, for more urban-style open space.)

Open Space Framework

These general site design guidelines are for open space amenities within greenfield and infill developments.

1. *Variety:* Provide a wide variety of usable open spaces that connect major community destinations (such as community parks, neighborhood parks, pocket parks and commercial plazas) through open space connectors (such as greenways, trails, etc.).
2. *Location:* Every residential unit in a planned new development should be within 1/4 mile (or 5 minutes or less walking distance) of a park or neighborhood gathering place.
3. *Accessibility and Connectivity:* Access to parks, open space areas, different land use types and community amenities (schools, playgrounds, community buildings, transit stops, etc.) should be enhanced with a network of open space connectors, thereby enhancing the desirability of using alternative methods of transportation (e.g., walking and bicycling). These connectors should link residential units, parks, commercial areas, schools and other areas to provide a comprehensive open space network.
4. *Relationships:* The location and configuration of regional trails, greenways and neighborhood gathering places should complement existing and proposed schools, libraries, city parks and commercial developments.
5. *Block Size:* Provide walkable and bikeable neighborhoods by limiting the size of residential blocks and creating a network of multi-use non-vehicular pathways in the new development. For blocks longer than 600', intersperse mid-block pedestrian pathways to create smaller blocks. Uninterrupted blocks or portions of blocks generally should be no longer than 400'.
6. *Multi-Use Utility Corridors:* Use major utility corridors (e.g., storm water drainage, underground and overhead utilities, etc.) to also provide usable open spaces consistent with their utilitarian function.
7. *Sustainability:* Where feasible, maintain and respect all natural features of the site, including the natural drainage of the land, natural preserves and habitat areas.
8. *Safety:* Enhance safety by minimizing at-grade crossings of arterial roads that interrupt major pedestrian-friendly pathways connecting to parks and schools. When open space trails intersect with roadways at grade, street widths and pedestrian crossing distances should be kept to a minimum. Arrange buildings to provide for visibility and surveillance opportunities. Locate and design buildings to allow open space areas to be viewed from inside residences and other buildings. This allows open space areas to be watched over by neighborhood residents and discourages anti-social and illegal activities.

OPEN SPACE PATTERNS FOR NEW DEVELOPMENTS

The diagrams at right illustrate a systematic process for creating an open space framework for new developments.

Figure 42.

a. Identify existing natural features on development sites, preserve significant features and create new naturalistic features to enhance projects. Provide connections for regional trail routes. Connect the open space network on individual developments to the citywide network.

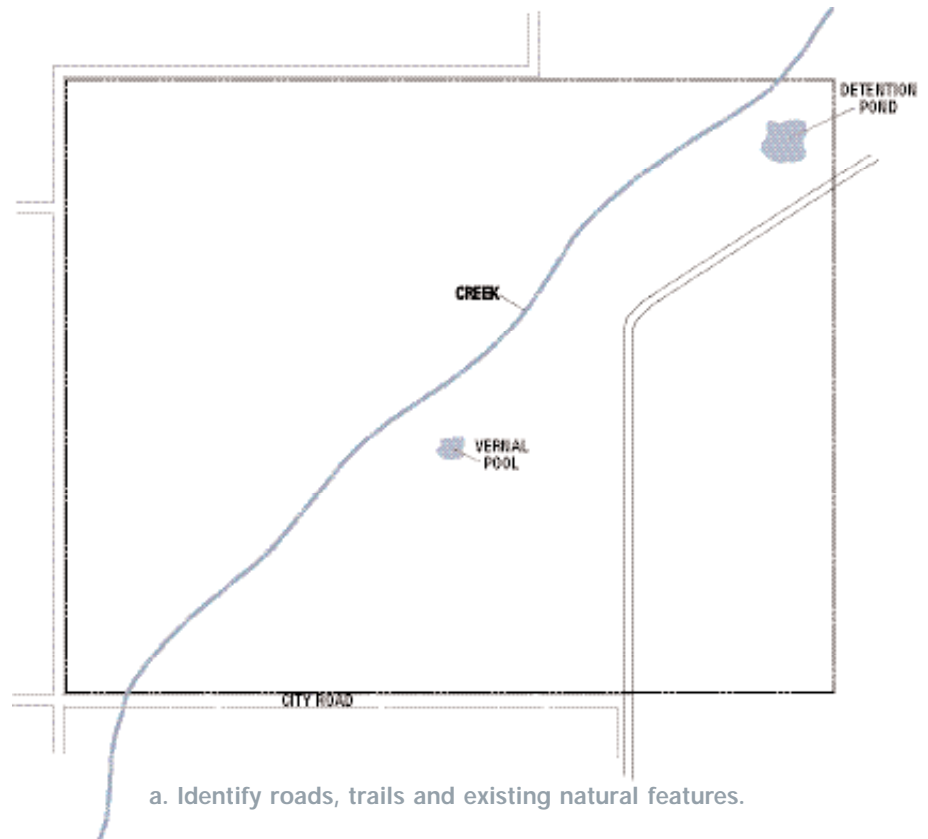
b. Locate at least one major non-vehicular, multi-use corridor. The pedestrian spine may be located along a natural feature such as a natural drainage corridor. Landscape the pedestrian corridor to provide summer shade and create a sense of identity and cohesion to the entire development.

c. Locate major built amenities (neighborhood commercial areas, schools and community parks) along the regional trail or greenway system. The trail system should also connect residential areas to employment or commercial areas.

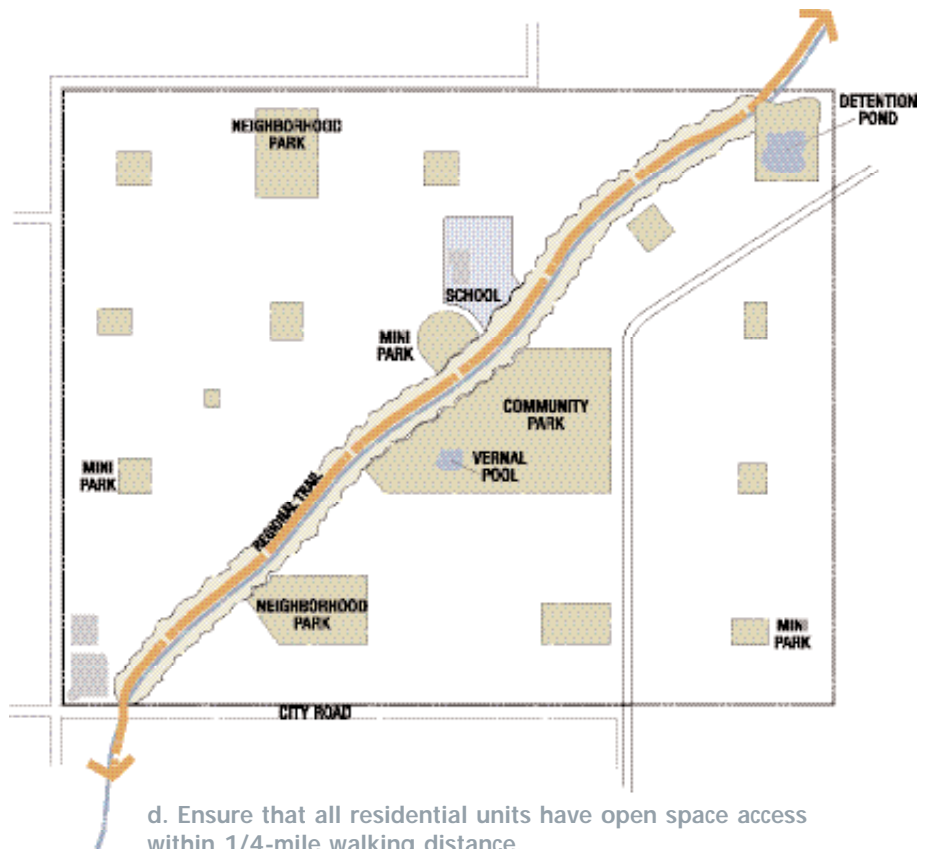
d. Locate parks such that all individual residential units are within 1/4-mile walking distance of a city park or neighborhood gathering place.

e. Create a network of pedestrian and bike connectors, such as trails and greenways, to connect all the built and open space amenities. All residential units and commercial areas should be within 1/8-mile walking distance of a connector.

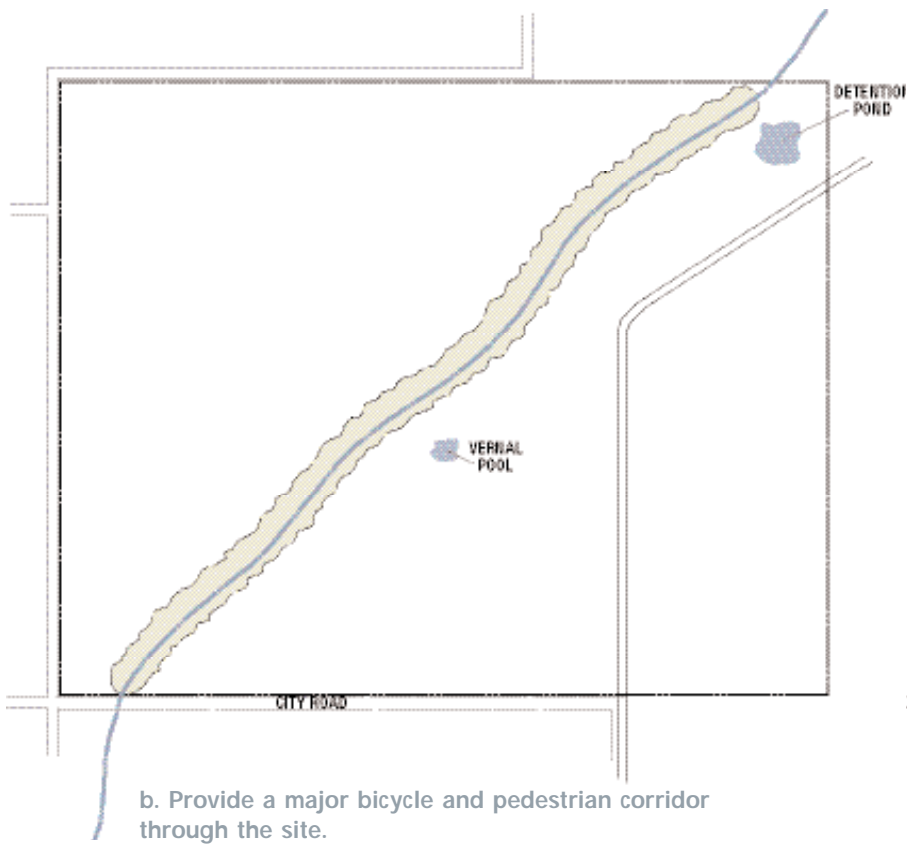
f. Organize street networks, neighborhood blocks and lots in combination with open space elements to tie into surrounding developments and link with natural amenities of the site (access to nature, views, sun, wind, etc.)



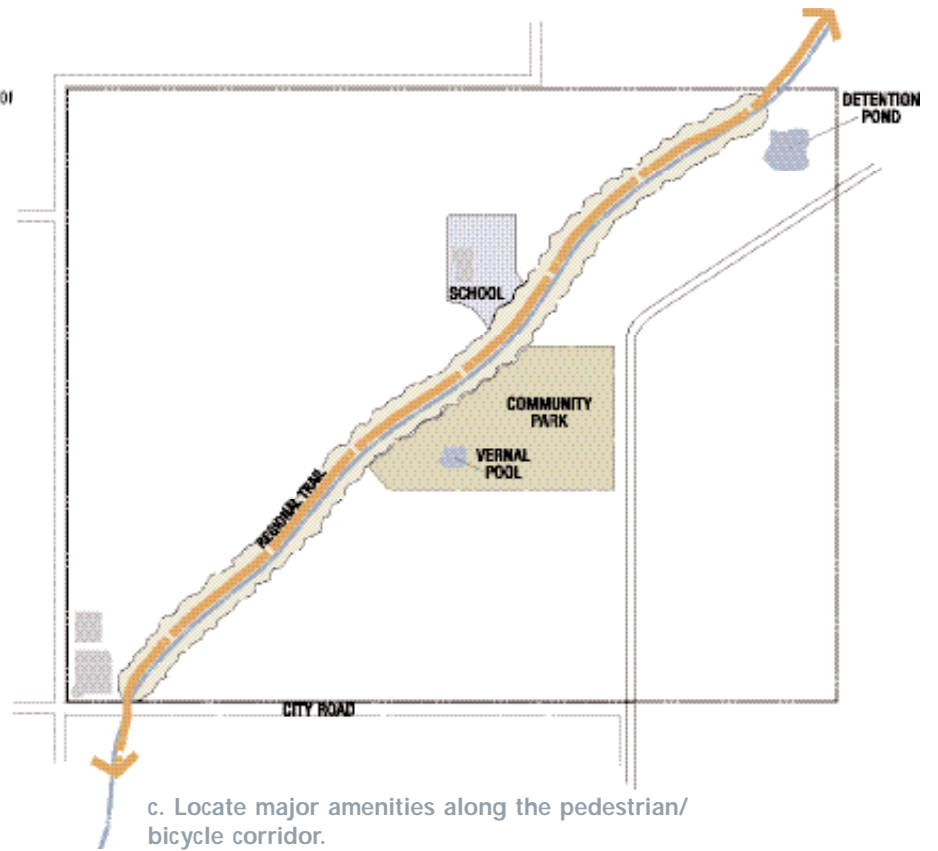
a. Identify roads, trails and existing natural features.



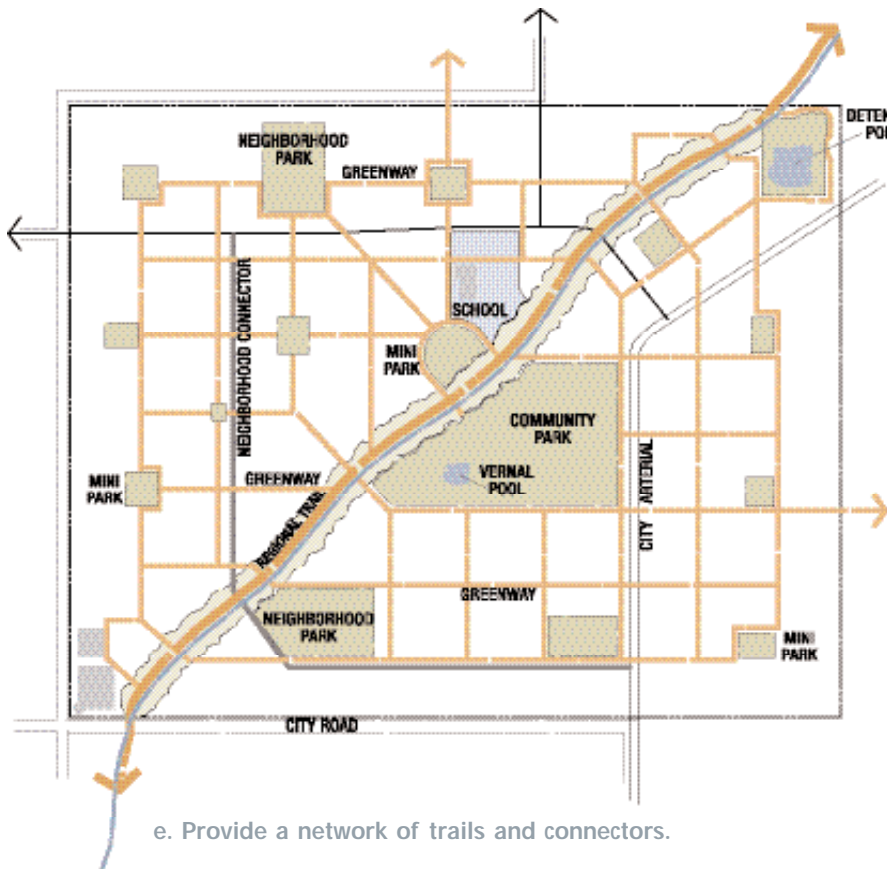
d. Ensure that all residential units have open space access within 1/4-mile walking distance.



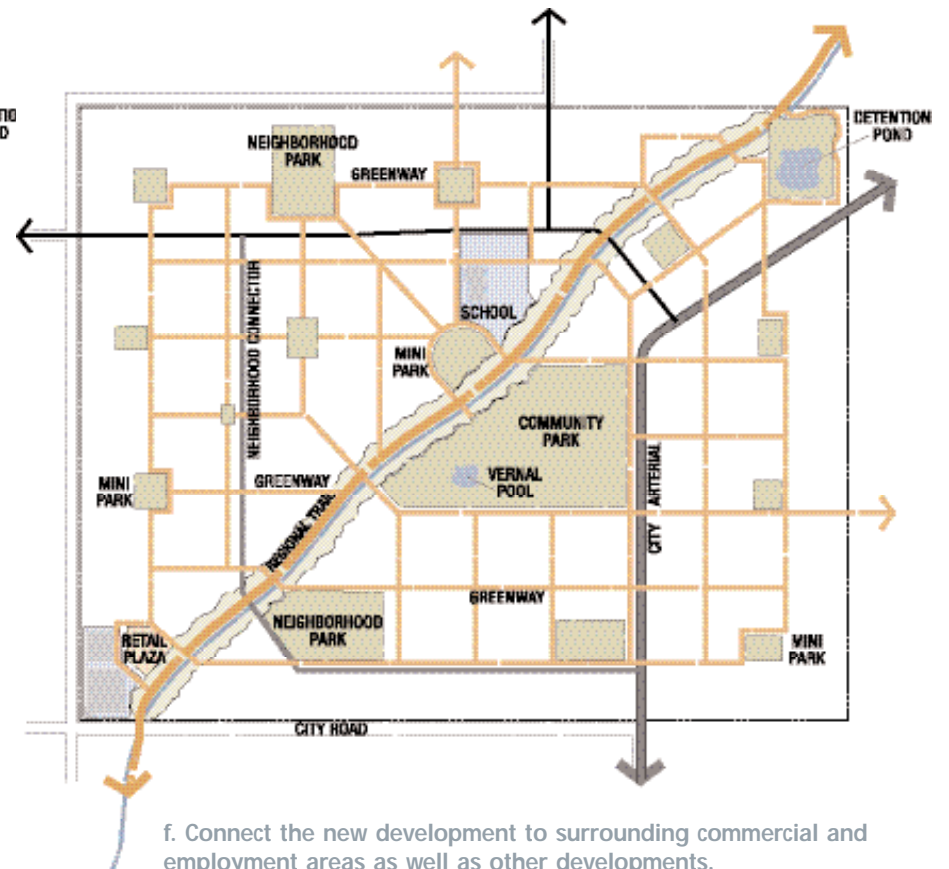
b. Provide a major bicycle and pedestrian corridor through the site.



c. Locate major amenities along the pedestrian/bicycle corridor.



e. Provide a network of trails and connectors.



f. Connect the new development to surrounding commercial and employment areas as well as other developments.