

TO: PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

FROM: COMMUNITY SERVICES AND PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENTS

DATE: MAY 26, 2015

SUBJECT: Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan

RECOMMENDATION

No action to be taken.

BACKGROUND

The City of Palo Alto has 37 parks and open space preserves covering approximately 4,165 acres of land, which includes Foothills Park, Pearson Arastradero Preserve, and the Baylands Nature Preserve. A Capital Improvement Project for a Parks, Trails, Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan) was adopted by Council for the 2013 fiscal year. The purpose of this project is to provide the necessary analysis and review of Palo Alto's parks and recreation system for the preparation of a Parks Master Plan. The Parks Master Plan will provide the City with clear guidance regarding future renovations and capital improvement projects aimed at meeting current and future demands on the city's recreational, programming, environmental, and maintenance needs, establishing a prioritized schedule and budget of future park renovations, facility improvements and expansion of recreational programs.

DISCUSSION

Discussion and review of the Parks Master Planning process will cover the following:

1. Review and respond to comments made by the commission concerning the Data Summary Matrix as well as the Program Analysis that was distributed last month.
2. Introduce the transition from the Analysis Phase to the Recommendation Phase and discuss the next steps of developing criteria to be used as part of Recommendation Phase.
3. Review project schedule status and possibilities for the next community meeting date.

NEXT STEPS

Community/Stakeholder Priority Workshops (Spring 2015)

POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The proposed CIP recommendations are consistent with Policy C-26 of the Community Services element of the Comprehensive Plan that encourages maintaining park facilities as safe and healthy community assets; and Policy C-22 that encourages new community facilities to have flexible functions to ensure adaptability to the changing needs of the community.

ATTACHMENT

- Responses to Matrix Questions Summary

PREPARED BY

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City of Palo Alto



To: Palo Alto Park and Recreation Commission, Peter Jensen, Elizabeth Ames

From: Ryan Mottau and Ellie Fiore, MIG

**Re: Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan Summary of Needs Matrix:
Response to PRC comments**

Date: May 20, 2015

At the April PRC Meeting commissioners reviewed the Summary of Needs Matrix, which is a collection of the analysis and input of the Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation planning process. During the discussion commissioners asked a number of questions that resulted in clarifications or changes to the matrix and supporting materials. These included:

- **Updating the inventory file in the binder to include which parks include which essential activity and adjust the number of sports fields to reflect the lack of public access to high school facilities.**
- **Providing additional language in Column K (Projected Demand) to clarify the ratings.**
- **Clarifying the rating scale for Column F (Capacity and Bookings) to explain where capacity exists.**
- **Noting the geographic cluster of dog parks in south Palo Alto in Column E.**

The discussion also included some small clarifications to Part II of the Program Analysis, a final version of which will be delivered at the May meeting.

Following the meeting, four members of the PRC provided additional comments and questions. This memo includes the commissioner's comments followed by the planning team's responses. Changes made are reflected in the updated Matrix which will be provided at the May meeting. The changes are also noted below. The comments and responses are organized by the rows of the data summary matrix.

Row 5. Walkability and Equity of Park and Preserve Access

Comment: "We have no current land for more parks! We are built up. Therefore I think our level of control is L and our barrier to participation is H."

Response: *The Matrix was edited to reflect the low level of control. The barriers to participation rating was not changed. A medium barrier to participation is justified because there is a high level of access to many of Palo Alto's park sites despite the high barriers to building more parks to create greater equity of access.*

Row 13. Trail Connections

Comment: Add need for shade and benches (see also, "relax & enjoy")

Response: *Change made. Added to Trail Connections, Summary of Need column.*

Comment: Must also reference importance of uninterrupted wildlife corridors, especially in open space.

Response: *Change made. Added to Preservation of Nature, Summary of Need.*

Row 16. Universal Accessibility

Comment: Please clarify what it means to make "continued & expanded integration of accessibility" so we can assess how we're doing on that goal.

Response: *No change made. This will be clarified later in the process.*

Row 18. Off-Leash Dog Areas

Comment: Should we call-out (shared use areas) in parenthesis in Column B?

Response: *No change made. This was discussed earlier with staff and ultimately the decision was made to include existing inventory only. Naming the experimental shared use areas might indicate that they are permanent.*

Row 22. Rectangular Sports Fields

Comment: This section should explicitly tie-in with adult sports, middle school sports, and youth and teen sports. "see also ..." would likely suffice.

Response: *Change made. Added in the Summary of Need Column- "see relevant needs in adult sports, middle school sports, and youth and teen sports.*

Comment: Give examples on line one "... can be accommodated in different ways. For example, lighting more fields adds hours of usage per day without additional space being consumed."

Response: *Change made. Lighting added to line one as an example.*

Comment: Last time I talked to staff in charge of fields there was NOT a problem of insufficient fields.

Response: *Change made. Capacity edited to "At."*

Comment: (In reference to the Perception of Quality) In fairness we should state "varies" here. That was my experience as a little league manager and a soccer dad.

Response: *No change made. The "M" rating indicates mixed input about the fields- some are good and some are bad.*

Row 23. Diamond Sports Fields

Comment: The statement of need is a bit confusing. Do you mean "additional backstops" or "improved backstops"?

Response: *Change made. Clarified – "additional and improved."*

Comment: Column C should not include PAUSD or PA Little League fields since those are not under City control.

Response: *Change made to inventory and matrix.*

Comment: Column F: PA Little League currently limits the number of its Fall Ball teams because of insufficient field space. Source 5/Pg 25 only lists softball demand, does not include baseball.

Response: *No change made. Source 5 includes all City of Palo Alto programmed sports and baseball is not one of them.*

Comment: Column I: I asked Palo Alto LL about demographic trends. National LL is seeing slow decline, but that is partially due to communities not affiliating with national LL. Midwest has the largest decline, but sun-belt LL is seeing strong growth. Palo Alto LL and Babe Ruth have both had growth over the last 5 years.

Response: *Change made. Edited Demographic Trends from decline to stable.*

Comment: Do not see any data that justifies "L" demand. (Reference to projected demand)

Response: *No change made. The Projected Demand column is intended to capture new opportunities for activities or users not currently captured in the data, rather than being a summary of the matrix.*

Row 24. Gymnasiums

Comment: See revisions in "Rectangular Sports Fields" re: Cubberley.

Response: *Change made. Added in the Summary of Need Column- "see relevant needs in adult sports, middle school sports, and youth and teen sports"*

Row 27. Special Purpose Buildings in Parks

Comment: "No need for additional facilities" could be confused for "No need for facility work", which is not true. Something like "No need for additional facilities, but current facilities need improvement"

Response: *Change made. Summary of Need edited to reflect the need for maintenance and improvements.*

Comment: "Column E: Why do you mention "dedicated athletic facilities"? None of the column C facilities are in athletic facilities."

Response: *Change made. Athletic facilities removed.*

Comment: Columns G, H: Cannot find data in source 17

Response: Reference to Source 17, additional meetings includes the conversations recorded in the Additional Meeting Log provided at the April meeting. Conversations with staff responsible for programming these facilities led to the notes in these columns. Very little other input has been collected about these facilities. *No Change Made*

Comment: Column J: Cannot find data in source 10

Response: *Source 10 is the geographic analysis, which shows the walksheds of parks and facilities. Walkability is a factor in evaluating barriers to access (Column J).*

Comment: Column K: Do not understand justification for "L"

Response: *Given the existing conditions and projected changes in trends and population there is a low projected demand for additional special purpose buildings in Palo Alto's parks. Further elaboration to Column K included in the new matrix.*

Row 29. Picnic shelters (covered)

Comment: To me, a "picnic shelter (covered)" is something that can be used when raining. IIRC, most/all of the sites you specify are covered with arbors that provide some shade but no rain protection.

Response: *the intent is to reflect the formally developed group picnic areas. Rain protection is not considered a necessity.*

Row 33: Adult fitness

Comment: "Need to serve underserved niche such as active, older adults" – How do we know this niche is underserved by private providers? Data suggests (F, G, H and J) that we're currently meeting the need. Maybe rephrase to emphasize anticipated growth due to demographic trends. Or clarify why this need is "underserved."

Response: *Change made. Copy added to explain need is based on demographic shifts.*

Row 34. Adult Special Interest Classes

Comment: Continued need, but “potential to grow w/older segment.”
Survey Summary says this category as a whole is “well under capacity”
(Tab 5, page 24)

Response: *Change made. The need will continue but it should be able to be absorbed in existing capacity.*

Row 35. Adult Sports

Comment: In addition to noting that this program is constrained by resident and youth preference in field policy, it seems that there should be some reference to the strong survey preference/demand to prioritize residents.

Response: *Change made. Summary of Need now reads: “Need for this program is constrained by resident and youth priority in sports field policy.”*

Row 36. Day Camps

Comment: Programs Analysis shows very high percentages of full/waitlisted camps for virtually ALL camps targeted to teens, no cancelled classes and only one class (public speaking) that fell below the minimum (Tab 5, p. 28). This demand should be reflected in the Matrix. In particular, “Summer of Service” (81 kids, 175% full/waitlist) should be called out in some way as the Survey indicated demand for greater community service opportunities.

Response: *Change made. Additional Summary of Need item added: “Need additional camps/programming that provide community service opportunities.”*

Row 37: Middle School Athletics

Comment: Add Need for additional, high/consistent quality coaches and Need for transportation assistance to away games.

Response: *See below.*

Comment: Add a 3rd bullet as follows: Expand staffing & training to make these programs accessible & inclusive to youth with special needs. Make these programs accessible & inclusive to youth with special needs.

Response: *Change made: added bullet reading “Need to develop a larger pool of coaches, supported with training”*

Row 39. Youth and Teen Aquatics

Comment: Programs Analysis says cancelled classes reflect a shortage of instructors (Tab 5, p.27). Add Need for additional instructors?

Comment: *Change made. Added Need for additional instructors.*

Comment: Add demand for additional diving classes? (tab 5, p. 27)

Response: *While this is useful information for programming, it does not reach the scale of a system-level need. No change made.*

Comment: Seems that there should be some reference here to higher need/demand among Asian American users and in South Palo Alto.

Response: *No change made. Input and data about aquatics programming does not specifically support youth and teen aquatics programs as noted. This is covered in Row 25 in reference to pools.*

Additional Comments

The comments below are valuable and will be taken into consideration in the next phase of the planning process. I

Comment: Providing restrooms as a “standard feature” must balance high demand at parks w/playing fields and popular playgrounds with localized opposition and safety concerns. Need to drill down through prioritization outreach whether appropriate for all, most, some. By size of park? Types of users? Location?

Response: *This is an important comment but asks for something more detailed than the level of analysis in the Summary of Needs Matrix. This will be included in actions/direction.*

Comment: City staff &/or MIG should conduct an accessibility audit of parks, playgrounds, and programs & plan for accommodations to be budgeted & implemented. An example audit is here: <http://bit.ly/1e7SkoA>

Response: *Site by site audits of all accessibility issues are not part of the scope of this project but could be included as a recommendation. No change made.*

Comment: Possible additional opportunities for (community garden) programming to tie in to farmers markets and school programs if additional volunteers or staff were provided?

Response: *Noted.*

Comment: Survey suggests strong opposition to more artificial turf. Didn't address lighting directly, but that raises conflicts with “Dark Skies” priority for wildlife folks.

Response: *Noted.*

Comment: We need to qualify the 1/2 mile constraint (regarding walkability and equity of Park and Preserve Access). Council has to decide if that is the metric or not.

Response: *We agree that this analysis point would need to be confirmed as a policy before implementing. However, it is based on well established research related to the amount of walking time/distance people prefer.*