



## ATTACHMENT 'A'

### DRAFT POLICIES

#### Overview

The project team has also been working on developing policies that will give overarching direction to City staff and the PRC, and will also provide a foundation for the projects and programs that will be included in the Master Plan. A cross-departmental work session was convened on January 25, 2015 to review and provide feedback on the draft policies.

This document provides each of the six goals, accompanied by the relevant areas of focus and policies. The goals are numbered 1 through 6. Under each goal, the policies are numbered for reference (1.A, 1.B, 1.C, etc).

The definition of a policy is a course or principle of action that provides clear guidance regarding recreation program provision, park maintenance and operations or future renovations and capital improvement needs for parks, trails, open space and recreation facilities.

*Goal 1: Provide high-quality facilities and services that are accessible, affordable, inclusive and distributed equitably across Palo Alto.*

#### Areas of Focus

- Distributing park and recreation activities and experiences across the city
- Improving the accessibility of the full range of park and recreation opportunities
- Exploring new types of programs, classes, events and activities for all ages and abilities

#### Policies

- 1.A Emphasize equity and affordability in the provision of programs and services and the facilitation of partnerships, to create recreation opportunities that:
  - Advance skills, build community and improve the quality of life among participants, especially Palo Alto youth and teens; and
  - Are available at a wide range of facilities, at an increased number of locations that are well distributed throughout the city.
- 1.B Use National Recreation and Park Association Standards as guidelines for locating and developing new parks. These guidelines are as follows:

- Neighborhood parks should be at least two acres in size, although sites as small as one-half acre may be needed as supplementary facilities. The maximum service area should be one-half mile. Two acres of neighborhood parkland should be provided for each 1,000 people.
  - District parks should be at least five acres in size. The maximum service area should be one mile. Two acres of district parkland should be provided for each 1,000 people.
- 1.C Ensure the maximum distance between residents' homes and the nearest public park or preserve is ½-mile, ¼-mile preferred, that is evaluated using a walkshed methodology based on how people travel.
  - 1.D Adopt the wayfinding signage used at Rinconada Park as the standard for Palo Alto parks and provide standardized directory signs for all large parks, preserves and athletic field complexes.
  - 1.E Apply universal design principles as the preferred guidance for design solutions in parks, striving to exceed Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.
  - 1.F Continue to apply the Field and Tennis Court Brokering and Use Policy as well as the Gymnasium Use Policy (as well as any subsequent updates) to guide the allocation of these recreation facilities with a preference for youth and Palo Alto residents.
  - 1.G Encourage walking and biking as a way of getting to and from parks, supporting implementation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.
  - 1.H Incorporate diversity in projects and programs to encourage and enhance citizen participation.
  - 1.I Increase volunteerism by creating and promoting opportunities for youth and adults to participate in parks, recreation, open space events, projects and programs..
  - 1.J Periodically collect and evaluate data on the changing needs of the community and adjust programs and plans accordingly.
  - 1.K.

*Goal 2: Enhance the capacity, quality and variety of uses of the existing system of parks, recreation and open space facilities and services.*

Areas of Focus

- Improving and enhancing community center and recreation spaces across the community
- Enhancing capacity and quality of sports fields
- Increasing the variety of things to do in existing parks
- Improving spaces and increased options for off-leash dogs

Policies

- 2.A Sustain the community's investment in recreation facilities. .
- 2.B Provide opportunities for creative expression in park and recreation facilities and programs.
- 2.C Design and maintain high quality turf fields with adequate time for resting to support maximum use in parks by multiple organized sports and casual users with areas large enough for practice or play.

- 2.D Actively pursue adding dedicated, fenced dog parks in multiple neighborhoods, equitably distributed between north and south Palo Alto. The size of the dog parks will vary, but should strive to be at least .25 acres. Dog parks should not be placed in Open Space Preserves.
- 2.E Actively pursue adding park restrooms in parks that are approximately two acres or larger, have amenities that encourage visitors to stay in the park, have high level of use, and where there are no nearby public restrooms available.

*Goal 3: Create environments that encourage active and passive activities to support health, wellness and social connections.*

Areas of Focus

- Enhancing comfort and making parks more welcoming
- Increasing health and wellness opportunities in parks and programs

Policies

- 3.A Implement the City’s Healthy City Healthy Community resolution with the community’s involvement.
- 3.B Incorporate artistic expression into park design and recreation programming (consistent with the Art Master Plan).
- 3.C Require that proposed privately owned public spaces that are provided in lieu of park fees meet Palo Alto design guidelines and standards for publicly owned parks, allow public access, and are designed to support self-directed exercise and fitness, incorporate natural ecosystem elements and comply with the policies of the Urban Forest Master Plan.

*Goal 4: Protect natural habitat and integrate nature, natural ecosystems and ecological principles throughout Palo Alto.*

Areas of Focus

- Integrating nature into Palo Alto parks

Policies

- 4.A Connect people to nature and the outdoors through education and recreation programming.
- 4.B Connect natural areas, open spaces and vegetated areas in parks and on public land to create wildlife, bird, pollinator and habitat corridors by planting with native oaks and other species that support pollinators or provide high habitat values.
- 4.C Prioritize development of comprehensive conservation plans for Baylands Preserve, Foothills Park, Esther Clark and Pearson-Arastradero Preserve to identify strategies to balance ecosystem preservation, passive recreation, and environmental education.
- 4.D Support regional efforts to control the spread of invasive species and plant pathogens.
- 4.E Promote, expand and protect habitat and natural areas in parks.
- 4.F Identify and pursue strategies and opportunities to expand native trees and planting areas in urban parks.

- 4.G Integrate and implement the Urban Forest Master Plan Policies and Programs as applicable to parkland in Palo Alto.
- 4.H In Natural Open Space, focus on development and activities that are compatible with the protection of nature.

*Goal 5: Develop innovative programs, services and strategies for expanding the system.*

Areas of Focus

- Expanding the system
- Offering more of the existing programs, classes, events

Policies

- 5.A Identify and pursue strategies to activate underused parks and Recreation facilities
- 5.B Support innovation in recreation programming and park features and amenities.
- 5.C Expand the overall parks system through repurposing public land, partnering with other organizations for shared land, incorporating public park spaces on parking decks and rooftops and other creative means to help address shortages of available land.
- 5.D Explore and experiment with parklets and other temporary park spaces for both long and short-term uses.
- 5.E Encourage new parks and identified neighborhood needs as part of the Development Agreement process for new residential and commercial developments.
- 5.F Enhance partnerships and collaborations with Palo Alto Unified School District and Stanford University to support access and joint use of facilities where appropriate for effective delivery of services and programs.
- 5.G Pursue other/private funding sources for recreation programming, capital improvement projects and facility maintenance.
- 5.H Partner with Mid-peninsula Regional Open Space District and other land conservation groups to expand access to open space through new acquisitions and improved connections.
- 5.I Encourage new parks and identified neighborhood needs as part of the development agreement process.

*Goal 6: Manage Palo Alto's land and services effectively, efficiently and sustainably utilizing quantitative and qualitative measures.*

Policies

- 6.A Continue to implement the Cost Recovery Policy for recreation programs, refining the cost figures and expectations using the most current information available.
- 6.B Limit the exclusive use of Palo Alto parks (booking an entire park site) for events by outside organizations that are closed to the general public.

- 6.C Periodically review and update existing guidance for development, operations, and maintenance of Palo Alto's Parks, Trails, Natural Open Spaces, and Recreation system based on the best practices in the industry and this Master Plan, including:
  - Park Rules and Regulations;
  - Open Space Policy & Procedure Handbook;
  - City of Palo Alto Landscape Standards; and
  - Tree Technical Manual.
- 6.D Incorporate sustainable best practices in the maintenance, management, and development of open spaces, parks, and recreation facilities where consistent with ecological best practices.
- 6.E Continue with the Integrated Pest Management ("IPM") policy as written. While some parks may be managed as "pesticide free" on a demonstration basis, IPM should continue to be Palo Alto's approach, grounded in the Best Available Science on pest prevention and management.
- 6.F Strategically reduce maintenance requirements at parks, open spaces, natural preserves and community centers while maintaining Palo Alto's high quality standards.
- 6.G Continue to coordinate with and/or use other relevant City plans, including:
  - Urban Forest Master Plan;
  - Urban Water Master Plan;
  - Long-term electric acquisition plan (LEAP);
  - Water Reclamation Master Plan;
  - Recycled Water Project;
  - Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan
  - Comprehensive Plan; and
  - Others adopted in the future.
- 6.H Continue to involve other relevant City departments and divisions in planning, design and programming, drawing on the unique and specialized skills and perspectives of:
  - The Palo Alto Art Center;
  - Library, including Children's Library;
  - Junior Museum and Zoo;
  - Children's Theatre;
  - Public Art;
  - Transportation;
  - Urban Forestry;
  - Planning; and
  - Public Works.
- 6.I Participate in and support implementation of regional plans related to parks, recreation, natural open space and trails, such as:
  - 2014 Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District Vision;
  - Clean Bay Pollution Prevention Plan; and
  - Land Use Near Streams in Santa Clara County.
- 6.J Develop a proactive Asset Management Program for infrastructure requirements and costs.



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1.B Use National Recreation and Park Association Standards as guidelines for locating and developing new parks. These guidelines are as follows:

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• District parks should be at least five acres in size. The maximum service area should be one mile. Two acres of district parkland should be provided for each 1,000 people.

~~1.B Retain the standard of five acres of park land per 1,000 residents for developed parks and follow best practices for measuring service levels. This standard does not include developed or undeveloped open spaces.~~

1.C Ensure the maximum distance between residents' homes and the nearest public park or preserve is ½-mile, ¼-mile preferred, that is evaluated using a walkshed methodology based on how people travel.

1.D Adopt the wayfinding signage used at Rinconada Park as the standard for Palo Alto parks and provide standardized directory signs for all large parks, preserves and athletic field complexes.

1.E Apply universal design principles as the preferred guidance for design solutions in parks, striving to exceed Americans with Disabilities Act requirements.

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1.G Encourage walking and biking as a way of getting to and from parks, supporting implementation of the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan.

1.H Incorporate diversity in projects and programs to encourage and enhance citizen participation.

1.I Increase volunteerism by creating and promoting opportunities for youth and adults to participate in parks, recreation, open space events, projects and programs..

1.J Periodically collect and evaluate data on the changing needs of the community and adjust programs and plans accordingly.

~~1.K Explore options to expand access to Foothill Park for non-residents.~~

## *Goal 2: Enhance the capacity, quality and variety of uses of the existing system of parks, recreation and open space facilities and services.*

### Areas of Focus

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### Policies

2.A Sustain the community's investment in recreation facilities. .

2.B Provide opportunities for creative expression in park and recreation facilities and programs.

2.C Design and maintain high quality turf fields with adequate time for resting to support maximum use in parks by multiple organized sports and casual users with areas large enough for practice or play. ~~Invest in tournament-quality high-wear sports field turf (see Natural vs. Synthetic Turf Analysis) at designated sports fields used full time for sports where lighting is possible. Policy Direction Needed: Should the policy be written to encourage more synthetic turf, to retain existing synthetic turf and replace it, to exclude synthetic turf, or to consider it on a case-by-case basis?~~

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