

**TO:** PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

**FROM:** KRISTEN O'KANE, COMMUNITY SERVICES DEPARTMENT  
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**DATE:** MAY 31, 2016

**SUBJECT:** PARKS, TRAILS, NATURAL OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

**RECOMMENDATION**

No action to be taken.

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Palo Alto has 36 parks and open space preserves covering approximately 4,165 acres of land, which includes Foothills Park, Pearson Arastradero Preserve, Esther Clark Park, 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 effort is to provide the necessary analysis and review of Palo Alto's parks and recreation system for the preparation of a long-range (20-year) Master Plan. The 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.

The Master Plan process consists of three phases:

1. **Phase 1: Specific Site and Program Analysis and Community Engagement (complete):** Development of a comprehensive inventory and analysis of all Palo Alto parks, trails, developed natural open space areas (picnic areas, parking lots) and recreational facilities and programs; analysis of current and forecasted demographic and recreation trends, and analysis of community recreation needs. Identify community and stakeholder needs, interests and preferences for system enhancements using a proactive community engagement process.
2. **Phase 2: Developing and Prioritizing Project and Program Opportunities (complete/ongoing):** Preparation of goals, policies, and programs; identification of capital projects, needed renovations and other improvements; and prioritization of projects into an implementation timeline of short (5-year), medium (15- year) and long-term (20-year) ranges.
3. **Phase 3: Drafting of the Master Plan, Review and Adoption (ongoing):** Public, Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC), and Council review; and Council approval to adopt the Master Plan.

The technical assessment and analysis, and the community and stakeholder engagement activities are complete (Phase 1). The Goals and Policies have been developed (Phase 2) and were presented to the PRC on April 26, 2016. There have been some revisions made to the policies, which are included in the Discussion section of this report. The potential Programs that will help achieve the goals and policies have since been developed and an implementation timeline and assessment of costs is underway. The draft programs are included in this staff report and will be presented by staff. Additionally, park concept plans highlighting the proposed improvements to each of the City's parks have been created. The Site Concept Plans can be located on line at the project web page for review.

## **DISCUSSION**

### ***Policies***

During development of the Proposed Project and Programs, some modifications were made to the Policies presented at the April 26<sup>th</sup> PRC meeting. A summary of policy changes are included in Attachment A. While most of these modifications are minor, some revisions are more significant and are discussed below.

Policy 1B (revised): Use the National Recreation and Park Association standard as a guide for park development in Palo Alto's Urban Service Area. New parkland should be added to meet and maintain the standard of 4 acres/1,000 residents. Parkland should expand with population, be well distributed across the community and of sufficient size to meet the varied needs of neighborhoods and the broader community. Maximum service area should be one-half mile.

The initial recommendation for policy 1.B was to adopt the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standard for the desired amount of urban parkland per resident. This standard is currently cited in the draft Comprehensive Plan Community Services Element. The standard divides parks into two categories: neighborhood and district parks and recommends for each type that 2 acres of land be provided per 1000 residents. This recommendation was made on the basis that the NRPA is currently a nationally recognized standard and an accepted established bench mark, and would provide the city with a clear goal. In applying this standard to Palo Alto's existing park system, however; it became apparent that the distinction between district and neighborhood parks used in the NRPA standard does not readily correlate to the inventory and patterns of use in Palo Alto where many parks serve as both neighborhood and district parks. In addition, many of Palo Alto's small neighborhood parks would be discounted from the overall parks inventory if the exact standard were used. Building off the Comprehensive Plan, the PRC and staff revised the policy to more accurately reflect Palo Alto while supporting the need to expand the existing parks system. To support the policy a set of programs has been developed that will guide how to expand the park system while taking into consideration the limits of space and funding.

Policy 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.

This policy was moved to a program under *Policy 4.H -In Natural Open Space, focus on features and activities that are compatible with the protection of nature*. Development of conservation plans for the open space preserves is a direct action that will identify methods for managing open space areas while balancing protection of the natural environment and recreational uses, which is the intent of the policy.

Policy 5.E: Encourage new parks and identified neighborhood needs as part of the Development Agreement process for new residential and commercial developments.

This policy has been deleted. New residential and commercial developments are reviewed by the City's Planning Department. Policies and laws related to parkland dedication are already in place and incorporated into the Planning Department's review of new developments.

### ***Proposed Projects and Programs***

Following the Goals and Policies, the next level of the Master Plan framework is the projects and programs that provide specific actions toward achieving the goals and policies. For consistency with the Comprehensive Plan, the Master Plan will refer to projects and programs collectively as programs. The programs represent potential enhancements and expansions for the parks and recreation system including

recreation programming. Potential new programs were created from the information gathered in the analysis phase of the project including physical inventory and community feedback, and utilizes the Areas of Focus that were developed as part of the community on line survey challenge as an overall structure. Additional programs, such as the addition of new park amenities like dog parks and restrooms were also considered and are included. Refer to Attachment B for the proposed Programs, including how they correlate to the goals and policies. For organizational purposes, and to ensure that the intent of the Master Plan is met, programs should be either New Programs or System Recommendations as described below:

Proposed New Projects and Programs:

- Enhance Existing Park Amenities: small scale enhancements or renovations made to the existing parks and facilities
- New Park and Recreation Facilities/Amenities: new facilities/amenities the current park system is missing or lacking
- New Programming Recommendations: new programming as well as maintaining/expanding existing programs

System Recommendations:

- Improve Accessibility and Inclusiveness: access and connections in and between parks as well as making that accessibility inclusive
- Partnering and Expanding the System Recommendations: opportunities to partner with others to acquire more area as ways of expanding the park and recreation system
- Funding Recommendations: funding opportunities to support and expand the parks and recreation system
- New/Revised Ordinance & Policy Recommendations: updates, modifications or new ordinances and policies for the parks and recreation system
- System Management Recommendations: maintenance and system expansion practices
- Environmental Recommendations: environmental and nature considerations
- Art Recommendations: incorporation of art into the parks system

Program prioritization and implementation:

When considering the priority of programs and the order in which they will be completed, the following set of criteria will be used as a guide to identify the benefit of the proposed program to the overall parks system and in relation to other programs. Proposed programs would be given a ranking of how well, using a range of low, medium, and high; that program meets the criteria. These criteria would not provide an overall score to a program, but would be used to inform staff, the PRC, and Council on how a particular program would serve the needs of the community. The criteria will be applied to each of the identified Master Plan programs and included in the draft report. New programs that are proposed will also be scored using the below criteria.

1. *Fill existing gaps*: Bring recreation opportunities (parkland, facilities, and programs) to areas of the City and to users where gaps were identified.
2. *Address community preferences*: Target the highest priority types of projects and programs identified through citywide outreach.
3. *Respond to growth*: Add features or programs, modify or expand components of the system to prepare for and address increasing demand.
4. *Maximize public resources*: Create the most impact for each dollar of capital and operating expenditure possible.

5. *Realize multiple benefits:* Advance the principles of this Master Plan as well as the goals, projects and directions of other adopted City efforts.

Since the aforementioned criteria are only a guide and first-step to identifying which programs to complete in the near-, mid-, and long-term; additional factors that influence the prioritization of programs will also be considered and applied, including:

- timing of the proposed program in relation to other facility improvements (e.g., plan for the installation of an adult fitness area to coincide with other planned park improvements to minimize disruption);
- available resources based on the approved annual budget;
- length of time to plan, implement, and/or construct; and
- overall feasibility based on staff knowledge and expertise, permitting requirements, immediate needs based on a specific event or incident, etc.

#### Site Concept Plans:

Site concept plans were developed for each of Palo Alto's parks and facilities that show site specific recommendations for new and enhanced park amenities that can be reviewed on the project web page at [www.cityofpaloaltoparksplan.org](http://www.cityofpaloaltoparksplan.org). The Site Concept Plans provide the opportunity for the community to provide input on what new amenities are being proposed for each site. Input gathered from the community review of these Site Concept Plans will assist staff, the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council determine what new amenities are added to the specific site and within what time frame the improvements will be installed. The park concept plans were developed from site analysis and extensive community outreach by the project team with assistance of park and recreation staff who has detailed knowledge of the community's preferences, common requests and feedback received from the public, as well as the feasibility of proposed improvements. The project team is currently providing numerous opportunities for the public to review and comment on the concept plans. Outreach was conducted at the City of Palo Alto May Fete fair, at a community meeting that was held on May 25, 2016, and was available online beginning May 25, 2016. Printed versions of the Site Concept Plans have also been dispersed throughout the City's libraries for comment. Review of the Site Concept Plans is anticipated to last thru June 2016. Staff will review with the commission the overall format of the site concept plan document and is requested to provide feedback by June 10, 2016 to staff.

#### **NEXT STEPS**

A City Council Study Session scheduled for June 27, 2016 will review the master planning process activities completed to date and obtain feedback on the goals and policies. Specific focus will be placed on the policies that address dog parks and restrooms.

#### **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.

#### **ATTACHMENTS**

- A. Summary of Policy Changes
- B. Draft Goals, Policies, and Programs

## Attachment A: Summary of policy revisions

(Strikethrough denotes deleted text; underline denotes added text)

Policy	Revised policy
<p>1.B Use National Recreation and Park Association Standards as guidelines for locating and developing new parks. These guidelines are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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.</li> </ul>	<p>1.B Use the National Recreation and Park Association standard as a guide (see sidebar) for park development in Palo Alto’s Urban Service Area. New parkland should be added to meet and maintain the standard of 4 acres/1,000 residents. Parkland should expand with population, be well distributed across the community and of sufficient size to meet the varied needs of neighborhoods and the broader community. Maximum service area should be one-half mile.</p>
<p>1.F <del>Continue to apply</del> 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.</p>	<p>1.F <u>Maintain</u> a 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.</p>
<p>1.H Incorporate diversity in projects and programs to encourage and enhance citizen participation.</p>	<p>1.H Incorporate <u>cultural</u> diversity in projects and programs to encourage and enhance citizen participation.</p>
<p>1.I Increase volunteerism by creating and promoting opportunities for youth and adults to participate in parks, recreation, open space events, projects and programs.</p>	<p>1.I Increase <u>stewardship and</u> volunteerism by creating and promoting opportunities for youth and adults to participate in parks, recreation, open space events, projects and programs.</p>
<p>1.J Periodically collect and evaluate data on the changing <del>needs</del> of the community and adjust programs and plans accordingly.</p>	<p>1.J Periodically collect and evaluate data on the changing <u>interests</u> of the community and adjust programs and plans accordingly.</p>
<p>3.B Incorporate <del>artistic expression</del> into park design and recreation programming (consistent with the Art Master Plan).</p>	<p>3.B Incorporate <u>art</u> into park design and recreation programming (consistent with the Public Art Master Plan).</p>
<p>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.</p>	<p>This has been moved to be a program under policy 4.H (now 4.G)</p>
<p>4.D Support regional efforts <del>to enhance and improve significant resources.</del></p>	<p>4.D (now 4.C) Support regional efforts <u>that focus on enhancing and protecting significant natural</u></p>

## Attachment A: Summary of policy revisions

(Strikethrough denotes deleted text; underline denotes added text)

	<u>resources.</u>
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.C Expand the overall parks <u>and recreation</u> 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.E Encourage new parks and identified neighborhood needs as part of the Development Agreement process for new residential and commercial developments.	This policy has been deleted.
6.A Continue to implement the Cost Recovery Policy for recreation programs, refining the cost <del>figures and expectations</del> using the most current information available.	6.A Continue to implement the Cost Recovery Policy for recreation programs, refining the cost <u>and fees</u> using the most current information available.
6.E <del>Continue with</del> 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.E <u>Strengthen</u> 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.G <del>Continue to</del> coordinate with and/or use other relevant City plans, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Urban Forest Master Plan;</li> <li>○ Urban Water Master Plan;</li> <li>○ Long-term electric acquisition plan (LEAP);</li> <li>○ Water Reclamation Master Plan;</li> <li>○ Recycled Water Project;</li> <li>○ Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan</li> <li>○ Comprehensive Plan; and</li> <li>○ Others adopted in the future.</li> </ul>	6.G Coordinate with and/or use other relevant City plans <u>to ensure consistency</u> , including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Urban Forest Master Plan;</li> <li>○ Urban Water Master Plan;</li> <li>○ Long-term electric acquisition plan (LEAP);</li> <li>○ Water Reclamation Master Plan;</li> <li>○ Recycled Water Project;</li> <li>○ Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan</li> <li>○ Comprehensive Plan; and</li> <li>○ Others adopted in the future.</li> </ul>
6.H Continue to <del>involve</del> other relevant City departments and divisions in planning, design and programming, drawing on the unique and specialized skills and perspectives of:	6.H Continue to <u>engage</u> other relevant City departments and divisions in planning, design and programming, drawing on the unique and specialized skills and perspectives of:

## Attachment A: Summary of policy revisions

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<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Palo Alto Art Center;</li><li>○ Library, including Children’s Library;</li><li>○ Junior Museum and Zoo;</li><li>○ Children’s Theatre;</li><li>○ Public Art;</li><li>○ Transportation;</li><li>○ Urban Forestry;</li><li>○ Planning;</li><li>○ Public Works, and</li><li>○ Palo Alto Youth and Teen Leadership</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ The Palo Alto Art Center;</li><li>○ Library, including Children’s Library;</li><li>○ Junior Museum and Zoo;</li><li>○ Children’s Theatre;</li><li>○ Public Art;</li><li>○ Transportation;</li><li>○ Urban Forestry;</li><li>○ Planning;</li><li>○ Public Works, and</li><li>○ Palo Alto Youth and Teen Leadership</li></ul>
<p>6.J Develop a proactive Asset Management Program <del>for infrastructure requirements and costs.</del></p>	<p>6.J Develop a proactive Asset Management Program <u>to identify new, and maintain existing park and recreation infrastructure.</u></p>



WORKING DRAFT 5/31/16

## ATTACHMENT B: Goals, Policies, and Programs

### Overview

This provides each of the six goals, numbered 1 through 6. Under each goal, the policies are numbered for reference (1.A, 1.B, 1.C, etc.) as are the programs (1.A.1, 1.A.2, 1.A.3 etc.).

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

### Policy

- 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.

### Programs

- 1.A.1 Continue to implement the Fee Reduction Program for low income and disabled residents and periodically evaluate its use and effectiveness.
- 1.A.2 Develop free or low cost teen programs that develop life skills, such as leadership and community service.
- 1.A.3 Develop a teen advisory committee to provide feedback on newly proposed parks, recreation and open space projects and programs.
- 1.A.4 Partner with local recreation providers to relocate existing programs or offer new programs in Palo Alto parks.
- 1.A.5 Recruit or develop programs for additional and alternative sports that can take place in existing parks and make use of existing outdoor recreation facilities. Examples include cross-country running, track and field, bike polo, parkour, cycling.
- 1.A.6 Expand offerings of preserves' interpretive facilities to area schools through curriculum packages (backpacks, crates, etc.) that can be brought into the field or the classroom.



- 1.A.7 Evaluate the geographic distribution of program offerings and make adjustments to equally offer programs throughout the City.
- 1.A.8 Develop additional community gardens focusing on underrepresented areas of the City.

## Policy

- 1.B** Use the National Recreation and Park Association standard as a guide (see sidebar) for park development in Palo Alto's Urban Service Area. New parkland should be added to meet and maintain the standard of 4 acres/1,000 residents. Parkland should expand with population, be well distributed across the community and of sufficient size to meet the varied needs of neighborhoods and the broader community. Maximum service area should be one-half mile.

## Programs

- 1.B.1 Develop design standards for privately-owned public open spaces (POPOS) that clearly set the expectation for public access, recreation activities and natural elements. (Examples: NY POPS and SF POPOS).
- 1.B.2 Establish a system in the City's real estate office that identifies land being sold and reviews it for park potential, prioritizing review of land within park search areas. (See Figure X: Park Search Areas).
- 1.B.3 Review all city owned land and easements (starting in park search areas) for potential parkland development or connection locations. (See Figure X: Park Search Areas and Figure X: Bikeways and Pedestrian Routes to Parks and Recreation Facilities).
- 1.B.4 Examine City-owned right-of-way (streets, which make up the biggest portion of publicly owned land) to identify temporary or permanent areas for improvements that connect or add recreation activity space. (Examples: California Ave., Indianapolis Cultural Trail, Parklets).
- 1.B.5 Identify and approach community organizations and institutions that own land in park search areas to create long-term agreements and improvements for public park space. (Examples: Friendship Sportsplex, New Riverside Park).
- 1.B.6 Create usable park space on top of utilities, parking or other infrastructure uses. (Examples: Anaheim Utility Park, UC Berkeley Underhill Parking Structure, Portland's Director Park).
- 1.B.7 Monitor properties adjacent to parks that are smaller than the minimum recommended size for potential acquisition to expand existing parks.
- 1.B.8 Develop a system to save and reserve funds for parkland acquisition so that when appropriate land is available the City is in a position to purchase it.

- 1.B.9 Construct a new park in park search area 'E (See map X), which represents the area in the City with the least park acreage and highest density.
- 1.B.10 Develop a creek walk along Matadero Creek that links parks and creates open space and habitat corridor.
- 1.B.11 Incorporate other underutilized City-owned outdoor spaces for park and recreational programming.

### Policy

- 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 watershed methodology based on how people travel.

### Programs

- 1.C.1 Maintain the City's digital map developed during this Master Plan process, updating for new activities and access points.
- 1.C.2 Establish a review step in the Planning and Community Environment department for any major redevelopment or the purchase/sale of any City land in the park search areas.
- 1.C.3 Acquire and develop a new neighborhood park in each park search area, starting with the most underserved areas and targeting a central and well-connected location to maximize access.

### Policy

- 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.

### Programs

- 1.D.1 Create and implement a signage and wayfinding program that conveys the park system identity, incorporates art, connects bike paths to parks and enhances the experience of park visitors
- 1.D.2 Install directional signs at parks that include the walking time to the next nearest park or parks.

### Policy

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

### Programs

- 1.E.1. Create a process to address adaptive program requests for individuals with cognitive, sensory, and physical disabilities (to be coordinated with upcoming ADA Transition Plan).
- 1.E.2. Adopt a standard of universal park design for accessibility and upgrade play areas and picnic facilities to meet or exceed the standard. (Note: a source and reference will be added).

## Policy

- 1.F** Maintain a 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.

## Programs

- 1.F.1. Periodically review the existing Field and Tennis Court Brokering and Use Policy and Gymnasium Policy and update as needed.
- 1.F.2. Develop an annual field usage statistics report, including number of prime timeslots that were unused due to field condition/resting and the number of requests for field space that were unfilled due to capacity.

## Policy

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

## Programs

- 1.G.1 Select parks as destinations along routes for “Ciclovia” or “Sunday Streets” type events where streets are closed to traffic and opened up for citizens of all ages to interact with each other through exercise, entertainment and fun;
- 1.G.2 Provide bike parking for cyclists as a standard feature at parks, open spaces, preserves and community centers;
- 1.G.3 Provide, identify and mark “Safe Routes to Parks” from locations such as schools, shopping centers, libraries, after-school programs, community centers, and residential neighborhoods;
- 1.G.4 Educate residents about the city’s Bike Boulevards – streets prioritized for bicycles – to promote greater use, and plan new Bike Boulevard projects that connect parks, open spaces and recreation facilities.
- 1.G.5 Identify gaps in the walking and cycling network to improve access to parks, open spaces, preserves and community centers, including sidewalk repairs, easements, trail improvements/repair and improved pedestrian visibility.
- 1.G.6 Collaborate with school communities to enhance routes to schools, especially where they pass through parks; and
- 1.G.7 Integrate art and nature into bike lanes, routes and paths as appropriate.
- 1.G.8 Develop a regular bicycle and walking tour of Palo Alto parks and preserves as a new recreation program. Develop online materials for self-guided tours.

## Policy

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

## Programs

- 1.H.1. Conduct an annual survey of cultural groups to identify gaps in recreation programming.

- 1.H.2. Provide multi-cultural and multi-lingual recreation programs.

### Policy

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

### Programs

- 1.I.1. Create a robust volunteer recruitment and management program utilizing the following steps:
- Explore funding a dedicated Volunteer Coordinator position with sole purpose of recruiting, training, managing and appreciating volunteers throughout the City.
  - Have detailed job descriptions created for all volunteer needs and make available at all City sites, as well as online.
  - Conduct outreach to senior centers and senior housing facilities to promote volunteer programs and opportunities.
  - Provide volunteer opportunities for Palo Alto youth and students to earn community service hours by offering programs like the Counselor in Training and Junior Lifeguard programs and partnering with Counselor in Training and Junior lifeguard programs and partnering with PAUSD.
- 1.I.2. Continue to offer volunteer habitat and landscape improvement projects, and support partnership organizations that offer volunteer programs in Parks and Open Space areas.

### Policy

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

### Programs

- 1.J.1 Create pilot recreation programs to test the public's interest in new types of classes, events and activities utilizing an evaluation process.
- 1.J.2 Initiate a community-wide focus group on an annual basis to provide feedback on programs, facilities and long-term roadmaps.
- 1.J.3 Create a streamlined and effective quarterly survey system that solicits feedback from customers, including program participants, facility renters, and the general community.

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

### Policy

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

### Programs

- 2.A.1 Continue to program and prioritize projects for existing facilities as identified in the Independent Blue Ribbon Committee report, and plan the keep up of new facilities as they come on line, recognizing their expected lifespan and revised based on real-world experience.
- 2.A.2 Research best practices to design recreational facilities that can be maintained with existing budgets.
- 2.A.3 Collaborate with Palo Alto Unified School District to develop a vision and master plan for the future of the Cubberley Community Center.

### Policy

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

### Programs

- 2.B.1 Incorporate artists and art into youth recreation programming, particularly day camps, utilizing the expertise of the Arts and Sciences Division.
- 2.B.2 Create outdoor studios and program spaces for creating art in parks (Coordinated with the Public Art Master Plan).
- 2.B.3 Encourage the community to participate in more expressive projects lead by the department, such as community mural projects in facilities, pop up open mic's in open spaces or chalk art programs in parks.
- 2.B.4 Continue to provide "maker" space to Palo Alto teens to encourage creative thinking and expression.

### Policy

- 2.C** Design and maintain high quality natural 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.

### Programs

- 2.C.1 Continue to monitor and track industry developments and the latest reputable scientific studies regarding synthetic turf in order to: 1. understand the environmental and human safety impacts of our existing synthetic turf fields; 2. determine if the City should continue to use synthetic turf; 3. determine which type of synthetic turf product to use when it comes time to replace an existing synthetic turf field.
- 2.C.2 Sustain the existing synthetic turf fields, and, as they need to be replaced, use the information learned from industry developments, scientific studies, and best practices from leaders in the field to select the most appropriate products (Reevaluate this policy based on the analysis from reputable scientific studies).
- 2.C.3 Synthetic turf fields should be striped for multiple sports to maximize use. Whenever possible, synthetic turf playing fields should have lights in order to maximize use of the field.

- 2.C.4 The City should complete an athletic field assessment and maintenance plan, in an effort to improve the condition and sustainability of the City's natural grass fields. The report should include analysis and recommendations regarding the soil profile, agronomy, irrigation systems, field slope, drainage, field-use demand, and maintenance.
- 2.C.5 The City should review the various improvement options recommended in the athletic field assessment, and fund the appropriate improvements.
- 2.C.6 Upgrade fields at select parks to high quality natural turf standards including irrigation system upgrades, drainage improvements, etc.

## Policy

- 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.

## Programs

- 2.D.1 The City will evaluate and select at least six dedicated, fenced dog parks, equitably distributed across north and south Palo Alto, from the following list of potential locations:
  - Eleanor Pardee Park (North, .41 Acres)-Near Term
  - Bowden (North, .37 Acres)-Near Term
  - Greer Park (Improve existing) (South, .87 Acres)
  - Peers Park (North, .73 Acres)
  - Hoover (Improve existing) (South, 1 Acre)
  - Robles (South, .47 Acres)
  - Mitchell Park (Expand existing) (South, 1.2 Acres)
  - Kingsley Island (North, .27 Acres)
  - Werry Park (North, .31 Acres)
  - Juana Briones Park (South, .47 Acres)
  - Heritage (North, .27 Acres)
  - \*El Camino Park (North, .5 Acres)

\*Additional research is needed regarding El Camino Park as a suitable location due to future transit improvements in the proposed area. \*We acknowledge that Hoover and Greer's current dog parks are inadequate in terms of size, and they should not be counted in their current configuration towards the minimum of six dog parks recommended in this program.

## Policy

- 2.E** The City will 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.

## Programs

- 2.E.1 Develop a restroom standard, in collaboration with the Architectural Review Board, for neighborhood parks.
- 2.E.2 The City will actively pursue adding park restrooms at the following potential locations:
  - Bol Park
  - Bowden Park
  - Eleanor Pardee Park
  - Johnson Park
  - Ramos Park
  - Robles Park
  - Terman Park

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

## Policy

- 3.A** Implement the Healthy City Healthy Community resolution with the community's involvement.

## Programs

- 3.A.1 Convene and lead a Healthy City Healthy Community stakeholder work group consisting of other agencies and nonprofit organizations to collaborate on initiatives and benefit from existing programs.
- 3.A.2 Develop an annual plan that supports implementation of the resolution.
- 3.A.3 Achieve designation as an Age-Friendly Community.
- 3.A.4 Add drop-in programs (free or BOOST!) focused on physical and mental health in settings that are near home/work and maximize the health benefits of being outside and surrounded by nature.
- 3.A.5 Connect walking paths within and between parks to create loop options of varying length that encourage walking and jogging.
- 3.A.6 Enhance seating areas to take advantage of quiet spaces or to create opportunities for social interaction.
- 3.A.7 Promote and enforce the ban on smoking in Palo Alto's parks through a marketing campaign and signage program.
- 3.A.8 Upgrade or add drinking fountains with water bottle filling and water for dogs.
- 3.A.9 Develop adult fitness areas in parks including exercise areas for the exclusive use of older adults (seniors).

## Policy

- 3.B** Incorporate art into park design and recreation programming (consistent with the Public Art Master Plan).

### Programs

- 3.B.1 Promote temporary public art installations in local parks.
- 3.B.2 Promote interactive public art features that also serve as play features (i.e. climbable sculptural elements integrated into the natural environment that invite touch and exploration).
- 3.B.3 Update park design policies to incorporate artistic elements consistent with the Public Art Master Plan.
- 3.B.4 Commission artwork that interprets local history, events and significant individuals; represents City core values of sustainability, youth well-being, health, innovation.
- 3.B.5 Bring in performance-based work, social practice, temporary art and community art.
- 3.B.6 Explore suitable art for preserves and natural areas.
- 3.B.7 Incorporate public art in the earliest stages of the design of parks and facilities that may utilize wind direction, sunlight and ambient sound (Coordinated with the Public Art Master Plan).
- 3.B.8 Install permanent and temporary installations and exhibits in well-trafficked parks and plazas, following the guidance of the Public Art Master Plan.
- 3.B.9 Integrate functional public art into play areas, seatwalls and other built features in parks across the system.

## Policy

- 3.C** Require that proposed privately owned public spaces that are providing 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.

### Programs

- 3.C.1 Develop and apply clear expectations and definitions of public access (hours, rules) for privately owned public spaces



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

Policy

- 4.A** Connect people to nature and the outdoors through education and recreation programming.

Programs

- 4.A.1 Expand access to nature through elements and interpretive features that explore ecological processes, historical context, adjacent waterways, specific plant/animal species that can be encountered onsite and elements tailored to be of interest to youth as well as other ages, cultures and abilities.
- 4.A.2 Expand programs working with volunteers on invasive species removal in preserves and creek corridors.
- 4.A.3 Improve and increase access to creeks for learning and stewardship experiences by designing access points that minimize impact on the waterway.
- 4.A.4 Expand programs such as Foothills camps to connect youth with parks year-round.
- 4.A.5 Partner with boys/girls scouting organizations for outdoor education programs and/or the Junior Rangers program.
- 4.A.6 Expand and increase events that educate and promote native plants, species and wildlife.

Policy

- 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.

Programs

- 4.B.1 Develop a map that identifies locations for habitat corridors including the appropriate plant palette for each corridor.
- 4.B.2 Work with local environmental groups to grow native plant species and utilize their network of volunteers to install and maintain planted areas.

Policy

- 4.C** Support regional efforts that focus on enhancing and protecting significant natural resources.

Programs

- 4.C.1 Collaborate with regional partners in projects to control the spread of invasive species and plant pathogens.
- 4.C.2 Join the Bay Area Children in Nature Collaborative/Children in Nature Network.

## Policy

- 4.D** Promote, expand and protect habitat and natural areas in parks.

### Programs

- 4.D.1 Promote urban greening by integrating storm water design into planting beds, reducing irrigation and providing interpretive information about park contributions to city water quality.
- 4.D.2 Train City maintenance staff and include specific standards and expectations in maintenance contracts for the care of for low-water, naturalized landscapes, natural play environments and other new types of features in the system.
- 4.D.3 Ensure project designs for new facilities and retrofits will be consistent with sustainable design principles and practices. This includes evaluating all projects for opportunities to implement Green Stormwater Infrastructure such as bioswales, stormwater planters, rain gardens, permeable pavers and porous concrete and asphalt.
- 4.D.4 Identify locations and develop swales, detention basins and rain gardens to retain and treat storm water.
- 4.D.5 Provide shade for play areas using shade trees as the preferred solution.

## Policy

- 4.E** Identify and pursue strategies and opportunities to expand native trees and planting areas in urban parks.

### Programs

- 4. E.1 Update the preferred planting palette and approved tree species list.
- 4. E.2 Partner with organizations such as Canopy and Acterra
- 4. E.3 Replace low-use turf areas with native shrubs and grasses, incorporating educational elements about native habitats.

## Policy

- 4.F** Integrate and implement the Urban Forest Master Plan Policies and Programs as applicable to parkland in Palo Alto.

## Policy

- 4.G** In Natural Open Space, focus on features and activities that are compatible with the protection of nature.

### Programs

- 4.G.1 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.G.2 Continue to work with partnership organizations to remove invasive weeds and plant native plants and trees in riparian and natural open space areas.

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

Policy

- 5.A** Identify and pursue strategies to activate underused parks and recreation facilities

Programs

- 5.A.1 Implement short-term placemaking improvements (flexible, small scale interventions such as seating, art, programming or planters that have minimal capital cost) to attract users and experiment with potential longer-term options.
- 5.A.2 Emphasize flexibility and layering uses (allowing for different uses at different times of day, week, etc.) in parks over installing fixed-use equipment and single-use facilities.
- 5.A.3 Expand Day Camp program opportunities, utilizing all preserves and more local park sites and additional topic areas, to meet excess demand.
- 5.A.4 Leverage social media and develop marketing materials to encourage “pop-up” recreational activities in rotating parks.
- 5.A.5 Invite and encourage local businesses to utilize neighborhood parks for weekly or monthly outings and lunches.
- 5.A.6 Create small (10-12 people) and medium-sized (20-25 people) group picnic areas that can be used for both picnics and programming
- 5.A.7 Provide additional lighting to enhance park safety and expand park use to dusk

Policy

- 5.B** Support innovation in recreation programming and park features and amenities.

Programs

- 5.B.1 Review program data based on clearly communicated objectives for reach, impact, attendance and financial performance.
- 5.B.2 Retire, end or refresh programs that require staff, facility and financial resources but do not achieve program objectives, thereby freeing up resources for new programs.
- 5.B.3 Actively develop a small number of pilot programs each year to test new ideas, locations and target audiences.
- 5.B.4 Build on partnership with Avenidas to build intergenerational programming as well as additional older adult programming.

- 5.B.5 Expand BOOST!, the pay-per-use exercise class system to cover fees for any drop-in classes or facility use (lap swim, drop-in gym time, new programs in parks).
- 5.B.6 Set goal of 10% new program offerings each season; new programs should be offered based on needs assessment, industry trends, and/or class evaluation data.
- 5.B.7 Create a robust marketing and outreach program to highlight new and innovative programs to community.
- 5.B.8 Develop short-term recreation access strategies (such as temporary use agreements for vacant or park like property) and seek long-term or permanent park and recreation space in each park search area. Actively recruit property and facility owners to participate in the development of the short and long-term strategies.

### Policy

- 5.C** Expand the overall parks and recreation 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.

### Programs

- 5.C.1 TBD

### Policy

- 5.D** Explore and experiment with parklets and other temporary park spaces for both long and short-term uses.

### Programs

- 5.D.1 TBD

### Policy

- 5.E** 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.

### Programs

- 5.E.1 Partner with PAUSD to provide “Open Gym” programs to community (basketball, badminton, indoor soccer) in the evening, in the evening, during the summer months, and on weekend mornings.
- 5.E.2 Develop a steering committee that consists of key officials from PAUSD and Stanford to develop partnership agreements and connect facility managers and programmers with the PAUSD and Stanford staff that will be providing the programs to develop, implement, and monitor program success
- 5.E.3 Increase access to PAUSD public schools (outside of school hours) schools to increase the availability of recreation activity spaces. Target school sites that are within or adjacent to "park search areas".

- 5.E.4 Work with Stanford to create or increase access to athletic facilities and other recreational facilities for Palo Alto residents.

### Policy

- 5.F** Pursue other/private funding sources for recreation programming, capital improvement projects and facility maintenance.

### Programs

- 5.F.1 Encourage foundations to assist with soliciting sponsorships and grants.
- 5.F.2 Create a more formalized annual or one-time sponsorship program that provides the donor with marketing and promotional opportunities.
- 5.F.3 Contract or add job responsibilities for managing fundraising and developing donors for the park system to pursue funding opportunities and sponsorships.
- 5.F.4 Engage nonprofit friends groups to seek donor funding, including foundation grants, corporate giving and small and major philanthropic gifts by individuals, for priority projects and programs.

### Policy

- 5.G** 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.

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

### Policy

- 6.A** Continue to implement the Cost Recovery Policy for recreation programs, refining the cost and fees using the most current information available.

### Programs

- 6.A.1 Periodically benchmark the City's Cost Recovery Policy against other Cities' cost recovery models.

### Policy

- 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.
- No exclusive use of parks by private parties is permitted on peak days (e.g., weekend, holidays) or peak times (e.g., evening hours on weekdays, 10 am – 6 pm on weekends) as defined by Community Services staff unless approved in advance by the Director of Community Services. Exclusive use of certain sites and facilities within parks, such as reservable spaces like picnic areas, is generally permitted during peak days and times.
  - Use of parks for locally focused events, where more than 50% of participants are expected to be Palo Alto residents and that allow registration by the

general public (e.g., events such as, races, obstacle course events, triathlons, etc.) may be considered by staff if consistent with this Master Plan;

- Private events that are closed to the general public (e.g., corporate events, private weddings) and are intended to use an entire park (rather than a reservable space in excess of capacities as defined in the Special Event Permit procedures) may only be considered outside of peak days and times as defined by Community Services staff. These events should recover 100% of all associated costs, including wear and tear on public parks and facilities.
- Events that allow public access are permitted, in accordance with Special Event Permit procedures.

## Policy

**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;
- City of Palo Alto design guidelines and standards; and
- Tree Technical Manual.

## Policy

**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.

## Programs

- 6.D.1 Increase energy efficiency in Palo Alto parks, including allocating funding to retrofit facilities for energy efficiency with increased insulation, green or reflective roofs and low-emissive window glass where applicable.
- 6.D.2 Conduct energy audits for all facilities, establish an energy baseline for operations, benchmark energy performance against comparable facilities, and implement energy tracking and management systems for all park facilities and operations;
- 6.D.3 Select Energy Star and equivalent energy-efficient products for Park equipment purchases; and
- 6.D.4 Expand the collection and use of solar power (parking lots, roofs) and other renewable energy sources at parks and facilities (e.g. pools).
- 6.D.5 Provide convenient and well-marked compost and recycling receptacles throughout the park system, in recreation facilities and at special events;
- 6.D.6 Ensure that trash, recycling, and compost receptacles have covers to prevent wildlife access to human food sources.
- 6.D.7 Review purchasing policies and improve employee education to reduce overall consumption of materials throughout the system;

- 6.D.8 Procure environmentally preferable products (as required by the City's Environmentally Preferred Purchasing policy) as the "default" purchasing option;
- 6.D.9 Initiate composting of green waste within the park system.
- 6.D.10 Work with Public Works to replace the vehicle fleet with electric vehicles whenever practical;
- 6.D.11 Install electric vehicle (EV) charging stations at park facilities with parking lots;
- 6.D.12 Enforce a "No Idle" program with vehicles and other gas-powered equipment. Conduct water audits for all parks and recreation facilities and park operations;
- 6.D.13 Install high-efficiency urinals, toilets, sinks and showers in all facilities;
- 6.D.14 As infrastructure expansion allows, extend recycled water use to more park sites;
- 6.D.15 Explore water capture opportunities in parks for irrigation and recycling;
- 6.D.16 Ensure any irrigation systems on public landscapes are run by a smart controller and/or sensors and that staff are trained in programming them
- 6.D.17 Link all park facilities to a centralized irrigation management system to maximize water use efficiency.

#### Policy

- 6.E** Strengthen 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.

#### Programs

- 6.E.1 Periodically review and update the IPM policy based on best available data and technology.

#### Policy

- 6.F** Strategically reduce maintenance requirements at parks, open spaces, natural preserves and community centers while maintaining Palo Alto's high quality standards.

#### Programs

- 6.F.1 Locate garbage receptacles in a single-location that is easily accessible by maintenance staff and vehicles.
- 6.F.2 Explore high capacity, compacting and smart garbage receptacles that can reduce the frequency of regular collection; and
- 6.F.3 Select standardized furnishing palettes for durability, vandal-resistance and ease of repair.

## Policy

**6.G** Coordinate with and/or use other relevant City plans to ensure consistency, 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.

## Policy

**6.H** Continue to engage 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;
- Public Works, and
- Palo Alto Youth and Teen Leadership

## Policy

**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.

## Policy

**6.J** Develop a proactive Asset Management Program to identify new, and maintain existing park and recreation infrastructure.

## Programs

6.J.1 Research asset management programs used by other City parks and recreation departments.