

DATE: August 24, 2021
TO: City Council Members
FROM: Parks and Recreation Commission
SUBJECT: **MEMO REGARDING EQUITABLE PARKS IN NORTH VENTURA AND TO ADOPT AN NVCAP DESIGN THAT FOLLOWS THE CITY'S ESTABLISHED PARKLAND STANDARD.**

Parks are an essential part of Palo Alto's high quality of life, fostering health, wellness, and social connections.

Palo Alto has long used the National Recreation and Park Association standard of 4 acres of parkland per 1000 residents. The Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation facilities Master Plan (Parks Master Plan) (unanimously adopted by City Council in September 2017) reaffirms Palo Alto's dedication to the 4 acres per 1000 residents parkland standard. The Palo Alto Comprehensive Plan 2030 (unanimously adopted by City Council in November 2017) endorses the same parkland standard.

The North Ventura Coordinated Area Plan (NVCAP) studied future development in the North Ventura Area. During the process, both the neighborhood and the NVCAP Working Group members expressed their strong support for North Ventura parks. Unfortunately, the three NVCAP alternatives not only do not meet Palo Alto's parkland standard, they also use a parkland definition that counts landscaped planting strips, setbacks between buildings, and paved driveways. If the calculations are limited to actual parkland, the NVCAP alternatives all provide less than one third of Palo Alto's parkland standard.

An explicit goal of the Parks Master Plan is to provide parks that are "distributed equitably across Palo Alto." As a result, the adopted Parks Master Plan requires the City to provide our new North Ventura neighbors with the same high-quality parks that are enjoyed in other Palo Alto neighborhoods. Furthermore, because much of North Ventura will contain high-density developments without yards, parks will be even more important to the residents, as traditional backyard activities will become park activities.

The Parks & Recreation Commission encourages City Council to recognize the importance of equitable parks in North Ventura and to adopt an NVCAP design that follows the City's established parkland standard.