



**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
SPECIAL MEETING  
December 14, 2021  
Virtual Conference  
Palo Alto, California**

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**Commissioners Present:** Chair Anne Cribbs, Keith Reckdahl, David Moss, Amanda Brown, Jeff LaMere, Vice Chair Greenfield

**Commissioners Absent:** Jeff LaMere

**Others Present:**

**Staff Present:** Daren Anderson

Chair Cribbs noted that there was a historic achievement about an hour ago, when Mr. Curry from the Warriors broke the three-point shooting record.

**I. ROLL CALL**

**II. AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS**

**III. ORAL COMMUNICATIONS**

Kathy Mock [phonetic] spoke on behalf of the Friends of Rinconada Pool, along with a couple other members. They are a group of swimmers who lap swim at Rinconada Pool, and they have organized over the past approximately three years, because they noticed that there was no real voice for swimmers, whereas other groups like the Master Swimmers and PASA have a direct contact with pool management. They have been volunteering their time to be a voice for lap swimmers, with their purpose being to serve as an independent, inclusive and transparent group that represents their interests as lap swimmers in Rinconada and to facilitate community and problem-solving between lap swimmers, the City of Palo Alto and the management of the pool. They have been meeting consistently with the City and the pool management since 2019. She said today they have a few concerns that they wanted to bring to the attention of the PRC. She added that they have met with pool management and talked about these concerns. Two of their biggest concerns are the current pricing structure of the pool, which has seen, since the pandemic, a sharp increase in price, and disproportionately towards Palo Alto residents and specifically Palo



1 Alto seniors. Also, in addition to seeing an increase for prices disproportionately affecting  
2 lap swimmers, they have also seen reduced access to the pool and scheduling leading to  
3 more crowding. She hoped they could appreciate their concerns and hoped they could have  
4 a say in changing some of the management practices at the pool.

5 Dr. Ken Horowitz spoke in support of the concept to build a city gym. He shared an idea  
6 that he has been proposing to City Council which would help raise the necessary funds to  
7 sustain a new city gym. He called the proposal a “sugar sweetened beverage tax.” He said  
8 he is a health instructor at Foothill College, and the two most important things regarding  
9 health are exercise and diet. He focused on the impact of sugar on health. He said he has  
10 proposed to the City Council, and wanted the Parks and Recreation Commission to support  
11 him when it comes forward, to have a two-cent per ounce on every sugar beverage. He  
12 said there is a lot of sugar in drinks. They are now seeing an influx of Boba teas which are  
13 full of sugar. Sugar leads to all the chronic diseases like obesity, diabetes, heart disease, et  
14 cetera. He encouraged the Parks and Recreation Commission to support a sugary beverage  
15 tax to the City Council so that it can raise approximately \$2 million. He said he anticipates  
16 that it could raise \$2 million yearly with such a tax. He said they have this in Berkley, San  
17 Francisco, Oakland, Albany and a number of other cities in the United States.

18 Linda Fletcher was not able to connect to speak. Chair Cribbs asked her to send her  
19 comments to them in an email, and they will make sure all of the Commissioners see what  
20 she has to say.

21 Hearing no other public speakers, she moved on to the next item.

22 **IV. DEPARTMENT REPORT**

23 Mr. Anderson gave an update on the Rinconada Park project, which is going well and on  
24 target to be completed in February. The project is mainly focused on the playgrounds and  
25 replacement of the existing walkways.

26 Mr. Anderson said the repairs for the synthetic turf at El Camino Park are being scheduled  
27 and they anticipate this in approximately one month. The availability of the contractor is  
28 not as near-term as they had hoped. The infield replacement for Stanford Palo Alto is  
29 tentatively planned for June of 2022.

30 City staff completed turf renovations of natural grass at Eleanor Pardee Park at the end of  
31 November, all done with in-house staff. He said they have not been able to do many  
32 renovations because of the budget but they are trying to get creative with their own team  
33 to get as many as they can. That field will remain closed until March 14, 2022. This is  
34 essentially giving the turf a chance to recover and regrow into a healthy stand that can hold  
35 up to athletic field use.



1 Mr. Anderson said the natural grass field at Cubberley was renovated by their contractor  
2 last week. They found some additional funding to help support that. The field was  
3 struggling from very heavy use and not enough rest or renovation. Those fields will remain  
4 closed until February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2022.

5 He said in regard to the update on the Baylands signage project, John Aiken told him that  
6 his staff refer to this as the Friendship Trail. The next steps are to go to Council for  
7 approval of a deed restriction and a budget change order, fabrication, which will take about  
8 two months, and then installation to happen sometime between now and February. They  
9 anticipate the project being completed by February of 2022.

10 Mr. Anderson reported he recently met with the Skatepark Ad Hoc Committee. Sam and  
11 some of the stakeholders from the Skatepark Advocacy Group, to discuss next steps on  
12 December 9<sup>th</sup>. They are working on the plan for how to do a community meeting and what  
13 to include in it to reach out to the neighbors, the park users, and the broader skateboarding  
14 community about next steps for the skate park. After the meeting it will come back to the  
15 full Commission for recommendation to Council and then on to Council. He mentioned  
16 that the Friends of Palo Alto Parks indicated their support for fundraising for this project  
17 once they have Council approval.

18 Mr. Anderson announced the Grand Reopening of Mitchell Park Teen Center will be  
19 celebrated from January 10<sup>th</sup> to January 14<sup>th</sup>, 3:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on those days. There  
20 will be workshops, activities, healthy cooking, graphic design, entrepreneurship, makexyz,  
21 fashion design and art workshops, to name just a few of the programs that will be offered  
22 during the week. There will be free food, video games, resources and information booths.  
23 Various competitions such as basketball, ping pong and dodgeball will be available at the  
24 Grand Opening. The Mitchell Park Teen Center is open to all Palo Alto students, 6<sup>th</sup>  
25 through 8<sup>th</sup> grade. The Children's Theater classes are on track to sell out for the winter  
26 session, with creative dramatics and acting classes for youth and teens already sold out  
27 with wait lists. The Art Center Youth and Adult Ceramics classes sold out the weekend  
28 that registration opened, and other visual arts offerings are filling up very quickly.

29 Mr. Anderson reported that the JMZ opening is going strong. They opened to a full  
30 schedule, Tuesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., on December 21<sup>st</sup>. The December  
31 dates are nearly sold out, and over 650 memberships have been sold since memberships  
32 went on sale in October of 2021. Due to the capacity limitations, advance purchases are  
33 strongly encouraged. More information is available at [cityofpaloalto.org/jmz](http://cityofpaloalto.org/jmz). Other  
34 recreation classes are also filling up fast. Registration opened on December 2<sup>nd</sup> for  
35 residents, December 9<sup>th</sup> for non-residents, and they are about 60 percent full. With a little  
36 over one week since enrollment began, they have seen an increase in revenues of 33  
37 percent over the final numbers from last winter. They are still trying to meet demand of  
38 the community, with outdoor classes like tennis, soccer and pickleball, which are the most

1 popular. They added seven more tennis classes this winter, and the soccer contractor is  
2 trying to provide additional coaches so they can add more soccer as well.

3 Mr. Anderson said Rinconada Pool contractor, Tim Sheeper, is working on staff  
4 recruitment so they can offer more lessons within the next month or two

5 The Grand Opening of the Highway 101 Pedestrian Bike Bridge was held on November  
6 20<sup>th</sup>. It was a well-attended event. Staff observed a lot of the use of the new bridge over  
7 the last few weeks. So far, it seems to be a great success.

8 Mr. Anderson announced that there is a Holiday Home and Business decorating contest  
9 going on right now. People can sign up at [cityofpaloalto.org/events](http://cityofpaloalto.org/events) where there is a link  
10 to sign up for the contest by December 15<sup>th</sup>. There is also a Holiday Toy Drive. Unwrapped  
11 gifts can be dropped off at Lucie Stern Community Center by December 15<sup>th</sup>. More  
12 information is available at [cityofpalto.org/toydrive](http://cityofpalto.org/toydrive).

13 Mr. Anderson reported that at the City Council meeting last night it was determined that  
14 they will defer resuming of in-person hybrid meetings for board, committee and  
15 commission meetings until March of 2022. They will remain remote until that time. He  
16 will pass any new information about this on to the Commission. The City Council also  
17 appointed positions for the Parks and Recreation Commission. He congratulated  
18 Commission Chair Anne Cribbs and Vice Chair Jeff Greenfield, both appointed to new  
19 three-year terms, and a new Commissioner, Nellis Freeman, Jr., also a three-year term;  
20 and Shani Kleinhaus appointed to a one-year term. Mr. Anderson congratulated  
21 Commissioner Reckdahl on his appointment to the Planning and Transportation  
22 Commission. His position on the Parks and Recreation Commission could not be filled  
23 last night because it was not noticed, so it will have to be filled at a future Council meeting.

24 In other Council news, Mr. Anderson said Council will review the NVCAP concept plan  
25 on January 10<sup>th</sup>. They will be on recess from December 15<sup>th</sup> through January 2<sup>nd</sup>. When  
26 they return they have a Council retreat planned for Saturday, February 5<sup>th</sup>.

27 Mr. Anderson noted that he was asked for some updates on Cubberley and said,  
28 unfortunately, he did not have much information other than in February staff will be  
29 bringing status updates on Cubberley to City Council. He will send information when he  
30 gets a date on that. It will include the status update on Cubberley Master Plan and  
31 everything else going on with Cubberley at the moment.

32 He said at the October meeting they had an agenda item regarding creating an Ad Hoc  
33 Committee for Measure E Area at Byxbee Park. He was tasked with confirming what the  
34 City's process will be for Boards and Commissions to add things like this to their Council-  
35 approved work plan. He was informed that staff should bring this issue to Policy Services.  
36 If Policy Services agree unanimously he thought it could go to Council. Likewise, on the

1 Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation on the new gym, he was directed to  
2 bring that to Policy Services first and then that also would go to City Council.

3 Chair Cribbs invited questions from the Commissioners of Mr. Anderson.

4 Commissioner Reckdahl had a question about Cubberley and asked what the renovation  
5 was actually doing – just reseeding or more detailed than that. Mr. Anderson said slightly.  
6 They ended up aerating as one of the core things that takes time, part of the resting process,  
7 plus the seed gets in there, and fertilizing. So, aerating, seeding, fertilizing and then the  
8 rest itself. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if there were irrigation changes. Mr. Anderson  
9 said yes. That is the perfect opportunity to run all the heads and make sure they have head-  
10 to-head coverage as best they can, which is essential, especially when they have put down  
11 any nutrients, to make sure it gets watered in quickly. That happens, too, but it is not like  
12 a major renovation of the irrigation system.

13 Commissioner Reckdahl asked if they aerate all fields regularly. Mr. Anderson said ideally  
14 you would be doing it very often. There are different kinds of aeration. The ones that are  
15 most impactful are when you see the conical-shaped plugs to pull out. If they are not doing  
16 that they are doing what is typically called slit seeding where you're just carving into the  
17 dirt. This doesn't really relieve compaction. Regarding how often and how regularly, they  
18 try to do the athletic fields three times a year. Some are maintained by the contractor,  
19 Brightview, whose services were diminished with the budget cuts. They intend to seek to  
20 restore that budget which will help with renovations of other fields with greater regularity.

21 Vice Chair Greenfield asked if there has been any outreach to the field users and  
22 stakeholders to see if they would like to provide some gap funding for the aeration type  
23 services. He acknowledged it isn't the ideal way that staff would like to approach it but he  
24 thought there were resources in the community and perhaps willingness, if there is a clear  
25 understanding of what would be done and the timeframe and time period in which it would  
26 be done. Mr. Anderson said there has been outreach to some degree. Not for all of the  
27 playing fields but for some particular ones. Typically it happens because a group has said  
28 they aren't pleased with the condition of something and offering to help. Usually that  
29 discussion entails "X" amount of dollars for a given renovation. This is on a scale. There  
30 can be some extreme ones where there is quite a bit of work, and others that are less  
31 pronounced. The challenge usually comes in when there is an expectation from someone  
32 giving a certain amount of money who expects that the turf is going to look a certain way.  
33 This is not something that staff can guarantee. Mr. Anderson said they were actually asked  
34 for a guarantee and that is not possible. He said they hope for the best weather and hope  
35 for things to take when seeded, and for everything to go well, but there are other criteria  
36 that sometimes they cannot control.

37 Vice Chair Greenfield added that another thing the stakeholders will want would be  
38 guaranteed access to the fields, which isn't always possible given the permitting and

1 allocation process. He said, anecdotally, the grass fields at Cubberley are in the poorest  
2 shape that he has seen in the last ten or more years, so he was glad work was being done  
3 and said it was a wise prioritization choice.

4 Commissioner Moss commented that it's fantastic about the Children's Theater and the  
5 JMZ and additional classes, which show that they are bouncing back from COVID in a big  
6 way. He hoped that continues. He thought it was fantastic that JMZ was selling  
7 memberships. He commented that when the Friendship Trail is done in February, he would  
8 love to see a grand opening because it is a nice addition to the Baylands. Mr. Anderson  
9 said he would suggest that to John Aiken.

10 Commissioner Moss asked if there was any news on the Tidegate and when it was  
11 supposed to start. Mr. Anderson said the construction would be in September of 2023.  
12 Vice Chair Greenfield observed that they've slipped a year. Mr. Anderson said that is  
13 correct. They had planned for September of 2022, and because of some delays in  
14 procurement and some other permitting issues for Valley Water, they have let them know  
15 that the construction won't start until the following September in 2023.

16 Chair Cribbs commented that it was a good report as they are trying to come out of  
17 COVID. She was very happy that the fields are being looked at since they are so important  
18 for their kids to get on the fields and play athletics as they come out of that. She encouraged  
19 all of the Commissioners to work together to try to see if they can help with funding for  
20 those fields that are in need of it, if there is an easy way to do that without burdening  
21 everybody too much.

22 Chair Cribbs congratulated Commissioner Reckdahl on his new position and said the  
23 Commission will miss him. She asked when his new position started, since they have just  
24 a little more work on recreational opportunities for Commissioner Reckdahl to be  
25 involved, so she needs to set the meeting pretty fast. Mr. Anderson said he will have to  
26 check with the Clerk's office. He regretted they couldn't borrow Commissioner Reckdahl  
27 on both Commissions for a while.

28 Chair Cribbs commented that Commissioner Moss will also be completing his term and  
29 leaving them. She said she would like to wait to discuss that and salute the work he has  
30 done.

31 **V. BUSINESS**

32 **1. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Parks and**  
33 **Recreation Commission Meetings During Covid-19 State of Emergency**

34 Mr. Anderson explained that this is the same item they had on the November agenda and  
35 is required in order to host the Parks and Recreation Commission meetings remotely. He



1 said per Council’s action last night, they will continue to meet remotely through March  
2 2022

3 **MOTION**

4 Motion to Adopt a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferences for Parks and  
5 Recreation Commission Meeting During COVID-19 State of Emergency was moved by  
6 Commissioner Reckdahl and seconded by Vice Chair Greenfield. The motion passed, 6-  
7 0, by roll call vote.

8 **2. Approval of Draft Minutes From the November 17, 2021, Parks and**  
9 **Recreation Commission Meeting**

10 **MOTION**

11 Motion to approve the minutes, as revised, of the November 17, 2021, Parks and  
12 Recreation Commission was moved by Commissioner Reckdahl and seconded by  
13 Commissioner Brown. The motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

14 **3. Ad Hoc and Liaison Updates**

15 Chair Cribbs said the Baylands Tidegate has turned into a liaison position. The Fund  
16 Development Ad Hoc continues to work with the Friends of the Parks and the Palo Alto  
17 Recreation Foundation for potential funding for both of those programs and parks. Neither  
18 Commission LaMere or Commissioner Brown had anything to add. Chair Cribbs reflected  
19 that, reading back over the minutes, they did put forth a lot of suggestions and the next  
20 step is probably to corral all of them to see how they get them all to work.

21 Regarding CIP Review Chair Cribbs said they would have discussion later on. There was  
22 nothing to report on the Racquet Court Policy Ad Hoc. There was nothing to report on  
23 Dog Parks and Restrooms. On New Recreational Activities, Commissioner Reckdahl  
24 reported there was still a lot of work to do on the gym. He said he has heard a lot of talk  
25 among residents and neighbors, and there is a lot of support in the community, especially  
26 if they can get it privately funded. He encouraged the Commission to keep the pressure  
27 on.

28 Commission LaMere echoed Commissioner Reckdahl’s comments in terms of his  
29 conversations with people. He was excited that they were trying to move this forward and  
30 that they are looking at possibilities. Chair Cribbs echoed Commissioner Reckdahl and  
31 Commission LaMere’s comments. She has found a lot of support in the community, a lot  
32 of ideas, a lot of people saying it is time. She felt the timing of the article in *The Weekly*,  
33 the front page story, was excellent. She thought that as soon as they can get their memo or  
34 request to the Policy and Services Committee the more good fortune they would have.

1 [audio interference].

2 Commissioner Moss asked if there was an update on the Cubberley Field restroom. Mr.  
3 Anderson thought it would be covered in the CIP discussion. Sidewalk Vendor Policy is  
4 now a liaison role.

5 Chair Cribbs said in terms of aquatics they will hear a report from Tim Sheeper in January.  
6 She had nothing to report on Baylands 10.5. There was no update on the Community  
7 Gardens.

8 Regarding Cubberley, Chair Cribbs asked Mr. Anderson if they will hear something soon.  
9 Mr. Anderson thought the update to Council in February would probably be the next  
10 opportunity. Chair Cribbs said there is a lot of talk about the extra acres that the School  
11 Board might want to sell or share, and people are interested in that, as well as the portables  
12 and the school moving in, so it will be good to get that information.

13 Regarding Field Users, Vice Chair Greenfield said there was some good news with the  
14 schedule for the work at El Camino Park to get some lines sewn back in.

15 Regarding Golf, Commission LaMere expected to be able to report something about The  
16 First Tee next month, but in terms of the golf course, revenue is up about 20 percent in the  
17 first months of the fiscal year, compared to the same period last year, so that is very  
18 positive. Chair Cribbs added that, anecdotally, to the standing of the course, the desirability  
19 of the course is very strong in the greater Bay Area and even outside the Bay Area.

20 Chair Cribbs had no update on the Palo Alto Recreation Foundation.

21 Commissioner Reckdahl said the PAUSD did talk about Project Safety Net at the last  
22 meeting. At one time they had a liaison with Project Safety Net. Mr. Anderson did not  
23 know if they had that anymore, but he would be glad to check in with them with any  
24 specific questions. Commissioner Reckdahl said he just wondered if they should have  
25 someone to just be involved. One thing they have been looking at is recreation programs,  
26 and they don't think they are fully serving the youth, so maybe they would have some  
27 suggestions for that or a good time for them to insert programs that they are looking for.  
28 He thought maybe in February at the retreat they could look at whether they want to have  
29 some type of connection.

30 Commissioner Moss asked Commissioner Reckdahl if he had heard anything about the  
31 move of Palo Verde to Cubberley. He thought it was going to happen in January, but he  
32 did not see any portables being built. Commissioner Reckdahl had no update on this. Mr.  
33 Anderson did not have any news either. He said ideally they would know sooner, but he  
34 thought it will be some of the information going to Council in February.



1 Commissioner Brown had no updates on Sustainability but there was a presentation to  
2 Council on the 13<sup>th</sup>, and the staff report and materials are available online on the  
3 Sustainability and Climate Action Plan. The staff report is in the agenda packet in the  
4 Agenda Center. The YouTube video has the presentation as well as the extensive public  
5 comments.

6 Chair Cribbs asked Mr. Anderson if they were making progress on the Skateboard Park.  
7 Mr. Anderson said he felt it was promising coming out of the meeting. One change is that  
8 Peter Jensen, the City's Landscape Architect, was willing to lend a hand and help organize  
9 things for the community meeting, which is the next step in the process. He highlighted a  
10 little bit about the work, to prepare for it, and making sure they have a vision from the  
11 skateboarders that they feel they can support to make it a little easier going into the broader  
12 community meeting.

13 On Urban Forestry, Vice Chair Greenfield reported that he and Commissioner Reckdahl  
14 met with staff from Urban Forestry Department and Community Services, Peter Gollinger  
15 and Mr. Anderson. They reviewed the recommendation of the guidelines for a relationship  
16 and did some cleanups and updates and passed them on to the directors of the appropriate  
17 departments, Public Works and Community Services. Essentially, after the directors  
18 approve it, it should become effective, so they are hopeful it will happen before their  
19 January meeting. Vice Chair Greenfield added that when the Tree Protection Ordinance  
20 Update goes back to City Council in April along with that would be a recommended update  
21 to the Municipal Code regarding the specific responsibilities of the Parks and Recreation  
22 Commission. Per the guidance they are getting from the City Attorney there is leeway  
23 within the guidelines and the specified tasks for the Commission that they can add this,  
24 but given that it would be better to make it more clear and formalize it, the appropriate  
25 time to do that would be when Council is taking action on related matters in April.

26 Commissioner Reckdahl said the Ventura Plan will go back to Council on Monday,  
27 January 10<sup>th</sup>, and staff is returning to the Council. The Council gave them guidance last  
28 time, and now they will see what staff produces. He said when the packet goes out, they  
29 should send an email and have people review it.

30 Chair Cribbs said, regarding Youth Council, they continue to meet. She was hopeful they  
31 could come in February, March or April to give the PRC a presentation about their  
32 activities. When she last talked to them, they felt it would be something they would like  
33 to do.

34 Commissioner Moss commented that the Cubberley track has become extremely popular  
35 the past couple of months. There are groups that are running marathons and using the track  
36 as their number one training venue. Over the past weekend there were around 28 people  
37 running the track on a Saturday and another 25 on a Sunday, so it is very popular, all  
38 because they put in a new track. He said they just have to keep supporting it. Chair Cribbs

1 thought it would be fun to do a sign or something online about all the people on the  
2 Cubberley track who are making history and running marathons. Maybe some of the  
3 Friends of Cubberley could do that, or Friends of the Track, but it would be fun to celebrate  
4 the Palo Altans who are so accomplished. Vice Chair Greenfield thought that was a great  
5 idea, although he was not familiar with the Friends of the Track. Chair Cribbs answered  
6 that they are going to create a Friends of the Track. Commissioner Moss added they will  
7 donate, and it would be nice to have a sign there pointing people to the Friends of Palo  
8 Alto Parks to donate, because they are willing.

9 **4. Foothills Nature Preserve Policy Updates**

10 Chair Cribbs asked Mr. Anderson to give the staff report before hearing from the Ad Hoc  
11 Committee, whom she said has done much work on this. She said it was exciting to be  
12 discussing this and thinking back to last year at this time, where they were, and all of the  
13 things that have worked out very well. There is still a lot to do, but she said the Ad Hoc  
14 Committee had done good work.

15 Mr. Anderson shared that the Foothills Nature Preserve Ad Hoc Committee has met  
16 numerous times over the past eight months to review these policies, including visitor limit,  
17 infrastructure improvements, entrance fees, passes, reservation system, bicycle access at  
18 Gate D, dogs in Foothills Nature Preserve, wildfire safety, film and video policy. The film  
19 and video policy would be addressed in a separate agenda item because it pertains to more  
20 than just Foothills and includes all of Open Space and Parks.

21 Mr. Anderson briefly shared the background information on Foothills to give context. On  
22 November 2, 2020, City Council voted to open Foothills Park – now Foothills Nature  
23 Preserve – to the general public by removing limits on non-residents while maintaining  
24 the maximum capacity of 1,000 people at any one time. The motion included a temporary  
25 90-day limit of the capacity to 750 people at any one time. The Council had directed staff  
26 to work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to develop proposals for fees, capacity,  
27 park management and environmental integrity studies.

28 The Foothills Nature Preserve opened to the general public on December 17, 2020. Staff  
29 began collecting vehicle entrance fees on weekends and holidays beginning Saturday,  
30 February 27, 2021. On March 23, 2021, the PRC discussed several Foothills Nature  
31 Preserve policies and voted to recommend that Council adopt several new vehicle entry  
32 fees and discounts for the Preserve, including fees for medium and large vehicles, busses,  
33 free entry on six specific days per year, free passes to be distributed at libraries, free entry  
34 for student field trips and all fourth grade students, and directed staff to permanently  
35 remove the nine hillside barbecues at Foothills Nature Preserve. On May 10, 2021, City  
36 Council approved this Parks and Recreation Commission recommendation.

37 Regarding visitation trends lately, Mr. Anderson presented a four-year visitation

1 comparison. There has been a significant increase in visitation since the Preserve opened  
2 to the general public. Mr. Anderson explained that in 2021, January through September,  
3 there were 264,057 visitors and 138,365 vehicles. In 2021 visitation increased by about  
4 107 percent from the three-year average. On December 17, 2020, when the Preserve first  
5 opened to the general public, the temporary visitor limit was 750 people at one time. The  
6 high number of visitors and that 750-person limit resulted in traffic and parking challenges  
7 in the Preserve. On February 22, 2021, City Council adopted an ordinance to authorize the  
8 City Manager or designee to establish the capacity limit at Foothills in the range of 300  
9 people to 650 people, in order to protect the health, safety and welfare of Preserve users  
10 and to protect the natural resources in the Preserve and/or, due to limits in parking facilities  
11 or staff availability. Staff have used 500 people at any one time as the visitor limit since  
12 that date in February, and the Preserve has not reached capacity since April 5, 2021. Park  
13 Rangers have observed that there hasn't been traffic or parking issues in the Preserve while  
14 the limit has been at 500 people. The Preserve has not reached capacity since that Easter  
15 weekend on April 5, 2021.

16 The Ad Hoc recommends continuing the current practice of allowing 500 visitors at any  
17 one time and adjusting the visitor limit range from 400 to 600 people at any one time. The  
18 rationale behind that was that when the visitor was reduced to 500 at one time and the  
19 weekend entrance fee was implemented, the Preserve's visitation and capacity became  
20 noticeably more manageable. Previously-observed issues with visitors going off-trail,  
21 increased traffic and parking issues were greatly diminished. The Ad Hoc noted that  
22 continuing to allow staff flexibility to make minor adjustments in the visitor limit would  
23 be helpful in addressing any unforeseen circumstances that may impact the Preserve's  
24 visitation.

25 The Ad Hoc supports narrowing the visitor range, because having fewer than 400 visitors  
26 at any one time is unnecessary to prevent traffic and parking problems. A visitor limit of  
27 fewer than 400 also leads to frequent Preserve closures, due to reaching the capacity  
28 quickly, especially during summer. Having more than 600 visitors at any one time seems  
29 to contribute to problems with traffic and parking, especially in the more popular areas of  
30 the Preserve.

31 In January, 2020, the City Manager assembled a stakeholder group. There were  
32 representatives from Grassroots Ecology, Friends of Foothills Nature Preserve, the  
33 Environmental Volunteers, Stanford University, Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve, Los  
34 Altos Hills and the Chair and Vice Chair of the PRC to help identify and recommend  
35 improvements in the Preserve. This stakeholder group developed a list of infrastructure  
36 improvements aimed at protecting the habitat and improving visitor safety and visitor  
37 experience. Examples of the proposed improvements included the split rail fence to  
38 encourage visitors to stay on-trail, a pedestrian pathway throughout the Preserve to allow  
39 visitors to avoid walking on the roadway, and better-defined parking spaces, additional

1 crosswalks and speed bumps to improve pedestrian safety, and additional signage to help  
2 guide visitors. Mr. Anderson shared photos of what the split rail fence would look like and  
3 the temporary measure that was instituted early on when staff observed problems. Caution  
4 tape and barricades were put up, which have since been replaced with rope and wooden  
5 stakes. Mr. Anderson said it is better, but not as efficient or aesthetically pleasing as split  
6 rail would be, and is still temporary. He shared a photo of the pedestrian pathway area,  
7 also showing vehicles lined up along the edge, essentially forcing pedestrians to walk right  
8 down the middle of the road. Mr. Anderson said if they were able to put in a pedestrian  
9 pathway it would stop all parking on the edge and provide a five-foot-wide pedestrian path  
10 for pedestrians to walk safely.

11 Mr. Anderson noted that there currently is not staff or funding available to document and  
12 compete the conceptual plan of improvements with cost estimates. He said staff will  
13 submit a capital budget request to fund the development of the improvement plan in fiscal  
14 year 2023, and construction of the improvements in fiscal year 2024. The Ad Hoc  
15 recommends moving forward with these infrastructure improvements as soon as funding  
16 is available and recommends allocating capital budget towards infrastructure  
17 improvements outlined by the stakeholder group, as well as ensuring that the PRC is  
18 involved in review of those plans. Reduced visitation has lessened the immediate urgency,  
19 but the improvements remain important for visitor safety and habitat protection.

20 The Ad Hoc reviewed the current Foothills Nature Preserve entrance fees and various  
21 options for free or discounted entry. There have been 11,436 paid entry fees since staff  
22 began collecting the fee on weekends and holidays starting in February, and there have  
23 been 1,552 uses of the annual pass during weekends and holidays. There have been 1,036  
24 instances of park entries where the fee is waived, accounting for 7.4 percent of all weekend  
25 and holiday entries. Staff anticipates implementing weekday fee collection via and  
26 automated machine starting in March, 2022.

27 The Ad Hoc recommends maintaining the existing daily fees, standard annual passes, free  
28 entry days, free library entry passes, and free entry for pedestrians and bicycles. They  
29 recommend adapting the free entry policy for select groups to simplify the entrance  
30 stations operations, facilitate entry fee enforcement on weekdays and expand the list of  
31 permanent disabilities to be more inclusive, including three elements – changing the  
32 existing active military and veteran free entry policy to a free annual pass for those  
33 persons; changing the existing student driver entry policy to a 50 percent discount on the  
34 annual pass for students aged 16 to 24 and require that student to be present; and expand  
35 on the existing free entry policy for vehicles with disabled person placards or license plates  
36 to include free annual passes for people with permanent disabilities as defined by  
37 California State Parks. The State Parks has a more diverse group of disabilities that they  
38 allow the discount for, including developmental, hearing, speech, visual, mental or  
39 physical disabilities. These changes are aimed at simplifying the entrance station

1 operations, reducing entrance queues and ensuring that the entrance fees can be fairly  
2 enforced on weekdays and making the disabled fee entry policy more inclusive of people  
3 with different disabilities.

4 The rationale for the active military and veteran fee was that the existing policy for  
5 weekdays would not work because there is no way for them to validate that they are  
6 without leaving their identification on the hood of their car, and they don't want to ask  
7 them to leave personal information out in that way.

8 Regarding the student driver entry that currently exists, the Ad Hoc wanted to note that  
9 they are very supportive and want to encourage youth and students to visit Foothills Nature  
10 Preserve. Unfortunately, there are a few challenges with the free entry for student drivers.  
11 It has resulted in confusion for some park visitors. In particular, the fact that the student  
12 needs to be driving the vehicle has been frustrating for many visitors, leading to a number  
13 of arguments at the entrance station, sometimes requiring vehicles to back up and wait to  
14 get in. The Ad Hoc recommends that student driver fee be changed to the discount  
15 previously mentioned – 16 to 24, and requiring the student to be present. An additional  
16 challenge for free entrance of students is that it will not be enforceable during weekdays  
17 when the entrance station is not staffed and there would be no way to identify a student  
18 driver.

19 Regarding vehicles with Disabled Person placards, the Ad Hoc recommends making a  
20 change to the annual pass, modeling on the State Park model. The Ad Hoc noted that the  
21 City's existing free entry for people with disabilities would be far more inclusive than  
22 including these people with different types. The Ad Hoc recommends modeling off of the  
23 California State Park examples, which requires an applicant to submit an application  
24 signed by a doctor in order to get the free annual pass. The applications would not be  
25 processed at the Preserve but rather online or in person at Lucie Stern Community Center.

26 The Ad Hoc Committee looked at a reservation system. They had discussed it early on  
27 when the Preserve was inundated with high visitation numbers upon first opening. While  
28 visitation at the Preserve is approximately 107 percent higher than historical average, the  
29 Preserve has not reached capacity since April, and a reservation system would be complex  
30 to implement and would unnecessarily limit the total number of people who are able to  
31 visit the Preserve. If visitation increases in the future to the point that the Preserve  
32 frequently reaches capacity, a reservation system could be reconsidered. The  
33 recommendation from the Ad Hoc is to not pursue a reservation system at this time.

34 Regarding bicycle access at Gate D, Mr. Anderson explained that in August, 2021, the  
35 Pedestrian and Bicycle Advisory Committee (PBAC) voted to request that Transportation  
36 Department staff work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to allow bicycle riders  
37 to enter the Foothills Preserve from the Arastradero Preserve through Gate D. In 2005,  
38 City Council had designated a pedestrian trail through Foothills Preserve to connect the



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1 Pearson Arastradero Preserve with the adjoining Los Trancos Open Space Preserve in  
2 exchange for grant funding. The Palo Alto Municipal Code was amended to allow general  
3 access through the two preserves at these designated points for the sake of using the  
4 Foothills Trails within Foothills Nature Preserve. These entry points through an existing  
5 gate – Gate D – into the Pearson Arastradero and through the existing pathway Gate Z into  
6 Los Trancos. This was for pedestrians only and not persons with horses or bicycles. On  
7 September 21, 2021, the Ad Hoc Committee met with PABAC representatives to discuss  
8 bicycle access through Gate D, and the feedback from that meeting is noted in the staff  
9 report.

10 The Ad Hoc does not have a unanimous recommendation on whether to open Gate D to  
11 bicycle access. They noted that a benefit to opening Gate D was that it would increase  
12 connections between Open Space Preserves, increase recreational opportunities, and  
13 provide an additional safe route for bicycle access, allowing them to avoid Page Mill Road.  
14 However, they were concerned about some potential impacts, including bikes going the  
15 wrong way down a narrow one-way road, an increase in illegal use of bikes on trails,  
16 impacts to already-limited staff resources to monitor and enforce issues, and a challenge  
17 in reversing course if they piloted such a program and it was unsuccessful.

18 The Ad Hoc reviewed the City’s dog policies in Foothills Nature Preserve and found that  
19 the existing Municipal Code for leash requirements – that dogs must be leashed and under  
20 physical control at all times while in the Preserve – and exclusion of dogs from the  
21 Preserve on weekends and holidays are appropriate. The Ad Hoc noted that the current  
22 rules for Towle Camp don’t require dogs to stay confined to the campsite. The Ad Hoc  
23 and staff researched what other agencies have for policies for dogs in campsites. With  
24 California State Parks, dogs cannot be left unattended, and overnight campers must keep  
25 dogs in a tent. Santa Clara County Parks requires dogs to be confined to tents or vehicles  
26 at night. San Mateo County Parks does not allow dogs in their campground. The Ad Hoc  
27 recommendation is that the rules for the dogs staying at Towle Camp should be updated  
28 to state that when the Preserve is closed dogs must be confined to campsites and must be  
29 in a tent unless otherwise supervised and accompanied at night.

30 At a City Council study session on Foothills fire mitigation strategies on August 30, 2021,  
31 staff discussed a fire safety survey recently done at Foothills Nature Preserve and Pearson  
32 Arastradero Preserve. The general feedback was the status of this year’s wildfire  
33 prevention work, and what was still visible from previous years’ work appeared to be  
34 highly effective. There were several eucalyptus trees that needed to be pruned or removed.  
35 There was support for the closure of campfire circles at Towle Camp for the remainder of  
36 the camping season. They also noted that the campfire circles and barbecues at Foothills  
37 Nature Preserve were well-maintained and low fire risk. There were several comments  
38 from City Council regarding these issues and a request to return to Council with options.  
39 A date has not been set for when this topic will be brought back to City Council.



1 Regarding the eucalyptus trees, staff found there are approximately 65 eucalyptus trees in  
2 Foothills and Arastradero and 41 that appear to be on Stanford property, adjacent to the  
3 Pearson Arastradero Preserve. Removal of them, the required biological surveys, and the  
4 native replanting mitigation would cost somewhere around \$350,000. Regarding the  
5 campfires, there are two at Towle Camp, and they are typically open with a permit during  
6 camping season, May 1<sup>st</sup> through October 31<sup>st</sup>, and are prohibited on red flag warning  
7 days. No campfire permits were granted this year because of last year's severe fire season.  
8 The campfire circles could be removed to further reduce the risk in Foothills Nature  
9 Preserve. If City Council directs staff to remove them, that can be accomplished with  
10 existing staff resources. The barbecues are typically open year-round except on red flag  
11 days. While there are signs at each barbecue informing people not to move ashes, there  
12 have been issues with people putting hot coals from the barbecues into dumpsters and  
13 causing dumpster fires. Also, there have been observations of park visitors walking away  
14 from barbecues, leaving them unattended. Staff maintains a minimum of ten feet of  
15 vegetation clearance around the barbecues and barbecue circles.

16 Mr. Anderson shared the Ad Hoc's concern about fire safety and the issues highlighted in  
17 the Council study session. An additional concern is the limited resources available to  
18 monitor campfires and barbecues. The Ad Hoc recommends that Palo Alto Fire  
19 Department provide guidance on actions to mitigate wildfire safety concerns.

20 Mr. Anderson concluded the presentation advising that if an action was taken to make a  
21 recommendation to Council, the recommendation would be brought in February.

22 Chair Cribbs invited comments from the public on the presentation.

23 Paul Goldstein commented that he has been a Palo Alto resident for over 50 years, and he  
24 has always loved Foothills Park. He has been hiking the trails for the last several years,  
25 twice weekly on weekdays. He supports the plan to charge weekday admission to the Park  
26 and has purchased his annual pass. He added that he has not had an occasion to use it in  
27 spite of the fact that he has been visiting the park twice weekly. He urged the Commission  
28 to eliminate the bicycle prohibition for Gate D. He is a member of the Palo Alto Bicycle  
29 and Pedestrian Advisory Committee who met with the Ad Hoc group. He said the current  
30 prohibition makes no sense since bicycles are permitted on the approaches of both sides.  
31 The prohibition is a relic of the time when Foothills was open to Palo Alto residents only,  
32 and the gate was made accessible to hikers on the Bay to Ridge Trail as a condition of  
33 grant money. The only arguments he has heard for maintaining the prohibition are that  
34 some bicyclists do illegal, destructive and dangerous things. He suggested that these same  
35 people probably ignore the current signage. Allowing and encouraging law-abiding  
36 bicyclists in the park aligns with Palo Alto policy to encourage bicycling and will create a  
37 more respectful community environment. Opening Gate D will allow leaders of local  
38 bicycle clubs to plan outings that include Foothills Park. They will teach respect for the

1 beauty and natural benefits that the Park provides. He urged the Commission to open the  
2 Gate and to amend the Municipal Code to allow bicycles through that Gate.

3 Cedric de La Beaujardiere, lifetime resident of Palo Alto, stated he has always loved  
4 Foothills Park and even got married there. He supported opening Gate D to bicyclists. He  
5 has done the ride through Arastradero to Gate D, and it is quite grueling. Being an  
6 experienced cyclist who bikes almost everywhere he goes, he said it is pretty brutal to get  
7 up there, and if you have made it that far, you are incentivized to go to the peak and check  
8 out the view, which is just a little bit further. He said many of the concerns about opening  
9 the gate center around safety concerns, but if that is the case he felt they should consider  
10 that opening the gate provides cyclists with a much safer way to get to Foothills Park, as  
11 they can avoid two-and-a-half miles of dangerous riding on narrow Page Mill Road. He  
12 thought with proper signage that it is a one-way road and warning to not ride against traffic,  
13 and proper signage to not ride on the trails, that they could regulate the behavior they don't  
14 want while permitting people who will respect the law to use the facility. The logic of not  
15 wanting people to do dangerous things doesn't make sense, because it is much safer to  
16 come in through the gate than driving on the road. He asked the Commission to open the  
17 gate to bicycle traffic.

18 Shani Kleinhaus thanked the Ad Hoc Committee and looked forward to joining them next  
19 month. She commented on bikes and dog access. She said since COVID started she has  
20 visited Foothills Park at least once a week on weekdays because she has a dog. She often  
21 visits Arastradero as well. She appreciated the recommendation to continue allowing dogs  
22 on weekdays to hike in Foothills Park. Regarding the bikes, she is concerned because there  
23 is evidence of damage to trails and habitat in Arastradero Preserve in exercise areas. She  
24 said there is no enforcement, and she sees the beginning of damage on Foothills trails.  
25 Regulation must have enforcement, and if there is no enforcement perhaps they should not  
26 have bikes there. She said one of the biggest controversies currently is what to do with  
27 electric bikes, hovercraft and all sorts of types of electronic mobility aides. Studies of the  
28 impacts of these on bats and birds shows severe impacts, primarily because the sound made  
29 by the bikes, the noise generated, is not audible to people but is audible to bats and birds.  
30 The disturbance to maternity routes is shown to reduce survivorship of young bats and  
31 abandonment by the adults. She felt that they needed to carefully look at the issue of any  
32 kind of bikes, especially electric bikes and similar vehicles.

33 Robert Neff, longtime Palo Alto bicyclist and mountain biker since the start of COVID,  
34 requested that they legalize bicycle passage between Arastradero Preserve and Foothills  
35 Preserve through Gate D. He said, as the staff report makes clear, there is no intrinsic  
36 reason for the gate to be closed to bicyclists anymore. All bicyclists are currently allowed  
37 on both the trail on the Arastradero side and the road on the Foothills side. Opening the  
38 connection would be a recreational benefit for bicyclists seeking to connect from  
39 Arastradero Preserve to Vista Hill in Foothills Preserve, and it would add a beneficial



1 connection between Los Altos Hills, the Palo Alto preserves, Portola Valley and the Palo  
2 Alto flatlands. Several objections to this action described in the staff report amounted to  
3 describing visiting bicyclists as rogue actors who do not follow rules. He said he has  
4 learned through his work on PABAC, the bicycle pedestrian advisory committee, that  
5 sometimes they get the users they deserve, whether motorists, bicyclists or pedestrians.  
6 Currently Foothills Nature Preserve may be getting the visitor behavior it deserves from  
7 the environment created by its own rules. He said certainly bicyclists who currently enter  
8 the Preserve using this gate or the fire road break the rules on entry. Riders may further  
9 seek to avoid detection and conflict with Rangers by continuing offroad on the single track  
10 panoramic trails or downhill on the Vista Hill Road, avoiding passage past the Park offices  
11 at the bottom of the hill. He said if the Preserve instead made access aligned with common  
12 sense through a gate, with legal passage on both sides and perhaps a legal fire road  
13 connection to Alexis Drive, he thought they would encourage rule-abiding behavior and  
14 have fewer issues in the Park. Mountain bicyclists have learned that riding on fire roads is  
15 generally allowed, and riding on single track trails is generally not, over 30-plus years of  
16 collective experience in the San Francisco Bay Area and all over the world. He encouraged  
17 the Commission to take up the issue to remove the restriction on bicycle passage between  
18 the Preserves and welcome rule-abiding bicyclists and the improved bicyclist behavior that  
19 this change would encourage. He thanked the Commission for their service to Palo Alto  
20 and has been impressed by the involvement and energy shown by the Commission.

21 Chair Cribbs invited comments from the Ad Hoc Committee.

22 Vice Chair Greenfield suggested regarding the format that they use to go through the items,  
23 rather than having all of the Ad Hoc Committee members speak to all of the items  
24 mentioned, it might be more efficient to talk about them one at a time and get group  
25 resolution on consideration of a motion for each given item before moving on. Chair  
26 Cribbs was agreeable to this if the Ad Hoc members were okay with it. Commissioner  
27 Moss said it was okay with him, but commented that this took eight months and a lot of  
28 meetings towards the end, trying to get something completed before the end of the year.  
29 He said as they go through the items, if Commissioners have any questions, they have  
30 probably dealt with it, and he wanted them to ask and they would try to clarify what they  
31 have been going through. Commissioner Reckdahl agreed that they should take this  
32 piecemeal.

33 Mr. Anderson shared a slide showing the draft motion in an editable Word document  
34 which included everything in the recommendation. Chair Cribbs asked him to leave the  
35 document up while having the members of the Ad Hoc Committee speak to the  
36 components of it.

37 Vice Chair Greenfield thanked Mr. Anderson and other staff members for helping the Ad  
38 Hoc move along on this project, which has been a long effort and could not have gotten

1 anywhere without staff's expert guidance and input along the way. First off, Vice Chair  
2 Greenfield commented on the visitor limit. He said for him it is pretty straightforward and  
3 what they have been doing with the number of 500 is working. The recommendation is not  
4 really suggesting that they want to go with a number other than 500 but are just allowing  
5 flexibility in the event of unforeseen circumstances. Commissioner Moss added the fact  
6 that they have not reached capacity since Easter and also that they added fees indicates it  
7 is at a proper level.

8 Commissioner Reckdahl said his first inclination would be to have a lower limit below  
9 400 to give them more flexibility to protect the Park. The problem with that is that bringing  
10 it that low may result in closing and opening multiple times creating more traffic problems  
11 on Page Mill, so he thought keeping the minimum at 400 makes sense. Vice Chair  
12 Greenfield was not sure 400 would actually work, but they have the flexibility to try it if  
13 needed.

14 Commission LaMere asked what sort of feedback they got with trail use, wildlife and  
15 habitat with the number of visitors they have had overall, continuously, as opposed to  
16 having certain periods much higher than others or certain times as in the past, and now it  
17 seems they are having a more stable visitation. He wondered if there was any data or  
18 anecdotal evidence of what the visitation is doing to the Park. Mr. Anderson responded  
19 that early on they saw environmental impacts widening, per monitoring done by  
20 Grassroots Ecology. The widening was happening due to people stepping off-trail for  
21 passing because there were so many people on the trails. This did damage some of the  
22 adjacent vegetation. It was limited to the narrow sections and certain spots along trails, but  
23 no special habitat has been impacted. Mr. Anderson added that this seems to have abated  
24 lately. There is less and less of this and numbers have become more manageable. He gave  
25 another example where they had, in January of 2021, begun to see illegal man-made trails  
26 into natural areas. With some signage, it grew back in. In that regard, the numbers have  
27 not impacted the natural area because of either good education or in some places, they did  
28 put in barriers, such as rope and fence. Mr. Anderson said they also tracked invasive  
29 species to see if increased numbers were dragging invasive species into areas they weren't  
30 before. Grassroots said they will continue to monitor, but they have not seen anything yet,  
31 and it is probably too early to see if that is happening.

32 Mr. Anderson said there was a question regarding visitation trends. Commissioner  
33 Reckdahl noted, looking at the visitation trends chart, was that after COVID when it was  
34 still just Palo Alto residents, the numbers skyrocketed impressively. Commissioner Moss  
35 added that in June and July of 2020 there were more visitors than this summer, even as  
36 COVID was reduced, so adding the fees may have played a role in reducing the number  
37 of people and therefore the impact, so actually in this case it might be better than it was.

38 Commissioner Reckdahl said one of the things that still bothers him is that they don't have

1 any baseline to have some way of measuring the impact to both wildlife and to habitat, to  
2 facilitate spot checks, so they really don't have a good answer to Commission LaMere's  
3 question. Commissioner Brown commented that there were a lot of moving pieces at that  
4 point, with the visitor limit, the fee, and other things going on, so it was a bit of an educated  
5 guess. She was glad to see it was more on the educated side and less of a guess.

6 Chair Cribbs said it sounded like number one seemed to have agreement of the  
7 Commission. With no objections raised, number one on the draft motion stood unchanged  
8 by the Commission.

9 Chair Cribbs invited comments from the Ad Hoc on the second item - infrastructure  
10 improvements. Commissioner Moss said they made a number of improvements already,  
11 as mentioned by Mr. Anderson, such as signage. However, there are definitely more  
12 improvements they should do to prevent longer-term damage. The only issue was the  
13 budget, the fact that additional improvements can't be made for another year. He strongly  
14 believed that this needs to be prioritized and work begun as soon as possible to prevent  
15 any more damage, but it will take a year. Vice Chair Greenfield said he was concerned and  
16 troubled by the length of time the improvements are being pushed out. He said FY '23 is  
17 when the improvement plans would be developed and actual construction would not  
18 commence until FY '24, which starts on July 1, 2023. Chair Cribbs asked what the cost of  
19 this work would be. Mr. Anderson said he didn't have a good estimate, but in the capital  
20 discussion they put a best guess on those numbers.

21 Chair Cribbs asked if the Commission would want to add something to the motion  
22 indicating the Commission's concern about pushing off the improvements. Vice Chair  
23 Greenfield thought if they wanted to pursue it further it could be discussed during the CIP  
24 item. Mr. Anderson added that in addition to the funding challenge, it's also a staff capacity  
25 issue, and even if they had funding now to implement the plan and make the construction  
26 happen it's sometimes more challenging because of staff resources than it is funding. He  
27 felt their proposal was realistic and that they can make it happen. If they tried to expedite  
28 it any faster, he questioned whether it would really happen.

29 Commissioner Moss remarked that if an infrastructure improvement is essential for safety  
30 or for mitigating damage, a change can be made to pull something up into regular  
31 maintenance in the case of an emergency. Commissioner Brown commented that the  
32 smaller items, such as the signs and the caution tape, while they may not be permanent  
33 fixes, she encouraged staff to continue looking for such opportunities, because they have  
34 been successful in what they have seen so far.

35 Chair Cribbs thought there was consensus regarding the capital budget priorities, with  
36 some concern about the timeframe on the part of the Commission and staff. Commissioner  
37 Reckdahl was somewhat concerned that the term "prioritize" seemed somewhat vague.  
38 Mr. Anderson said CSD is already moving this as a proposed budget for the nearest

1 possible term, which is FY 2023, so he felt the proposal was in effect taking an action on  
2 this already in terms of its proposal and it would be strengthened by having the PRCs  
3 agreement and encouragement for it to happen as soon as possible.

4 The Commission moved on to the third item in the motion, pertaining to the fees.  
5 Commissioner Moss said the big thing with this was avoiding conflicts at the kiosk and a  
6 smooth flow into and out of the Park. He said their efforts were to try to do that in a number  
7 of different areas. Vice Chair Greenfield added that while item three is not a change action,  
8 the Ad Hoc felt it was appropriate to specifically call out things that they like as they are  
9 and to note it specifically in the motion that goes to City Council so that there is no lack  
10 of clarity. Chair Cribbs agreed with this, remembering that when they were thinking about  
11 reporting back to Council, they wanted to reserve the ability to look at whether the fees  
12 should be lowered or removed. She asked if there was any thought of another review of  
13 fees in the future. Vice Chair Greenfield said it is not something that was specifically  
14 brought up in the Ad Hoc. He felt it was a best practice and something that the Commission  
15 could review on a periodic basis. Commissioner Moss said they did note that there are a  
16 number of ways that people can get in and that the number of people didn't drop off  
17 precipitously because he cost was too great or that they didn't have other options, so they  
18 felt it was working.

19 Hearing no further comments on item number three, Chair Cribbs asked if there was  
20 agreement to support the item as is. Hearing no further comments, she moved to item four  
21 on the draft motion.

22 Commissioner Moss said this item described additional things the Ad Hoc wanted to do  
23 to simplify the entrance process. He felt they dealt with the stickiest issues, especially ones  
24 that had been brought up by the City Council. Commissioner Reckdahl commented that  
25 they are all things that will help the flow and also help the weekday process, so he  
26 supported all of them. Vice Chair Greenfield said the major factor that has not yet come  
27 into play which will impact this is the weekday fee collection. It has not been instituted  
28 yet, so they do not yet have feedback on it. In some ways he said they were fortunate as  
29 they have outlined the existing free entry policy to select groups that would make  
30 enforcement of weekday fees impossible for staff. Commissioner Brown was interested in  
31 hearing a report in the future from either from the Ad Hoc or in a department report on  
32 how that change works out in the future, especially for the weekdays. Commissioner Moss  
33 noted that the change to the weekday fees is not until around March, so there would be a  
34 report back somewhere around June. Vice Chair Greenfield said in the likely event that  
35 they choose to form a Foothills Nature Preserve Ad Hoc next year they will have to come  
36 up with a specific goal and area of direction for it, and monitoring the weekend entry fee  
37 collection would be an obvious one to include.

38 Moving on to item five, pertaining to the reservation system, Commissioner Moss

1 commented that the big driver of this was closure on weekends at the very beginning.  
2 Because that has not happened since Easter, all through the Memorial Day weekend, and  
3 July 4<sup>th</sup> weekend, they felt it was not appropriate to go to this level of complexity at this  
4 time. Chair Cribbs asked if there was any research done on other parks that do have a  
5 reservation system. Mr. Anderson said they researched with other agencies and had  
6 extensive dialog with one particular park in Santa Clara Country who had recently  
7 implemented a reservation system, primarily for the same reasons – the spike in visitation  
8 due to COVID. They had shared a little about how it was working. As their problem  
9 seemed to abate, the less they continued those conversations, so he did not have anything  
10 new in this regard. Vice Chair Greenfield said they felt there is limited benefit to pursuing  
11 a reservation system and lots of potential problems with it in terms of how to set up a  
12 ticketed time for entry and exit. They did not feel it was practical or realistic for the  
13 Preserve, given the nature of the visitor experience and also the staffing available for  
14 enforcement.

15 With no further comments on item five, Chair Cribbs moved on to the next item – the dog  
16 policy. Commissioner Moss said this was precipitated by an article in *The Palo Alto*  
17 *Weekly* by a reporter who brought their dog to Foothills camping in the middle of the week  
18 and decided to take a jog with the dog throughout the park after dark, after park closure.  
19 This prompted them to think it was not appropriate because the trails are really for wildlife  
20 after the park closes. There were no questions or comments on this item from the  
21 Commissioners.

22 Chair Cribbs invited comments on item seven, regarding wildfire safety. Commissioner  
23 Moss said some things have already been done. He said they did not feel confident in their  
24 expertise to be able to make significant recommendations above and beyond those things,  
25 without the help of the experts. They have heard from several experts that it “seems to be  
26 okay,” but they felt totally inadequate in being able to make additional recommendations.  
27 Vice Chair Greenfield said they identified concerns, and City Council is already working  
28 with Fire Department staff and expect a recommendation, so the Ad Hoc also felt that if  
29 they made a recommendation that was potentially different from the Fire Department’s  
30 then it would not be providing straightforward guidance, so they deferred to the expertise  
31 of the Fire Department. Mr. Anderson concurred with that and the concern that they might  
32 get ahead of the experts on this item. He felt more comfortable with the Fire Department  
33 providing the specific details that the Council may want, beyond what they already have.

34 Commissioner Moss said he felt that their role as a Commission was really to ask, do we  
35 want campfires at all? And what would the camping experience be like without campfires  
36 at all? Likewise for barbecues. If campfires and barbecues were disallowed anywhere in  
37 the park, ever, would it be a good thing? His guess was that there were people in the city  
38 who would absolutely agree with this. The Ad Hoc did not want to go that far, but he asked  
39 if the rest of the Commission wanted to go that far. Commission LaMere understood not

1 wanting to get ahead of the experts, but he had great concern for fire safety and looking at  
2 the area as a preserve he was not sure of the necessity of barbecues and campfires,  
3 especially there. Commissioner Moss was willing to entertain campfires separate from  
4 barbecues if someone had a feeling about campfires versus barbecues. Commissioner  
5 Reckdahl's first instinct was in agreement with Commission LaMere's concern and  
6 whether they really want to be taking those chances. He said the Fire Department wasn't  
7 concerned about those chances, and he wondered if they were being callous or if they have  
8 better information. He suspected that they are best off recommending that the Fire  
9 Department address this. Vice Chair Greenfield added that doesn't mean it isn't an area  
10 that they can comment on in the future if the Resolution and recommendation from the  
11 Fire Department to City Council is not something that the Commission is comfortable with  
12 in the near-term or mid-term.

13 Commissioner Moss said there are rules for campers already in place. No bonfires, for  
14 instance and what Mr. Anderson mentioned earlier about leaving coals in the barbecues  
15 unattended. Those rules already exist, so this is above and beyond those rules, and he  
16 thought that was why the Fire Department has said in the past that it is not as big a risk as  
17 they might think. Commissioner Reckdahl said the Ad Hoc had a big discussion about  
18 using the word "defer" in regard to deferring to the Fire Department's expertise. They took  
19 it out because they didn't want to make it sound too passive. They wanted to push the Fire  
20 Department to make a recommendation. They didn't want to just sit on the sidelines, but  
21 did want them to take action and address their concerns.

22 Chair Cribbs asked if they wanted to say, "make a recommendation within a certain  
23 timeframe." The Commission would then review it again. She liked the fact that they could  
24 learn from the Fire Department but then make their own recommendation. She said she is  
25 also concerned with the fire danger. Vice Chair Greenfield said that sounds appealing;  
26 however, he felt it was not their place to direct the Fire Department. Chair Cribbs denied  
27 wanting to direct the Fire Department. Vice Chair Greenfield wondered how to specify a  
28 timeframe without the Commission directing them. Commissioner Moss suggested a  
29 request that the Fire Department recommend actions before the fire season starts in April  
30 or May. Chair Cribbs liked this idea and invited others' comments. Vice Chair Greenfield  
31 felt it was too much "directing." He felt it was stepping out of their lane in this case and  
32 that City Council had already requested an update from the Fire Department on this. Mr.  
33 Anderson concurred. City Council has directed staff to come back on this. A City  
34 Manager's staff report has been generated; they just have not gotten the date. He felt  
35 confident that this will go to Council in the near term, and he was less comfortable going  
36 beyond requesting that the Fire Department provide the recommended action. Chair Cribbs  
37 said that their role then was to discuss the recommendations, decide if they all agree with  
38 them and make a motion to go on to the Council or not.

39 Mr. Anderson said one little piece is the Gate D discussion. The Ad Hoc did not come to

1 agreement, and he felt it would be a good one for them to dive into and see if the  
2 Commission can come up with a recommendation. Vice Chair Greenfield agreed it was an  
3 item that is not straightforward and that should be discussed as a full Commission. Chair  
4 Cribbs asked for discussion on Gate D. Mr. Anderson pulled up pages 8 and 9 of the staff  
5 report listing the pros and cons on this subject. Vice Chair Greenfield felt it was important  
6 to indicate that the Commission has reviewed this and made a formal comment on it.

7 Commissioner Moss stated he definitely believes in the benefits listed. The connection  
8 between open space preserves is something he has wanted to do for his entire term on the  
9 Commission. Increased recreational opportunities and also the safe route up to the Park is  
10 something that is definitely worthwhile. He said the big problem is finding ways to  
11 mitigate the potential impacts of opening the gate. He said they can add to this, which  
12 would allow more people to go there and go faster. He said he has always deferred to  
13 staff, and the fact that impacts to already-limited staff resources to monitor and enforce  
14 issues especially involving illegal use of bikes on trails, and the bikes going the wrong  
15 way is a real concern for staff. He debated wanting to go against staff in expecting them  
16 to deal with it or not because of his firm belief in increasing those connections and the  
17 other benefits. He said this has essentially been the entire discussion the Ad Hoc has had  
18 since September when they met with PABAC. Are the benefits enough to overcome these  
19 potential impacts? He said this is the question for the Commission.

20 Commissioner Reckdahl said he thought overall they should be opening Gate D. He  
21 appreciated that there are risks with this, but his reason for supporting it was that the upside  
22 is more compelling than the downside. In particular, he felt the current rules were  
23 penalizing people who follow the rules. The people who don't follow the rules are already  
24 going through the gate and are already in Foothills Preserve, so he felt they are not  
25 penalizing the right people. He said, looking at the advantages, they are all legitimate. The  
26 connecting of the two open space preserves is a high priority. They are also getting people  
27 off Page Mill. He said there are potential downsides, but he didn't think there was any hard  
28 data saying that those bad things are going to happen. They are just worried that they are  
29 going to happen. He did not want to make work for staff, and said he appreciates how hard  
30 Mr. Anderson and his staff do work and that they are stretched very thin. He did not want  
31 to have damage to the Preserve. He felt that it most likely will not be a big deal and that  
32 they are penalizing people who should not be penalized right now.

33 Vice Chair Greenfield said the Ad Hoc was fairly unanimous in their feeling that  
34 increasing the connections and adding the safe route are absolute positives that they  
35 support and are reasonable and important changes to make for the bicycling community.  
36 With that said, he suggested that, on balance for him, he felt like the timing was just not  
37 right to pursue this, given that they are already outlining a range of infrastructure  
38 improvements that they want to make to the Preserve which will be pushed out into the  
39 next two fiscal years to plan and then do the construction of the improvements. He said

1 there will be infrastructure improvements required for this as well. He said he looks at  
2 Gate D and sees that someone has come up on a bike from Arastradero Preserve and at  
3 that point there is a steep road that goes up to Vista Point and back down to the Interpretive  
4 Center. At the same point there is also a dirt trail that goes laterally in either direction. He  
5 said it feels like it will take some time and some staff resources if they were to open this  
6 up to get people to do the right thing. He did not feel it was realistic to expect that opening  
7 up the gate would not increase bicycle traffic on the dirt trails. As mentioned earlier, there  
8 is an expectation of bicyclists that bikes are permitted on fire roads, if not on trails, and in  
9 Foothills Nature Preserve bikes are not permitted on the fire roads and that is not  
10 something that is being considered. This will make for further confusion and education  
11 needed.

12 Vice Chair Greenfield said ultimately there is no enforcement available to Foothills Nature  
13 Preserve right now, so he felt the overwhelming impact on staff in terms of the resources  
14 that would be needed to change the infrastructure, to educate and guide and monitor the  
15 behavior, and the fact that there is no enforcement available, no extra resource pool. He  
16 said in the last year-and-a-half there has been a much larger portion of open space  
17 resources dedicated to Foothills Nature Preserve at the expense of other open space  
18 preserves because of the changes happening at Foothills. This is just exacerbating the  
19 situation before staff has had an opportunity to catch their breath and catch up and get  
20 things back under control. He thought once they were able to get the other infrastructure  
21 improvements in place it would be appropriate to have another discussion on. However,  
22 he felt the timing was not right presently.

23 Commission LaMere was in favor of connections and access. Commissioner Brown  
24 agreed with the comments regarding access and opportunities; however, she felt they  
25 should take the recommendations of Parks and Recreation and Community Services staff  
26 and Ranger on what they feel is best and what is feasible. She thought they should listen  
27 to their recommendations based on the resources currently available, although she did have  
28 some thoughts to consider, moving forward, to potentially identify opportunities, and if  
29 there were staff available in the future, to do targeted enforcement during a busy bike  
30 season rather than year round. She thought once good practices were in place people  
31 returning would get into the same habits and spread the word. She suggested that another  
32 opportunity is to offer individual days or guided rides on the path to allow the opportunity  
33 so that people could sign up, get the hang of it and know what to do before they end up  
34 doing any sort of next steps.

35 Chair Cribbs affirmed these ideas and wanted to make sure they don't lose sight of them.  
36 Commissioner Moss agree they were excellent suggestions and also wanted to suggest that  
37 it is really the responsibility of the City Council, and perhaps the PRC should make a  
38 recommendation that if there were more resources, and if they could put some of the  
39 infrastructure changes in sooner, to try to put one-way signs and split rail fences in to keep



1 bikes out of some trails, then it's the Council's responsibility to help them get there. They  
2 would like to get there at some point, but there are some real issues with timing and  
3 resources. They've talked with PABAC about self-policing so that the staff doesn't have  
4 to do it, so on a busy Saturday or Sunday morning there could be people to help monitor.  
5 There was not much desire on their part to do that, and that is why Commissioner Brown's  
6 suggestion about guided rides and individual days where there could be somebody there  
7 to monitor it was an excellent suggestion.

8 Vice Chair Greenfield added, on the subject of eBikes, that they are a double-edged sword.  
9 Though it is great that they will provide a broader swath of the population access where  
10 they wouldn't normally have it, they will also increase ridership and potentially raise  
11 environmental concerns. He felt it would be appropriate for the Commission to be  
12 considering an overall eBike policy for the City. It would be a complicated undertaking  
13 but might be something else that would be appropriate to consider before opening Gate D  
14 as well.

15 Chair Cribbs invited Mr. Anderson to share his thoughts on the motion. Mr. Anderson  
16 thanked the Commissioners for their thoughts and comments. He said he does have  
17 concerns, in talking to the Rangers who would be the ones ultimately enforcing issues or  
18 responding to complaints if there were some. He referenced a prior Commissioner  
19 comment that they have no assurances that there would be problems. He thought this was  
20 true. He said he did not claim to know for sure there that would be issues. His hunch was  
21 that this would most certainly bring more bikes into Foothills Nature Preserve and  
22 typically when there is more of anything there is a small percentage that causes some sort  
23 of problem. He thought there would be a small percentage of bikes that are new to the  
24 Preserve that would end up going off-trail and exacerbating that issue that they already  
25 struggle with enforcing.

26 Mr. Anderson said he also worried that when making a change like this they would want  
27 it to be monitored and to get data to help them know how it's working. He said they do  
28 not have staff to monitor this and see how it's working, nor do they have the additional  
29 enforcement. He said it is possible that there wouldn't be an issue, but he was a little  
30 worried about it. He was not totally convinced that the infrastructure improvements would  
31 make it less likely for this increase in bikes going off-trail. He didn't see it making a  
32 difference, although it would make it safer for pedestrians so they would have a place to  
33 get off the road that they would otherwise be sharing with bikes and cars. He said he could  
34 definitely see both sides of the argument. There are many pros to opening it up and it  
35 would make some things a little easier because the Rangers are always dealing with people  
36 complaining. He just thought with this change there would likely be new problems.

37 Chair Cribbs commented that after listening to both sides, that certainly they all want to  
38 increase the connections between Open Space preserves and have more recreational

1 opportunities, but when they started out the staff report they noted that November 20<sup>th</sup> of  
2 last year was when they opened Foothill Park, and it has only been a year and a month.  
3 During that time, the staff has addressed a lot of issues that have come up because they  
4 did open up the Park to everybody, which was the right thing to do from her perspective.  
5 She said she would like to keep Gate D closed for now, for at least a couple of years, so  
6 that they have some time to rest, to see what the impacts are of the people who are currently  
7 in the Park, see the other things that are going to happen in a year or two, see how things  
8 go when COVID goes away, and just give themselves a little bit more time. She felt they  
9 did not have to rush into it, although she recognized that there is pressure to do so. She  
10 supported keeping Gate D closed at this point She didn't have an opinion about setting a  
11 timeline to review it again. If they did keep it closed she wondered if they would get  
12 enough information in two or three years, or what an appropriate time would be. She added  
13 that they do not have to put a time in this.

14 Commissioner Moss said he liked Commissioner Brown's suggestion of maybe once a  
15 month or once a quarter having an open house, where you can have group rides that come  
16 one Saturday a month, or one Saturday morning a month, sometime in the next year or  
17 two. Chair Cribbs thought it was a good idea but would not want to start anything like that  
18 for at least two years, preferring to keep it closed until they all have a bit of a rest,  
19 acknowledging the fact that they are in favor of connecting things. She proposed looking  
20 at the topics discussed in the motion and adding their decision regarding Gate D.

21 Vice Chair Greenfield offered a starting point, assuming there was a majority not  
22 supporting the opening of Gate D to bicycle access. He suggested verbiage such as  
23 "maintain the current policy prohibiting through access at Gate D." Commissioner Moss  
24 advocated using wording to stress that the City Council has the ability to add funding for  
25 more staff. Vice Chair Greenfield felt there should be a statement that the Commission  
26 supports the goal of opening the gate.

27 The Commissioners worked together on verbiage for item number 8, regarding Gate D,  
28 resulting in the following:

- 29 8. Opening Gate D to bicycle access would result in benefits including increased  
30 connections between open space preserves and safe routes for bicycle access.  
31 The Commission recommends monitoring and evaluating potential policy  
32 changes in conjunction with available staff resources, but recommends  
33 maintaining the current policy prohibiting bicycle access at Gate D at this time.

34 Vice Chair Greenfield asked Commissioner Reckdahl what he thought of the resulting  
35 text. Commissioner Reckdahl expressed that he understood and appreciated what the  
36 Commission was trying to do, but to him the issue was not a slam dunk. It was more like  
37 a 70/30, with 30 percent of him understanding what they're doing, but the 70 percent feels  
38 like it's not a big deal to open the gate. He said his crystal ball – which is not always

1 accurate – says that there won't be problems. Therefore, he was not going to support the  
2 proposed text, although he feels it is reasonable.

3 Vice Chair Greenfield wondered if recommendation 8 should be moved to be above the  
4 dog policy recommendation, to be consistent with the discussion of items within the staff  
5 report. Mr. Anderson agreed that this would be a good idea. Further discussion ensued  
6 regarding wording and position of item number 8, as well as other verbiage changes within  
7 the motion for clarity and consistency with the staff report.

8 Chair Cribbs asked for a motion to approve the recommendation. Vice Chair Greenfield  
9 recommended having a split motion, first voting on items 1 through 8, not including item  
10 6, and then having a separate vote on item 6.

11 **MOTION**

12 Motion to approve the Recommendation as stated to City Council was moved by Vice  
13 Chair Greenfield. Seconded by Commissioner Reckdahl, the motion passed, 6-0, by roll  
14 call vote.

15 **MOTION**

16 Motion to approve Item 6 as stated to City Council. Seconded by Commissioner Brown,  
17 the motion passed, 4-1-1 by roll call vote.

18 Commissioner Reckdahl asked a follow-up question regarding eBikes, whether it is  
19 something the Parks and Recreation Commission has to get permission to address from  
20 the Council, or if they can take action to evaluate eBike usage in parks on their own. Mr.  
21 Anderson thought it would need to be added to the work plan, by going to Policy and  
22 Services, or it could be discussed at their retreat. Vice Chair Greenfield felt it was a retreat  
23 item, to propose it as part of their new work plan.

24 **5. Open Space and Parks Photography and Film Policy**

25 Mr. Anderson said the Ad Hoc and staff support a PRC recommendation that City Council  
26 adopt the draft policy listed in attachment A of the staff report. The Foothills Ad Hoc  
27 Committee reviewed the existing photography and film policy as part of their review of  
28 multiple policies relating to Foothills Nature Preserve. Because the policy applies to all  
29 open space parks and preserves, this policy was separated as its own agenda item.

30 Mr. Anderson said one of the goals in drafting this policy was to make it clear when a  
31 permit was required and clarify what type of activities may be allowed. The current  
32 practice is for a permit applicant to discuss the particulars of their photograph or film event  
33 with an Open Space or Parks Manager. The Ad Hoc and staff believe the draft policy  
34 presented will help make things more transparent and consistent. The policy was broken

1 into three areas – personal photography and film, which does not require a permit; low  
2 impact photography and film, which does require a permit; and high impact photography  
3 and film, which is not allowed at all.

4 Mr. Anderson highlighted the categories addressed in the policy as stated in the staff  
5 report. The personal photography and film category would not require a permit, provided  
6 the following: it was anon-commercial use; no impact on vegetation, habitat, wildlife or  
7 visitor use; maximum duration of one hour; 24 or fewer people; duration of one hour or  
8 less; and no exclusive use of parks or preserves, for example, blocking trails, parking  
9 spaces, roads, pathways, et cetera; and in compliance with all municipal codes and park  
10 regulations. Examples of personal photography and film include photography that does  
11 not require additional permits. For example, if they needed a generator there would be a  
12 separate permit for that. Other uses not requiring a permit include small professional group  
13 shoots with limited subjects and crew, such as an engagement or immediate family  
14 photography session, with no impact to the preserve vegetation, habitat or wildlife.

15 For low impact photography and film, a permit would be required. This is generally  
16 associated with smaller shoots, also with no impact on the habitat, wildlife, visitor use.  
17 Maximum duration of two hours. This would not be permitted on weekends and holidays.  
18 Permits would be required if it is a commercial shoot as defined in Palo Alto Open Space  
19 and Parks Regulation R1-21A. Duration would be up to two hours, with multiple camera  
20 shoot and additional lighting, sound or other equipment.

21 High impact photography will not be allowed. These are generally associated with medium  
22 or large commercial shoots, with significant impact to City-owned property or right-of-  
23 way, involving traffic control and street closures and shoots with multiple cameras,  
24 photographers, assistants and talent.

25 Mr. Anderson went over the conditions included in the draft policy as listed in the staff  
26 report, aimed at minimizing the impact to open space and parks and to the visitor  
27 experience. For example, utmost care will be exercised to ensure that wildlife, habitat and  
28 natural/historic/cultural resources are not disturbed or impacted. Photography and film of  
29 wildlife will be permitted only when wildlife will not be approached within 100 feet, fed,  
30 harmed or otherwise disturbed from their natural behavior. Drones are not allowed.  
31 Exclusive use of any significant area is not permitted. Permit fees for parks and open space  
32 may range from \$324 to \$2,163. This is the same range as the special event permits.

33 Mr. Anderson said in general the Ad Hoc believed the open space and parks are not  
34 appropriate locations for commercial photography and film due to its impact on vegetation,  
35 habitat, wildlife and visitor experience. Additionally, limited staff resources cannot  
36 provide proper oversight for this type of activity. This could be re-evaluated in the future  
37 if appropriate staff resources were available. The recommendation would go to City  
38 Council in February. Mr. Anderson concluded by thanking the Ad Hoc committee for their

1 work on these two items, thinking through the situation and coming up with good policy.  
2 The draft policy was included as Attachment A of the staff report.

3 Chair Cribbs invited public comment on this item. Hearing none, she invited comment  
4 from the Ad Hoc Committee members.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield felt Mr. Anderson’s summary statement spoke for itself in that their  
6 general belief is the open space and parks are not generally appropriate for commercial  
7 shoots at the expense of the environment and visitor experience, and additionally, staff  
8 resources are limited. This was the general basis for all of the policy considerations they  
9 developed.

10 Commission LaMere appreciated the detailed work and time put in on this comprehensive  
11 policy. Commissioner Brown felt it was a great balance of flexibility, protection of the  
12 environment and adherence and consistency with other City policies.

13 Chair Cribbs also felt the policy was very well done. She was curious whether Mr.  
14 Anderson has had requests from commercial entities to do large-scale filming in the park.  
15 Mr. Anderson said they have. Recently, they had a request from an automobile company  
16 to do a commercial shoot for multiple hours using almost all of the preserve.

17 Mr. Anderson shared the text of the recommendation to City Council for discussion by the  
18 Commissioners. Minor changes in verbiage were decided upon, particularly with regard  
19 to item 13.

20 **MOTION**

21 Motion to adopt the Palo Alto Open Space and Parks Photography and Film Policy in its  
22 final form was moved by Commissioner Moss. Seconded by Commissioner Reckdahl, the  
23 motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

24 Chair Cribbs affirmed the work of the staff and Ad Hoc Committee on this item.

25 **6. Review of the Proposed Fiscal Year 2023-2027 Capital Improvement Plan**

26 Chair Cribbs thanked Mr. Lam Do for his work on this item and said she was very happy  
27 to have the opportunity to see this item a little bit earlier.

28 Mr. Do provided a brief presentation to supplement the staff report, which encompasses  
29 primarily fiscal year 2023, although the Capital Improvement Plan as outlined in the report  
30 is actually a five-year plan. The plan will be implemented in July of 2022.

31 Mr. Do recapped what a capital improvement plan is, explaining that the projects in  
32 included have to do with the City’s infrastructure. In particular infrastructure that impacts



1 the Community Services Department. Capital Improvement projects essentially need to  
2 either extend the life of an existing asset or provide a new functional use for an existing  
3 asset. Mr. Do explained a few criteria which distinguish a capital improvement project  
4 versus an operating expenditure. The expenditure needs to provide a useful life of at least  
5 five years with a minimum threshold of typically \$50,000 or more. In the Community  
6 Services Department it can range from several hundred thousand dollars, or to a golf  
7 course renovation which is in the millions of dollars.

8 Capital improvements work on a rolling five-year plan, looking forward at fiscal years  
9 2023 through 2027, with fiscal year 2023 starting in July of 2022. Because there are many  
10 possibilities for capital improvement projects, staff applies several factors of criteria to  
11 prioritize them, as listed in the staff report. For example, they look at City Council  
12 priorities, health and safety implications, or things that are impacted by changes in code  
13 or legal requirements. They also consider funding availability and balance needs between  
14 daily operational needs and improving efficiency. They consider Parks and Recreation  
15 Commission priorities and/or needs the community has expressed through the  
16 Commission as well. For example, the site amenities replacement at Heritage Park. Mr.  
17 Do explained that this is a proposal from the Adopted Capital Proposal book, fiscal year  
18 2022. For all capital projects that are proposed, several factors are reviewed. One,  
19 identifying a fund source. In this case the source is the Capital Improvement Fund which  
20 for Community Services is funded primarily by the General Fund. Other factors reviewed  
21 include its category, location, who will be managing it, a proposed fiscal year and a project  
22 number. A description of the justification for the project is provided as well as whether the  
23 infrastructure needs to be repaired or replaced. They also consider what they anticipate  
24 staff capacity will be. In the past they have had to bump some projects to into the future,  
25 because between the Community Services Department and Public Works Department they  
26 have a backlog of projects. This involves consideration of the current lifespan and how  
27 much longer they can use the existing infrastructure.

28 Mr. Do explained that the Heritage Park project is looking at fiscal year 2025. He shared  
29 the Funding Sources Schedule and the Expenditure Schedule which do not always match.  
30 On the expenditure side they look at construction and design costs and also a five-year  
31 capital improvement project total. In this case because this project is planned for one fiscal  
32 year it is one and the same, but looking at a larger project such as Rinconada Park that is  
33 being done in phases, there may be different amounts in year one, three and five. That will  
34 all roll up to a five-year CIP total, so depending on the type of project and size it may be  
35 funded in one or multiple years.

36 Mr. Do pointed out that while looking at the five-year rolling plan, when Council reviews  
37 and approves budgets they approve for the upcoming fiscal year only – a one-year budget  
38 and then a five-year plan. As years approach they look at the budget and approve one year  
39 at a time. The process begins about this time of year with Council approval in June, so the



1 timeline is around November when staff starts to assess needs and proposals and discuss  
2 these with Ad Hoc committee to help prioritize projects. Towards the end of December  
3 and in January staff submits their proposal for the next five years, which is Attachment A  
4 of the staff report, with a focus on what they really want to get funded for the next fiscal  
5 year. They submit this to the Office of Management and Budget and they review it during  
6 February and March, not just Community Services but citywide, perhaps shuffling and re-  
7 prioritizing, and they may make recommendations. They are also looking at the financial  
8 status of the City, regarding what can be considered for funding and what may need to be  
9 deferred. Ultimately, the Office of Management and Budget makes a recommendation  
10 around April to the City Manager's Office, who presents to the City Council a proposed  
11 Capital Improvement Plan. This is about the same time the City Manager also proposes an  
12 operating budget as well.

13 There is review by the Planning and Transportation Commission sometime in April or  
14 occasionally in May, as the timeline can slide a little bit. The purpose of the Planning and  
15 Transportation Commission is to ensure that the proposed projects remain within the  
16 City's adopted Comprehensive Plan. Soon after that, the City Council asks the Finance  
17 Committee to review the Capital Plan and also hold budget hearings. From there, the  
18 Finance Committee makes recommendations which ultimately lead to Council adoption  
19 of the budget for the upcoming fiscal year. This occurs sometime in June.

20 Mr. Do pointed out they are within the five-year rolling window with a focus on what is  
21 being proposed for the next fiscal year. After that he will discuss what is not on the CIP  
22 plan that the Commission has considered and which he would perhaps like some input  
23 from the Commission on as well.

24 Mr. Do shared that for the next fiscal year he and Mr. Anderson have spoken with the  
25 Public Works Engineering Department to balance to what they think they have staff  
26 capacity to work on between the two departments. They are looking at proposing design  
27 of the next phase of Rinconada improvements, Phase 2. Phase 1 is currently underway and  
28 should be complete by the end of the fiscal year, so they are looking at designing Phase 2  
29 for the next fiscal year, fiscal year 2024, constructing Phase 2 of Rinconada Park.

30 In the next fiscal year they would also like to do repairs to Sunfish Island in Foothills  
31 Nature Preserve. This is in reference to a pedestrian bridge to access the island which is in  
32 need of repair. They are funded every other year for dog park improvements, via either an  
33 installation or renovation. They hope to be able to achieve that in the next fiscal year as  
34 well. They also have two design items to propose regarding Foothills Nature Preserve.  
35 One, as discussed earlier, the opening of Foothills Nature Preserve to the general public  
36 prompted some needs for improved infrastructure for logistics and for public safety, which  
37 they would like to put into design. They also would like to come up with design plans for  
38 replacing the three restrooms in the Preserve. Lastly, every year they have ongoing CIPs

1 to continue to work on. These are infrastructure annual needs, including such things as  
2 trail maintenance, maintaining Boronda Lake and funding for court repairs or  
3 replacements on tennis courts, pickleball and basketball courts. There is also funding for  
4 emergency repairs as the need arises, whether for weather or vandalism-related damage.  
5 Attachment A of the staff report includes other items planned to be proposed for fiscal  
6 years 2024 through 2027, as part of the rolling five-year plan.

7 Mr. Do continued, there are also needs that could potentially be a CIP, where they have  
8 identified them, but they either haven't been fully developed yet, or they are still in initial  
9 discussions or exploration stage. They are identified but not placed in the rolling five-year  
10 window yet. Some of these are also of interest to the Parks and Recreation Commission.  
11 In the past they have discussed several items and improvements to Rinconada Pool,  
12 involving replacement of starting blocks. The current pool length is not ideal for  
13 competition, so they would like to consider extending the length of the pool and also add  
14 timing touch pads. He said the Commission is aware of discussions they have had with  
15 initial stakeholders regarding the skatepark. A project they have struggled to find funding  
16 for over the years is The Baylands Athletic Center and developing plans for the 10.5 acres.  
17 He said last month, the Commission discussed a gymnasium. Also, down the line they will  
18 need to do work at Eleanor Pardee Park, due to age.

19 Regarding Open Space, infrastructure is deteriorating after years of repairs but a large  
20 overhaul is needed at the sailing dock station at the Bayland Nature Preserve. Other areas  
21 in Open Space that have needs include Buckeye Creek Improvements, regarding major  
22 needs for addressing the creek flow and channels.

23 The former ITT site adjacent to the Renzel Wetlands has hydrology needs. The 7.7 acres,  
24 they have discussed having passive use there. In Foothills Nature Preserve there are needs  
25 over the years that continue to age, including the carport, the garage and exhibits in the  
26 Interpretive Center that don't fit the current education needs.

27 Outside of Parks and Open Space there are also needs for the Lucie Stern Center signage  
28 for the Community Center, the JMZ and Rinconada Park. Each have had improvements  
29 over the years and they would eventually like to get a cohesive area using signage there.

30 Mr. Do said that these are items that have been discussed but are not included on the CIP  
31 plan yet, but he said perhaps in the future they can place them somewhere. Aside from  
32 fiscal year 2023, he said there are items that are in Attachment A for fiscal years 2024  
33 through 2027, which are tentative and can be moved or shifted.

34 Chair Cribbs invited public comments on this item. Hearing none, she invited comments  
35 from the CIP Ad Hoc Committee.

36 Commissioner Moss commented that the reason they are starting now is that there may be



1 opportunities now for the Fundraising Ad Hoc to get some items not on the CIP moved  
2 up. The problem is that each one requires staffing time. So while they would like to throw  
3 a lot of money at these projects, the staff to manage and maintain it has to be considered  
4 as well.

5 Commission Brown thanked staff for the preparing the information. She said it is  
6 especially helpful to look at the planning process as it relates to maintenance. A number  
7 of conversations were helpful, with one or two items pointed out that were slated to be  
8 addressed in a coming year but ended up being well-maintained, so they could be pushed  
9 back. So you actually see the dollars coming back to be able to address newer priorities  
10 that come up. She described that the flip side of that is that very expensive things come up  
11 that were not necessarily anticipated. She said it is complicated and hard to plan out in  
12 advance, dealing with competing priorities. She thanked staff for staying on top of this and  
13 presenting this in such a succinct fashion.

14 Commission LaMere echoed thanks to staff for their time preparing this in such detail. He  
15 appreciated the prioritization and timelines, which are very helpful, and the transparency  
16 is also very important. He said it is remarkable to see how many projects there are. He  
17 agreed that staff time is limited.

18 Chair Cribbs invited comments or questions from the Commission.

19 Vice Chair Greenfield appreciated the opportunity to get visibility and insight early in the  
20 process. He asked what exactly the nature is of the input staff is looking for from the  
21 Commission and what they are aiming for at this meeting. He said he is a little confused  
22 at what he saw in terms of projects being proposed by the Department for fiscal year 2023  
23 at the top of page 4 of the staff report, and what they are looking at in Attachment A, and  
24 whether these items are from the current CIP from last year. Mr. Do responded that, first,  
25 they are seeking several things from the Commission. He asked for feedback on whether  
26 they are heading in the right direction in what they are proposing, and also, whether the  
27 Commission sees things that perhaps staff has prioritized or de-prioritized that they think  
28 need to be shuffled. He said Attachment A is essentially a re-shuffle of the prior rolling  
29 five-year cycle, based on what they feel they have the capacity for, the funding for, or  
30 based on what they feel the lifespans are of existing items. Sometimes they think they  
31 don't have enough funding for a certain project, so they bump the project down the line so  
32 that they can consider other projects sooner.

33 Vice Chair Greenfield asked whether the Ad Hoc Committee has commented on that and  
34 advised staff in that re-shuffle before it was done, or if they were shown the information  
35 later. He wondered what the input from the Ad Hoc has been. Mr. Do replied this was  
36 shared with the Ad Hoc; however, they were not given a lot of advance notice as it took a  
37 while for CSD staff and Public Works Engineering staff to coordinate and figure out what  
38 they thought their first pass would look like. Mr. Anderson agreed with Mr. Do's response

1 and added in regard to their request of the Parks and Recreation Commission, he also  
2 wanted to hear the PRCs questions and feedback on what may or may not be clear, or what  
3 may or may not be clear for transparency purposes to the rest of the community, so  
4 everyone can hear what they are prioritizing and why.

5 Vice Chair Greenfield asked in regard to the restrooms for Cubberley Stadium, Ramos  
6 Park and another park, if they are already budgeted in the current fiscal year 2022 and will  
7 be rolled over, because he did not see them in the 2023 plan. Mr. Do said Cubberley was  
8 previously funded and, due to several staffing capacity and engineering review and other  
9 delays, they have had to roll those funds forward and skip fiscal year 2023 and look at  
10 installing it in the future. The funding is rolling forward, but not for fiscal year 2023, but  
11 for 2024 and beyond, based on staff capacity to manage the projects. They will likely be  
12 managed by Public Works Engineering and not CSD staff, so CSD staff consulted with  
13 them. They support projects that impact other departments as well, so they do have a  
14 backlog of projects to work on. Vice Chair Greenfield said he has a big problem with this,  
15 and wanted that noted. He felt it is very important to particularly move forward with the  
16 restroom at Cubberley Stadium. He wanted to understand what the competing priorities  
17 are that prevent it from moving forward until at least fiscal year 2024, when it was planned  
18 to be done in either fiscal year 2020 or 2019.

19 Vice Chair Greenfield also commented that looking at the previously-planned fiscal year  
20 2023 details he wondered if the planning for Buckeye Creek grade control structures would  
21 be pushed back to another year. Mr. Do confirmed that was correct. Vice Chair Greenfield  
22 wondered why it is being given lower priority than the infrastructure improvements  
23 previously talked about and the restrooms. Mr. Do said the Buckeye Creek item is intended  
24 to be a design solution, not funding for the solutions. The design is being pushed out to be  
25 looked at in fiscal year 2024, he thought, as stated in Attachment A. Vice Chair Greenfield  
26 said Attachment A indicates Buckeye Creek design planning is to be in fiscal year 2023,  
27 yet it is not in the CIP proposal for 2023, so he asked where it ends up. He commented  
28 that it would be helpful in seeing what the proposals are for 2023, and also what they are  
29 proposing moving out of 2023.

30 Commissioner Moss said what they are seeing is that there are two organizations or more  
31 involved, and when it says “design,” that is being done by a different organization than  
32 actual implementation, so what they are seeing here is that there is only enough time in  
33 2023 to do a little bit of design for something and that is separate and distinct from the  
34 implementation of other things. So, his understanding of Mr. Do’s comment was that they  
35 only have staff to do design for the Foothills Nature Preserve improvements and the  
36 restrooms and no other staff availability to do design for anything else this year. Mr. Do  
37 said that is correct. In fiscal year 2023 they also anticipate having some projects that they  
38 will initiate in the fiscal year but unfortunately may not finish, so they will continue to  
39 work on those in fiscal year 2023 in addition to the proposals shown.

1 Vice Chair Greenfield asked if Buckeye Creek design is being pushed out to 2024, or later.  
2 Mr. Do said it is being pushed out to fiscal year 2024. Vice Chair Greenfield said looking  
3 at Attachment A, it says design plans in 2023 under Open Space areas for Sunfish Bridge  
4 and for Buckeye Creek, and then in 2024 design for Buckeye Creek grade control  
5 structures in Los Trancos trail bridge, but he didn't see any of the construction included in  
6 the CIP for subsequent years. Mr. Do replied that was correct and said that particular CIP,  
7 although they have had to push it out, about two years ago it was clarified that the funding  
8 for the CIP is for the design part, not to fund the implementation or construction of the  
9 solutions. They will have to determine how to source the funds for it.

10 Vice Chair Greenfield remembered a few years ago when they were reviewing the  
11 Buckeye Creek improvement plans and the structures that were approaching failure and  
12 were in place for a few years down the road, and now that they are a few years down the  
13 road he was concerned that there is nothing there. Mr. Do said that Community Services  
14 in consultation with Public Works Engineering have assessed and addressed how long they  
15 can perhaps delay this item. They are aware it is an item they need to get to and take action  
16 on, but at present they feel the current infrastructure based on other assessment as is, could  
17 probably wait a few more years, so as a result they have pushed out how to manage  
18 holistically the design/funding aspect of it. He said it is correct that it was initially  
19 identified four to five years ago and at that time they felt they had four to five years to take  
20 action. However, they have taken another look at it, and feel they still have a few more  
21 years. Vice Chair Greenfield expressed concern about the bridge at the Los Trancos Trail  
22 across from the Interpretive Center that was planned for 2024, that the items are not even  
23 in the five-year plan.

24 Commissioner Moss responded that the bridge is not part of the Buckeye Creek item. He  
25 asked for Mr. Anderson's confirmation that the repair is going to be done. Mr. Anderson  
26 replied that it is uncertain exactly when. They will be having a bridge analyst look at it this  
27 year to give them recommendations. This is independent of the capital process, being  
28 maintenance.

29 Commissioner Reckdahl asked for clarification that the design is in the CIP but the  
30 construction is not. He inquired as to why it would be designed now if it won't be  
31 constructed for several years. Mr. Do replied that it does not necessarily mean that it won't  
32 be planned or constructed. The design will help staff to get a better idea of what is truly  
33 needed and perhaps a better cost estimate. At that point they will assess and make  
34 proposals. Though it is not in the five-year, it doesn't necessarily mean it would have to  
35 wait another five years. They can slot or propose it any future time within the five-year  
36 window. He described that the project could "cut in line" and bump other CIP projects if  
37 there is more immediacy.

38 Commissioner Reckdahl stated in regard to Buckeye Creek, a few years ago they discussed

1 a fiber optic line that Utilities was concerned about and which was driving some of the  
2 schedule. He asked if that is still an issue. Mr. Anderson explained that Utilities has not  
3 been overly concerned about it; it is Open Space staff that have driven concern about  
4 Buckeye Creek. In addition to the fiberoptics there are several utilities that run along the  
5 banks of Buckeye Creek that are of concern if there was a significant washout and failure  
6 of the structures. Utilities analyzed it and have not voiced excessive concern. They were  
7 grateful for the analysis that was done and were supportive of doing the design work to  
8 figure out exactly what should happen, but there has not been any call for action from the  
9 Utilities Department saying it needs to be done by any specific time. From the Buckeye  
10 hydrology study, the consultant advised that they have five or so years left in the grade  
11 control structure system. Commissioner Reckdahl asked if that was being conservative, or  
12 if things have changed. Mr. Anderson replied it was hard to say. He has to rely on what  
13 Public Works engineers, who are the experts, to give him guidance on something like this.  
14 They seem to feel there is some additional lifespan on it and can defer the design to the  
15 proposed year.

16 Commissioner Reckdahl brought up the subject of donations, and said he felt the exhibits  
17 in the various interpretive centers would be very attractive. More attractive than fixing a  
18 carport, which they probably won't get private funds for. He said at one time they hoped  
19 to partner with JMZ and that they would do the exhibits for all of the interpretive centers.  
20 He inquired whether this was lost in the JMZ remodel. Mr. Anderson responded that it has  
21 fallen off to some degree. The focus for the JMZ staff has for many years now been all  
22 about rebuilding the JMZ and wholly dedicated to that. He felt it might be a good time to  
23 re-engage them. He thought they would be more likely to support the PRC in terms of  
24 going out to bid for a re-design, as opposed to doing it themselves. Commissioner Moss  
25 said most importantly is that it doesn't involve staff. Mr. Anderson noted that it would still  
26 involve staff to manage and do the design, but the JMZ staff has great expertise in that.  
27 They might have capacity to help to some degree, but he didn't believe they would be able  
28 to design and build, themselves, new interpretive displays, nor have they ever proposed it  
29 to him.

30 Chair Cribbs remarked with regard to Commissioner Reckdahl and the potential  
31 partnership that was previously discussed with the JMZ, and wondered if the Foothills  
32 stakeholder's group could possibly do something more with the Environmental Volunteers  
33 and Grassroots Ecology, for displays and exhibits. Mr. Anderson affirmed that guidance  
34 from those groups would be tremendously helpful. In many ways, supplanting what would  
35 be paid for some design work to do, in terms of ideas, but ultimately it still needs to be a  
36 CIP, where the City funds it to make it happen. Chair Cribbs thought it would be a great  
37 opportunity for partnership with the City and other outside groups and some specific  
38 fundraising.

39 Commissioner Reckdahl referred to the list in the Appendix and noted that there are many

1 that mention irrigation. He said if that irrigation is leaking they should “cut the line” and  
2 move it up. On the other hand, do they want to be adding irrigation if they will be cutting  
3 back? For example, Foothills Nature Preserve in 2027 shows a huge irrigation amount.  
4 He wondered about evaluating and possibly shrinking that to save money and also save  
5 water by not irrigating as much at Foothills. Mr. Anderson says they have definitely  
6 considered that. It is another project that has been on the books for a very long time. They  
7 look at the age that a given piece of infrastructure was installed and their programmed  
8 lifespans. They get put into a spreadsheet which tells them in 15 years they have to look  
9 at a particular playground, for example. In 30 years from when that irrigation was put in,  
10 it should be replaced. In reality, some irrigation systems or playground will need to be  
11 replaced many years before the defined, schedule date, or sometimes many years after,  
12 depending on the nature of how it was built and maintained.

13 In the case of the irrigation system for Foothills, he said they have done a number of repairs  
14 to extend the life of the infrastructure. It is performing okay, and that is why they push it  
15 out. Sometimes it stays on the list four or five years out, but that doesn’t mean it is in  
16 desperate need, but is there because they think it can last that long. In regard to re-  
17 evaluating whether to irrigate at all for this recreational turf in the Nature Preserve. He  
18 affirmed this is an essential question to be analyzing, and they are. There have been parts  
19 of the turf that have been taken back and naturalized through their partnership with  
20 Grassroots Ecology.

21 Commissioner Reckdahl asked whether they have a dependable way of checking on  
22 whether components are leaking, or if things could quietly leak for many years. Mr.  
23 Anderson indicated that in some areas they are not good at catching it, unfortunately. One  
24 system they have tracks water flow, and the Utilities Department will notice excessive  
25 flow from a certain meter, prompting them to check it. What he hoped for was to have  
26 their four sprinkler repair people that have zones throughout the city, enormous zones, but  
27 they check them every week, looking at irrigation areas, running them and searching for  
28 problems. They are catching a lot, but once in a while they miss one until it gets reported  
29 in some other manner.

30 Commissioner Moss commented in response to Commissioner Reckdahl’s question. If  
31 they say they will do design in 2024 and they do not see even a phased implementation,  
32 he thought they should, in 2023, put a TBD, which he felt Mr. Do was alluding to. If they  
33 don’t know how big the project is, how many phases are needed, there ought to be a  
34 placeholder in the CIP that says they will implement it eventually, but without information  
35 on cost and phasing, et cetera. He inquired if they could put a TBD in with regard to  
36 Buckeye Creek implementation, just to keep it on the list. Vice Chair Greenfield further  
37 commented that if there is planning and design times on the CIP which are not followed  
38 up by construction items, he questioned the transparency. He felt it would be a best practice  
39 to include subsequent construction following a design. Otherwise, why are we making

1 design expenditures, at least for planning purposes. Relying on cutting in line to get  
2 something done, he felt was problematic on many levels.

3 Mr. Do agreed that there are instances, such as the 10.5 acres, where it was funding for a  
4 plan on development of the 10.5 acres, and eventually they determined that with the state  
5 of the budget right now it does not make sense to proceed with a plan to develop it if there  
6 is no possibility of funding construction and development of it. Thus, they did remove any  
7 funding for planning of the 10.5 acres. He understood Vice Chair Greenfield’s point with  
8 regard to Buckeye Creek and explained that it is slightly different. The reason why they  
9 may still want to consider having a plan for it in place is because they don’t know the exact  
10 dollar figure and planning and design and consultation that gets them a dollar figure. He  
11 said in the past they have received different direction on how to go about finding funding  
12 sources for it, whether it be general fund, grant funding or other sources.

13 Chair Cribbs asked about the family restroom/changing room at Rinconada, whether it was  
14 still on a list, as it got pulled out a couple years ago. She was hopeful they were going to  
15 be able to take care of that somehow. Mr. Do said it is, in fact, in place, not called out  
16 specifically by itself, but they have discussed it with Public Works Engineering, and it will  
17 be included in Phase 2 design of Rinconada Park as a whole. Chair Cribbs was sure the  
18 families will appreciate this. She asked if there is a way the Cubberley restrooms could  
19 “jump the line” in priority. Mr. Do said Mr. Anderson and he will take the Commission’s  
20 feedback and discuss this with Public Works Engineering to see what they can do about  
21 another re-shuffle. As the staff report indicates, all projects and budgets are subject to  
22 change, so it is something that he and Mr. Anderson can discuss with them.

23 Chair Cribbs commented regarding extending the length of Rinconada pool, and explained  
24 that what they really mean is shaving part of the plaster off at either end of the pool so that  
25 the it is the correct size to allow swimmers to set records when they put the touchpads in.  
26 She said it is almost under the maintenance area, where you drain the pool to plaster it and  
27 take some of the plaster at each end. It is not like building a whole new pool. Commissioner  
28 Reckdahl asked how much would be shaved. Chair Cribbs replied that it can be as little as  
29 an inch, because if you’re swimming a 500, which is 20 laps, then it really adds up. It  
30 depends on the measurement. She said when Rinconada was built, it was built to the specs  
31 but then the touchpads came in and were required by the swimming organizations. When  
32 they’re installed in the pool they take up space, so now they have to accommodate that,  
33 and it is very little, a small thing in her opinion.

34 Chair Cribbs said it had been a good discussion and hoped the Commission could continue  
35 it to that they keep abreast of what is planned even though it is difficult with budgets, and  
36 re-shuffling priorities, et cetera, but she felt it was important to have this information as  
37 they go through the budget cycle. She thanked the staff and Ad Hoc for working on this.

38 Vice Chair Greenfield added a quick comment regarding Cubberley restrooms, in that they



1 know they get significant funding each year designated for use at Cubberley. Though  
2 Cubberley is in a state of flux, investing in a restroom at the stadium is a safe long-term  
3 investment and would immediately benefit the community.

4 **VI. TENTATIVE AGENDA FOR THE JANUARY 25, 2022, MEETING**

5 Mr. Anderson advised there will be election of the new Chair and Vice Chair, as well as  
6 updates from Golf and Aquatics, tree protection, and court usage on the agenda.  
7 Commissioner Reckdahl asked whether court usage referred to results of surveys taken.  
8 Chair Cribbs said it should. Vice Chair Greenfield thought there was a possibility that tree  
9 protection may slip from the agenda.

10 Chair Cribbs asked if they could see the swimming and golf reports in advance. He  
11 responded that he has talked to Sarah Duffy about that, and she will try to get a copy to  
12 Chair Cribbs before it gets posted. Chair Cribbs requested that they discuss the date for  
13 their retreat. Mr. Anderson said they will do a Survey Monkey. Council’s retreat is on the  
14 5<sup>th</sup> and they typically make sure it is after that, to allow strategy time after hearing their  
15 priorities. He suggested mid-February. Chair Cribbs agreed with this. Vice Chair  
16 Greenfield suggested at least a week to 10 days before the scheduled PRC meeting. They  
17 will also need to keep in mind there will be a new member added to the Commission.

18 **VII. COMMENTS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

19 Mr. Anderson thanked Commissioner Moss and Commissioner Reckdahl for their service  
20 on the Commission and their commitment to the community and how supportive and  
21 helpful they have been to staff. He said it is deeply appreciated and will not be forgotten.  
22 Mr. Do echoed the comment, adding that they have been another set of eyes and brains to  
23 help them make their way through the daily and monthly needs.

24 Chair Cribbs agreed that these were the most important comments. She added  
25 congratulations to Commissioner Reckdahl for moving to the Transportation role,  
26 although they would miss him. She said she has learned much from him and appreciated  
27 his thoughtful questions and comments. Vice Chair Greenfield pointed out that in his nine  
28 years on the Commission, Commissioner Reckdahl has been their “Senior Statesman.”  
29 Vice Chair Greenfield said when he first joined the Commission it was quite young, with  
30 four fresh members and two with only one year of experience. He said Commissioner  
31 Reckdahl was the institutional knowledge source and voice of reason. He appreciated his  
32 guidance and steady input. Commissioner LaMere was grateful for Commissioner  
33 Reckdahl’s example. He said when he came on the Commission, Commissioner Reckdahl  
34 provided a great example of what to do and how to be very intentional with the  
35 Commission, providing deep analysis. He always perceived how much Commissioner  
36 Reckdahl cares about their community and very much appreciated that. Commissioner  
37 Brown added that she thought she loved Palo Alto until she heard Commissioner Reckdahl



1 talk at Commission meetings. She thanked him for asking brilliant questions and wished  
2 him the best at the Transportation Commission and the best of luck to them at answering  
3 his tough questions.

4 Chair Cribbs acknowledged her long friendship with Commissioner Moss even before the  
5 Commission, around Gunn High School pool fundraising. She was delighted to be on the  
6 Commission with him and stressed that his love of Palo Alto brought a great perspective  
7 – from the prospective of his grandchildren, his hikes, his Cubberley affiliation and many  
8 other interests. She said they will miss him and she appreciates all he has done for Palo  
9 Alto.

10 Commission LaMere reiterated that he appreciates Commissioner Moss’s service and the  
11 passion he shows, particularly for the outdoors and everything Palo Alto. He felt his points  
12 and his energy have been infectious and showed how much he loves Parks. He has learned  
13 much from him.

14 Commissioner Moss had a comment. He appreciated Commissioner Reckdahl, because  
15 when he came in fresh he had already been on for a few years. Most importantly was the  
16 politeness, the absence of infighting and arguing, that it was a civil organization, which is  
17 not universal. He said the best way to get things done is to be civil. He appreciated staff  
18 putting up with them, and at the same time, they try to treat staff well and that mutual  
19 respect is important. He said the other important thing is passion. Everyone is passionate  
20 about something, but not all about the same thing. He felt it important that each bring their  
21 passion to the rest and get them excited about their passions. He said the newbies will need  
22 role models of how to get things done while bringing their passion to the Commission.

23 Chair Cribbs echoed Commissioner Moss’s comments and followed his op ed, which  
24 contributed to them having so many applications for the new Commission. They know and  
25 appreciate that he will be around for a long time.

26 Vice Chair Greenfield thanked Commissioner Moss for his passion and love for Palo Alto  
27 that comes out in things like his hike from the Bay to the ocean, going through all the  
28 planning and showing people how it could be done. He said this will be a good legacy.

29 Commissioner Brown said she was fortunate to work on some Ad Hoc committees with  
30 Commissioner Moss and learned much just from those meetings. She said the  
31 conversations will help her to move forward. She thanked him for everything he has done  
32 for her to teach her about the Commission and its impacts on Palo Alto.

33 Commissioner Reckdahl thanked Commissioner Moss for his infectious enthusiasm and  
34 said he has had a very good Commission-mate, making him appreciate how wonderful  
35 things are when others are overlooking it.



1 Chair Cribbs said they can all be very grateful to serve on this Commission. She said she  
2 continues to think they are the “fun” Commission, and she is glad they all get along as  
3 well as they do.

4 **VIII. ADJOURNMENT**

5 Chair Cribbs ended the meeting by wishing everyone a very happy holiday season, a time  
6 for rest and reflection and good health, with a thank you to Mr. Anderson and Mr. Do for  
7 all they do for the Commission and to all for helping to make Palo Alto better.

8 Motion to adjourn by Vice Chair Greenfield, seconded by Commissioner Moss.

9 Meeting adjourned at 10:57 p.m.