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**MINUTES  
PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION  
REGULAR MEETING  
November 22, 2022  
In-Person & Virtual Conference  
Palo Alto, California**

**Commissioners Present:** Chair Greenfield; Vice Chair LaMere; Commissioners Amanda Brown, Anne Cribbs, Nellis Freeman, Shani Kleinhaus, and Joy Oche (virtually)

**Commissioners Absent:**

**Others Present:** Council Liaison Tom DuBois

**Staff Present:** Daren Anderson, Adam Howard, Lam Do, Javod Ghods

**CALL TO ORDER & ROLL CALL**

**BUSINESS**

**1. Adoption of a Resolution Authorizing Use of Teleconferencing for Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting During COVID-19 State of Emergency**

Commissioner Kleinhaus moved to adopt the Resolution. Seconded by Vice Chair LaMere, the motion passed, 6-0, by roll call vote.

**PUBLIC COMMENT**

Samir Tuma of Barron Park spoke regarding a dog park concept and petition. Early in the pandemic when community members felt scared and isolated, groups of dog owners began to meet at Barron Park Elementary School. This group has become a community with social interaction and support. Dog ownership grew nationwide by 12% from December 2020 to April 2021, and this sustained growth has put significant stress on the limited resources Palo Alto offers to dog owners. After some complaints and being shooed away by Animal Control Services, the dog owners began a process to investigate a dog park. The feedback was that most people wanted a dog park but the question was where. Mr. Tuma was here to open a conversation with the community to try to arrive at something that would be helpful for everybody.

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1 Carole Lin, Clinical Associate Professor at Stanford University School of Medicine and  
2 Practicing Pediatric Regional Anesthesiologist at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital,  
3 supported a dog park in the Barron Park neighborhood for the physical and mental health  
4 benefits for both dogs and their owners. Dog ownership is associated with healthier,  
5 functional individuals and communities. Isolation is not just a side effect of COVID but  
6 a pervasive issue for communities and schools. Many studies document the mental  
7 health benefits of owning dogs for various groups, such as children, the elderly, and  
8 populations with disability. In 2013, the American Heart Association concluded that pet  
9 ownership, especially dog ownership, was associated with decrease in cardiovascular  
10 risk factors and increased survival in individuals with established cardiovascular disease.  
11 Dog parks may provide a safe place for older people or people with disabilities who  
12 cannot walk their dogs and also offer area where dogs can exercise and run freely while  
13 the owners socialize.

14 John King, resident of Barron Park and President of the Barron Park Association, stated  
15 the Association became aware of the petition circulating and discussed it at their recent  
16 board meeting with no decision made. He stated he is also a dog owner and knows the  
17 importance of dog owners and dogs being able to get together. He was aware of  
18 complications of this being at the elementary school. The playground is only available  
19 after hours, usually after 6 p.m., but there is an involved group of dog owners who pick  
20 up after the dogs in the mornings. The school has been very supportive, but there has to  
21 be a better solution.

22 Christian Kalar, resident of Barron Park and Chair of the Creeks and Parks Committee of  
23 the Barron Park Association, stated there was an interest in making Bol Park a dog park  
24 a number of years ago and the people proposing it felt the creek was a great natural  
25 barrier. He stated that it is actually private property halfway through the creek, and that  
26 Bol Park has few established fence lines.

27 Arlene Sheehan, Barron Park resident, had no objections to a dog park but stated  
28 residents whose properties border Briones Park, one proposed site for the dog park,  
29 would be impacted by dogs running along the property line. She hoped there was room  
30 for community input in the decision of where to place the dog park.

31 **AGENDA CHANGES, REQUESTS, DELETIONS**

32 **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

33 **2. Approval of Draft Minutes from the October 25, 2022, Parks and Recreation**  
34 **Commission Meeting**

35 Commissioner Cribbs moved to approve the minutes of the October 25, 2022, Parks and  
36 Recreation Commission meeting. Seconded by Commissioner Oche, the motion passed,

1 7-0 by roll call vote.

2 **CITY OFFICIAL REPORTS**

3 **3. Department Report**

4 Assistant Director Daren Anderson gave an update on the recruitment status. The Senior  
5 Management Analyst position has been filled, and the Budget Analyst position is still  
6 vacant. Staff is still recruiting for several hourly Open Space Technicians. He described  
7 upcoming events, including a holiday tree lighting event at Litten Plaza, a toy drive for  
8 local youth in need, and a holiday decorating contest. There is a contract in place to do  
9 the work on the infill at Mayfield Soccer Complex, beginning the week of November 28  
10 and taking about 12 days, pending weather. The work will start in the north field,  
11 keeping the south field open for play, and then switching fields with a potential 1- to 2-  
12 day overlap when both fields are temporarily not available. The Foothills Nature  
13 Preserve weekday entrance fee is still on hold, waiting for the contract to be completed  
14 and expected to be in place fairly soon. The Magical Bridge Playground improvement  
15 project was delayed due to equipment and materials being delayed in delivery. The  
16 playground is scheduled to reopen on December 1.

17 Commissioner Freeman asked to let people know as far in advance as possible when  
18 both fields will be closed at the same time.

19 **BUSINESS**

20 **4. Racquet Court Policy – Adam Howard - Action**

21 Adam Howard, Senior Community Services Manager, discussed the multiuse courts in  
22 Mitchell Park, specifically the priority hours between pickleball and tennis. He gave  
23 background on the courts and policy. Currently, there are 8 designated pickleball courts,  
24 all located in Mitchell Park; 51 public tennis courts, some of which are on school  
25 grounds and only available after 4 p.m. and on weekends, with 17 lit courts at 3 different  
26 locations; and 2 multiuse courts in Mitchell Park, 2 courts when used for tennis and 7  
27 when used for pickleball, all lit. On the multiuse courts, pickleball has priority 8 a.m. to  
28 2:30 p.m. and tennis 3 p.m. to 10 p.m. Pickleball feedback was that there is a need for  
29 either additional space or evening priority, grouping of courts is important, and there is  
30 frustration when tennis players displace up to 16 players. Tennis feedback was that lit  
31 courts are in high demand and hard to come by; Mitchell Park tennis courts are the only  
32 courts available in South Palo Alto; wait time for tennis is substantially different than  
33 with pickleball, potentially up to an hour; driving to different locations is burdensome,  
34 not good for the environment, and uneconomical; and it is difficult to remove a large  
35 crowd of pickleball players or to play tennis there with a large grouping. There is joint  
36 frustration around those courts. Staff and the ad hoc did spot checks over a couple-

1 month period. Of the 15 dates that checks were performed, pickleball courts were full 14  
2 times and tennis 4 times.

3 Given the feedback and the observations, Staff felt the policy needed to be updated. The  
4 recommendation was a policy change to provide pickleball priority 7 days a week, 8 a.m.  
5 to 10 p.m., with continued dual-striping and no physical changes to the court. This  
6 would allow flexibility to see how these changes impact the courts in Palo Alto. By  
7 changing priority, Staff believed a majority of time would be used for pickleball, but this  
8 would allow flexibility in the future. Staff also looked at a tiered approach of several  
9 nights of pickleball but ultimately steered away from that to remove, rather than  
10 potentially increase, some of the conflict and frustration at the courts. There was a  
11 suggestion to change priority on only 1 of the 2 multiuse courts. The overlapping of  
12 courts was a problem, and that change would not help either group. There was a  
13 suggestion to dual stripe more courts and spread it out to other parks. Staff again felt this  
14 would create more conflict and also would require moveable nets, storage for those nets,  
15 and people willing to set up and take down those nets.

16 Another suggestion Staff will continue to look into was adding lights to existing courts.  
17 There are a large number of courts at Cubberley but the cost to bring in an additional  
18 electrical source would be in the range of \$½M to \$1M. Mr. Howard also spoke to 2  
19 solar companies who did not feel solar lights would be able to accommodate side-by-side  
20 courts. He felt that was not a solution to wait for before making policy changes.  
21 Another suggestion was to build additional courts, which is the ideal solution moving  
22 forward. Financing those projects is difficult, but finding the adequate space will be key.  
23 Both communities have stressed the importance of grouping of courts together, so  
24 building 1 or 2 courts in a park is not what either community thinks is necessary.  
25 Groupings require space, and Staff will continue to look at ways to do that. That was not  
26 in the immediate future.

27 If this change were made, there would be 8 designated pickleball courts and 7 pickleball  
28 courts that have continued priority, 15 total courts, all lit, and 51 public tennis courts  
29 with 17 lit courts spread over 3 different locations. If this court policy was suggested to  
30 move forward, it would go to City Council in December or January. If City Council  
31 approves the court use policy update, Staff would begin evaluating in about 6 months'  
32 time to see how it is impacting the rest of the courts, how the courts are being used, and  
33 if there are other changes that could be made. Mr. Howard stated the creation of a  
34 community courts group, made up of both tennis and pickleball community members,  
35 would be important to make sure the City is best utilizing its courts. He wanted to see  
36 that happen in February and acknowledged this conflict needs to be removed before a  
37 group like that could work. Staff will continue to look into better utilizing the courts,  
38 look for new court locations, and look at the idea of lighting existing courts.

1 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if Staff would come back to the Commission after the 6-  
2 month evaluation to discuss findings and how the community group is working.

3 Mr. Howard stated that is the plan and clarified that the data and information would  
4 begin to be collected at 6 months.

5 Commissioner Freeman stated this is a 6-month trial to continue to look at what is  
6 working and refining it, a temporary plan to see how everything works.

7 Commissioner Oche asked how many people will be part of the committee.

8 Mr. Howard wished to keep it relatively small, around 8 people. He was open to  
9 opinions.

10 Chair Greenfield invited comments from the public.

11 Rich Pearson, pickleball board member and 16-year Palo Alto resident, described a  
12 petition requesting the City shift its resources to support pickleball's skyrocketing growth  
13 amongst Palo Alto residents. He felt the 600+ signatures of only Palo Alto residents  
14 represented the tip of the iceberg in the support that pickleball has in Palo Alto. He  
15 appreciated the support the Commission and urged them to approve the recommendation  
16 from Mr. Howard and ad hoc committee. He stated the data and the personal stories  
17 make shifting resources to support pickleball the right choice for Palo Alto.

18 Kevin Chen, Palo Alto resident living 3 blocks from Mitchell Park, agreed with creating  
19 more tennis or pickleball courts but asked not to take away the existing tennis courts.  
20 While walking his dog every night, he sees the parking lot is full, including cars parked  
21 around the fire lane, which is a hazard. He stated the noise of the pickleball hitting the  
22 ground is becoming an issue for the neighborhood. He stated there will never be enough  
23 space for pickleball in Mitchell Park because it is becoming a hub for pickleball fans. He  
24 did not want Mitchell Park to become too crowded and stated Palo Alto already has the  
25 highest pickleball court per person, almost double or triple the other cities in the Bay  
26 Area.

27 Jing Huang described that her 14-year-old son plays tennis in Mitchell Park with kids of  
28 the same age. She described that one boy ranked #1 in North California and #7 in the  
29 country; another boy ranked #4 in North California; and her son ranked #14. They have  
30 all played in Mitchell Park for years with great achievements. She did not want kids to  
31 feel that tennis is in competition with pickleball and asked for a solution for both to play  
32 there. She stated one of these kids may someday play in the U.S. Open, and when they  
33 win the championship, they will be able to say they played in Mitchell Park for years.

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1 Yuanye Ma stated he has been playing tennis for around 7 years and supported keeping  
2 courts 5 and 6 for tennis only. He has played tennis at Mitchell Park with a friend every  
3 weekend for the past 3 years and has also gotten to know countless people from kids to  
4 adults, with interactions leading him to feel that the tennis community was a family. He  
5 stated taking away these courts would be like taking away their home.

6 Greg Xiong, tennis player and Palo Alto resident, stated he was not against pickleball,  
7 yet pickleball players are taking tennis courts and time away from the tennis players,  
8 creating tension between the 2 groups. He felt the City should help resolve this problem  
9 proactively and suggested finding find a piece of land with a good public access, for  
10 example a land parcel near Palo Alto Regional Airport, to dedicate to a new pickleball  
11 court development. He stated \$1.5M to \$3M could deliver 15 to 20 new pickleball  
12 courts with lights.

13 Bryan Chan was present to support tennis. He stated he tries to take his kids to play  
14 tennis after school and oftentimes drives 45 minutes to find a court or cannot find one.  
15 He stated that after 3 p.m. is a priority time for kids to play tennis and that youth tennis is  
16 in huge demand. He opposed changing the priority times for courts 5 and 6 at Mitchell  
17 Park to pickleball. He stated he has observed that some pickleball players choose to play  
18 on the dual courts even when the dedicated pickleball courts are not being used. Giving  
19 priority completely to pickleball gives a tennis payer no recourse to ask them to move  
20 even if there are open pickleball courts. He proposed 2 solutions: giving pickleball  
21 courts priority to residents of Palo Alto and allocating space in the Cubberley Gym for  
22 evening use for pickleball. It is a huge, underutilized space that could create many more  
23 temporary courts than at Mitchell Park and players could still gather when it is cold or  
24 raining.

25 Wenxin He, 22-year Palo Alto resident and USTA tennis captain for multiple teams in  
26 Palo Alto, stated that he used to captain a team out of Mitchell Park for mixed doubles  
27 but cannot do so anymore with the pickleball courts taking over the tennis courts. Most  
28 of the USTA teams in Palo Alto play in Rinconada Park, but almost nobody is hosting at  
29 Mitchell Park because the double-striped courts are taken and cannot be used for  
30 matches. There are no lights at Cubberley, and usage is limited. He also stated many of  
31 the pickleball players come from other cities and that giving them full court access will  
32 attract more pickleball players from other cities. He asked the City to find a better  
33 solution for both groups of people.

34 Monica Williams, President of the Palo Alto Pickleball Club and past Board Member of  
35 the Palo Alto Tennis Club, supported the court usage policy recommendation to provide  
36 pickleball priority at Mitchell Park from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. 7 days a week. When the  
37 current pickleball priority time of 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. was set, it made sense because most of  
38 the players were seniors. With the explosive growth of pickleball by younger people and

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1 working people, the new recommendation of court usage availability will give families  
2 and children an opportunity to use the courts. She was excited that the extended time  
3 would allow youth clinics after school and family tournaments and that working people  
4 would no longer be bumped from the pickleball courts in the evenings. She hoped in the  
5 future to forge a partnership with the Palo Alto Tennis Club to work together to help  
6 improve the courts and embrace both spots.

7 Paige Cook, Palo Alto Pickleball Club Member, mother and spouse of pickleball players,  
8 and volunteer of the City of Palo Alto Middle School Athletics Program, stated she  
9 intended to offer free lessons and get elementary, middle, and high school kids on the  
10 pickleball court. She stated she and her family have been displaced in the evenings, and  
11 with daylight hours becoming shorter, having court priority after 3 p.m. will allow her to  
12 teach. Pickleball is the fastest growing sport in America, and each week new Palo Alto  
13 residents come out for free introductory lessons that are a gift from the Palo Alto  
14 Pickleball Club to residents. She asked the Commission to test out the court use policy  
15 giving priority for the courts in the afternoons for 7 days a week.

16 Joy Zhang, resident of Palo Alto and pickleball player, stated the community is  
17 exploding with new pickleball players in Palo Alto and it is now a popular social activity  
18 among young people. She stated her 7th-grade son had pickleball lessons during PE at  
19 JLS Middle School and enjoyed playing with his friends in the pickleball round robin.  
20 She stated kids would love to play more pickleball at Mitchell Park if courts were  
21 available after school, but they are often packed on weeknights and weekends. She did  
22 not agree with a previous speaker that players choose to play on the mixed-use courts  
23 when pickleball courts are available because the pickleball courts are often full. She  
24 hoped the Commission would give pickleball priority 7 days a week for the shared courts  
25 so that more people can enjoy pickleball at Mitchell Park.

26 Jocelyn Tseng stated the pickleball courts at Mitchell Park were designed to be a  
27 community place with large, shaded picnic tables and benches. She listed some of Palo  
28 Alto's pickleball events in the past 4 weeks, including a brown bag luncheon, a  
29 Thanksgiving round robin mixer, multiple weekly free skills clinics and getting started  
30 classes for those who have never tried pickleball. In the same period, the club would  
31 also have hosted a citywide pickleball youth day in late October, but the event was  
32 cancelled because court time was not secured due to the priority hours. She stated that  
33 by changing the priority, the Commission will allow many more opportunities for  
34 community and public enrichment and requested they vote to change the priority hours.

35 Juan Jaysingh, Palo Alto resident for the last the 3 years, related his background of  
36 moving to the United States at age 13 to start a career in tennis and his professional  
37 accomplishments achieved through connections with fellow tennis players. He now  
38 plays both tennis and pickleball and sees the pickleball community growing. He was

1 here to support pickleball because of the amazing team behind Palo Alto Pickleball  
2 Foundation. He stated Ms. Williams has brought the community together with her  
3 energy and passion and has brought pickleball to everyone in the Palo Alto community.  
4 He recommended supporting the needs of pickleball in Palo Alto.

5 Chair Greenfield thanked the speakers and appreciated hearing from both the tennis and  
6 pickleball communities.

7 Commissioner Cribbs restated that she was in full support of the 6-month trial period.  
8 She encouraged joining the joint group to have a discussion about how to utilize all of  
9 the courts and make them better for the future. She stated it is important for the  
10 community to work together for the benefit of the children. She thanked the Staff for  
11 trying to avoid tension and bad feeling when people are trying to get exercise and have a  
12 good time.

13 Commissioner Freeman also thanked the community for coming out and being  
14 passionate about both tennis and pickleball. The ad hoc had spent a lot of time with Mr.  
15 Howard and his team for the last 2 months listening to both sides. Just like pickleball,  
16 this policy is evolving quickly and is worth trying. He encouraged his fellow  
17 commissioners to approve this. It will give the opportunity to look at other options. He  
18 stated a pickleball court can be set up nearly anywhere, even on top of garages and  
19 buildings, which is not true of tennis. He also stated it can take 90 minutes to play a  
20 game of tennis, whereas it takes 15 to 20 minutes for 4 people to play pickleball. He  
21 encouraged the tennis and pickleball communities to work together to help develop this  
22 plan going forward.

23 Commissioner Brown felt this was an example of the City being responsive to the  
24 evolving needs in the City and determining whether a policy is still working for the  
25 users. She pointed out the accessibility and comments about injured tennis players  
26 picking up pickleball. The interest in creating youth programming around pickleball  
27 with more guaranteed court time was also factored into this decision. She stated data-  
28 informed decision-making was important to the Commission and felt Mr. Howard did a  
29 great job in that area. She did not think it was a bad thing for Palo Alto to be a regional  
30 hub for pickleball and did not like the suggestion of a resident requirement or preference,  
31 which does not fit with the goals and objectives of the Park Master Plan. A goal of this  
32 policy was to improve simplicity and make it easier for people to understand.  
33 Establishing a feedback loop to continue to work with Staff is important to evaluate  
34 changes and continue the strong record of being responsive. She asked how someone  
35 would volunteer or serve on the joint group.

36 Mr. Howard requested they contact him at [adam.howard@cityofpaloalto.org](mailto:adam.howard@cityofpaloalto.org).



1 Commissioner Kleinhaus requested that Staff include in the community group some  
2 neighbors in the area, from Stevenson House or across Charleston, to make sure they are  
3 okay with the changes.

4 Mr. Howard stated the group would not focus on that neighborhood alone but he would  
5 try to involve neighborhood associations around the larger parks where the opportunity  
6 exists.

7 Commission Kleinhaus stated noise is troublesome to people. She did not feel the noise  
8 was excessive but wanted to know what people who live there had to say. She suggested  
9 checking with residents nearby to see that there are no environmental concerns or impact  
10 on their lives.

11 Commissioner Oche stated the temporary resolution might help resolve what is on hand  
12 at the moment. She hoped for more information about the committee and what the next  
13 steps would be. She wanted residents to know they were heard and the Commission  
14 wants to make the right decision to fit both parties.

15 Vice Chair LaMere stated these issues point to broader issues of continuing to engage  
16 with sports in the winter, the relationship with the school district about Cubberley, and  
17 the land by the Baylands Athletic Facility that was designated when the golf course was  
18 redone, looking at use of space and trying to find win-win solutions for everyone. He  
19 was excited to see how this 6-month trial works out.

20 Chair Greenfield stated it is a complicated issue that a lot of people care about. He  
21 wanted to ensure that parking impacts would be monitored during the trial. He asked to  
22 include a policy guideline that usage should go to the dedicated courts first.

23 Mr. Howard stated the language would be included that for pickleball priority, the  
24 permanent courts should be used first before moving on to the joint-use space.

25 Chair Greenfield asked to come up with a better name for the community courts group  
26 and suggested Racquet Court Advisory Group. He found the slide showing the  
27 allocation of the courts to be compelling in terms of the numbers if the trial went ahead.  
28 There are a lot of other variables, but he stated the numbers felt fair and reasonable in  
29 considering the number of people using the pickleball courts. Living near Mitchell Park,  
30 Chair Greenfield agreed that there seems to be more demand at the pickleball courts than  
31 the tennis courts and supported the trial. He did not take lightly taking courts away from  
32 the tennis community and was hopeful this would be temporary. He hoped this issue  
33 would push the envelope in the need for change, with Cubberley potentially being a site  
34 where lighted tennis courts could be increased.

35 Vice Chair LaMere asked how big the Racquet Court Advisory Group would be.

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1 Mr. Howard stated 8 to 10 people would keep it manageable so good communication  
2 could take place. Those people would go back to a larger audience and gather  
3 information and would be a mix of court users and neighbors.

4 Chair Greenfield stated it would potentially become an application process.

5 Mr. Howard stated if there was a larger audience that wanted to be included, there could  
6 be a selection or making sure everybody has an opportunity to participate. He would  
7 like to see the process resolve the conflict and then get the group together, potentially by  
8 February, to have a positive path forward. People may contact him about this starting  
9 immediately.

10 Mr. Anderson clarified that Staff would begin evaluating the usage in 6 months. He  
11 wanted to ensure there was no miscommunication on when this would come back to the  
12 Commission and what happens in 6 months. He suggested having the time frame be part  
13 of the motion.

14 Mr. Howard stated that the policy would be updated to reflect this change and Staff will  
15 begin investigating whether that is working in 6 months. There is no expiration date. He  
16 stated 6 months will to give it time to change and see how things are going to be  
17 impacted before looking at it.

18 Chair Greenfield asked if this is a trial or a policy change.

19 Mr. Howard stated it is a policy change with no permanent structural changes to the  
20 courts. Like any other policy, it could be changed in the future. The intention is not to  
21 make a policy change and leave it; whether it is working and/or additional changes need  
22 to be made will continue to be investigated. The policy change could happen as soon as  
23 next month, and it would be in effect for around 6 months before Staff started evaluating  
24 how it has impacted the courts and the community.

25 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated she believed a policy change with change of use needed  
26 SEQA associated whereas a pilot would not. She asked if it would be better to have a  
27 pilot for 6 months to evaluate how effective it is and how well it serves the population  
28 and then change the policy.

29 Mr. Howard stated that was not necessary because the use of the courts would not be  
30 changed. It would still be a joint-use policy for both courts with no physical changes to  
31 how the courts are being used, only the time of the priority use. He was not sure how to  
32 allow the change to take place without changing the policy.

33 Commissioner Cribbs asked Mr. Howard to review again where the tennis and pickleball  
34 courts are.

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1 Mr. Howard did so, showing the tennis courts, the designated pickleball courts, and the  
2 joint-use courts lined for both sports. On the joint-use courts, priority is currently given  
3 7 days a week to pickleball from 8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. and tennis from 2:30 p.m. to 10 p.m.  
4 The change proposed is that the priority on these 2 courts would go to pickleball 8 a.m.  
5 to 10 p.m. 7 days a week but the courts would not physically change and would remain  
6 dual striped and available to tennis if pickleball players were not on them.

7 Chair Greenfield asked if the temporary nets on the joint-use pickleball courts would be  
8 put away each night and set up each morning.

9 Mr. Howard stated that was the expectation.

10 Commissioner Kleinhaus asked if someone may finish a game while playing or must  
11 leave right away.

12 Mr. Howard asked that the community allow people to finish their play.

13 **MOTION**

14 Commissioner Brown moved that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend the  
15 City Council adopt the update to the Court Usage Policy with changes to the priority  
16 hours on the joint-use courts in Mitchell Park to provide pickleball priority 7 days a  
17 week from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m., with reevaluation to begin in 6 months.

18 The motion was seconded by Commissioner Freeman, who encouraged the tennis and  
19 pickleball communities to work toward supporting a solution that will work for both  
20 parties.

21 Information about creation of the Racquet Court Advisory Group would be included in  
22 the staff report that goes to City Council when considering the motion.

23 The motion passed, 7-0, by roll call vote.

24 **5. E-Bike Ordinance – Daren Anderson – Action**

25 Mr. Anderson presented an action item on the Open Spaces and Parks Electric Bicycle  
26 and Electric Conveyances policy. The ad hoc and Staff met with the Pedestrian and  
27 Bicycle Advisory Committee (PABAC) to get feedback on the draft policy on E-bikes  
28 and other electric conveyances, and PABAC passed a motion stating they do not support  
29 the draft E-bike guidelines. They recognized E-bikes are becoming more popular and  
30 there is a need to create some guidelines but urged the PRC to wait until completion of  
31 the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan update, scheduled to begin in early 2023  
32 and take between 18 and 24 months to complete, before submitting any  
33 recommendations to Council. Some of the comments from PABAC regarding the status

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1 of the current E-bike laws prompted Staff to review existing regulation R1-37 and  
2 current and pending California Vehicle Code legislation with the City Attorney's office.  
3 The attorney's office explained that CSD Staff had misinterpreted the status of the  
4 existing regulation, R1-37. The regulation, which Staff thought prohibited E-bikes on  
5 trails, became obsolete when California Vehicle Code 21207 took effect. Additionally,  
6 AB 1909, which takes effect on January 1, 2023, will remove the prohibition of class 3  
7 E-bikes on trails unless prohibited specifically by ordinance. That means class 1 and 2  
8 E-bikes are currently allowed on open space and park trails, except Foothills Park where  
9 no bikes are allowed on trails, and on January 1, 2023, class 3 E-bikes will be allowed on  
10 those same trails.

11 The ad hoc committee supported a common policy for all E-bikes without differentiating  
12 between classes, a change from the previous draft. Transportation Staff had advocated  
13 for an E-bike policy that promotes safe speed behavior rather than one based on  
14 classification as distinguishing between the different classes of E-bikes is difficult if not  
15 impossible. He reviewed the ad hoc's proposal for the draft Open Space Policy: all  
16 classes of E-bikes would be allowed on paved roads and trails and prohibited elsewhere,  
17 including unpaved roads and trails; all E-bikes would be allowed for city staff in open  
18 space and parks for maintenance and enforcement purposes; and other electric powered  
19 mobility devices would be allowed on paved roads and trails in the Baylands Nature  
20 Preserve and prohibited in other open space preserves. For urban parks, all E-bikes and  
21 other electric-powered mobility devices would be allowed on paved and unpaved trails in  
22 parks and prohibited elsewhere. On the previous draft, class 3 E-bikes were not going to  
23 be allowed in urban parks. There was feedback from Transportation Staff that  
24 prohibiting that would cause problems for parents taking their kids to school. The ad hoc  
25 felt it was a good compromise and did not want to interfere with that activity. The ad  
26 hoc recommended City Council adopt an update to Ordinance 22.04.220 and the City  
27 Manager approve an update to the parks and open space regulations R1-18 and R1-37.

28 If the Commission chose to make this recommendation and City Council were to adopt  
29 the change, the ordinance would become effective 31 days after the second reading. If it  
30 were an emergency ordinance, it would take effect immediately upon adoption. The  
31 update to the parks and open space regulations would become effective at the same time  
32 as the ordinance, upon adoption by the City Manager. Some of the ad hoc was able to  
33 meet with PABAC, and the Chair would share that conversation. Staff also wished to  
34 meet with the City/School Transportation Committee. This is an evolving policy  
35 because it is an evolving recreational activity. E-bikes will continue to adapt and  
36 change, and Staff will need to track those changes and come back to the Commission  
37 with updates and feedback.

38 Chair Greenfield stated that after discussing this item at the October meeting, the  
39 intention had been to return to the Commission with an action recommendation in

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1 December. Instead it is back today based on feedback from PABAC regarding the  
2 applicability of the current regulations. As of 2 weeks ago, E-bikes would not have been  
3 permitted at Arastradero Preserve or Baylands because there was a regulation in place  
4 that motorized vehicles were not permitted. It is now understood that class 1 and 2 E-  
5 bikes are not considered motorized vehicles; therefore, class 1 and 2 E-bikes are now  
6 permitted everywhere that bicycles are permitted. Beginning January 1, new legislation  
7 also reclassifies class 3 E-bikes as not motorized vehicles, making them similar to class 1  
8 and 2. That was the reason for coming forward more quickly. He appreciated the need  
9 to work in conjunction with other pertinent efforts going on in the City but did not feel it  
10 was realistic to wait 18 to 24 months for the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation Plan  
11 update before coming back with a recommendation. The proposal is meant to be simple,  
12 straightforward, and easy to understand. There is no enforcement available for this, so  
13 the focus is on encouraging compliance and community support.

14 Chair Greenfield stated the ad hoc met with Transportation Staff prior to putting the  
15 packets up, and he and Commissioner Freeman were able to join the PABAC meeting  
16 this afternoon. Chair Greenfield appreciated the expertise PABAC offers and takes  
17 seriously their motion that they were not in support of the previous proposal. He looked  
18 forward to hearing from PABAC members as part of public speaking on this item. He  
19 added the recommendation is focused on simplicity. To move forward with opening  
20 unpaved trails at open space areas to E-bikes, there is still work to do. The open space  
21 areas do not all need to be considered the same, but there needs to be improved signage,  
22 opportunities for education, and time for Staff to get things set up. He stated it was  
23 similar to how Foothills Nature Preserve was opened up very quickly and was a  
24 significant burden for Staff to deal with at the time based on the timeline associated with  
25 the change.

26 Paul Goldstein, member of PABAC, stated there has been discussion about the need for  
27 speed in passing this ordinance. In the Baylands, bicycles and class 1 and 2 E-bikes are  
28 allowed but class 3's are currently not; as of January 1, class 3 E-bikes will be legal.  
29 This minor change is not deserving of the rushed process. His main disagreement with  
30 the proposed policy was the prohibition of E-bikes in the Baylands. Bikes and E-bikes  
31 are currently allowed, and he suggest continuing to allow them and monitor the use for  
32 any problems. He stated the process to update the Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation  
33 Plan is beginning and suggested delaying any bicycle prohibitions until the update is  
34 completed and usage is monitored, using that information to form a policy in due course.

35 Rani Fischer, Environmental Advocacy Assistant for Santa Clara Valley Audubon  
36 Society, urged the Commission to oppose the ad hoc committee's recommendation and to  
37 prohibit all electronic bicycles on unpaved trails in Palo Alto's nature preserves. She  
38 gave information that birds will fly 145 feet from their nests after sensing a perceived  
39 threat, wasting energy and body heat and subjecting them to predation, and that fast-

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1 moving objects like E-bikes are more threatening to birds than slower-moving  
2 pedestrians are. She encouraged reading a recent story by Ed Young in the Atlantic  
3 titled How Animals Perceive the World, which provides examples of how "every  
4 creature lives in its own sensory bubble" and how humans are discovering how impactful  
5 their sensory comfort bubble is on other species. People encroaching into animals'  
6 habitats may cause displacement, disconnect movement patterns, and increase habitat  
7 segmentation. E-bikes erect a wall of sound along trails in the preserves that create  
8 obstacles to animal connectivity, reproduction, and safety. She requested the  
9 Commission prohibit electronic bicycles on all unpaved trails and provide opportunities  
10 for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education.

11 Susan DesJardin, Chair of Sierra Club's Bay Alive Campaign, stated the San Francisco  
12 Bay is a critical habitat for fish, birds, and other wildlife, but urban and industrial growth  
13 have put pressure on the Bay's environmental health. Climate change, including sea  
14 level rise and groundwater rise, poses a threat to ecosystems all around the Bay. These  
15 ecosystems need to remain a vibrant place for wildlife and a buffer against climate  
16 change. She requested the Commission limit the E-bike use to only paved trails in open  
17 space areas, prohibiting E-bikes on unpaved trails. This policy provides simplicity for  
18 bike riders and pedestrians and is consistent with neighboring agencies. These areas are  
19 habitats of endangered species and provide high-tide refuge for many other species of  
20 birds and animals. It is critical not to degrade these habitats with high-speed and/or  
21 noisy vehicles on trails. It is unfortunate that no funding is available for enforcement, so  
22 it is doubly important that adequate signage for E-bike restriction and speed limitations  
23 be provided both in the Baylands and on the City's website.

24 Penny Ellson, PABAC Chair, speaking as an individual, thanked Staff for revising the  
25 draft policy to allow bikes and E-bikes on all park trails and strongly supported the  
26 policy. These trails are important, providing safe off-road routes to PAUSD schools,  
27 playing fields, libraries, community centers, and other city facilities for less experienced  
28 and confident bicyclists of all ages and abilities. Regarding E-bikes in open spaces, she  
29 stated all Palo Alto open spaces are not equal and terrain is an important factor to  
30 consider. She understand prohibiting E-bikes from hilly areas of open space but asked  
31 the Commission to consider the mostly flat Bay Trails open space differently. Because  
32 the Bay Trails connect to trails in neighboring communities that allow E-bikes and many  
33 of the trails are wide enough to be considered roads, it would be very difficult to enforce  
34 a prohibition of E-bikes on the Bay Trails. She encouraged defining and enforcing rules  
35 for behavior related to speed and behavior around equestrians, pedestrians, and wildlife.  
36 She felt the December City Council action item was premature, with sufficient outreach  
37 not having been done.

38 Arthur Liberman, member of PABAC, stated there are 2 key features behind the Staff  
39 recommendation. The first is the wish to treat all the open space preserves the same

1 way. The Baylands is different from the other Palo Alto open space preserves with flat  
2 terrain and trails that are wide gravel roadways. The Midpen District treats its open  
3 space preserves differently when it comes to allowing dogs off leash and E-bikes, and  
4 the half-mile unpaved trail in the Ravenswood Preserve where E-bikes are allowed is  
5 essentially identical to the Adobe Creek trail or the unpaved section of the San  
6 Francisquito Creek Trail in the Baylands. The second feature of the Staff  
7 recommendation is its desire to be consistent with the Midpen Open Space District's  
8 policies, but prohibiting access of E-bikes in the Baylands is not consistent with that  
9 policy. At the Midpen Directors' Meeting in June, in the discussion of a motion to  
10 continue E-bike access in Ravenswood, there was no mention of any environmental or  
11 ecological damage caused by E-bike riders. He asked the Commission to reconsider the  
12 Draft Open Space E-bike Policy to allow E-bikes on the Baylands unpaved trails or to  
13 create a pilot program that would allow E-bikes there for an evaluation period.

14 Eileen McLaughlin, representing the Citizens Committee to Complete the Refuge,  
15 supported the recommendation of the ad hoc committee regarding E-bikes. She stated  
16 she attended a Palo Alto webinar called Balancing Public Access and Habitat  
17 Enhancement at the Baylands in which speakers highlighted local scientific studies of the  
18 reaction of wildlife to human activity on trails. There is a direct relationship between  
19 human presence and avoidance behavior by wildlife in the vicinity, with a need to take  
20 all due precautions for both people and wildlife sharing these spaces, including limiting  
21 E-bikes to paved roads and trails. She had accompanied a person in a wheelchair on  
22 trails and stated it can be uncomfortable when a rude bicyclist flies by. She stated there  
23 needs to be greater emphasis on safe speed requirements rather than a specific speed.  
24 She stated keeping bikes on paved trails may not be in the best interest of individuals  
25 covered by ADA regulations or others casually enjoying the open space and questioned  
26 if the recommendations were adequate for those situations.

27 Mike Ferreira, who is on the Executive Committee of the Sierra Club, stated he was in  
28 attendance at the MROSD meeting referenced by an earlier speaker. He felt it was wise  
29 that MROSD, with the exception of 1 trail, limited E-bikes to paved trails. He stated it  
30 was irritating to deal with speeding bikes or to be shouted at to get out of the way of  
31 speeding bikes on the Bay Trail and hated to think of how fast electric bikes would run  
32 on that trail. He envisioned different trails for pedestrians and bicycles. MROSD did a  
33 lot of environmental studies prior, which prompted them to have caution, and he stated  
34 there had not been analysis of that impact for electric bikes on the trails the Commission  
35 is thinking about. He suggested proceeding as previously decided and obtaining credible  
36 environmental data before going any further.

37 Dashiell Leeds, Conservation Organizer for the Sierra Club Loma Prieta Chapter, agreed  
38 with the previous comments in support of protecting ecosystems. He stated these  
39 policies present a good balance between ecological protection and recreational access

1 and allow commuters to use the Bay Trail. He supported the recommendation of the  
2 PRC Electric Conveyances Policy Ad Hoc Committee and asked the Commission to  
3 recommend that Council adopt the ordinance and regulation on electric bicycles and  
4 electric coasting devices. He stated habitat monitoring is important and Palo Alto should  
5 maintain a science-based approach to trail policy management to ensure ecosystems are  
6 protected.

7 Vice Chair LaMere asked if bicycles have always been allowed in Baylands.

8 Mr. Anderson stated regular bicycles have been allowed.

9 Chair Greenfield asked Mr. Anderson to comment regarding the urgency and particularly  
10 impacts to Staff now that E-bike are permitted at 3 open space areas.

11 Mr. Anderson has discussed with the rangers the concerns they have enforcing this. For  
12 example, rangers have increasingly seen one-wheel users migrate off the trail and onto  
13 natural areas. The ranger staff fears this is going to grow and become an entrenched  
14 habit. A lot of the trails in the Baylands are very road-like but happen to go through  
15 habitats filled with endangered species. There are unpaved trails across from the ranger  
16 station and the Environmental Volunteer Center that are only 4 feet wide and made of  
17 oyster shells. Allowing E-bikes on unpaved trails would include those as well.

18 Commissioner Freeman asked if telling the difference visually between an electric and  
19 peddle bikes when regular bikes are allowed on the Baylands Trails would be an extra  
20 burden on the rangers.

21 Mr. Anderson stated it would be a challenge. The ad hoc recommended having good  
22 signage and education. If this policy moves forward, Staff would concurrently work on  
23 the signage plan and website updates for education. The biggest part would be through  
24 voluntary compliance. If this policy were to go forward, the rangers would be able to  
25 articulate the policy to people who ask. They do not have radar guns, but when they see  
26 gross violations of speed, they will stop the rider and speak with them. There would then  
27 be a conversation about where electric bikes are allowed.

28 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated science-based decisions are important. In the previously  
29 mentioned webinar Palo Alto hosted, one of the first things that came up was that people  
30 do not understand their own impacts. There were talks about how difficult it is to keep  
31 people from interfering with endangered species, and many impacts are not noticeable to  
32 people but very noticeable to the animals. There are a lot of endangered species in the  
33 Baylands, and Palo Alto needs to protect that. She felt it was important to study impacts  
34 of faster movement with associated sounds before making a decision and wanted to be  
35 precautionary rather than do something and find out the impact when it was too late.  
36 The ad hoc discussed that if the rules are changing and rangers cannot catch up, there



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1 will be another situation like what happened with Foothills Park, this time involving  
2 quite a lot of endangered species, which is of great concern. She supported the ad hoc  
3 recommendations. Parks and Rec has responsibilities other groups do not, recreation and  
4 also nature. There is no one else watching for those endangered species. She wanted to  
5 strike the balance that allows commuters to use the Bay Trail where it is paved and allow  
6 non-motorized bicycles to continue to use some of the facilities.

7 Commissioner Freeman stated this was a difficult decision, coming down to people  
8 being responsible, which is where safety concerns come into play. One challenge is  
9 trying to make it easy on the rangers and Staff, but there is a big growth in electric  
10 conveyance vehicles that will get bigger over time. This is a recreational technology that  
11 is changing quickly, so having something evolving in place might be the best way to go.  
12 The biggest things are the right documentation and signage and protecting the  
13 environment. He fully supported the way the policy is laid out but thought it was  
14 something that will evolve over time.

15 Chair Greenfield reviewed the policy again. Education and signage is very important,  
16 and the need for improved parking for bicycles at the open space areas should be  
17 prioritized and specific locations to add parking identified. Bixby Park is part of the  
18 Baylands Open Space, so the open space guidelines apply there. As far as the Midpen  
19 policy, E-bikes are allowed at Ravenswood and limited portions of Rancho San Antonio,  
20 but Ravenswood is essentially an outlier within the Midpen policy. E-bikes are not  
21 permitted on paved roads at most Midpen sites, so he believed this policy was consistent  
22 with that of Midpen. He believed this policy recommendation struck a good balance  
23 between the transportation and recreation needs of the community and preservation.  
24 Transportation through the Baylands on the Bay Trail and through parks used as safe  
25 routes to school and other destinations has been prioritized. In the open space preserves,  
26 the policy recommends prioritizing environmental and ecological protection over the  
27 recreational desires of the community.

28 Commissioner Oche asked about the plan in terms of awareness and signage and also  
29 speed. As this subject will be evolving, she asked how often it should be reviewed to  
30 address balance and respond to community needs.

31 Mr. Anderson stated there is not yet a plan regarding the signage. Most signage is at the  
32 trailheads to catch people coming into the preserve or at a trail, so that is where it would  
33 be added to reflect any policy, clarifying which bikes are allowed. There are trail  
34 etiquette signs in some areas, and more of them are needed to make it clearer. That will  
35 help cut down on conflict between equestrians, bicyclists, and hikers. Speed is also a  
36 part of that. Staff will work with the ranger staff to come up with layout and messaging.

37 Commissioner Cribbs asked if there is a lot of conflict right now or if the concern is  
38 anticipation of conflict.

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1 Mr. Anderson stated there is some conflict right now but not a lot. The rangers have met  
2 with the ad hoc, shared their perspectives, and noted where they have seen an increase in  
3 things. The rangers at Palo Alto are multifaceted and not spending the majority of their  
4 day watching for those things. Rangers get complaints on both sides of the argument,  
5 people who want to be able to use their E-bikes and those who do not want E-bikes in  
6 open spaces.

7 Commissioner Brown stated this was not unlike the general principal of the sidewalk  
8 policy in which there was blanket state legislation to fit into the policy for Palo Alto's  
9 specific parks and open space areas. She appreciated the outreach done to PABAC as  
10 well as the environmental groups but was disappointed there was not more in terms of  
11 connectivity and transportation planning efforts. MTC, the regional planning agency,  
12 has a Bay Trail Gap Closure Plan to connect 500 miles of trail in the Bay Area, which  
13 this trail is part of, and that was not referenced. Being involved in their public  
14 engagement process would be essential, and the Baylands needs to be reevaluated. She  
15 was in favor of the recommendation and keeping it more restrictive right now but also  
16 being mindful of what other agencies on the trail are doing, not just Midpen or other  
17 open space areas, and the transportation aspect. She would like to see more about the  
18 equity component moving forward.

19 Vice Chair LaMere also realized a policy was needed with the action being taken at the  
20 state level but wanted to revisit the policy in the Baylands at some point. He understood  
21 the difficulty in identifying different classes of E-bikes but thought that allowing class 1  
22 peddle-assist in the Baylands where regular bicycles are allowed was reasonable. He  
23 supported the policy as is.

24 Mr. Anderson stated the Bay Trail aspect was a good note to see what is going on around  
25 the Bay. The ad hoc made sure there was connectivity on the part of the Bay Trail most  
26 frequently used. He noted that Midpen had commissioned a report entitled E-bikes and  
27 Open Space, The Current State of Research and Management Recommendations,  
28 prepared by the San Francisco Estuary Institute. In the executive summary, almost all of  
29 the takeaways noted the dearth of information and more research needed. That will be  
30 coming soon. The impacts to the Baylands should be reevaluated based on the research  
31 coming and following the broader Bay Area and leaders like Midpen. He hoped Staff,  
32 the ad hoc, and the Commission could track what is happening and make adjustments,  
33 having an adaptive management technique.

34 Chair Greenfield stated he would expect to revisit this before the Bicycle and Pedestrian  
35 Transportation Plan is completed 18 to 24 months from now. The usage and impacts of  
36 E-bikes in the parks, on the paved trails in the Baylands, and on the unpaved trails in the  
37 Baylands even if they are prohibited need be evaluated. An E-bike ad hoc needs to be  
38 continued in the coming years.

1 Commissioner Freeman asked if there is a way to monitor traffic over the next several  
2 months to see whether there has been an increase in bicycles and whether rangers might  
3 be able to tell how many of those were E-bikes or other electric conveyances.

4 Mr. Anderson stated it is challenging. Having 14 entrances to the Baylands makes it  
5 difficult to adequately monitor 1 spot without an unfeasible endeavor. Spot checks and  
6 trying to extrapolate information from smaller bits of analysis is possible but of uncertain  
7 value. The rangers will be directed to make anecdotal observations and notes to the best  
8 they can and possibly do an intercept to ask people questions or try to monitor.

9 There was discussion of wording of the motion to be proposed.

10 **MOTION**

11 Chair Greenfield moved that the Parks and Recreation Commission recommend that:

- 12 1. City Council adopt an update to Ordinance 22.04.220 to include electric bicycles  
13 and electric coasting devices;
- 14 2. City Manager adopt the updated Park and Open Space Regulations R1-18 and R1-  
15 37 to regulate electric bicycles and electric coasting devices.

16 Seconded by Commissioner Kleinhaus, the motion passed, 7-0, by roll call vote.

17 **6. CIP Review – Lam Do – Discussion**

18 Lam Do, Superintendent with Community Services, presented a preliminary list of  
19 Capital Improvement Projects under consideration. Staff sought the Commission's  
20 feedback on projects presented, prioritization of these projects, and an assessment for  
21 any missing projects not listed that should be considered. He reviewed the CIP criteria  
22 and prioritization criteria and presented a list of the CIPs the Department is considering  
23 for fiscal year '24, ongoing CIPs proposed annually, and CIPs for years 2 through 5 for  
24 planning purposes, primarily projects under Parks and Recreation. He also presented  
25 CIP needs identified that are not yet formalized because some need further vetting or  
26 more scope and others need more exploration of the cost and/or funding source. He  
27 spoke about the CIP process timeline and how projects get from discussion to proposal to  
28 adoption.

29 Chair Greenfield stated it would be helpful for Staff to clarify what they need from the  
30 Parks Commission. He also thanked Staff for getting this to the Commission early  
31 enough to make recommendations and wanted to make sure to get this on the agenda  
32 every November.

1 Mr. Do asked the Commission to consider whether to proceed with the preliminary list  
2 presented and what has been prioritized for fiscal year '24 versus the other fiscal years.  
3 He also asked if there were any projects the Commission thought the Department should  
4 consider that is not on the above lists. It is an open discussion of prioritization,  
5 omissions, and whether what the Commission wants the Department to focus on.

6 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated the Parks Master Plan included pollinator corridors and  
7 ways to connect parks, either along streets or asking homeowners to plant if they have a  
8 creek in the backyard, and there was no follow-up. There was a map of butterfly  
9 corridors connecting the parks with a biodiversity overlay, looking at creating ways for  
10 birds and butterflies to get through the urban landscape, which are important to prevent  
11 the loss of biodiversity. Palo Alto plants native trees but could do more than that. Some  
12 of the mitigations that have been discussed and not done may need to come into  
13 budgeting. She worried about extra lighting in parks in general. People wanted lights  
14 installed at Ramos Park, and it has not increased use but caused a tree to be trimmed  
15 severely. She mentioned a webinar discussing the impacts of lighting and did not  
16 consider lighting an improvement.

17 Mr. Do stated Staff could talk to the Park Architect in Public Works to implement these  
18 aspects and could also address some of them separately, not necessarily through a CIP.  
19 The pollinator corridors could be addressed through the operating budget as not  
20 necessarily a large project but implemented collectively at different locations.

21 Mr. Anderson stated there has been some headway on that in partnership with Juanita  
22 Salisbury, adding 8 pollinator gardens and partnering with churches and other people  
23 along the corridor and Embarcadero Road. They are taking passive turf or ineffectual  
24 habitat areas, either dirt or nonnative shrubs, and converting them to diverse, well-  
25 functioning habitat areas that support pollinators. That endeavor was supported through  
26 operating funds. He echoed the idea of making sure to have mitigation funding. For  
27 plantings in the \$50,000 range, it has to be a CIP. He stated he would work with Mr. Do  
28 to find a place to put that in.

29 Chair Greenfield stated the Master Plan is an aspirational document that is an unfunded  
30 mandate. CIPs are a potential way to get funding, but things have to fit into priority. He  
31 stated the process is to suggest ideas to Staff, who can then guide the Commission.

32 Commissioner Brown thought a lot of what has been proposed had come up previously.  
33 She was happy to see park restrooms and Magical Bridge. She asked about the cost of  
34 the Foothills Park bathroom, which was originally slated earlier.

35 Mr. Anderson stated there are 3 aging restrooms at Foothills where the structure and  
36 supporting infrastructure need to be replaced. The water and sewer lines also need work,  
37 which is part of why the prices are so high. Staff wants to be empathetic to concerns

1 about the expense for a restroom project being so high and wants to be judicial with city  
2 funds. The large prices were recently vetted by the Facilities Team in Public Works who  
3 said they are steep but accurate. Staff is looking into cost savings elements, such as a  
4 prefab that would fit with the Foothills aesthetic. Costs are dynamic and frequently  
5 change. Staff will keep the feedback in mind when deciding where different projects end  
6 up on the final list.

7 Commissioner Brown asked if there is a process to take advantage of a low bidding  
8 environment and move things up in the CIP if the price goes down.

9 Mr. Anderson stated things can move up on the list for a number of reasons, such as  
10 favorable bidding, grant funding, or a change in the status of the infrastructure itself.

11 Commissioner Oche asked what the ongoing CIPs covers.

12 Mr. Do stated there are 6 ongoing CIPs, and they are not specific to any location. For  
13 example, athletic courts resurfacing could be in any park based on the age of the tennis  
14 or basketball courts. Of the 6 items, the only one that is location specific is open space  
15 lake and pond maintenance, to remove aquatic plant life from Boronda Lake annually.

16 Commissioner Oche asked if this is the final time to give feedback.

17 Mr. Do stated feedback can be given tonight or through the ad hoc within the next month  
18 before the proposal is submitted.

19 Chair Greenfield asked that feedback not go through the ad hoc but directly to Staff.

20 Commissioner Cribbs asked if something like an emergency for the soccer fields skews  
21 the priorities.

22 Mr. Anderson stated the park emergency CIP was \$125,000, which was not enough, and  
23 there was not a CIP in place already. In that situation, Staff consults with the Office of  
24 Management and Budget for recommendations and looks at other CIPs where savings  
25 may be anticipated and the budget may be adjusted. The infill at Mayfield is a prime  
26 example of that.

27 Commissioner Cribbs asked if the location of the restroom listed as TBD on the  
28 proposed CIPs for 2024 is the Magical Bridge.

29 Mr. Anderson stated it is. He stated the funding is an important element but without the  
30 staff to implement it, it is very difficult to make it happen. Staff has met with Public  
31 Works Engineering twice, and each time they have asked to push something out. The  
32 first reaction to adding another project on top of upcoming ones is to push the Magical  
33 Bridge out, but that is critical to the community. One option is to see if another group

1 within Public Works Engineering can manage it because the typical group is taxed.  
2 Hiring a project manager can help, but staff would still need to be involved. That will be  
3 something to explore in order to stay on top of everything, assuming the money is  
4 available.

5 Commissioner Freeman stated this gives a good picture of the projects. He asked if  
6 priority can change over time if something becomes more important.

7 Mr. Anderson stated changes take place as priorities shift. For example, the sailing  
8 station at the Baylands is old with not a lot of life left on it. Using \$30,000 from the park  
9 emergency fund toward that when the 2 docks separated added another decade to the  
10 lifespan, rather than replacing it for \$1M. Instead of being in the 1- to 3-year time frame,  
11 it is not even on the plan right now.

12 Commissioner Freeman stated when Staff put together the budget list for '23, '24, '25,  
13 they likely did not anticipate pickleball becoming a big thing. He asked if it would get  
14 factored into the budget going forward if there is a decision to build additional pickleball  
15 courts and if the price associated with that is under ongoing CIPs or would be a  
16 completely new project.

17 Mr. Anderson stated it would likely be a standalone because the ongoing CIPs would not  
18 have that amount of money. Rather than earmarking \$1M for a pickleball court in '25, it  
19 would likely be the other way around, doing some planning and community outreach and  
20 then creating a CIP.

21 Chair Greenfield asked if there is an annual increase typically added to the ongoing CIPs  
22 and if it is needed this year.

23 Mr. Do stated there have been increases to the ongoing CIPs, but it is not annual. After a  
24 number of years without any increases and exhausting of the budget, the Office of  
25 Management and Budget gave a one-time bump that is ongoing. At present, there is not  
26 another acceleration percentage annually.

27 Chair Greenfield asked if it should be considered differently this year due to  
28 unprecedented inflation.

29 Mr. Do stated the Office of Management and Budget is aware of bids for projects  
30 coming in much higher than anticipated. Staff has gone back to ask for more funding for  
31 both ongoing and existing projects, and that is always on the table as an ask.

32 Commissioner Kleinhaus did not understand why \$175,000 was budgeted for improving  
33 trails and did not include planting native plants next to them. She stated it was not less  
34 important than maintaining or building a trail and wanted to see green infrastructure as

1 part of the picture. She stated Mountain View has a biodiversity overlay on their  
2 programs now with a priority of biodiversity in the city. She wanted to see a wildlife  
3 preservation plan with improvements focusing on wildlife rather than things like  
4 increasing parking. She suggested looking for a project that actually does something for  
5 wildlife and not just removing weeds and fixing trails.

6 Mr. Anderson stated 10,000 native plants are planted every year for almost the last 20  
7 years, but there can always be more because these areas are so big. It is also built into  
8 CIPs for parks projects and is happening, sometimes via partnerships, operating funds, or  
9 capital embedded in ongoing projects. He mentioned a standalone CIP for \$100K for  
10 habitat improvements to be used wherever it is needed.

11 Chair Greenfield stated once something is on the list, it gains some inertia and gets  
12 funded. He stated it was reasonable to ask how to get more established regular funding  
13 for some of the natural environment initiatives.

14 Commissioner Kleinhaus stated quite a few projects done in recent years need to be  
15 upgraded because of use and asked about the impacts of adding more improvements  
16 because they need to be maintained. She questioned why they need to be done so  
17 frequently.

18 Mr. Anderson gave the example that the boardwalk is far too new to require a big repair  
19 project, but unfortunately due to regulations requiring natural wood to be used,  
20 shipworms and wood boring isopods have gotten into some of the pilings. The CIP will  
21 probably be to prevent future damage to the natural wood pilings. Some playgrounds  
22 have a lifespan of 20 years, but some older ones have wood bases that rot out faster and  
23 have a lifespan of 10 years. That changes the typical cycle. The Magical Bridge is  
24 interesting because it has 30,000 kids per month rather than the usual 1,000 or 2,000,  
25 with more wear. He stated that more assets making it more of a burden can be true.  
26 While every playground deserves to be as amazing as the Magical Bridge, bearing the  
27 financial burden of replacing it quickly needs to be considered. Staff tries to pool  
28 projects together so there would be a bigger time gap before the disruptive project;  
29 however, some assets do not age out at the same time. It is multifaceted.

30 Chair Greenfield thanked Staff for the detail on this item.

## 31 **7. Ad Hoc Committees and Liaison Updates – Discussion**

32 Chair Greenfield stated next month there is a fairly light agenda and encouraged detailed  
33 ad hoc and liaison updates.

34 Commissioner Brown stated she is working with Staff and the dog owners group on  
35 exploring a possible location in North Palo Alto area along Palo Alto Avenue for a dog

1 park. She will also continue discussions with the Barron Park group. She thanked Mr.  
2 Ghods for the timely updates to the agenda website.

3 Commissioner Cribbs also thanked Mr. Ghods that the fundraising ad hoc now has a  
4 page about how to give money to the Park and Recreation Commission.

5 Chair Greenfield asked Mr. Ghods to send out a link to commission members when  
6 adding new pages of interest to the Commission.

7 Commissioner Cribbs mentioned that the golf course tour with Chair Greenfield and  
8 Commissioner Kleinhaus to look at trees was incredibly interesting and hoped to  
9 continue to look at that. The recreational opportunities ad hoc had a good session with  
10 Chase and Adam about middle school athletics and learned about the program, which is  
11 serving a lot of middle school kids. There was idea about adding opportunity for  
12 fundraising for middle school athletics, and Mr. Anderson has talked with the City  
13 Attorney about what can be done. More work will be done on that. Regarding  
14 recreational opportunities, a presentation will be brought to the Commission in January  
15 to talk about the Recreation/Wellness Center and the status.

16 **COMMISSIONER/BOARD MEMBER QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, ANNOUNCEMENTS OR**  
17 **FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS**

18 Chair Greenfield stated all that is on the agenda next month is the urban forestry annual update and the  
19 AWPS. In January is the Wellness/Rec Center update, most likely a golf update to include First Tee,  
20 an aquatics update, and Cubberley restroom discussion.

21 Commissioner Kleinhaus requested an update on the tree part of the mitigations for the golf course.  
22 She stated there is still a lot of work being done on the wetlands but wanted a discussion for the trees.

23 Mr. Anderson stated Staff is behind on that and not prepared to bring a meaningful discussion.  
24 Starting with the ad hoc liaison would be helpful. That effort has been prioritized toward the wetland  
25 mitigation. Staff was supposed to have been monitoring that for quite some time, and for reasons  
26 including COVID and funding, it was not done. The primary push is to get with the Water Board,  
27 monitoring and managing those wetlands to reach a certain level of native cover. In addition to having  
28 Grassroots Ecology cage many naturally occurring oaks up in Arastradero Preserve as part of the  
29 mitigation for the tree loss at the golf course project, there was also other acreage that was supposed to  
30 be restored. It is unclear exactly where that is, if it happened, what was promised.

31 **ADJOURNMENT**

32 Meeting adjourned at 11:07 p.m.