



**September 20, 2023**

Re: 5.2 Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Update and Commission Input

Dear Parks and Recreation Commission,

GreenSpacesMV is a community group in Mountain View striving for healthy communities thriving with urban tree canopy, nature, and native biodiversity. In a time where Mountain View is experiencing rapid urbanization, biodiversity loss, and extreme heat, we hope to proactively design with nature in mind.

We hope that the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan will prioritize urban nature and help increase access to green spaces. We value our parks as green spaces. We envision that in ten years there will be small and large parks as a part of our network of green spaces that supports the health of our community and environment!

In this letter, we strongly recommend opportunities for Parks and Recreation and a top-priority outcome based on the consultant's key questions in the staff memo.

***Question 2: What are opportunities for expansion, improvement, or new additions for Mountain View Parks and Recreation/Community Services Department?***

- **Establish ambitious goals to increase parkland and large parks. Develop strategies, resources, and funding for implementation.** Set park acreage per person ratios of 5 acres per 1000 residents to be commensurate with the goals of our neighboring cities.
- **Advance the City's Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan, environmental sustainability and climate actions, and active transportation goals.** Nature and biodiversity can be incorporated into every park's and community asset design by prioritizing local California native plantings of trees and shrubs, and implementing maintenance practices that promote biodiversity<sup>1</sup>.
- **Engage and support volunteers.** It is difficult to start volunteer projects in our City's parks. Creating a streamlined process for community members/groups to initiate new programs and projects is essential. For example, while we had eager volunteers from the

---

<sup>1</sup> <http://internal.harveyecology.com/harvey/UrbanDesignGuide.pdf>

community, we felt delayed to do work in our pollinator habitat garden in Cuesta Park and the Butterfly Garden at Heritage Park.

- **Establish and invest in a local green workforce to sustain urban nature initiatives in our parks.** We love the collective impact brought by the Pollinator Habitat at Cuesta Park, Soil&Water community garden in Heritage Park, and trees planted by Canopy in various parks. The creation of long-term, city-wide jobs that manage community impact projects is ideal– perhaps under the greater role of advancing urban greening and biodiversity. We envision City jobs overseeing community gardening initiatives, providing training for proper care, and establishing sustainable maintenance plans.
- **Pilot “Pocket Forest” projects that enhance underutilized land and prioritize neighborhoods with scarce green spaces.** In 2022, Assemblymember Ash Kalra (D-San Jose) introduced a bill to establish California Pocket Forest Initiative to promote urban greening<sup>2</sup>. Schools in Berkeley are using pocket forests to combat climate change<sup>3</sup>.
- **Increase canopy coverage and tree diversity in our parks.** Planting trees in our parks will help advance tree equity in our City. Consider prioritizing planting in parks where urban nature is scarce and lacking natural shade e.g., newer parks with fewer mature trees. We think that playground structures in Wyandotte Park, Sierra Vista Park, and Del Medio Park could use more natural shade. We also strongly support planting trees in parks located by freeways and major roadways.
- **Enhance infrastructure within parks that would encourage people to walk and bike to parks.** We find that our parks are lacking water foundations or hydration stations including pet bowls, public-facing bathrooms, benches, and bike parking. For people to want to walk and bike across Mountain View, relax in our parks, play with their kids and bring their pets, we need more and newer infrastructure. Currently in Mountain View, we see investment in electric vehicle charging stations. Similarly, we should support active transportation across and within our city by adequately providing enhanced infrastructure within our parks.

### ***Question 3: What is your one top-priority outcome from the Strategic Plan?***

A priority outcome should be that many community members who reflect our diverse communities, engage in various ways to help make decisions about the park system and urban nature in our City. We provide a couple of recommendations.

- **Include questions and choices about urban nature, biodiversity, and access to park spaces in the community survey.** We appreciate the questions and collaborative process that the City of Palo Alto conducted in 2014 for distributing a community survey for its Parks, Trails, Open Space and Recreation Master Plan. The City of Palo Alto’s

---

<sup>2</sup> [Assemblymember Kalra Introduces Bill to Promote Urban Greening](#)

<sup>3</sup> [Berkeley schools' 'pocket forests' are taking root \(berkeleyside.org\)](#)

memo<sup>4</sup> provides the survey that includes questions about natural resources and habitat and connecting people to nature.

- **Provide additional community discussion opportunities throughout the strategic planning process.** Please consider providing times and dates alternative to public meetings and in different weeks. Also to help ensure inclusive outreach to our diverse communities, please consider working with community groups and members to develop an outreach list. We hope that making the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan is a collaborative process and would appreciate that diverse community members have meaningful, accessible ways to provide input throughout the process.

Thank you for considering our ideas and recommendations for Mountain View's Parks and Recreation!

Sincerely,

Mary Kay "Marina" Marinovich  
Peying Lee, she/her  
for GreenSpacesMV