

**DATE:** September 14, 2022

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission

**FROM:** Lindsay Wong, Senior Management Analyst  
Kristine Crosby, Recreation Manager  
John R. Marchant, Community Services Director

**SUBJECT:** Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan Proposed Scope of Work

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**RECOMMENDATION**

Review and provide feedback on the proposed scope of work for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan.

**BACKGROUND**

The City of Mountain View has a rich history of providing quality recreation programs, services, events, facilities, and open space to the community.

The City's first Recreation Plan was adopted in 2008 as a companion document to the Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP). The purpose was to provide a review and assessment of recreation programs, services, and facilities and prepare a long-term, recreation-focused vision for the community. Through extensive public input, staff developed 23 recommendations for programs and services, three priorities for recreation facilities, and three options for meeting the demand for athletic fields. At that time, the Recreation Division also adopted the California Parks and Recreation Society's vision statement of: "We create community through people, parks and programs."

The current POSP was adopted by the City Council in 2014. This was the sixth update since the first POSP was adopted in 1992. The POSP provides a review of open space resources within the City, calculating total open space and amenities available in the community by planning area. The POSP offers a long-range vision intended to guide decisions made to advance park and open space resources as well as environmental conservation efforts that enhance the quality of life for all people who live and work in Mountain View. Since the POSP was adopted, a total of 6.5 acres of new parks have been created, not including the 2.76-acre Pyramid Park that will open later this month.

Both the Recreation Plan and the POSP have reached their intended planning horizon. Combining these two documents into a single Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (“Plan”) will create a cohesive plan that will address the open space needs of the community. The Plan will identify and analyze the variety of programs offered and define a clear vision and action plan for the future of the City’s parks and open spaces, trail systems, recreation facilities, and recreational programming to meet the current and long-term needs of the community.

The City Council confirmed its commitment to providing quality recreation programming and open space with the adoption of Council’s Strategic Priorities in June 2021. One of the seven Priorities is “Livability and Quality of Life,” which aims to “enhance Mountain View as a great place to live that values community health and well-being.” Development of a Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan is one of the identified projects for this Priority. The timing of this project was impacted by the need for the City to dedicate staff resources to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including opening and helping operate the first mass-vaccination site in the North County at the Community Center. Staff is now able to move this project forward, and an estimated timeline is provided later in this memorandum.

As staff prepares to take the next steps to develop the Plan, it will be important to recognize that the City has evolved since the creation of the Recreation Plan in 2008 and the POSP in 2014. The overall population has increased and will continue to grow. As the City grows, the need for access to open space will also increase. The community has expressed an interest to the City for increased number of and geographic access to parks.

The community uses parks for a variety of purposes ranging from organized activities to passive uses and are enjoyed by a wide range of ages that have different needs and priorities. The pandemic also created a shift in the way the community uses parks and open space. Parks provided a safe space to get outdoors while social distancing, and the general appreciation of parks and open spaces increased. Due to State and County COVID-19 restrictions, youth sports and other organized use of parks ceased for a period of time. As these activities returned, the community questioned how use of parks and athletic fields are prioritized as well as the times these sports organizations have access compared to general community access. Similarly, during COVID-19 restrictions, recreation programming was modified to provide remote programming. As restrictions eased, many popular programs returned with high demand, and a review of programming will assess if changes are needed to the current available options.

Through the development of the Plan, City staff and the consultant team will work together to create a clear vision and action plan to meet the wide range of needs and desires of the community related to parks and recreation while incorporating themes of equity, inclusion, sustainability, accessibility, and livability.

## **Proposed Elements of the Plan**

The following are key elements of the proposed Plan. The Analysis section of this memorandum includes the specific proposed scope of work for the Request for Proposals (RFP) to select consultant services to develop the Plan.

### *Confirmation and Calculation of the City's Open Space*

The City plans for, develops, utilizes, and maintains a variety of open spaces in an effort to meet the City's goal of providing three acres of open space for every 1,000 residents. This goal will be reviewed at a Citywide level and by planning area population. The different types of property currently counted toward the goal include:

- City-owned park space: This is open space owned and maintained by the City and accessible from 6:00 a.m. to one-half hour after sunset unless specific programming/amenities extend these hours.
- Privately owned property that is accessible to the public during the same hours as City parks: Within the City, open space and trail facilities can be found on property owned by other agencies, such as Valley Water and San Francisco Public Utilities Commission. Through agreements, the City may improve these properties for use by the public. The City has also created a process for residential developers to create privately owned, publicly accessible (POPA) open spaces to receive credit toward meeting their park land requirements. POPAs must be publicly accessible during City park hours at a minimum and are maintained by the property owner. Through contractual requirements, the POPA will remain open to the public in perpetuity.
- Non-City-owned property that has limited hours of access: The City utilizes school district properties as open space during nonschool hours, including after school, school holidays, and breaks. During school hours, the public does not have access to these open spaces. The City maintains the recreational areas of the schools, and the City schedules organized sports at those locations during nonschool hours and follows the established priority use as stated in the Athletic Field Use Policy.

The Plan will review and confirm total acreage of each existing site and recommend any changes to the existing list and calculation of open space. The Plan will also recommend how to define the different types of open spaces and how to calculate the number of acres per 1,000 residents for open space not owned by the City with limited hours of access.

### *Anticipated Open Space and Future Growth*

The City continues to make efforts to meet the City's open space goal. Based on current data, the City is expected to create, on average, one to two new parks per year through the year 2030. The overall park acreage will be growing with these future identified parks; however, there are specific planning areas within the City that are not reaching this goal currently, and future City growth will impact the gains being made toward increased open space per 1,000 residents. The Plan will review the existing acreage in each planning area compared to 2020 Census data and provide new metrics of how the City is meeting its goal in each planning area.

The Plan will also use projected residential growth to provide a summary of how much park space will be needed to meet the goal long-term. Recommendations will be provided as to how additional park space can be created given a lack of available land for new parks to be created.

### *Funding Strategies to Increase Acreage of the Parks and Open Space System*

Based on the analysis of long-term park acreage needs noted above, the Plan will recommend strategies to support the financial needs of creating new park space. The Plan will provide recommendations to update the City's existing Park Land Dedication Ordinance. Changes to the ordinance can change the way park land fees are calculated for new residential development. In addition, the consultant will review a nonresidential development requirement which could provide additional funding for parks. Other creative funding strategies will be reviewed and recommended to increase available funding for acquisition, development, and renovation of City parks.

### *Community Use of City's Parks, Open Space, and Facilities*

The City provides a number of facilities to the community, including the Community Center, Senior Center, Teen Center, Historic Adobe Building, Rengstorff House, Eagle Park Pool, Rengstorff Park Aquatics Center, Whisman Sports Center, Mountain View Sports Pavilion, Willowgate Community Garden, Latham Community Garden, Senior Garden, and Deer Hollow Farm. These facilities are typically used to provide programming and special events to the community, and most are available as rental facilities for individuals, families, and organizations to access and host meetings and private events.

Policies and procedures currently exist to help balance the priority uses of facilities and parks. These include Council Policy H-5, Use of the City's Facilities, and Chapter 38 of the City Code. These policies help guide staff and Council related to the use of facilities and parks; however, they do not always provide clear direction when new or emerging programming increases in demand. Most recently, the City has received input from the community about emerging programs and providing appropriate access for these programs. One such example is pickleball. While a pilot program is being implemented, long-term solutions to meet increased demand are

being developed. This is one example of a situation where increased demand for one activity must be balanced given existing resources while looking forward to meeting the long-term needs of these user groups. The Plan will assist in identifying these emerging programs and how best to position the City to respond to these situations in the future.

The City also provides access to athletic facilities, including sports fields and two gymnasiums for sports organizations to host practices and games. Over the years, the youth sports programs have grown, and changes have been made based on demand. More families are choosing to enroll their children in competitive sports compared to recreational programs. The expansion of competitive teams in all sports has placed additional pressure on existing sports fields and gymnasiums.

The consultant will review the historic use of these facilities and athletic fields. A review of the City's existing Athletic Field Use Policy, including the Recognized Youth Sports Organizations process, will also be completed. Based on these reviews, the Plan will include recommendations which may include updating times fields are available for organized sports compared to general community use by location, how to define the different types of organized sports, including competitive programs, and changes to priority use of facilities and fields. An assessment of long-term athletic facility needs will also be completed.

### *Recreation Programming*

Over the years, the Recreation Division has increased the types and amount of recreational programming to the community, including special events. This past summer, the highest number of participants in history enrolled in programs offered by the Division. The Plan will review existing programming, determine if there are gaps in service, and make recommended changes based on feedback from the community.

### *Fee Structure*

The City has an existing Recreation Cost Recovery Policy that sets how much the City should recover from the cost of providing specific programs and events. The Policy places a higher cost recovery for programs that have more individual benefits. For example, a dance class provides individuals with a direct benefit compared to the greater community; therefore, the cost recovery is higher compared to a Citywide special event, such as the Community Tree Lighting, that is free based on community benefit.

The Plan will review the fees charged for all Parks and Recreation Division programs and services. The review will not only review direct and indirect costs and associated fees to the City; it will also include a comparison of the City's fees to those at local agencies. Based on this review, the Plan will provide recommended changes to fees currently being charged for programs and possible changes to the existing Recreation Cost Recovery Policy.

The City has an existing Financial Assistance Program that is well-utilized. Families can sign up for the program and, based on need, families can receive up to a 90% subsidy on fees for recreation programs up to \$500 per child or 75% subsidy up to \$400 per child. The Plan will review this program and possibly recommend changes to ensure it continues to meet future needs.

### *Staffing and Open Space Maintenance Practices*

The staffing levels for both the Recreation and Parks and Open Space Divisions have not been formally reviewed for over 20 years, even though the acreage of parks and the level of programming have increased significantly.

The Parks and Open Space Division staffing needs have changed over the years. Additional and renovated facilities, such as McKelvey Ball Park, have increased staff time to maintain these improved facilities. Additional improvements are anticipated at Sylvan, Cuesta, and Rengstorff Parks that will further impact staffing resources. Operational changes have also led to impacts on staffing needs. For example, the City has terminated use of glyphosate (Round-Up) and replaced it with more environmentally friendly products that require additional staff time and must be applied more frequently to be effective.

The Plan will also review current maintenance practices. The timing of this review will allow the Plan to reference the new Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forest Plan which may recommend changes and updates to the types of plantings suggested for urban parks. These planting changes may impact the maintenance time required at each location. The Plan will also review current maintenance schedules and recommend cycles for more regular open space renovation and replacement schedules.

A review of staffing resources based on current and recommended operational practices will help calculate future staffing needs as more open space is created.

### *Public Input Opportunities*

Community engagement is a critical element of developing this Plan. The identified community needs will drive the priorities and recommendations from the consultant team.

The public input process will provide robust methods for residents to engage through various community meetings, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, surveys, pop-up input opportunities at City events, and more. Several organized community groups have specific interests related to parks and recreation that are communicated to staff. Identifying and meeting with these stakeholder groups will further the dialogue to understand the priorities and goals of the groups. The selected consultant will have experience and expertise in community engagement and will

be required to be innovative in their approach to attract and involve a wide range of community members.

*A Living, Action-Oriented, Outcome-Driven Document*

Once the Plan is adopted by Council, it is intended to be referenced often by staff and as needed by Council to make decisions related to parks and recreation. The Plan and its recommendations compared to existing conditions will be reviewed periodically by the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and the City Council. The purpose of these reviews will be to assess how the City is meeting the recommendations set in the Plan and enable the public to follow the process and progress made over time. The consultant team will provide recommended timelines for periodic reviews by the PRC and City Council over the life of the Plan.

**ANALYSIS**

The Plan will be developed with the assistance of a consultant with experience and expertise in helping communities plan for and achieve their parks and open space goals. The consultant will be selected through an RFP process. The PRC is being asked to review the scope and provide feedback prior to staff presenting it to the City Council later this month.

**Proposed Plan Scope of Work**

- **Task 1: Project Management and Coordination**
  - Prepare for and facilitate a kickoff meeting with City staff to refine the work plan and schedule. The consultant will also conduct monthly (and additional) project management meetings, manage subconsultants, and provide regular progress reports for City staff.
- **Task 2: Establish Plan Vision, Goals, and Objectives**
  - Incorporate themes of sustainability, inclusion, environmental stewardship, safety, preservation, accessibility, and historical and cultural character.
  - Consider future trends and planning best practices for use of public space for recreation, wellness, and community-building.
- **Task 3: Background Review**
  - Review all relevant City and State laws, regulations, and documents related to parks, open space, trails, and recreation programming. This includes existing City plans and documents, such as the Parks and Open Space Plan, Recreation Plan, General Plan,

Precise Plans, Housing Element, Community Tree Master Plan, existing agreements, and the Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) as well as relevant State frameworks, such as the Quimby Act. Provide an in-depth review of related City Code and Council policies to identify key policies or standards to update.

- **Task 4: Community Outreach**

- Work collaboratively with City staff to develop and implement a robust community engagement plan with opportunities for stakeholders and residents to provide input through meetings, surveys, pop-up opportunities at City events, stakeholder interviews, focus groups, and other tools.

- **Task 5: Inventory and Assessment**

- Compile an inventory and assessment of the existing parks, facilities, trails, open space, and athletic fields. The analysis should consider the capacity of each amenity as well as their functionality, accessibility, condition, comfort, and convenience.
- Develop an assessment of each planning area, including a list of open space facilities, relevant demographic data, residential density, proportion of multi-family housing, an assessment of open space and park needs, a discussion of these needs, and specific recommendations.
- Perform a comparative analysis of the parks and recreation systems with communities of a similar size and density.
- Analyze the park and recreation systems usage, needs, desires, and interests of the community today and 15 years from today based on anticipated demographic, economic, and sociologic changes.
- Review the five-year CIP and identify and recommend priority parks and recreation capital projects to meet future demand.
- Identify emerging trends and needs from national and regional studies, regional collaborations, and stakeholder input.
- Complete an assessment of parks and recreation facilities and athletic fields based on current and anticipated needs of the community.



- **Task 6: Calculation of the City's Open Space**
  - Utilizing the inventory created in Task 5, recommend changes to the existing list of open spaces currently counted toward the City's total open space acreage. Utilize 2020 Census data to update the calculated amount of open space currently available per 1,000 residents Citywide and by planning area.
  - Define the different types of parks and open space available in the City and recommend how to calculate this acreage into the City's total open space.
- **Task 7: Anticipated Open Space Needs and Long-Term Funding Strategies**
  - Determine the amount of park space that will be needed to meet the City's existing goal of providing three acres of open space per 1,000 residents in the next 15 years based on anticipated growth.
  - Determine a cost estimate to create new park acreage to meet the existing goal above.
  - Recommend creative funding strategies for acquisition, development, and renovation of parks and open space.
  - Provide recommendations toward meeting the goal given amount of available land for new parks.
  - Complete a thorough review of the Park Land Dedication Ordinance, evaluate any impacts from 2020 U.S. Census data and provide recommended changes to the Ordinance that can increase funding to parks and open space.
- **Task 8: Park Accessibility Goals**
  - Recommend accessibility goals by reviewing State and national park access initiatives and best practices. Focus on residents' walkability and access to parks, including the Trust for Public Land's goal of a maximum of a 10-minute walk for every resident to access a park.
- **Task 9: Recreation Division Programming**
  - Review existing programs and services currently provided and recommend changes to Recreation programs based on feedback from the community. Determine if there are gaps in service and make recommendations for new programs to offer to the

community. Provide recommended changes to policies and practices related to the facility rental program.

- **Task 10: Fees and Recreation Cost-Recovery Policy**

- Recommend changes to the Recreation Cost Recovery Policy and existing fees. Determine level of cost-recovery goals based on program types while calculating direct and indirect costs for programs and services. Compare recommended changes to surrounding agency fees for similar programs to determine market pricing. Recommend any changes to the existing Financial Assistance Program to ensure the program meets future needs in the community.

- **Task 11: Use of City's Parks, Open Space, and Facilities**

- Analyze historic use of City facilities and athletic fields, including the hours of use and residency rates of organized programs and organizations. Recommend changes to the City's existing policies and practices, including the Athletic Field Use Policy. Recommend any changes to the times fields are available for organized use compared to general community use by location and clearly define the different types of organized sports programs.

- **Task 12: Staffing and Maintenance Standards**

- Recommend appropriate staffing levels for both Recreation and Parks Divisions.

For the Recreation Division, recommend staffing levels based on existing conditions and level of programming. Based on recommended changes in Task 9 to Recreation Division programming, determine appropriate staffing levels to incorporate new or expanded programs efficiently to the community.

For the Parks Division, recommend staffing levels based on existing conditions and short-term (five years) of new parks opening based on size, locations, and amenities of the parks. Recommend how to calculate future staffing needs beyond five years as new parks are constructed.

- Recommend new maintenance and operations standards, including regular park renovations and replacement schedules.
- Reference the progress on the Biodiversity Plan and Urban Forest Plan to determine if any recommendations will impact future staffing levels.

- **Task 13: Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies**
  - Integrate the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA) objectives, methods, and standards into the Plan where applicable and make recommendations on actions with the long-term goal of achieving CAPRA certification for the Community Services Department.
- **Task 14: A Living, Action-Oriented, Outcome-Driven Document**
  - Recommend timelines for periodic reviews by the PRC and City Council over the life of the Plan to inform advisory bodies, policy-makers, and the public on how the City is meeting recommendations set in the Plan.
- **Task 15: Vision and Goal-Setting for the Community Services Department**
  - Lead a participatory visioning process with staff to develop a vision and mission statement for the Community Services Department.
- **Task 16: Draft and Final Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan**
  - Document the engagement process, key findings from the existing conditions analysis, prioritized project list, and all other aspects of the Plan into an accessible and easy-to-read graphic report.
- **Task 17: Presentations**
  - Prepare and deliver presentation materials at several public meetings throughout the Plan development process, including the PRC and City Council.

### **Plan Timeline**

Staff is currently developing an RFP to hire a consulting firm to assist with developing the Plan and will incorporate feedback from the PRC and City Council into the RFP scope. The following is the estimated timeline for Plan development and implementation. The timelines may be adjusted once a consultant is hired and the essential steps of developing an implementation plan are further defined.

- Issue a Request for Proposals: October 2022
- Enter into an agreement with a consulting firm: Q1 2023

- Conduct community engagement, gather and assess essential data, develop recommendations, and identify funding strategies: Q2 2023 to Q3 2023
- Present Plan for Council adoption: Q4 2023

### **Plan Coordination**

The Community Services Department and the consultant team will work in coordination with the Community Development Department, Public Works Department, and others as needed. Community Development will provide information regarding anticipated residential project projections and how the Plan may relate to the City's General Plan, Housing Element, and Precise Plans. Public Works will help identify current and future projects that may relate to recreation facilities and amenities and parks and open space connections or improvements. Public Works will also coordinate the development of the Active Transportation Plan with the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan recommendations for trails and open space connections.

The City is also developing a comprehensive Biodiversity Strategy and Urban Forestry Plan in a parallel timeline with the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. This enables the two planning efforts to inform each other and the inclusion of recommendations in the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan regarding how to increase the use of native plantings, trees, and pollinator habitats within existing parks and how to incorporate these elements into the design of future parks and open spaces.

### **FISCAL IMPACT**

Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Project 22-37, is funded with \$750,000 to develop the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, including the cost for consulting services.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Staff will review the draft scope of work with the City Council on September 27, 2022. Following this meeting, staff will compile feedback received from both the PRC and Council to finalize the scope of work and issue an RFP this fall for a consultant. Once a consultant starts the project, a timeline to provide updates of the project to the PRC will be established.

### **PUBLIC NOTICING**

In addition to the standard agenda posting, the notice for this meeting was posted to the City website, City social media channels, and NextDoor.com. Staff sent a notice to all neighborhood associations and registrants from recreation programs from 2020 to present. Notice has been provided to City-recognized youth sports organizations, Mountain View Masters, Los Altos Mountain View Aquatics Club, Mountain View Tennis Academy, Mountain View Tennis Club,

Community Services Agency, Mountain View Whisman School District, Los Altos School District, Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District, Soil+Water, Mountain View Coalition of Sustainable Planning, Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society, Canopy, Friends of Mountain View Parks, GreenspacesMV, and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

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Attachment: 1. Summary of Proposed Scope of Work