

**DATE:** April 22, 2014

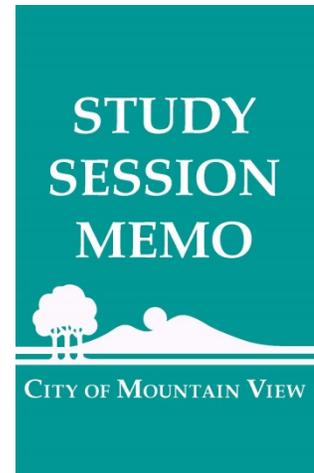
**TO:** Honorable Mayor and City Council

**FROM:** Rochelle Kiner, Senior Administrative Analyst  
J.P. de la Montaigne, Community Services  
Director

**VIA:** Daniel H. Rich, City Manager

**TITLE:** **Draft Parks and Open Space Plan  
Recommendations**

---



## **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this joint Study Session is to present the Parks and Recreation Commission's recommendations for the update of the Parks and Open Space Plan. Based on Council's comments and recommendations, a draft plan will be completed and presented to Council for approval in the fall of 2014.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City first adopted a Parks and Open Space Plan (Plan) in 1992 and this effort represents the sixth Plan update. The Plan represents a review of open space needs within the community and within each neighborhood planning area. It offers both a long-range vision and an evaluation of current needs based on new development and future parks and open space projects. The Plan also prioritizes planning areas that are most in need of additional open space. The last update of the Plan was adopted by the City Council on June 24, 2008. The current Plan revision is a periodic update and intended to ensure the Plan remains relevant and responsive to the changing needs of the community. Staff anticipates a more comprehensive review of the Plan in the next five years, estimated to begin in 2017/2018.

In order to provide an organized way to evaluate the City's parks and open space needs, the City is divided into 10 planning areas. While the planning areas are based on census tract boundaries, they are useful for the purpose of this Plan because they provide a consistent framework and help facilitate a logical method of analysis. The planning areas differ from those of the City's General Plan. The City's General Plan divides the neighborhoods into 8 planning areas while the Plan has 10 planning areas. Having more planning areas allows Council to further evaluate open space needs and refine recommendations based on neighborhoods.

## DISCUSSION

While the City has an outstanding park and recreation system, its parks and open space needs evolve and the need for additional open space resources has increased in response to population growth, more areas of the City zoned for residential use, and more residential housing developments that have limited open space. The City continues to search for land to develop parks in areas most in need of additional open space and to develop trail systems for greater pedestrian and bicycle mobility. In order to evaluate planning areas most in need of additional open space, the Parks and Recreation Commission (Commission) has been updating the Plan document, including the list of open space recommendations, referred to as the “Prioritized Recommendations”; the Planning Area Population and Open Space Data, which is the update to the zoning, open space, and population data; and the Open Space Needs by Planning Area, which evaluates and ranks open space needs.

Since the last Plan update, the City has added the following parks, trail extensions, and recreation facilities to serve the recreational needs of its residents:

### New Parks, Trail Extensions, and Recreation Facilities

#### Parks:

- Mariposa Park (0.61 acre)
- Del Medio Park (0.38 acre)
- 771 North Rengstorff Avenue Park (1.22 acres) (purchased – to be developed)

#### Trails:

- Stevens Creek Trail
  - El Camino Real to Sleeper Avenue – 0.52 mile
  - Sleeper Avenue to Dale Avenue/Heatherstone Way – 0.30 mile
- Permanente Creek Trail
  - Highway 101 to Old Middlefield Way – 0.25 mile
  - Old Middlefield Way to Rock Street – 0.17 mile

- Old Middlefield Way/Highway 101 Grade Separation
- Bay Trail:
  - Improved Access and Signage of the Bay Trail to the Sunnyvale Baylands

Facilities:

- The View Teen Center
- Bubb Park Restroom
- Fitness Cluster at Rengstorff Park
- Renovation of the Skate Park at Rengstorff Park

Prioritized Recommendations

A key component of the Plan is the prioritized recommendations, which provide a framework for the recommendations divided into five major categories:

- Increase Open Space
- Improve Existing Open Space
- Preserve Existing Open Space
- Provide Access to Open Space
- Develop Trail System

Within each of the categories, the Plan has prioritized broad recommendations, “City-Wide Priorities” that reflect City-wide goals and issues. Within each “City-Wide Priority,” more specific recommendations are given by planning area based on priority of need for additional open space. Recommendations are made within each of the 10 planning areas to provide a more in-depth analysis of the needs of each neighborhood. The City’s planning areas are based on census tract information to facilitate the use of available demographic data. The prioritized recommendations are included as Attachment 1 and provide an update to the 2008 Plan recommendations and identifies new projects added by the Commission in the current Plan revision.

## Demographic Information

Attachment 2 is the Planning Area Population and Open Space Data Chart, which is an update of open space acreage, zoning information, population growth, and the number of acres per 1,000 residents. The chart also provides the number of acres needed in each planning area to reach the City's goal of 3.0 acres of open space per 1,000 residents. The "Calculations" Section of the chart provides the calculations used in the Open Space Needs Assessment (Attachment 3).

Since the last Plan update, the City's population increased by approximately 2,500 residents and the City increased the amount of open space by an additional 2.21 acres. This additional open space did not offset population growth and the City's total acres of open space per 1,000 residents, excluding the North Bayshore Planning Area, decreased from 2.61 to 2.58. If the North Bayshore Area is included, the number of acres of open space per 1,000 residents decreased from 13.51 to 13.35.

## Needs Analysis

The Open Space Needs by Planning Area provides a quantitative analysis of demographic and zoning data to better evaluate the need for additional open space in each planning area (Attachment 3). The Commission used the same evaluation criteria in this Plan update as was used in the previous 2001 and 2008 Plan documents. Using the same criteria to quantify open space needs provides a consistent framework for analysis and comparison between Plan updates. The North Bayshore Planning Area was not included in the open space needs scoring because this area contains the majority of the open space with very little population and inclusion would skew results. For each criterion, planning areas are assigned a score of 1 to 10, with 1 indicating the least need and 10 indicating the highest need. The criteria used are listed below.

- Proportion Residential:
  - *Is the area primarily zoned for residential or commercial/industrial?*

Scores based on the percentage of planning area that has been zoned for residential use.

- Residential Density:
  - *Is the density of the residential area high or low?*

Scores based on the number of persons living in the residentially zoned portions of the planning area.
- Proportion of Multi-Family Housing:
  - *Is the residential acreage in the area primarily single-family or multi-family housing?*

Scores based on the percentage of multi-family housing in the planning area.
- Safe and Comfortable Walking Distance:
  - *Do residents have access to open space facilities within a one-half mile walking distance without crossing major traffic barriers?*

Scores based on the percentage of residential area that is not within one-half mile of a park or open space area.
- Amount of Open Space:
  - *What is the inventory of open space in the area?*

Scores based on the number of open space acres per 1,000 residents.

The table below outlines the Open Space Needs by Planning Area for 2014. The lowest possible needs score is 5 and the highest is 50. Higher scores indicate a greater need for open space in that particular planning area. Attachment 3 provides a detailed listing of the needs score for each criterion.

**2014 Open Space Needs by Planning Area<sup>1</sup>**

Planning Area	Proportion Residential	Residential Density	Proportion Multi-Family	Safe Walking Distance	Amount of Open Space	Needs Score
San Antonio	6	10	10	10	9	45
Sylvan-Dale	8	4	9	5	9	35
Rengstorff	4	5	9	6	10	34
Stierlin	6	3	7	7	8	31
Central	7	4	6	2	8	27
Thompson	10	2	3	1	7	23
Whisman	1	4	6	3	8	22
Miramonte	8	2	3	2	1	16
Grant	8	1	1	1	2	13

While the scores changed slightly, as noted below, the planning area order of need did not change. The table below shows the difference in needs score between the 2014 and 2008 data.

**Amount of Change in Needs Score Between 2014-2008**  
n/c = No Change

Planning Area	Proportion Residential	Residential Density	Proportion Multi-Family	Safe Walking Distance	Amount of Open Space	Needs Score
San Antonio	+1	n/c	+1	n/c	n/c	+2
Sylvan-Dale	-2	+2	-1	-2	+1	-2
Rengstorff	-1	+1	-1	+4	n/c	+3
Stierlin	-2	+1	-1	+4	+1	+3
Central	n/c	+1	+1	n/c	+1	+3
Thompson	n/c	+1	+2	n/c	n/c	+3
Whisman	n/c	+1	n/c	+2	n/c	+3
Miramonte	-1	+1	+1	+1	n/c	+2
Grant	n/c	n/c	n/c	n/c	+1	+1

Overall, the ranking of planning areas based on the needs score from 2008 to 2014 remains unchanged. That is to be expected as there were minimal increases to population and amount of additional open space acreage. The total scores from the 2014 Plan are higher than those of the previous Plan indicating a greater need for additional open space. This is due to a larger portion of the City zoned for residential and multi-family use and population growth was not offset by additional open space.

<sup>1</sup> The North Bayshore Planning Area was not included in the needs assessment scoring as this area contains the City's regional open space with very little residential population and inclusion would skew results.

The criterion showing the most change is the “Safe Walking Distance” category. A greater percentage of the City is now within a safe walking distance to open space with the additional parks, trail extensions, and trail access points. That reduced the percentage spread of residential areas within a safe walking distance. Because all of the planning areas were ranked within a more compressed percentage spread, the total scores in some planning areas was increased.

The second biggest change is in the “Residential Density” criterion with greater needs scores in seven of the nine planning areas. This is consistent with some of the changes in zoning where commercial and industrial zoning areas have been rezoned for residential use.

### Maps

Staff has included three draft maps for the Council’s review and comment.

- **Attachment 4–Acquisition Map.** This map reflects the Commission’s recommendations in the “Increase Open Space” section of the prioritized recommendations. Areas designated with cross-hatch shading are the areas where certain developments, as outlined in the Municipal Code, would be required to dedicate land for open space.
- **Attachment 5–Trail System.** This is a draft update to the trail systems and the City’s public transportation system.
- **Attachment 6–Major Traffic Barriers.** The major traffic barriers remain unchanged between the 2008 Plan and the current Plan. The number of areas of the City that are not within a safe walking distance has been reduced due to the addition of new parks, trail extensions, and trail access points.

### Public Input

Two Public Hearings have been held for community input on May 8, 2013 and on January 15, 2014. In summary, public comment focused primarily on the following topic areas:

- The need for additional parks;
- Comments for and against developing a community garden at 771 North Rengstorff Avenue;

- The need for additional garden space, such as urban gardens, demonstration gardens, and/or edible gardens;
- The need for an east-west trail corridor;
- The need to preserve the Hetch Hetchy right-of-way;
- The need to improve connectivity between trail systems; and
- The need for additional dog parks.

The Commission also met with the Bicycle/Pedestrian Advisory Committee on March 12, 2014 to review and provide input on the prioritized recommendations.

### **RECOMMENDATION**

To review and provide input on the Commission's Plan recommendations and updates.

### **NEXT STEPS**

Based on Council's input and recommendations, a draft of the Plan document will be updated and presented to Council for approval in the fall of 2014. The current Plan revision is considered a periodic update. Staff anticipates a more comprehensive review of the Plan in the next five years, estimated to begin in 2017/2018.

### **PUBLIC NOTICING**

Agenda posting and notification sent to the Parks and Recreation Commission.

RK-JPdIM/7/CAM

240-04-22-14SS-E

- Attachments:
1. Prioritized Recommendations
  2. Planning Area Population and Open Space Data
  3. Open Space Needs by Planning Area
  4. Acquisition Map
  5. Trail Systems
  6. Major Traffic Barriers