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To: [Ramirez, Lucas](#); [Hicks, Alison](#); [Kamei, Ellen](#); [Matichak, Lisa](#); [Abe-Koga, Margaret](#); [Showalter, Pat](#); [City Council](#); [Lieber, Sally](#)
Cc: [GreenSpacesMV](#)
Subject: Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan
Date: Monday, September 26, 2022 7:18:20 PM

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Dear Mayor Ramirez, Vice-Mayor Hicks, and City Council.
Thank you for taking the time to review the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. As a former Parks and Recreation Commissioner for eight years, I agree with the Plan especially the inclusion of the Community Tree Master Plan.

It is difficult for trees to live in an urban environment. We are losing large trees due to climate change and poor planting techniques that occurred years ago when people did not consider how these trees would grow. **We need a strategic plan to increase tree canopy. We must plant trees that will grow to be drought tolerant and provide canopy.**

The Plan mentions inclusion. **I'd like to see elements for all ages integrated into our parks and be part of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan.** This includes benches in the shade for seniors to sit down and elements for children. When we designed Heritage Park, we asked for a small natural element for children, such as climbing log steps in the park. At the time, the designers felt that people would only walk on the gravel paths, and an element for kids would encourage going off the path. People treat it as the natural open space that it is. There is naturally a lot of foliage from the trees, and people walk on the foliage. I'd still like to see an element for kids at Heritage Park.

There are two other related plans and two other issues that I'd like to see integrated into the Strategic Plan

1. Biodiversity Plan -

We need to not only have space set aside for biodiversity, like our burrowing owl sanctuary but also **integrate biodiversity into our parks.** For example, Mariposa Park, a small park, has a miniature monarch butterfly garden. It has signage about the plants and the monarch butterfly. Many people have commented they really like this part of the park. Other endangered native butterflies eat different plants.

We have many parks that have large swathes of grass. While the grass at Eagle Park is heavily used for recreation, much of the grass in our parks is a holdover for when grass was considered the defacto surface. As you know, grass consumes a lot of water, is a monolithic plant, and the grass planted is not native to this area. **Just as we're slowly making our streets more bike/ped friendly and less car-centric, we need to gradually eliminate the grass that's not used for recreation and replace it with natural elements.** These natural elements will also increase biodiversity.

Much of our urban areas have light pollution. Too much light is an issue that disrupts the circadian rhythms of humans and other animals. It discourages night wildlife that might otherwise use the park. It creates blind spots for humans when they move

from a brightly lit area to more natural light. **I think PRC should study how to best light a park so it's safe but does not cause light pollution.**

2. GHC goals -Sustainability is mentioned but we have GHG reduction goals. Parks, particularly trees by absorbing carbon can be part of that goal. GHG is always an approximation so I'd like to see an approximation of how much our tree canopy contributes to reducing GHG.

Thanks for taking the time to read my email on this important Plan!

Thida

Pronouns: she/her