

DATE: November 17, 2025

TO: Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Kristine Crosby, Assistant Community Services Director
John R. Marchant, Community Services Director

SUBJECT: **Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan – Draft Review**

PURPOSE

Review the draft Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan and provide feedback.

BACKGROUND

The City of Mountain View has a long-standing commitment to providing high-quality parks, open space, recreation programs, and community services that enhance residents' quality of life. Mountain View's parks and recreation system encompasses **46 parks, two trail corridors, and a wide range of community facilities**, including a community center, senior center, teen center, two aquatics complexes, two historic sites, and a regional performing arts center. The City offers over 1,800 recreation classes, camps, and activities year-round, with participation continuing to grow annually and reaching a record-breaking 13,000 enrollments in 2025. In addition, the City produces more than 80 special event dates annually, fostering community connection and civic pride through arts, culture and recreation. Together, these spaces and programs provide opportunities for recreation, enrichment, and cultural engagement for residents citywide, while also serving as destinations for visitors from throughout the region.

In the years following the COVID-19 pandemic, the value of parks and open spaces has become even more evident. When many indoor spaces were closed, parks became vital community assets—places where residents could safely connect, exercise, and find comfort in nature. Families went to parks to take in fresh air, individuals relied on trails and green spaces for wellness and stress relief, and neighborhoods rediscovered nearby parks as essential extensions of home. This collective experience deepened the community's appreciation for what parks and recreation provide—not only individual health benefits but also social connection and resilience. In response, both the community and the City have brought renewed energy and focus to sustaining and expanding parks and recreation facilities, reaffirming the importance of every resident having access to welcoming, high-quality parks and recreation opportunities.

Plan History and Direction

As community interest in parks and recreation has grown in recent years, so too has the City's focus on ensuring that its planning efforts keep pace with evolving needs. Mountain View's commitment to providing quality parks, facilities, and programs is rooted in a long history of thoughtful planning and investment. The following overview highlights the foundational plans that shaped today's system and set the stage for the development of the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan.

The City's first Recreation Plan was adopted in 2008 as a companion document to the Parks and Open Space Plan (POSP), which was originally adopted in 1992. Together, these plans established a foundation for guiding the City's investment in recreation programming, facilities, and park development. Each plan included priorities, such as expanding park access, improving facility quality, and enhancing community recreation opportunities, reflecting the City's consistent commitment to livability and active lifestyles. Both plans have since reached their intended planning horizon, with the POSP last updated in 2014 and the Recreation Plan sunseting in 2018.

Recognizing the need for a modern, integrated framework to guide future decision-making, the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan (Strategic Plan or Plan) was initiated as a Fiscal Year 2021–22 Capital Improvement Project (Project 22-37). The Plan was identified as a priority under the City Council's Strategic Priority of Livability and Quality of Life and reaffirmed as a Category A project—the highest priority level—in the Council's Fiscal Year 2023–25 Strategic Work Plan. In addition, the City's 2023–2031 Housing Element outlines a two-step approach to reviewing the City's Park Land Dedication Ordinance, which includes completing a Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan to address anticipated open space needs and develop long-term funding strategies.

The process began in late 2022 with input from the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) and City Council on the scope of work for developing the Strategic Plan. Following Council authorization in April 2023, the City engaged Next Practice Partners, LLC to carry out this scope and assist in the development of the Strategic Plan. The project team, consisting of City staff and the consultants, proceeded with a robust 11-month community engagement effort between August 2023 and July 2024. From August 2024 to the present, the project team has focused on technical analysis, including a comprehensive Level of Service (LOS) analysis, inventorying, re-measuring, and assessing all parks and recreation facilities, and translating the findings into goals, strategies, and action items in a 10- to 15-year Strategic Plan.

A Strategic Plan

The **Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan** establishes a unified vision and clear direction for how Mountain View will sustain and enhance its parks, open spaces, and recreation system over the next decade and beyond. Rooted in community values, the Plan serves as a practical and aspirational roadmap to guide decision-making, investment, resource allocation, and the exploration of new funding sources. It is designed to ensure that the City's parks and recreation

system continues to evolve in response to community needs, emerging trends, and best practices in the field. Developed through extensive public engagement, the Plan reflects the priorities and aspirations of Mountain View residents, providing a framework for balancing growth, equity, environmental stewardship, and financial sustainability. Above all, it is intended to be a **living, actionable plan**—one that fosters continual improvement and innovation while staying true to the Community Services Department’s mission to *build community and enrich lives*.

Key components of the draft Plan include:

- **Community Profile and Needs Assessment** – A review of demographic trends, recreation participation, and community feedback.
- **Inventory and Analysis** – Evaluation of existing parks, facilities, and programs to identify system strengths, gaps, and opportunities.
- **Vision, Goals, and Strategies** – A framework that articulates the City’s long-term direction for parks, recreation, and community services.
- **Funding and Implementation** – An overview of potential funding mechanisms, along with a phased **Action Plan** to guide immediate, short-term, medium-term, and long-term priorities.
- **Performance Metrics** – Measures to track progress and ensure accountability over time.

Project Delays

When the plan development began, staff anticipated an 18-month process from project initiation to plan adoption, with an expected completion date of December 2024. However, several factors extended the schedule, including additional meetings with the PRC to provide input at key milestones, and a longer community engagement phase to ensure broad participation. The statistically valid survey was delayed by two months to launch after the 2023 holiday season, which in turn shifted other outreach and analysis tasks.

Significant time was also required to verify and recalculate existing park acreage. This effort involved collaboration across multiple departments and the creation of new GIS data to support the Level of Service (LOS) analysis. While this work added to the timeline, it produced a far more accurate and reliable foundation for the Plan’s findings and recommendations.

Since the public input phase concluded, City staff have dedicated significant effort to ensuring the Plan accurately reflects Mountain View’s specific needs and values. While a consultant assisted with the technical analysis and national benchmarking, the priorities and actions are based on community input and staff expertise, including multi-departmental input as described

below. This intentional, hands-on approach synthesized with the work of the consultants, guarantees that the Strategic Plan is not a generic framework but a highly tailored roadmap aligned with Mountain View’s needs, opportunities, and long-term vision.

The Plan Development Process

The development of the Strategic Plan has been a collaborative, Citywide effort led by the Community Services Department with support from multiple departments, including Community Development, Public Works, the City Manager’s Office, Finance and Administrative Services, and Information Technology. Each department contributed to data collection, analysis, and review to validate that the Plan reflects a comprehensive understanding of Mountain View’s parks, facilities, and recreation system. The Plan also went through multiple rounds of interdepartmental review to confirm accuracy, strengthen coordination, and align recommendations with broader City goals and policies. The timeline below summarizes key phases in the planning process, from community engagement and assessments to technical analysis and action plan development.

Community Engagement

The community engagement phase formed the foundation of the Plan and included a mix of digital and in-person outreach. Over the 11-month period, the City conducted a variety of input activities, including:

- Launching a project website to share information and solicit feedback, achieving 854 engagements on the website’s “Idea Board”;
- Six public input meetings with interpretation available in Spanish, Mandarin, and Russian, with 280 people in attendance;
- Eight focus group meetings with stakeholders, including two meetings in Spanish and Mandarin with 70 people in attendance;
- Four Community Services Department All-Hands staff meetings with a focus on the Plan;
- Three pop-ups at Celebrate Shoreline (October 2024), Monster Bash (October 2024), and Community Tree Lighting Celebration (December 2024) with over 150 engagements per event; and
- A statistically reliable, representative survey and companion community survey with over 1,800 responses collectively.

- Four PRC meetings:
 - Sept. 20, 2023 – Commissioners shared feedback on the City’s strengths and opportunities related to parks and recreation, and identified top priorities they would like the Plan to address.
 - Dec. 13, 2023 – The project team presented initial findings from the park and program assessments and provided an overview of the statistically reliable community survey.
 - July 1, 2024 – A presentation highlighted key findings from the public input process and park and program assessments.
 - March 12, 2025 – Staff presented the draft Level of Service and received Commission feedback on how school fields and Shoreline at Mountain View are recommended to be calculated in the Plan.

In total, approximately 3,200 engagements occurred over this period. Through this process, residents shared their thoughts on the City’s strengths and opportunities for parks and recreation offerings, as well as top-priority outcomes that they would like the Plan to address. This feedback shaped the Plan’s focus areas and informed the development of goals, strategies and action items.

Program Assessment

The project team conducted a comprehensive assessment of the City’s recreation programs to better understand how they align with community needs, participation trends and organization priorities. The process began with a detailed review of existing program data, registration reports, and fee structures to establish a baseline of current offerings. Staff then organized all programs into Core Program Areas and evaluated each area using standardized criteria, including age groups served, participation trends, cost recovery, and program lifecycle.

To provide additional context, Mountain View’s program data was then compared with national averages and trends observed in other parks and recreation agencies. This comparison helped identify areas of strength, service gaps, and opportunities for program growth, helping inform the recommendations for recreation programming presented in the Plan.

Operational Assessment

The City conducted a comprehensive Operational Assessment of the Community Services Department to better understand how internal systems, staffing structures, and workflows support service delivery. Recognizing that the Department’s ability to provide high-quality programs and facilities depends on effective internal operations, the assessment evaluated

organizational alignment, workload distribution, procedures, and staffing models, and the use of technology across divisions. The project team also examined key City Council policies and municipal code provisions to identify potential barriers or redundancies.

In addition to the above analysis, the process also included staff meetings and targeted listening sessions with employees at all levels. These discussions provided valuable insights into day-to-day operations, interdepartmental coordination, and opportunities to enhance communication, resource management, and overall efficiency.

The assessment explored several core areas, such as staff capacity, resource allocation for park maintenance and recreation programs, coordination of grants and sponsorships, and succession planning, to position the Department for long-term sustainability. The findings, summarized in the Analysis section of the Plan, establish a foundation for future organizational improvements and continued excellence in service delivery.

Parks Assessment

Concurrent with community engagement, the project team conducted a comprehensive, on-the-ground assessment of all City-owned and maintained parks and trails to document existing conditions and identify opportunities for improvement. The evaluation covered 43 parks, including Shoreline Park, six Community Parks, six Neighborhood Parks, 19 Mini Parks, and two trail corridors, including Stevens Creek Trail and Permanente Creek Trail. Evelyn Park was not included, as it had not yet opened at the time of the assessment.

The team also reviewed 11 school fields accessible through the City's Joint Use Agreement with the Mountain View Whisman School District (MVWSD) to understand the role of these sites within the broader park system. Although detailed site assessments were not conducted for school fields, the review noted general conditions and community access value.

Each park and trail was evaluated using consistent criteria—access and connectivity, condition, functionality, and sense of safety and comfort. The findings revealed systemwide patterns and opportunities that shaped the Level of Service (LOS) analysis and guided development of the Plan's recommendations. A subsequent park-by-park workshop with City staff further refined priorities by distinguishing sites suitable for targeted repairs from those needing more comprehensive redesigns, helping align future capital improvement planning.

Level of Service (LOS)

Following the completion of the community engagement and assessment stages, the project team conducted a comprehensive Level of Service (LOS) analysis to evaluate the quantity and accessibility of park land and recreation facilities. The process began in mid-2024 and involved inventorying all City-owned and maintained parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities;

verifying and recalculating acreage using updated GIS mapping; categorizing parks by type; and identifying recommended service standards for each park type, trail, and amenity.

The process required close collaboration among staff from the Community Services, Public Works, and Information Technology Departments to ensure accuracy and consistency. Particular attention was given to remeasuring park acreage and adjusting the calculation of how the acreage of school fields and Shoreline at Mountain View should contribute to the LOS. This reflected the community's feedback and staff's evolving thinking about taking into consideration the degree to which these sites are available to the public. Staff analyzed public access hours for each site, developed proportional acreage factors for the school fields, and proposed a standardized approach for counting accessible portions of Shoreline Park.

Staff presented the draft LOS to the PRC on [March 12, 2025](#) for review and discussion, including the proposed methods for calculating school fields and Shoreline at Mountain View. Feedback received at that meeting helped refine the LOS framework and confirm its alignment with community expectations. The finalized LOS now serves as a foundation for the Plan's park and facility recommendations and was used to design the equity maps that visualize park access and service gaps across the city for parks and recreation amenities. Key findings and implications from this analysis are further elaborated in the Analysis section of this report.

Vision, Values, Goals, Strategies, and Action Plan Development

Building on the extensive community engagement and technical assessments, the project team began shaping the guiding framework for the Strategic Plan in late 2024. Using insights from the surveys, pop-up events, stakeholder interviews, community meetings, project website feedback, and park and program assessments, the team identified recurring themes and priorities that informed the development of the Plan's vision, values, goals, and strategies. During this phase, the Community Services Department also developed a new mission statement to better reflect the Department's commitment to inclusion, connection and enrichment for all residents.

Through a series of collaborative workshops with staff, the project team refined the Plan's core goals and strategies to be actionable, measurable, and aligned with community expectations. These goals and strategies then served as the framework for developing the draft Action Plan, which outlines clear areas of focus, policy updates, staffing considerations, and implementation steps to carry the Plan's vision forward.

Relationship to Other City Plans

The Strategic Plan complements and aligns with several related City planning efforts that are also underway. It directly references the draft Biodiversity and Urban Forest Plan, which outlines strategies to enhance biodiversity, expand the urban tree canopy, and strengthen the connection between people and nature. The Strategic Plan supports these goals by identifying opportunities within parks and open spaces to enhance biodiverse landscaping and tree canopy.

The Plan will also align with the forthcoming Active Transportation Plan, which will guide policies and projects aimed at improving walking and biking throughout the City. This coordination will help provide safe and accessible connections to parks, trails, and recreation facilities.

ANALYSIS

The following analysis summarizes the key findings from the Plan development stages described above and provides the highlights of the recommended areas of focus and the resulting goals, strategies, and action items.

Community Input Key Findings

Community feedback served as the foundation of the Strategic Plan, providing a clear picture of what Mountain View residents value today and what they hope to see in the future. **With over 3,200 engagements, the feedback revealed a deep appreciation for the City’s well-maintained parks, welcoming facilities, and the wide range of recreation programs that bring people together.** Residents consistently described the City’s parks and recreation system as one of Mountain View’s greatest strengths, emphasizing the quality of its parks, the diversity of its programs, and the strong sense of connection created through events and engagement.

At the same time, residents identified opportunities to enhance and expand the system. Many called for additional park land, improvements to aging infrastructure, and investments in sustainability, such as biodiverse landscaping, tree planting, and energy-efficient features. Interest also emerged around specific amenities, including public restrooms, sports fields and courts, dog parks, shade structures, and skate/bike parks. Residents also expressed interest in expanding fitness, wellness, and social programming for adults (18+) and older adults (55+), highlighting the importance of lifelong recreation opportunities.

Beyond the formal engagement process for this Strategic Plan, City staff continued to receive feedback through ongoing projects, public meetings, and direct communication with community members. Recent discussions surrounding pickleball expansion and the potential use of Cuesta Annex open space included a high level of civic engagement and reflects the passion residents bring to local issues. While viewpoints may represent special interests, they also highlight the diversity of perspectives and depth of engagement that shape decision-making. Importantly, strong feedback from nearby residents and the broader community underscores a desire to preserve Cuesta Annex as a natural, peaceful open space—a sentiment that speaks to the community’s deep connection to its environment.

These insights, both from the Strategic Plan engagement and other ongoing conversations, demonstrate the City’s broad and nuanced understanding of community priorities. This understanding has guided the development of the Plan’s vision, goals, and actions. Full details of

the engagement process and results from each engagement activity are provided in Appendix B of the Plan.

Program Assessment Findings

The Recreation Program Assessment offers a comprehensive examination of how the City's recreation programs align with community needs, market trends, and operational capacity. **Overall, Mountain View's program portfolio demonstrates a strong balance between community-oriented offerings and revenue-generating opportunities, reflecting the City's commitment to both accessibility and fiscal responsibility.** Approximately one-third (33%) of programs provide a broad community benefit, consistent with national benchmarks, while 25% offer a blend of community and individual benefit – an area that presents opportunity for growth through partnerships, program design, or marketing strategies. Revenue-generating programs account for roughly 30% of the portfolio, which is slightly higher than average, primarily due to vendor-led activities. These programs support cost recovery goals while the City's financial assistance program balances continued access and affordability for residents.

Program lifecycle analysis indicates that Mountain View maintains a healthy mix of innovation and stability within its recreation offerings. Nearly one-third (29%) of programs are new or expanding, indicating a steady responsiveness to evolving interests, while two-thirds (66%) are stable and well-established, exceeding the national average for program retention. **This balance underscores the City's ability to maintain quality, trusted programs while continuing to pilot new opportunities. However, the continued introduction of new programs will require careful assessment of staff and funding capacity to sustain quality and avoid overextension.**

These findings illustrate a recreation system that is both resilient and adaptive, striking a balance between tradition and innovation to meet the community's evolving needs. However, as program offerings continue to grow and diversify, maintaining quality, consistency, and equitable access will depend increasingly on the Department's internal capacity and operational structure. The following section looks into this further by examining organizational systems, staffing, and workflows to identify opportunities to strengthen efficiency, support staff, and ensure the City is well-positioned to deliver high-quality services into the future.

Operational Assessment Findings

The Operational Assessment identifies opportunities to enhance the Community Services Department's organizational capacity, internal systems, and policy framework, as a means to provide enhanced and sustainable support for the City's expanding parks and recreation services. As new facilities, programs, and events have been introduced, staffing resources have largely evolved through minor adjustments in the annual budget process, without a comprehensive review to determine the most effective staffing and structure to deliver the department's portfolio of programs and services. While the Plan makes some recommendations regarding staff

capacity, a more comprehensive review of the Department’s organizational structure—including an evaluation of workload distribution and division alignment—would help ensure that staffing, resources, and operational priorities remain balanced as service demands grow.

The review also identified several City Council policies and City Code ordinances that should be updated to reflect current community expectations and operational realities. Updates to policies such as H-5 (Facility Use), H-7 (Athletic Field Use), and J-2 (Cost Recovery) would enhance fairness, consistency, and transparency across user groups, aligning fee structures with the City’s broader equity and sustainability goals. Similarly, upcoming efforts to refine the park land dedication and in-lieu fee structure will help ensure that future development contributes appropriately to the park system. In addition, reviewing the City’s financial assistance program will uphold affordability and access as central to the Department’s mission.

Operationally, the assessment identified opportunities to improve efficiency through clearer staffing standards for park maintenance and enhanced support for the Recreation Division. Establishing centralized roles or small teams for functions such as marketing and communications, special event coordination, contract management, and grants and sponsorships would streamline operations, reduce duplication, and strengthen cross-divisional coordination. Continued investments in workforce development, succession planning, and volunteer engagement will help sustain the City’s high standard of service delivery and position the Department for long-term success.

Park Assessment Findings

As noted in the Background section, each park was evaluated using a standardized scoring framework that assessed condition, functionality, accessibility, and overall user experience. This analysis helped identify where repairs, updates, or enhancements are most needed to sustain quality and safety across the system. In addition to individual park scores, the project team developed guidelines to support park design decisions when prioritizing reinvestment—balancing the need to address deferred maintenance with opportunities to modernize amenities, improve inclusivity, and align with community preferences identified through public input.

The Park Assessment established a strategic framework for maintaining and enhancing Mountain View’s parks, focusing on identity and quality, amenities, biodiversity, and comfort. **The findings emphasize the importance of creating a cohesive and recognizable park system with consistent design standards, signage, and wayfinding elements, while allowing each park to express a unique character that reflects its setting and community use.** By promoting thoughtful design, durable materials, and clear points of entry, the City can strengthen both the functionality and visual appeal of its parks. Expanding amenities that serve multiple age groups and activity levels—along with inclusive play spaces and natural play features—will ensure that each park continues to meet diverse community needs and encourage multi-generational use.

Additionally, the assessment emphasizes the importance of integrating sustainability and accessibility principles into park planning and operations. Strengthening biodiversity through native and drought-tolerant landscaping, habitat restoration, and ecological connectivity supports the City’s environmental goals and builds long-term resilience. Comfort and safety are equally critical and could be achieved through strategic placement of seating, shade, lighting, and restrooms to enhance usability and visibility for all users. Collectively, these recommendations provide a clear framework for future park design, repair, and upgrades, supporting Mountain View’s park system to remain welcoming, inclusive, and adaptable to changing community needs.

Park Acreage and Level of Service

The City’s park system performs well overall, providing a strong foundation of accessible and well-maintained parks and open spaces. Mountain View currently provides approximately 4.40 acres of developed park land per 1,000 residents, exceeding its long-standing citywide goal of 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents. **While this systemwide figure reflects a healthy overall level of service, a closer look at park acreage by Planning Area reveals important disparities in how park land is distributed across the city.** And throughout and before the planning process, residents have consistently expressed a desire for more parks in areas with a lack of parks, such as the Monta Loma, Terra Bella and Rex-Manor neighborhoods.

To further understand access to parks and amenities, the City developed locally tailored benchmarks by park type and amenity. These benchmarks were established through a data-driven process that combined community input, staff analysis, and peer city comparisons.

Mapping park acreage and accessibility by planning area and overlaying equity indicators revealed that while most residents enjoy convenient access to parks and trails, several planning areas, including Rengstorff, Thompson, Central, Stierlin, Sylvan-Dale, and Whisman, fall well below the goal of 3.0 acres per 1,000 people. The Monta Loma neighborhood falls within the Thompson planning area; the Terra Bella and Rex Manor neighborhoods are in the Stierlin planning area. The Plan identifies these areas as the City’s highest priorities for new park acquisition and reinvestment, particularly where barriers such as density, limited land availability, or transportation constraints reduce access to open space.

Together, the LOS and equity maps highlight that Mountain View’s challenge is not the total amount of park land, but rather its distribution and accessibility. These findings directly inform the Plan’s park land focus areas outlined below.

Mountain View’s Strengths

Mountain View’s parks and recreation system benefits from a uniquely engaged community that not only values its parks and programs but holds high expectations for what the next generation of investment can achieve. The public’s passion for parks, recreation, and community events

remains one of the City's greatest assets, fueling participation, volunteerism, and advocacy for ongoing improvement.

From a systemwide perspective, Mountain View performs exceptionally well in providing close-to-home park access. According to the Trust for Public Land, **92% of Mountain View residents live within a 10-minute walk of a park or school field, placing the City well above national averages and reflecting decades of thoughtful planning and investment.** The City has made strong progress in expanding its park system by adding eight new parks over the past decade and acquiring additional land to meet future park land needs. Many of these newer parks feature modern amenities, sustainable design elements, and inclusive spaces that reflect the evolving expectations of the community. Equally noteworthy is the high standard of care and maintenance provided by City staff, whose daily stewardship ensures that Mountain View's parks remain clean, safe, and welcoming for all users. Staff's commitment to quality and attention to detail is a key reason the City's parks continue to be regarded among the community's most valued assets.

Recreation programs are another core strength. The City has built a robust and adaptable program lifecycle, maintaining long-standing favorites and introducing innovative new offerings that respond to emerging trends and community interests. Over the past three years, **recreation programs have grown by 28% and community events have increased by 31%**, reflecting both strong public demand and the Recreation Division's ability to adapt and innovate. Today, the Recreation Division offers approximately 1,800 programs and hosts more than 80 community events each year, creating countless opportunities for residents of all ages to connect, learn and play. This success is a testament to the creativity and dedication of staff who have continued to deliver high-quality experiences even as capacity and resources have been stretched thin.

Areas to Focus On

As noted in the section above describing the analysis of level of service, while Mountain View meets its overall citywide park land goal, there are localized deficits in certain planning areas, underscoring the importance of continued focus on equity in access and distribution. Considering these areas of deficit, community input and a systemwide analysis of park conditions, the Strategic Plan identifies several areas where investment over the next decade would have the greatest impact. These focus areas seek to maintain the City's strong foundation while addressing key gaps in access, amenity distribution, and long-term sustainability.

Three-Tier Framework for Park Improvements

The Strategic Plan establishes a three-tier framework to guide future park investments based on scale, purpose, and resource needs. Tier A (Foundational) focuses on maintaining existing parks through repairs and updates to sustain safety and functionality. Tier B (Strategic) includes targeted enhancements or partial redesigns of existing parks to address evolving community needs, improve usability, and add new amenities within the current park footprint. Tier C

(Aspirational) involves developing new parks to expand the park system and close service gaps in specific Planning Areas. **This framework provides a clear structure for prioritizing park improvements; however, achieving the desired outcomes, particularly in Tier B and Tier C projects, will require significant additional resources beyond existing funding sources, which necessitates the exploration of a revenue measure.**

Neighborhood Parks

Improving access to high-quality neighborhood parks remains a top priority, especially in planning areas with limited nearby park land such as the Central, Rengstorff, Stierlin, Sylvan-Dale, and Thompson Planning Areas., which include particular neighborhoods with identified park deficits as noted above. Reinvestment efforts will focus on upgrading existing neighborhood parks to modern standards, including the addition of shade, gathering areas, play features, and enhanced trails, while also pursuing opportunities to create new parks in neighborhoods with the greatest need.

Strategic Park Enhancements

Select community and neighborhood parks present opportunities for targeted improvements that can significantly enhance user experience and community identity. These include modernization projects at well-used parks and exploring future enhancements or new amenities where community demand supports them.

Systemwide Amenities

Citywide priorities such as additional sports fields and courts, shade, public restrooms, dog parks, adult fitness zones, and expanded tree canopy were frequently mentioned by residents. These amenities can be integrated into both new and existing parks, with future design guided by community input to reflect each neighborhood's unique character.

Together, these focus areas create a balanced approach—strengthening existing assets, expanding access where it's needed most, and guiding future park and facility investments to reflect community priorities, equity goals, and fiscal realities.

Vision, Values, Goals, Strategies, and Action Plan

The Plan establishes a unified framework to guide investment, operations, and decision-making over the next decade. The Plan defines a **vision** of

A vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community where parks, open spaces, and recreation opportunities inspire connection, well-being, and stewardship for generations to come.

The five core **values** of the Plan are:

- Inclusion
- Future Focus
- Collaboration
- Stewardship
- Quality

The Plan's four strategic **goals** focus on:

1. Expanding and enhancing safe, equitable and convenient access to parks, open spaces, and trails;
2. Increasing community participation in recreation and programs;
3. Fostering a positive staff culture and maintaining high-quality operations; and
4. Developing new funding sources and strengthen existing financial strategies to support long-term sustainability.

To achieve these goals, the Plan identifies a set of **strategies** that translate the City's values into clear direction across all parts of the system:

- **Parks, Trails, and Open Space:**
 - Provide connected and inclusive access to parks and trails.
 - Deliver amenities that reflect community values, unmet needs and trends.
 - Promote environmental resilience and long-term sustainability in the City's parks.
- **Recreation Programs and Facilities:**
 - Deliver inclusive program offerings that serve diverse community needs.
 - Expand partnerships for program delivery, awareness and use.
- **Operations and Maintenance:**
 - Build organizational capacity and a future-ready workforce to sustain high-quality parks and recreation services.
 - Enhance preventive and responsive maintenance practices.
- **Funding and Marketing:**
 - Diversify and expand revenue streams.
 - Share meaningful stories to maximize community engagement and connections.

These strategies form the foundation of the Action Plan, shown in Chapter 7 of the attached Plan, which includes 38 specific actions to implement the Plan’s vision over the next 10–15 years. Each action identifies lead and supporting departments, a planning-level cost range, and an implementation timeline. Designed to be adaptive, the framework enables the City to align resources, track progress, and adjust priorities as community needs evolve.

Performance Metrics

To measure progress toward the Plan’s vision, a set of 10 performance metrics translates the goals and strategies into measurable outcomes. These indicators track system-wide progress in key areas, including park access, trail connectivity, recreation participation, sustainability, workforce development, partnerships, and financial stewardship.

These metrics provide a data-driven framework for accountability and transparency, helping the City evaluate effectiveness, identify emerging needs, and communicate the value and impact of its parks and recreation system to the community. Each measure includes defined targets, related action items, data sources, and a tracking frequency, with some reviewed annually and others on a multi-year cycle.

Results will be shared through a public-facing dashboard and annual reports to the Parks and Recreation Commission and City Council, allowing residents and decision-makers to see tangible outcomes of the Plan’s implementation. This regular tracking ensures that the Strategic Plan remains a living, actionable guide—one that adapts to changing conditions while staying focused on long-term community priorities.

Discussion/Feedback Requested

The Commission is asked to review the draft Plan and provide focused feedback to help guide final refinements before the plan advances to the adoption phase. To support a productive discussion, staff asks for Commission feedback on the following questions:

- Does the draft plan provide an accurate picture of Mountain View’s parks, trails, open spaces, and recreation programs? Is there anything missing or not shown clearly?
- Do the draft Vision, Goals, and Strategies reflect what the City should focus on for the future of parks and recreation?
- When looking at the Action Plan, are there any actions that should be added, removed, explained better, or moved up or down in the timeline?

FISCAL IMPACT

The Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, Project 22-37, is funded with a total of \$750,000; \$150,000 from the Shoreline Regional Park Community Fund and \$600,000 from the General Non-Operating Fund. No additional appropriation is being requested at this time to complete the development and adoption of the Plan.

The Strategic Plan provides order-of-magnitude cost estimates to inform future budgeting and capital planning for park improvements and expansion. Tier A (Foundational) improvements, focused on repairs and updates to existing parks, range from approximately \$1.0 to \$1.7 million per acre, depending on park type and scale. Tier B (Strategic) improvements, which involve targeted redesigns and modernization of existing parks, are estimated at \$3 million per acre. Tier C (Aspirational) projects, which include the development of new parks, represent the most significant investment, with an estimated \$13 million per acre—including \$10 million for land acquisition and \$3 million for design and construction. For illustrative purposes, the Tier A (repairs and updates), Tier B (targeted redesign), and Tier C (new parks) costs for a five-acre park would be \$7 million, \$15 million, and \$65 million respectively.

Implementing the actions outlined in the Plan will require a significant financial investment over time, including exploration of a revenue measure, which is a priority project in the Fiscal Years 2025-27 Council Work Plan. These costs will be assessed as part of the City's standard budget development and Capital Improvement Program review processes to ensure alignment with available resources and City priorities.

NEXT STEPS

The draft Plan, including the Executive Summary of the Plan, will be presented to the City Council for a Study Session in January 2026, providing an opportunity for Council discussion and direction prior to finalizing the plan. Based on the feedback received from both the PRC and City Council, the project team will prepare a final version of the Plan, anticipated for PRC review in spring 2026 and City Council adoption in May 2026.

Nexus Study Update

In addition to the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan, the City is developing a "Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study" (nexus study) to update the fees associated with new residential development.

A nexus study provides the legal and technical foundation for determining a fair and proportionate park land fee. As new housing is constructed and the population grows, additional demand is placed on the City's parks, trails, and recreational facilities. The study evaluates the number of new residents expected from future development, identifies the additional park land

and facilities required to maintain the City's adopted service standards, and estimates the associated costs. Based on this analysis, the study establishes a fee structure that ensures new development contributes its fair share toward maintaining high-quality parks and recreation opportunities for the entire community.

The findings of the nexus study may have implications for the Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan. Historically, the City's park land fee has been calculated based on a goal of three acres of park land per 1,000 residents, consistent with the Quimby Act. Additionally, the City's Housing Element has recommended reducing the development fees on residential housing to ensure the feasibility of delivering new housing to the community. The recommended fee will balance these goals and City Council will adopt a new fee structure as part of this Nexus Study process.

The study may recommend updates to the fee program, including potential adjustments to this acreage standard or the broader calculation of a new fee utilizing the Mitigation Fee Act framework.

The park land nexus study is scheduled for City Council review and action in February 2026. As the study is finalized and adopted, corresponding updates may be incorporated into the draft Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan following completion of the nexus study.

CONCLUSION

The draft Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan translates extensive community input and technical analysis into a clear, actionable roadmap for the next 10-15 years in Mountain View. The Strategic Plan balances reinvestment in existing parks with targeted enhancements and strategic growth, and continued innovation in recreation programs. The Plan is guided by measurable outcomes and an implementation framework that can adapt as community needs evolve.

A key focus of the Plan is expanding the park system by adding new parks in park-deficient Planning Areas, specifically Central, Rengstorff, Stierlin, Sylvan-Dale, and Thompson, with particular attention to neighborhoods such as Monta Loma, Terra Bella, and Rex-Manor. Addressing these gaps is essential to providing residents with equitable access to high-quality parks.

The successful implementation of the Strategic Plan will require a sustained organizational and financial commitment. The Plan provides a three-tier framework to clarify where resources are most needed for park improvement and expansion and underscores that new park development will require significant additional funding, including the exploration of a revenue measure. Performance metrics, annual reporting and a public-facing dashboard will support accountability and transparency as the City works to achieve the community's long-term vision for parks and recreation.

PUBLIC NOTICING

In addition to the standard agenda posting, the notice for this meeting was posted to the City website and project website, ImagineMVParks.com. Staff sent a notice to all neighborhood associations and registrants from recreation programs from 2020 to the present. Notice has been provided to City stakeholders, including, but not limited to, City-recognized youth sports organizations, Mountain View Masters, Los Altos Mountain View Aquatics Club, Mountain View Tennis Academy, Mountain View Tennis Club, Mountain View Pickleball Club, Mountain View Los Altos Community Services Agency, Mountain View Whisman School District, Los Altos School District, Mountain View Los Altos Union High School District, Soil + Water, Friends of Mountain View Parks, Greenspaces MV, Santa Clara Valley Bird Alliance, Canopy, and Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District.

Attachments: 1. [Draft Parks and Recreation Strategic Plan](#)