



Parks and Recreation Commission 2023-2024 Workplan

Staff Liaison: Daren Anderson, Assistant Director

Lead Department: Community Services

About the Commission

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Commission is to advise the City Council on matters pertaining to the activities of the Open Space & Parks, Golf, and Recreation divisions of the Community Services Department, excluding daily administrative operations.

Timeframe covered by Work Plan: June 5, 2023 – March 31, 2024. The Commission is composed of seven members. See Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) 2.25 Sections 2.25.010, 2.25.030, 2.25.040, 2.25.050, and 2.25.060. Residency is required. Further requirements are that members shall not be Council Members, officers or employees of the City of Palo Alto. Each member of the Commission shall have a demonstrated interest in parks, open space and recreation matters.

For more information about the Parks and Recreation Commission please visit our [webpage](#).

Current Commissioners

- Jeff Greenfield (Chair)
- Amanda Brown (Vice Chair)
- Anne Warner Cribbs
- Nellis Freeman
- Shani Kleinhaus
- Joy Oche
- Bing Wei

Mission Statement

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Commission is to advise the City Council on policy matters pertaining to the activities of the Open Space, Parks and Golf Division, and the Recreation Division of the Community Services Department.

Prior Year Accomplishments

- **Racquet Court Policy**

- Ad Hoc reviewed existing policy and received community feedback through stakeholder meetings and site visits.
- PRC recommended an update to the Racquet Court usage policy, increasing pickleball access, on November 22, 2022.
- Initiated a racquet court stakeholder advisory group with pickleball and tennis users.
- Began research into the cost and feasibility of adding lights to City-owned tennis courts.

- **Recreation Projects/Opportunities**

- Gym/Wellness Center

- Weekly ad hoc meetings (with occasional staff participation) on stakeholder outreach and research on wellness center need, potential locations, facilities, programs and activities.
- Worked with City staff on stakeholder outreach and research of wellness center facilities, programs and activities.
- Hosted a community meeting on March 7, 2023 to discuss the proposed Recreation Wellness Center and issued a community survey to collect additional feedback.
- Organized “Friends of Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center” Board of Directors submitting bylaws and articles of incorporation, achieving 501.c3 status and constructing a web site www.parwc.org.
- Provided status updates to the PRC during monthly ad hoc updates and at a March 28, 2023 presentation.

- Skatepark

- Ad hoc worked with staff and skatepark stakeholders and broader skateboarding community on potential skatepark conceptual design that incorporates and honors existing historic skate bowl.
- Established a partnership with Friends of Palo Alto Parks to serve as the repository for skatepark donations, following PRC recommendation on September 1, 2022, and City Council authorization on October 24, 2022.
- First draft conceptual design completed by pro-bono designer and staff is working on parking analysis.

- First Tee partnership at Baylands Golf Links

- Encouraged completion of the LOI signed with City of Palo Alto and First Tee to allow First Tee to raise funding for this public private partnership.
- Feasibility study report provided by First Tee on January 27, 2023.

- **E-Bike and Electric Conveyance Device Policy**

- PRC ad hoc met throughout the year reviewing policy and regulations regarding the use of e-bikes and electric conveyances in parks and open space areas. This included Palo Alto and neighboring cities, regional, state, and national jurisdictions.
- Discussed policy considerations including parks vs. open spaces, types of e-bikes, and state policy implications with CSD, Transportation and Safe Routes staff, and PABAC, including their E-Bike subcommittee.
- PRC discussed balancing competing interests and priorities including wildlife and ecosystem protection, recreation, bicycle transportation corridors, public access, equity, safety, enforceability, ADA requirements, and clarity and communication of rules on October 25, 2022.
- After considerable public comment and discussion, PRC unanimously recommended an e-bike and electric conveyances policy and regulations for parks and open space on November 22, 2022

- **Fundraising**

- Developed process for recreation, open space, and community service advertisements to be placed on a regular basis in Enjoy! catalog.
- Increased regular communication between Friends of Palo Alto Parks, Palo Alto Recreation Foundation, and the PRC.

- Created a [webpage](#) for City of Palo Alto Community Services Department, increasing awareness of how to donate to various programs within Community Services.
- Encouraged City staff and partners to pursue grants, which may be available to Community Services, Parks, and Open Space agencies.

- **Urban Forestry**
 - Annual State of the Urban Forest report presented to PRC on December 15, 2022.
 - Reviewed implementation status of significant changes associated with the Title 8 Tree Ordinance update including new tree protections, tree removal and maintenance processes, public communication, and new staffing.
 - Provided periodic updates on the roll-out of new Tree Ordinance processes, communication, and staffing.
 - PRC feedback centered on clarification, communication, timing, and transparency of the associated changes. City web pages continue to evolve. Roll-out is proceeding despite staffing challenges.

- **Parkland Dedication**
 - The PRC ad hoc reviewed the 10-acre Measure E site at the Baylands Nature Preserve / Byxbee Park for potential rededication as parkland, and consulted with Public Works, Utilities, and City Attorney departments, and Utilities Advisory Commission leadership.
 - PRC discussed permitted development under the ballot measure, absence of current project proposals, and potential benefits of a recreational connector trail, wildlife corridor, and support for the ecological integrity of the Baylands on September 27, 2022.
 - PRC voted 4-2 to recommended dedication of the Baylands Measure E site as park land on October 25, 2022.
 - The ad hoc reviewed other potential sites for Parkland Dedication and is working with staff to move forward with dedicating a small area at Greer Park where a sewer easement is being released (February 28, 2023).

- **Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) Review**
 - The ad hoc met with staff on November 7, 2022 to review the FY 2024 - 2028 CSD Capital Plan for Parks, Open Space, and Golf projects.
 - The ad hoc recommended updates to the CIP project list, including providing more specific details of "On-going CIPs" and adding Foothills Comprehensive Conservation Plan and Cubberley synthetic turf replacement projects, and perhaps the Roth Building restroom.
 - The PRC reviewed and provided feedback on the CIP plan on November 22, 2022.

PROJECT/GOAL 1:	<u>Parks Master Plan Process Review</u> Review the process for planning and implementation of the Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan (Parks Master Plan) for consistency and coordination with the annual CIP process. Identify scope of work and high-level process for a comprehensive Parks Master Plan review.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Optimize implementation of the Parks Master Plan	FY24-Q1&Q2	Low to moderate staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on the planning and implementation process since adoption of the Master Plan Optimize FY25 CIP process for consistency with the Parks Master Plan New work plan item created for comprehensive Parks Master Plan review (lower priority items) 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Policy 2.G, 6.A)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Phase 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> High level review of Parks Master Plan – understand and clarify best practices for utilization, implementation, etc. Evaluate the potential use of the Action Plan to optimize annual CIP processes moving forward Establish scope, details, and timeline of a comprehensive Parks Master Plan review 			Phase 2: A new work plan item will outline a comprehensive Parks Master Plan review, which will likely include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed status review of projects and programs Engage community feedback to understand community priorities and needs Quantitative evaluation of demand and capacity of major recreation facilities (Policy 2.G) Review demographic trends and interests by segment for and adjust programs and plans accordingly (Policy 6.A) Establish annual and periodic review best practices 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Chapter 5: Progress Reporting)
PROJECT/GOAL 2:	<u>Recreation Program Review</u> Review existing recreation programs, categorize offerings (age group, program type, capacity and availability, fee reduction use, etc.), and review program offerings of neighboring agencies.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Compile data to understand the needs, challenges, and gaps in existing programming for our diverse community.	FY24-Q1&Q2	Moderate staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report on successes and challenges of existing program offerings. Identify potential new program offerings. 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Program 1.H.1)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Work with the community and staff to assess the current program offerings and current City program offerings and			Identify programming gaps and potential solutions, including new Enjoy Catalog offerings.	Yes: Parks, Master Plan (Chapter 5: Progress Reporting)

PROJECT/GOAL 3:	<u>Recreation Wellness Center</u> Work with staff to facilitate progress on a new Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Recreation and wellness facilities provide active and healthy recreation opportunities for current and future generations. Increase social engagement and well-being.	FY24	Moderate staff time Utilize professional expertise in our community, working with the Friends of Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing feedback to City Council on a new Recreation Wellness Center as directed by City Council. Recommendation for a Letter of Intent. 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Policy 5.G; and major project Chapter 5)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
As directed by City Council: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conduct public outreach on a new gym, including and location, siting, gym features, cost estimates, funding timeline, demand assessment, and prioritization of projects Investigate fundraising. 		Recommend approval of a Letter of Intent for a new Recreation Wellness Center.		Yes. Council Motion
PROJECT/GOAL 4:	<u>Bicycle/E-Bike Policy and Access</u> Proceed with City Council direction from 2/27/23 to: Review policy and access for all bikes, electric bikes and other electronic coasting devices in the Baylands and Pearson-Arastradero preserves to consider 1. Reduction of speed limit; 2. Whether and where to restrict bicycle and horse access; 3. Adding bike racks at trail heads to the open space where lacking.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
The project implements City Council direction from 2/27/23 with the benefit of providing access to nature while protecting habitat and wildlife, with consideration of community interests, staff and infrastructure resources and ensuring safe use of trails.	FY24	Low to moderate staff time Funding for signage and bike racks.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop signage Identify bike rack locations Consider whether and on what trails to restrict bicycle and horse access and make recommendations Consider speed limit and make recommendations 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Program 1.G.2, and 2.A.7)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Implement Council direction from 2/27/23, including: For all bikes in the Baylands and Arastradero Preserves consider and recommend policy to address: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduction of speed limit Whether and where to restrict bicycle and horse access Adding bike racks at trail heads in open space, where lacking 		Continue monitoring of evolving bicycle/e-bike issues, including: technology, impacts, and state and local policies. Assess how the current e-bike policy is working.		Yes

PROJECT/GOAL 5:	<u>Playing Fields Policy and Programs Review</u> Review and recommend updates to playing fields policy and programs including synthetic turf replacement strategy and field reservation policy			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Efficient and successful replacement of end-of-life synthetic turf fields. Optimized access to City playing fields. Proactive field management.	FY24-Q1&Q2: Complete synthetic turf replacement strategy review. FY24-Q3&Q4: Complete review of field reservation policy.	Low to moderate staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meet with playing field stakeholders Successful replacement of end-of-life synthetic turf field, contingent upon CIP funding Field reservation policy update recommendation if warranted 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Programs 1.F.1; 2.A.3; 2.C.3)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Work with staff to review and recommend optimum synthetic turf replacement strategy including materials, process, and timing. Meet with stakeholders periodically for feedback.		Meet with stakeholders for feedback and review field reservation and use policy and recommend an update as appropriate.		No
PROJECT/GOAL 6:	<u>Park Dedication FY24</u> Conduct a broad review and assessment of potential sites within our community to recommend dedicating as parkland.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Increase dedicated parkland to provide recreational opportunities, promote the health and well-being of the community, and support biodiversity. Advance goals of 4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and within 1/2 mile of homes.	FY24	Low staff time (GSD, CAO, Planning, PWE, Real Estate)	Recommendation of one or more sites for dedication as parkland.	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Goals and Policies 1.B, 1.C, 4,D, 5.C) and Comprehensive Plan (Policy L-8.1).
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Work with staff to assess the suitability of potential sites for parkland dedication, including a review of existing list of previously identified locations. Pursue dedication of Greer Park sewer easement associated with the 2850 W. Bayshore Road development project.		Establish best practices for future review and assessment of potential sites to be dedicated as parkland.		Yes

PROJECT/GOAL 7:	<u>Grant Opportunities</u> Consider how to increase funding for Parks, Open Space, and Recreation programs and projects through grants.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Obtaining new grants increases funding for programs and projects.	FY24	Low to moderate staff time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report on recommendations to increase grant funding • Recommend new grants to pursue 	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Program 5.G.4)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Work with staff to assess how to use grants more effectively to increase funding for programs and projects. Review current grant application process, associated resources, and recent grant applications.	Consider what new resources and partnerships may be effective to increase grant funding.			No