



Parks and Recreation Commission 2024-2025 Draft Workplan

Staff Liaison: Kristen O’Kane, 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 3, 2024 – March 31, 2025. 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

- Amanda Brown (Chair)
- Nellis Freeman (Vice Chair)
- Anne Warner Cribbs
- Jeff Greenfield
- 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

Parks Master Plan Process Review

- Conducted high level review of Parks Master Plan and assigned priorities in the Action Plan Spreadsheet.
- Reviewed Action Plan Spreadsheet in detail:
 - Created categories for review process including best practices, project status, and other departments involved.
 - Identified priorities led by other stakeholders or other City departments.
- Reviewed proposed FY 2024-25 CIP projects with staff.
- Began discussion of how to utilize the Action Plan to help inform future CIP priorities.

Recreation Program Review

- Collaborated with Palo Alto City staff to enhance the Enjoy! Catalog and Community activities, aligning efforts to promote equity and potential cost-reduction for programs, for example, bringing/advertising free programs from other Palo Alto partners, (i.e., PA Adult School) in the Enjoy! Catalog.
- Facilitated brainstorming sessions with City staff to pinpoint priority programs and proposed recommendations, including potential programs and providers, to address community needs effectively.
- Ad Hoc conducted a comprehensive review of past Enjoy! Catalog's and benchmarked against neighboring cities. Presented findings and suggested solutions for scaling up at the Commission Meeting in February 2024, align with the Master Plan's reviewing progress.
- Successfully spearheaded the implementation of a new QR code on the first page of the Enjoy! Catalog. This innovation allows for simple multilingual instructions directing residents to our website for community events, thereby expanding awareness among residents who speak English as a second language.

Recreation Wellness Center

- Weekly ad hoc meetings (with occasional staff participation) on stakeholder outreach and research on wellness center needs, potential locations, facilities, programs, and activities.
- Worked with City staff on stakeholder outreach and research of wellness center facilities, programs, and activities.
- Raised the visibility of the community's need for a gym/wellness center.
- We hosted a community meeting on January 17, 2024, to discuss the proposed Recreation Wellness Center. We presented the current preferred location/sites and a second option, depending on the current Cubberley negotiations between the City and the PAUSD.
- Provided status updates to the PRC during monthly ad hoc updates and at a January 17th community meeting presentation.

Bicycle / E-Bike Policy and Access

- Implementation of Council Direction from 2/27/2023 for all bikes in the Baylands and Arastradero Preserve to consider and recommend policy to address:
 - Reduction of speed limit.
 - Whether and where to restrict bicycle and horse access.
 - Adding bike racks at trailheads in open space, where lacking.
- PRC ad hoc met throughout the year, working with staff to review policy and regulations regarding the use of e-bikes and electric conveyances in parks and open space areas. This included Palo Alto, neighboring cities, and regional, state, and national jurisdictions. We also met with park users to solicit feedback.

- 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 ad hoc 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 e-bike and electric conveyances policy and regulations for parks and open space on November 22, 2022.

Playing Fields Policy and Programs Review

- Supported staff in reviewing regional best practices and recommending a synthetic turf replacement strategy for upcoming work at El Camino Park and Stanford/Mayfield Soccer Complex.
- Completed initial review of field use policy, including identifying potential areas for further review after engagement with stakeholders, and general policy cleanup recommendations.
- Recommended non-policy field use updates, including tournament clean up responsibilities, goal storage and communication with stakeholders.

Park Dedication FY24

- Conduct a review of existing list of potential locations for parkland dedication, including prioritization of suitability.
- Pursued park dedication for Tower Well Site:
 - Met with CSD staff and PAHA per City policy.
 - Recommended park dedication for Tower Well Site to City Council, which was approved with the recommendation to consider a name change.
 - Initiated name change process for Tower Well Park to Frederick Eyerly Park.
- Pursued park dedication for Rinconada Gardens:
 - Worked with CSD and Utilities staff to review site constraints related to park dedication and determine next steps.
- Reviewed a potential site adjacent to San Antonio Avenue at Ponce Drive for a small park, suggested by a community member; added to the existing list of locations for parkland dedication.

Grant Opportunities

- Work with staff to assess how to understand current City grant process, including current consultant, to use grants more effectively to increase funding for Recreation and Parks programs and projects. Concern about staff time in finding grants, applying for grants, and reporting about grants.
- Reviewed current grant application process, associated resources, and recent grant applications opportunities.
- Ad Hoc interviewed new resources and potential partnerships which may be effective to increase grant funding, including contacts with Silicon Valley Community Foundation, suggested three projects to share with SVCF corporate partners Foothill Buckeye Creek restoration, Foothill Interpretive Center, and additional restrooms at Mitchell Park/Magic Bridge, plus attempts to contact the Gordon Moore Foundation and the Packard Foundation.
- Ad Hoc recommends continuing to strengthen existing partnerships with Friends of Palo Alto Parks, Palo Alto Recreation Foundation, Environmental Volunteers, Grassroots Ecology and Silicon Valley Community Foundation. An example of collaboration between the City and a non-profit, which could qualify for a grant that includes developing joint projects to bring East Palo Alto youth to Foothill Park.

PROJECT/GOAL 1:	Master Plan 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. Work with staff to conduct a review of the existing policies and progress to inform planning efforts, enhance inter-departmental coordination, and implement best practices.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Optimize implementation of the Parks Master Plan	FY 25 – Q1 & Q2	Moderate staff time	Complete inventory of projects denoted as high priority, including status Optimize FY26 CIP process for consistency with the Parks Master Plan Coordinate with staff to implement high-priority policies and best practices	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Policy 2.G, 6.A)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Conduct a comprehensive Parks Master Plan review, which includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Status review of PRC prioritized projects and programs with staffDevelop recommendations for best practices and inter-departmental coordination to support the implementation of the Parks Master Plan		Establish annual and periodic review best practices		Yes: Parks Master Plan (Chapter 5: Progress Reporting)
PROJECT/GOAL 2:	Park Dedication FY25 Pursue and evaluate top priority potential sites and identify potential new sites to recommend dedicating as parkland within our community			
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	FY25	Moderate staff time (CSD, 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 Rinconada Gardens, San Antonio Avenue at Ponce Drive, Los Altos Treatment Plant Site (wetland area), and Baylands Measure E Site (landfill slope portion)		Pursue dedication of Greer Park sewer easement associated with the 2850 W. Bayshore Road development project Review previously identified locations and consider new potential sites for park dedication		Yes

PROJECT/GOAL 3:	Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan (BCCP) Update			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Work towards releasing the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan which was previously developed but not completed Establish updated standards, guidelines, and processes for environmental stewardship and infrastructure development and maintenance in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve	FY25	Moderate to high staff time Funding for a consultant will likely be required eventually	Generate an update on the current status of the BCCP, including estimated timeline for completion	Yes (Parks Master Plan Program 4.A.1)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Review current draft BCCP and work with staff to assess status of document sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Up to date, completeUp to date, further update requiredOutdated, update requiredOutdated, appropriate to omitIdentify gaps that should be addressed Work with staff to review status of CEQA and other required environmental reviews Work with staff to recommend a path forward for completing and releasing the BCCP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none">Identify work that can be completed with current resources during FY25Identify any additional required resources and an estimated timeline for completionIdentify work, which is out of scope for the BCCP, to be considered at a later date.	Move forward with BCCP updates as possible and appropriate		Yes	
PROJECT/GOAL 4:	Nature Preserve Access Policy Access Policy Recommendation for Pearson-Arastradero and Baylands Nature Preserves - work with staff and stakeholders to review all access, including bicycles, e-bikes and other electric conveyances, equestrians, and pedestrians			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Balance recreational access with stewardship of natural resources in the Baylands and Arastradero Nature Preserves Considerations include habitat and wildlife protection, trail safety, community interests, and staff and infrastructure resources	FY25	Moderate Staff Time	Forward updated access recommendations for Pearson-Arastradero and Baylands Nature Preserves to City Council.	Yes (Parks Master Plan Policy 6.D; Program 2.A.7)

HIGH PRIORITY	LOWER PRIORITY	COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Follow up on FY24 Bicycle and Equestrian Ad Hoc recommendations re: unauthorized trail usage and stewardship of natural resources along trails. Review Adobe Creek Loop Trail and Byxbee Park trail access. Provide input to staff regarding an appropriate response to the 02/27/2023 City Council referral	Follow up / review access and activity at Pearson-Arastradero Bowl Loop Trail area and Baylands Adobe Creek Loop Trail Bowl. General trail network access review	Yes

PROJECT/GOAL 5:	Recreation Wellness Center Work with staff to facilitate progress on the Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Recreation and Park facilities for the health and welfare of current and future generations Community engagement	2024 – 2025 Goal – vision of a complete facility	CSD staff time, Public Works staff time	Selecting the site Completing the facility for the community via the partnership with the City of Palo Alto, Friends of Recreation Wellness Center and community stakeholders	Council Approved (Parks Master Plan Goal 1; Policy 4.A) Identified priority major project
HIGH PRIORITY	LOWER PRIORITY			COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Community engagement with stakeholders and others, including existing facilities Discussion of site alternatives – Greer Park, Cubberley, 10.5 acres, and others Confirmed location of site with Council Approval of site Commission support of LOI with Friends and City of Palo Alto Regular updates for PRC to ensure other Commissioners, City staff and stakeholders are kept abreast of updates	Define relationship between Ad Hoc/PRC, Friends group, and the City of Palo Alto			Yes
PROJECT/GOAL 6:	Playing Fields and Racquet Sports Review and recommend updates to playing fields and Racquet Sports policies, including synthetic turf replacement strategy, including tennis and field reservation policies			
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	FY24-25 Q1&Q2: Complete synthetic turf replacement strategy review FY24-25 Q3&Q4: Complete review of court reservation policy	Moderate staff time	Meet with playing field stakeholders Successful replacement of end-of life synthetic turf field, contingent upon CIP funding (turf study/analysis) Court reservation policy update	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Programs 1.F.1; 2.A.3; 2.C.3)

Fair and equity tennis court reservation system that promotes wellness			recommendation if warranted	
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Work with staff to review and recommend optimum synthetic turf replacement strategy, including materials, process, and definite timeline Meet with stakeholders periodically for feedback Work with staff to review current USTA resident requirements as it relates to reserving court space in Palo Alto for non-residents Work with staff to convene and support the joint taskforce for racquet sports		Meet with stakeholders for feedback and review field or court reservation systems and use policy and recommend an update as appropriate		Yes