



CITY OF SANTA CRUZ PARKS AND RECREATION COMMISSION

DATE: April 25, 2017

AGENDA OF: May 1, 2017

DEPARTMENT: Parks & Recreation

SUBJECT: Park Master Plan 2030 Priority Actions

Recommendation: That the Parks and Recreation Commission discuss the Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions and provide recommendations on establishing priorities for these Actions and forward to the City Council for consideration.

BACKGROUND: The Parks and Recreation Department released the draft Parks Master Plan (PMP) 2030 for public review. The plan includes recommendations for future improvements to the park system and is envisioned as a “living document” that will be updated periodically to help the City be responsive to changing needs and interests of the community. The draft recommendations were formed from community outreach; trends in recreation, direction received from the Parks and Recreation Commission, City Council and Parks Master Plan subcommittee; feedback from staff; and an analysis of existing conditions. On March 2, 2017 the City Council referred the Parks Master Plan back to the Parks and Recreation Commission for further discussing regarding priorities for the City’s parks.

VISION → 7 GOALS → 80 ACTIONS → 143 PROJECTS = ENHANCED PARK SYSTEM

The Department’s Vision can be realized through the implementation of seven Goals that have been identified and described in the draft PMP. The Goals provide high level direction and, if implemented, would direct the Parks and Recreation Department’s in realizing its Vision for the Santa Cruz community. The PMP’s seven Goals are linked through 80 “Actions” which provide more specific areas of focus and the framework for creation and implementation of -capital improvement projects. A large number (143) and wide variety of potential projects were identified during the community outreach phase of the PMP. These projects were evaluated and categorized into one or more of the 80 Actions. Unfortunately, Department resources are not able to support all of the recommended projects over the 2030 timeframe for the PMP. Therefore, staff received direction at the joint City Council/Parks and Recreation Commission meeting of February 7, 2017 to work with Parks and Recreation Commission to recommend priorities with regards to recommended Actions and projects which were identified through public outreach efforts for the PMP.

DISCUSSION: The PMP is organized with seven overarching Goals, 24 Policies and 80 Actions. The 143 projects generated during the PMP process vary greatly in size, complexity and cost, ranging from less than \$100 (signage), to over \$2M (multi-use field) for example. Determining which of the 143 various projects should be of highest priority and which are low priorities is determined on a variety of factors (i.e., budget) which rely heavily on Department staff expertise and planning. Compounding the challenge is the uncertainty of financial resources over the next 15 years, staff availability, changing trends, leadership and demographics. With the Department's assets totaling over 1700 acres of land, it is difficult for Commissioners or members of the general public to be familiar with all aspects of Santa Cruz's park system and to be able to compare 143 projects in an equitable and balanced manner. Department staff is in the best position to delve into the details of specific projects and recommend them for approval by City Council after the PMP has been adopted.

Based on this evaluation it is recommended that the Park and Recreation Commission's leadership and the public's feedback would be most valuable at the higher "Action" level as included in the PMP. In determining which Actions are considered the highest "Value to the Community," and if concurred with by City Council, the Department's staff can then budget accordingly in order to complete the priority Actions and associated projects over the next seven to ten years. Attachment A, lists the 80 Actions and which of the seven Goals they are associated with. Attachment A is intended to be used for a discussion at the Parks and Recreation Commission Meeting of May 1, 2017.

Expectations of the May 1st Commission meeting are to identify and recommend a minimum of 3 high priority Actions for each of the seven Goals. Additional priority Actions may be identified for Goals which contain a large number of Actions. Staff believe this process will provide guidance to establish and complete projects that will ultimately result in realizing the Department's Vision. These priority recommendations will be forwarded to City Council for final discussion and approval.

Submitted by:

Mauro Garcia
Director of Parks and Recreation

Attachment A: Parks Master Plan 2030 Action Ranking Form

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
GOAL I. Provide attractive and sustainably maintained parks and facilities throughout the City.	
<p><i>Action 1: Use sustainable landscaping design and maintenance practices to conserve water, prevent erosion and run-off, and provide habitat and food sources.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Investigate and implement the use of recycled water for irrigation. b. Update irrigation systems to be weather-based, monitored, and controlled remotely. c. Replace turf in non-recreational areas with water-conserving landscapes and demonstration gardens with educational displays describing the environmental benefits. d. Select materials and plants to enhance biodiversity and attract pollinators and birds in all parks. e. Increase the number of trees and tree canopy to improve carbon sequestration, reduce heat island effect, and provide habitat. f. Expand the dedication planting program to plant more trees. g. Increase the number of bioswales and continue to implement stormwater erosion best management practices to reduce runoff, erosion, and sedimentation. 	
<p><i>Action 2: Employ energy conserving practices to reduce energy use and produce clean energy.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Install computer controlled, energy-efficient lighting in parks and facilities. b. Install solar products or panels to provide clean energy for lights, new shade structures, or on larger facilities such as Harvey West Pool, the Golf Course Driving Range’s deck, or the Loudon Nelson Community Center. c. Work with the Climate Action Committee and Energy Office to implement the Climate Action Plan’s short-term and long-term projects. 	
<p><i>Action 3: Use water conserving practices to reduce potable water use.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Install waterless urinals and low flow fixtures in parks and facilities. b. Investigate water capture and reuse for large water users such as the DeLaveaga Golf Course. c. Install composting toilets in remote restrooms. d. Install recycled water systems in facilities for watering adjacent landscapes. e. Increase the number of drinking fountains with water bottle fill station features. 	
<p><i>Action 4: Enhance man-made and natural settings when renovating parks with site furnishings, landscaping, pathways, plazas, artwork, and architectural features that are attractive, functional, and add to the use and identity of the park.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 5: Consider design features and site furnishings that add character and are not replicated in every other community.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 6: When feasible, replace asphalt pathways with decorative, permeable, hardscaped pathway surfaces.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 7: Create colorful and artistic expressions of landscape and garden design.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 8: Consider the function of landscaping in relation to the surrounding setting.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Install native plants in areas abutting open spaces, waterways, or other natural surroundings. b. Install ornamental plantings along streets, at entrances, along primary pathways, around plazas, or other architectural features. 	
<p><i>Action 9: Ensure that new parks have at least one street frontage for increased visibility and access.</i></p>	

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
<i>Action 10: Work with the Arts Commission to incorporate interactive art and interpretive signage to highlight cultural, art, and historic elements within the parks.</i>	
<i>Action 11: Carefully coordinate the site furnishings, plazas, pathways, passive and active recreational features and spaces, and landscaping to create meaningful experiences, minimize conflicts between new and existing uses, and optimize use.</i>	
<i>Action 12: Increase the number of restrooms at larger or highly utilized neighborhood park facilities.</i>	
<i>Action 13: Increase the number of bike parking spaces throughout the parks system.</i>	
<i>Action 14: Provide an adequate level of service of restroom facilities and renovate existing restrooms to maintain a clean, safe, inviting appearance.</i>	
<i>Action 15: Develop and periodically update a site materials and furnishings palette to ensure continuity in the overall design of each park over time to ensure colors, materials, and styles match as improvements are made. {For example, some parks have four different pathway materials}</i>	
<i>Action 16: Maintain a signage program and other features that help maintain a united identity for the parks system as a whole.</i>	
<i>Action 17: Increase the replacement of the deteriorating concrete garbage cans with decorative or BearSaver cans to improve appearance and increase recycling.</i>	
<p><i>Action 18. Improve access for disabled users.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Consider improvements to increase beach and open space access for disabled users. b. Increase accessible parking near facility and park entrances and trailheads. c. Consider Universal Design principles when locating new recreational facilities to accommodate use by all users. 	
<i>Action 19. Consider the needs of seniors in circulation and park design and expand recreational facilities for seniors.</i>	
<i>Action 20. Provide fitness facilities for all users.</i>	
GOAL II. Provide Ample parks and facilities throughout the City.	
<p><i>Action 1. Continue to seek opportunities to purchase or lease additional parkland. Use criteria for deciding where to purchase property for new park development:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Higher density growth areas. b. Important links in trail system. c. Along the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail or Santa Cruz Riverwalk. d. Underutilized land. e. Neighborhoods that lack existing parks and amenities in close proximity. f. Larger properties that can accommodate a variety of recreational facilities. g. Properties with significant cultural or natural heritage. 	
<i>Action 2. Explore opportunities for partnerships with other agencies to use land outside but adjacent to the City to help fund larger facilities to meet unmet needs.</i>	

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
<i>Action 3. Acquire new open space when there are opportunities to increase access, improve public safety and management.</i>	
GOAL III. Provide parks and facilities to meet the existing and emerging needs of residents and visitors.	
<i>Action 1. Provide neighborhood park uses including, but are not limited to, off-leash dog use areas, ball fields, skateboard parks, tennis courts, basketball courts, ping-pong tables, playgrounds and tot-lots, climbing and exercise equipment, slack-lining, pickleball courts, community gardens, pump tracks, bocce courts, disk golf courses, horseshoe pits, picnic areas, sand volleyball courts, and other recreational activities when designed to minimize impacts to the surrounding neighborhood.</i>	
<i>Action 2. Considerations in design should include minimizing potential impacts of light spillover, attenuating noise, and providing appropriate view screening.</i>	
<i>Action 3. Conduct an athletic field feasibility study to explore locations and options for additional multi-use field space (i.e. can accommodate soccer, football, lacrosse, rugby, field hockey, baseball, softball, etc.).</i>	
<i>Action 4. Explore or expand more cooperative agreements with the Santa Cruz City School district and UC Santa Cruz for use of sports fields.</i>	
<i>Action 5. Convert grass to synthetic turf and ensure sports fields have adequate drainage and lighting to increase duration of play.</i>	
<i>Action 6. Expand opportunities for informal sports play.</i>	
<p><i>Action 7. Renovate and maintain playgrounds to create more unique and interesting play experiences. Incorporate:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Universal Design principles so parks and facilities are more inclusive and available to all users. a. Natural playgrounds (water, rocks, trees, etc.). b. Interactive playgrounds. c. Multi-dimensional playgrounds. d. Themed playgrounds. e. Sand and water play. f. Play structures that offer more than one type of play and allow children of varying abilities to play together. g. Complementary facilities for adults when locating facilities for their children, such as adult play/exercise equipment near playgrounds. 	
<p><i>Action 8. Assure accessibility and safety on all City playgrounds.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Use playground surfacing that meets criteria of accessibility and safety. b. Consider fencing playgrounds. c. Provide signage about play equipment and safety rules. d. Separate tot and school-age play areas. 	
<p><i>Action 9. Develop, improve, and enhance mountain bike trail system.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Expand trail network and connections. 	

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b. Seek partnerships with UCSC, State Parks, non-profits, and private property owners to improve network connectivity, signage and trail designations. c. Rate trails with difficulty level. d. Consider creating spurs from multi-use trails to reach more advanced features and terrain and accommodate a variety of skill levels. e. Consider providing one area dedicated to technical downhill jumps and obstacles and adequately sign the trailhead with maps and signs indicating features and difficulty level. 	
<p><i>Action 10. Provide bike classes and practice space.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seek programming and locations to host children’s classes to learn “bike smarts”. b. Increase skills clinics for advanced riders. c. Develop more bike parks, pump tracks, and jump facilities with features and amenities to meet a variety of skill levels. 	
<p><i>Action 11. Improve the Joint Use Agreements with the School District to improve access and more clearly define roles and responsibilities, funding, enforcement, and repair to ensure facilities remain open and in good condition during agreed upon public use times. {The existing agreement is from the 1963}</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 12. Provide activities that improve physical activity and mental health for all ages, abilities, and interests.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Provide outdoor game tables such as chess, checkers, table tennis, or foosball. b. Continue to promote outdoor fitness and health initiatives and increase the distribution and number of outdoor exercise facilities. c. Seek opportunities for community garden space, particularly on the east side of San Lorenzo River and in the Beach Area. d. Seek opportunities and partnerships for use of a walking track. e. Consider locations for adding climbing wall and slack-lining facilities to be placed in equally distributed locations. f. Consider adding a tennis court facility on the east side of the San Lorenzo River. g. Identify a location for a pickleball tournament facility with 6 to 10 courts. h. Increase the number of wildlife interpretive signage and viewing areas. i. Seek opportunities for the installation of a ropes course in a natural or urban setting. j. Consider establishing a drone course. 	
<p><i>Action 13. Prioritize upgrading and optimizing existing community recreational facilities to ensure they attract use from the broader community.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 14. Capitalize on opportunities for partnerships and joint-use agreements to develop new community recreational facilities when rare opportunities are presented.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 15. Expand partnerships and concessionaire agreements to allow for outside providers to provide a recreational service on City land.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 16. Continue to seek community recreational facilities to host community events and programming.</i></p>	
<p><i>Action 17. Consider partnerships to allow for public recreational uses in the permanent Kaiser Permanente Arena during the Santa Cruz Warriors off-season.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Evaluate potential Parks and Recreation programming uses, events, designs, and costs during the planning phases of the arena. 	

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
b. Explore mechanisms to facilitate Parks and Recreation Department programming to facilitate multi-purpose sports and events throughout the year.	
<i>Action 18. Identify a fenced off-leash dog use location for the Lower Westside neighborhood.</i>	
<i>Action 19. Consider fencing-in the off-leash dog use area at Ocean View Park.</i>	
<i>Action 20. Consider smaller facilities for dogs less than 25 pounds in weight.</i>	
<i>Action 21. Increase enforcement of off-leash and dog access laws.</i>	
GOAL IV. Protect the City's natural resources, wildlife habitat, and ecologically sensitive areas.	
Action 1. Develop a natural open space restoration work plan.	
Action 2. Encourage volunteer programs to participate in restoration efforts and maintain an adopt a park program.	
Action 3. Increase the number of large clean-up days to remove waste from illegal camping activities.	
Action 4. Protect and improve wildlife and wildlife habitat.	
Action 5. Protect water bodies, including creek systems, riparian environments, and wetlands.	
Action 6. Remove invasive species and encourage planting and restoration of native vegetation.	
Action 7. Reduce erosion and sedimentation.	
Action 8. Consider non-sensitive and degraded areas for future recreational amenities, such as trails.	
Action 9. Provide youth ecological study programs.	
Action 10. Provide more interpretive signage in parks and open spaces and along waterways.	
Action 11. Continue downtown tree walk tour and add signs identifying trees in downtown.	
Action 12. Provide interpretive educational programs led by park rangers.	
GOAL V. Create a safe, clean, and comfortable environment for all park users.	
<i>Action 1. Use defensible space design treatments to deter illegal behaviors.</i>	
a. Increase lighting and visibility in parks and on trails.	
b. Increase visibility into parks by removing low vegetation and taller mounds.	
c. Activate underutilized spaces by providing additional programming and facilities to encourage lawful uses.	
d. Make parks easily navigable with way-finding elements.	
e. Explore fencing, locking, and temporary closures of areas of concern.	
<i>Action 2. Explore rules and policies regarding park uses (drones, off-leash dogs, camping, and closures).</i>	
<i>Action 3. Develop a caretaker or park host program to help care for open spaces and community parks.</i>	
<i>Action 4. Explore partnerships and programs to provide mental health services in parks.</i>	
<i>Action 5. Increase resources to remove trash and debris from illegal camping.</i>	
Action 6. Increase park ranger/police presence and interaction.	
a. More patrolling earlier in the morning and later in the evening.	
b. More alternative methods of patrol (bikes, motorcycles, etc.).	
<i>Action 7. Increase enforcement of park rules.</i>	

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
GOAL VI. Encourage the development of an interconnected park system by developing an integrated system of trails.	
<i>Action 1. Integrate and expand existing parks along the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail multi-use path.</i>	
<i>Action 2. Work with Public Works to help connect major parks throughout the City with smaller loop options and spur trails that connect to the bike and pedestrian system.</i>	
<i>Action 3. Promote alternative transportation by integrating bike trails and paths into City street pattern.</i>	
<i>Action 4. Support a Felton-Santa Cruz recreational trail and transportation/commuter corridor.</i>	
<i>Action 5. Develop trailheads to improve access and minimize conflicts between different uses.</i> a. More well signed trails with maps. b. More parking at trailheads.	
<i>Action 6. Partner with organizations and property owners to fund and acquire properties and resolve gaps in the trail system.</i>	
<i>Action 7. Support and help implement and maintain the Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail.</i>	
<i>Action 8. Consider opportunities to work with private property owners to increased access from the Carbonera neighborhood to DeLaveaga Park and from Moore Creek to Wilder Ranch and Empire Grade.</i>	
GOAL VII. Establish, maintain, and operate parks, facilities, and programs in a manner that is cost effective and manageable while engaging the community to maximize involvement and support.	
<i>Action 1. Develop maintenance and safety standards for parks and facilities and evaluate staffing levels to achieve goals.</i> a. When acquiring new facilities, consider long-term staffing and maintenance costs. b. Increase full-time staff to improve park maintenance. c. Increase number of park rangers to allow more focus on natural resource management, park maintenance, and interpretation in addition to law enforcement and illegal camp clean-ups.	
<i>Action 2. Work with the Parks and Recreation Commission to establish annual priorities for capital improvement projects that are proposed to City Council.</i>	
<i>Action 3. Coordinate efforts with CA State Park system to ensure quality of maintenance.</i>	
<i>Action 4. Publicize park programs and facilities.</i> a. Continue to utilize website for marketing events, programs, and classes. b. Utilize emerging technologies to publicize events, programs, classes, and park and facility improvements. c. Consider developing an outdoor tour cell phone application where park users can take tours and learn about the history, environment, and things to do and see when they visit each park and open space.	
<i>Action 5. Increase funding for parks.</i> a. Consider a ballot initiative or other alternative financing options to augment parks funding. b. Expand partnerships with private organizations.	

Priority Ranking for Draft Parks Master Plan 2030 Actions	Value to Community (Score Criteria 1 - 4 - 7)
c. Develop maintenance agreements with other entities.	
<i>Action 6. Develop and implement adopt a park programs and increase volunteer efforts.</i>	
<i>Action 7. Consider the establishment of a parks endowment fund.</i>	
<i>Action 8. Prioritize projects which are economic generators and draw use from residents and visitors.</i>	
<i>Action 9. Utilize and support Friends of Parks and Recreation (FOPAR) to help in their fundraising, scholarship, and funding of smaller special projects to improve the parks system.</i>	

Instructions: Please rate each Action Item as either a 1 (low priority) 4 (medium priority) or 7 (Highest priority) in regards to "Value to the Community". There are no right answers. Use your overall experiences in Santa Cruz to determine how you rate each of the Actions. For example: You are hiking in Pogonip and have realized that you are lost. You walk to a trail intersection and find no signage directing you back to Spring Street where you parked. Not wanting this to happen to any of your neighbors that hike, you assign a value of 7 to Goal VI Action 5.