



# CITY OF CUPERTINO

## *Parks & Recreation System Master Plan*



### **PARK SERVICE AND ACCESS**

February 2018

At the City's request, the Master Plan team has developed a series of maps for the Park & Recreation System Master Plan (Master Plan) to evaluate nearby park service. The first of these maps were presented as part of the Geographic Analysis at the August 2017 Park & Recreation Commission Meeting. These were revised as part of the Opportunities Analysis and presented to the Park & Recreation Commission and City Council in September meetings.

The early maps raised two questions:

1. What type of park or facility should all residents in Cupertino have access to within a ½ mile of their home?
2. Are there any minimum requirements or expectations for the quality of those parks (e.g., size, types of facilities, recreation opportunities, availability/hours open)?

The answers to these questions have significant implications for the City's park and recreation system. They should be considered in the context of other important potential investments in City parks.

### **CUPERTINO POLICIES AND GOALS**

The City of Cupertino strives to provide quality parks for all City residents. Regarding park access, two policies are noteworthy:

- As noted in the Cupertino General Plan Policy RPC-2.4, the City of Cupertino strives to ensure that all residents have "access within a ½ mile walk of a neighborhood park or a community park with neighborhood facilities."
- In October 2017, Mayor Vaidhyanathan joined 134 of the nation's mayors in launching a "10-minute walk" parks advocacy campaign in conjunction with the National Recreation and Park Association, Trust for Public Land, and Urban Land Institute.

Both policies emphasize providing parks within ½ mile (approximately a 10-minute walk). However, the 10-minute walk campaign focuses on access to any park or green space, while the City's General Plan policy emphasizes neighborhood-serving features or facilities. The General Plan does not define what is meant by "neighborhood park" and "neighborhood facilities."

### **NEW ANALYSIS MAPS**

To determine what these policies mean for proposed park acquisition and investment, four new analysis maps are presented here (Maps 2-5), along with an initial base map for context (Map 1). Each analysis

map uses ArcGIS Network Analyst Extension<sup>1</sup> to illustrate areas within ½ mile (10-minute walk) walking distance to parks.

The maps highlight unserved areas zoned for residential uses. They divide residential uses into three categories to reflect different population densities:

- Single Family Residential (R1), Single Family Residential Cluster (R1C), and Residential Duplex (R2), which allows for residential uses with densities up to 10 dwelling units per acre.
- Multiple Family Residential (R3) and Mixed Use Planned Development (P), which allows for residential uses with densities up to 20 or more dwelling units per acre.
- Residential Hillside (RHS) and Agricultural Hillside, where residential densities can range from 0.1 to 2 dwelling units per acre.

### Map 1: Existing Parks, Open Space and Recreation Resources

Map 1 presents City park land in the larger context of public parks, open space, trails and schools in and near the City of Cupertino. The map also identifies key recreation facilities provided by the City of Cupertino.

### Map 2: Access to Parks within a 10-minute Walk

Map 2 illustrates areas served with a ½-mile of all publicly-accessible, designated parks, open space and trails, including school sport fields used as recreation space as per a joint use agreements (JUA) between the City and Cupertino Union School District. This includes City and County parks and open space, District sites such as Rancho Rinconada and the SCVWD Percolation Pond, and privately-owned parks that provide public access, such as Main Street Park, Cali Mill Plaza, etc. Sites that count towards providing access are named on the map.

Map 2 does not include privately-owned and operated parks and recreation facilities, such as Deep Cliff Golf Course and YMCA, schools without joint use agreements, and parks and recreation resources outside the city limits.

### Map 3: Access to Neighborhood-Serving Parks within a 10-minute Walk

Map 3 focuses on neighborhood-serving parks that provide access to a minimum set of recreation features. Specifically, the map shows ½-mile access to all neighborhood parks in the City designed to serve surrounding residents with at least three recreation uses.

Qualifying sites must be:

- 1) City-owned or designated for public access;
- 2) Neighborhood parks or other types of park that meet neighborhood needs;
- 3) Open year-round and accessible during regular park hours;
- 4) Located in the City;

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<sup>1</sup>ArcGIS Network Analyst provides network-based spatial analysis tools. It uses a configurable transportation network data model, allowing organizations to accurately represent their unique network requirements (e.g.: determining areas around the parks that fall within a specified distance from the parks along the road network rather than using a simple one-mile buffer around the parks without taking the mode of travel into consideration).

- 5) Not designed to provide County-wide or regional service; and
- 6) Able to provide a minimum of three unrestricted, self-directed recreation uses.

For this final criterion, “unrestricted” uses means that no permit, reservation or membership is required to participate. “Self-directed uses” means that the facilities are available for drop-in participation and do not require advance scheduling nor staff leadership (as do events, programs or classes). Examples of park elements that support self-directed uses include seating, playgrounds, looped walking paths, drop-in tennis courts, drop-in basketball courts, picnicking, turf areas for play, and similar amenities that can be freely enjoyed and serve casual daily neighborhood use.

Based on these criteria, this map excludes trail corridors, County parks and regional open space, private park and recreation facilities, and several specialized or small City parks. It also excludes schools with and without joint use agreements, and parks and recreation resources outside the city limits.

Note: Map 3 also excludes Rancho Rinconada, which is managed by its Park & Recreation District for local use. That makes it easier to see where District residents are served by City parks as well as that site.

#### Map 4: Park Service (Accessible Acreage) within a 10-minute Walk

Map 4 is similar to Map 2 in terms of the park access areas shown. In addition, Map 4 illustrates where there are disparities in the amount of park acreage available and the density of the residential areas served. The map is shaded to show residents with access to different amounts of acreage associated with parks, open space, trails and recreation areas within a ½ mile:

- No access (0 acres of park land available)
- 0.3 to 1 acres
- 1.1 to 3 acres
- 3.1 to 5 acres
- 5.1 to 10 acres
- 11 to 15 acres
- 20 + acres

Because of overlapping service areas, some areas have access to more acreage than indicated. The purpose of the map is to highlight residents that do not have access to at least 3 acres of park land. Three acres is enough space to provide a play area, open lawn, seating/picnic areas, and one or more small sports courts or other facilities to support traditional neighborhood park uses.

#### Map 5: Park Service (Accessible Neighborhood-Serving Park Acreage) within a 10-minute Walk

Map 5 is similar to Map 4, but focuses on neighborhood park access areas. This map illustrates where there are disparities in the amount of neighborhood-serving park acreage available and the density of the residential areas served. Similar to Map 4, the map is shaded to show areas where residents have access to different amounts of park acreage.

## POTENTIAL POLICY DIRECTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

Map findings will be discussed with the City Council and Park & Recreation Commission at the February Special Meeting. Based on the discussion to date, the following directions should be considered:

1. What type of park space should all residents in Cupertino have access to within a ½ mile of their home?

**Potential Policy Directions for Discussion:**

General Plan Policy RPC-2.4 should be clarified to interpret “neighborhood park or community park with neighborhood facilities” as any publicly accessible park, green space, trail or joint use recreation area located in the City that is accessible to nearby residential areas.

Very low-density hillside residential areas, which are shown differently on the map, should be considered differently in relation to the 1/2-mile policy because residents in these areas typically have private yard space and are located near hillside open space.

2. Are there any minimum requirements or expectations for quality of parks that meet the requirements of General Plan Policy RPC-2.4 (e.g., size, types of facilities, recreation opportunities, availability/hours open)? What is the definition of neighborhood facilities?

Map 2 shows the most comprehensive approach for addressing the current policy, which is proposed for endorsement. Map 3 illustrates areas that do not have high-quality neighborhood parks and/or “neighborhood facilities” in parks. This notes a need to provide guidelines for the provision of “neighborhood parks” and “neighborhood facilities” that could be added to other types of parks through development, renovation and/or partnership.

**Potential Policy Directions for Discussion:**

- The City should define park land requirements to meet General Plan policies (as noted in #1 above).
- The City should also define neighborhood park design guidelines that identify required, desired and/or appropriate types of recreation amenities and facilities in neighborhood parks, as well as targeted site size, access considerations, site characteristics and programming options. Additional guidelines should define what could count as “neighborhood facilities” provided in community parks or parks of other types to improve services for nearby neighbors.

These park design guidelines should guide new park acquisition, renovation, dedications/donations, as well as joint-use and partnership opportunities to address gaps. These guidelines are not intended to be adopted as policies for minimum park land requirements.

- Additional recommendations in the Master Plan should identify options for meeting neighborhood needs where quality park land cannot be provided.