



# Parks & Recreation System Master Plan



## SYSTEMWIDE GOALS, OBJECTIVES & ACTIONS

(DRAFT, JULY 2018)

### INTRODUCTION

The aspirations for Cupertino parks and recreation are the guiding forces for the Parks & Recreation System Master Plan (Master Plan). The community's vision, priorities and goals provide a foundation for the specific initiatives City staff will take to achieve planning objectives.

This document presents goals, objectives and actions to provide overarching direction for the development, programming and management of the park and recreation system. It builds on the vision, mission and goals that were identified through public outreach, by the Parks & Recreation Commission and by City Council earlier in the planning process.

Still in process, these objectives and actions will be reviewed and refined prior to identifying site-specific recommendations to enhance City parks. Together, actions and site recommendations will provide the basis for identifying a capital projects list

### Planning Framework

The elements of the planning framework provide guidance for the Master Plan:

**Our vision** reflects the City's aspirations for parks and recreation. It describes the desired future we want to achieve.

**Our mission** describes the business or approach that we will take in providing parks, recreation facilities, trails, programs and events.

**Master Plan goals** provide direction for long-range change.

**Objectives** reflect the desired outcomes the City wants to achieve by implementing the Master Plan.

**Actions** are the more detailed ideas, innovations and strategies that will help achieve Master Plan goals.

#### VISION AND MISSION FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

##### Vision

We aspire to create an inspiring, lively, healthy, diverse and sustainable community by connecting our residents to outstanding parks, nature and one another.

##### Mission

The City of Cupertino:

- PROMOTES parks and public spaces as integral elements of our City's character;
- RESTORES, preserves, and protects our creeks, meadows, trees and natural areas;
- ENGAGES our diverse residents in healthy, inclusive events and activities; and
- CREATES a safe, connected, walkable and welcoming community.

## MASTER PLAN GOALS

Master Plan goals will provide overarching guidance for the park and recreation system. These goals are aligned with the City's General Plan goals and policies for the Recreation, Parks and Community Services. Seven goals are presented:

**MP1. CONSERVATION**

Protect nature, trees and natural areas in parks and throughout the city to support wildlife, ecological functions and a stronger connection to Cupertino's natural environment.

**MP2. CONNECTION**

Provide an interconnected network of multiuse trails, walkways and bikeways, close-to-home parks, and community destinations.

**MP3. EQUITABLE ACCESS**

Distribute parks and facilities throughout the community for easy and equitable access.

**MP4. ENHANCEMENT**

Reinvigorate and revitalize parks and recreation facilities to support broad and inclusive recreation interests.

**MP5. ACTIVITY**

Provide programs, events and services that foster social cohesiveness and lively, diverse activities for people of all ages, abilities, cultures, and interests.

**MP6. QUALITY**

Create high quality recreation experiences, places and services that are welcoming, safe, responsive, comfortable and reflective of Cupertino's unique character.

**MP7. SUSTAINABILITY**

Provide, manage and maintain parks, facilities, programs and services through sound management and stewardship, sustainable choices and the wise use of resources.

## SYSTEMWIDE OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

Objectives and more detailed strategic actions are presented below. These are organized and numbered by goal. To support decision-making, these actions should continue to be evaluated and integrated into the City's annual planning for projects and services. Goals, objectives and actions are noted in the following format:

**Goal MPX**

1a. Objective

Action

### Master Plan Goal 1

**MP1. Protect nature, trees and natural areas in parks and throughout the city to support wildlife, ecological functions and a stronger connection to Cupertino's natural environment.**

- Protect important natural resources through park land acquisition, conservation easements, regulations and other techniques.
- Work with partners, including but not limited to the Santa Clara County, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, Santa Clara Valley Water District, Union Pacific Railroad, nonprofits, and private entities/property owners to strategically connect riparian corridors, wetlands and other

natural areas to preserve vital ecological functions, protect habitat, improve water quality and increase biodiversity.

- Connect habitat within the Stevens Creek corridor from north to south Cupertino, taking interim steps and making progress towards protection and preservation of this key riparian corridor.
- Evaluate opportunities to protect parcels along creeks, contiguous to existing parks and natural areas, or with active or remnant habitat.
- Collaborate with efforts to enhance or expand habitat areas and conduct restoration in County parks, open space preserves, creek corridors and other natural areas.
- Support efforts to acquire, protect and restore undeveloped tracts, such as the former Dorsa quarry site.

1b. Manage meadows, natural areas and wildlife habitat in existing parks and across the city, and creeks within city jurisdiction, to maintain and restore ecological health and function.

- Remove or support work by others to remove invasive species, address bank erosion, enhance habitat value and improve water quality and flood capacity to enhance the ecological function along Regnart, Calabazas, Heney, Stevens, Permanente and Saratoga Creeks, Junipero Serra Channel, and open space parcels. (Most such sites are non-city owned.)
- Foster natural systems by creating pollinator pathways through the city, taking advantage of rights-of-way to create a gridded network of habitat within the urban core of Cupertino.
- Add bird-friendly and pollinator-friendly plantings, gardens and features in parks and at other city-owned sites. Include bird baths/water sources, rocks with shallow depression, bird houses and nest-friendly areas, bee nesting blocks, vegetation for forage and cover, and protected, non-mulched ground areas for ground-nesting species where appropriate.
- Create or enhance “park forests,” concentrated tree plantings that establish a large, contiguous tree canopy and emphasize native trees. Augment the existing tree canopies at Jollyman Park, Three Oaks Park and Linda Vista Park.
- Support efforts in Santa Clara County to protect and expand oak savannahs and woodlands.
- Within the Stevens Creek corridor, renovate the Blackberry Farm Golf Course to provide improved habitat value. Future decisions regarding the golf course property should respect the site’s unique creek side location and emphasize choices that are compatible with increased ecological value.
- Support efforts to secure public ownership and restore habitat on undeveloped tracts, such as the former quarry property or lands in the vicinity of the cement plant, if such opportunities become available.

1c. Ensure natural resources in parks and on city property are maintained and stewarded.

- Maintain natural areas in parks in a manner to control invasive species, remove/prune hazardous trees, control river- and stream-bank erosion, minimize wildfire hazards and provide safe access.
- Develop a maintenance management plan that addresses natural resources in parklands and trail corridors and regularly update it. This plan will identify the maintenance tasks, frequencies, staffing and resources needed to manage, maintain and steward natural resources.
- Continue to work with volunteers and partners to improve, enhance and restore natural areas.

1d. Design parks and trail corridors to reflect and respect the Santa Clara Valley local ecology, habitats and native landscape.

- Incorporate and enhance existing natural features when renovating parks or building new ones.
- Preserve existing native or large canopy trees in parks.
- Increase tree canopy where opportunities exist. Develop a Parks Tree Palette for adding/replacing trees, and a plan for canopy succession.
- Update the City's plant palette to encourage horticultural diversity in parks for ecological benefits and visual interest. Include a variety of carefully selected shrub, grass, and groundcover species that have unique textures and colors that are best suited for Cupertino's climate, soil, and wildlife. Utilize native and/or climate-appropriate plants when possible; consider drought tolerance; avoid invasive species.
- Embrace storm water management, incorporating green infrastructure elements such as rain gardens, bioswales, permeable pavers and detention ponds to help reduce flooding, filter pollutants and replenish groundwater during storm events.
- Replace unused or under-used areas of lawn in city parks with pollinator gardens, native plant species, trees that provide canopy or wildlife value, and other planting regimes with habitat value.

1e. Expand opportunities to experience nature, balancing access with natural resource protection.

- Locate access points away from high value habitat and significant natural resources to the extent feasible.
- Interpret the natural environment and processes in parks.
- Add nature play elements in several locations.
- Encourage interaction with nature through the provision of nature trails, habitat viewing areas, and pollinator plantings.
- Gather information and develop actions to manage existing orchards to retain the connection with Cupertino's agricultural past.
- Incorporate community gardens at park sites to provide hands-on opportunities to interact with nature by growing and harvesting food.
- Add plantings in developed parks to attract birds and butterflies for viewing; incorporate boulder groupings, logs/woody debris, and other niches and micro-habitats where insect and plant discovery can occur.
- Provide quiet areas with seating that allow for solitude, in locations with views of creeks, natural areas, or vistas across the landscape.
- Support trails in creek corridors and natural areas, in a manner that accommodates wildlife protection.

1f. Support environmental education and nature interpretation.

- Continue the management and stewardship of the Stevens Creek corridor as Cupertino's environmental education and nature interpretation hub.
- Collaborate with schools located near parks, e.g., Creekside, Portal and Varian, on how best to create outdoor "classroom" space.
- Create "naturehood parks" by providing more natural elements and learning areas in large neighborhood parks (such as outdoor "classrooms", gardens, places to dig)

- Provide environmental education and nature interpretation programming at multiple sites, bringing the expertise of the McClellan Ranch Preserve Environmental Education Center out into Cupertino's neighborhoods and developed parks.
- Continue to support the elementary school Creek Studies Program that is currently hosted at McClellan Ranch Preserve and any successor or associated programs.
- Pursue collaboration with Deer Hollow Farm at Rancho San Antonio to provide environmental education opportunities for the community.

## Master Plan Goal 2

### **MP2. Provide an interconnected network of multiuse trails, walkways and bikeways, close-to-home parks, and community destinations.**

- 2a. Implement proposed trails and paths noted in the Bicycle Transportation Plan, Pedestrian Transportation Plan, Cupertino General Plan, Countywide Trails Master Plan, and other local and regional plans to improve access to parks and expand walking and biking opportunities in Cupertino.
  - Improve pedestrian and bike access to parks through the construction of the envisioned network of Class I Bike Paths, Class II Bike Lanes, Class III Bike Routes and Bike Boulevards, Class IV Protected Bikeways, and sidewalks, trails and pathways noted in the plans.
  - Dedicate or acquire open space along creeks and utility corridors for trails through regional cooperation, grants and private development review.
  - Require dedication or easements for trails, as well as their implementation, as part of the development review process, where appropriate.
  - Establish Joint Use Agreements with the Santa Clara Valley Water District that support the implementation of creek trails.
  - Continue to evaluate and pursue opportunities to develop multiuse trails, walkways and bikeways.
  - Implement wayfinding signage to support use of trails, walkways and bikeways.
- 2b. Prioritize the completion of a comprehensive off-street trail network and protected bikeway network to meet the need for safe, inviting walking and biking opportunities.
  - Reassess the trail priorities in earlier planning efforts for the Bike and Pedestrian transportation plans to focus on prioritizing improving access to parks, recreational activities and programs, as well as connecting parks to other community destinations. Revise criteria in the Bike and Pedestrian plans to more highly rank routes that improve pedestrian and cyclist access to such destinations.
  - Prioritize trail development and partnerships with surrounding cities and agencies to connect Cupertino to regional trails.
  - Extend existing trails and fill gaps in connectivity to link City and County parks and regional open space preserves and provide access to pedestrians and bicyclists to trails in regional open space areas. [Update and reference this map: Opportunity B: Connect the System]
  - Connect the existing popular multi-use paths (Don Burnett Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge and Homestead Road to Mary Avenue Trail, Stevens Creek Trail and Saratoga Creek Trail) to more locations, such as extending the Mary Avenue Trail southward toward Memorial Park and De Anza College, or connecting the east end of Junipero Serra Channel trail to the Saratoga Creek Trail.



- Provide more trails in creek corridors (in a wildlife-compatible manner), rail corridors and off-street locations to support park connectivity, non-motorized transportation, recreation and health benefits.
- Evaluate and pursue means to improve pedestrian/bicycle connectivity and access to parks via use of rights-of-way, easements, joint use agreements or partnerships, land acquisition from willing owners, or other possible opportunities.

2c. Support walking in parks.

- Provide looped internal pathways or trails in parks with adequate space, wide enough for people to walk side-by-side comfortably.
- Provide benches, water fountains, distance markers, and other amenities along pathways and trails to encourage walking for fitness. Add fitness stations along suitable trails and walking routes in parks.
- Vary trail length, types and challenge levels to expand trail-related recreation options. Include soft-surfaced nature trails and jogging trails, as well as hard-surfaced trails for bicycle, tricycle, walker, scooter and stroller use.

2d. Encourage biking and walking to parks and recreation destinations and use of non-single-driver-vehicle options through physical and programmatic enhancements.

- Create welcoming pedestrian and cyclist entrances to parks, with pedestrian and bike paths that are visually prominent, direct, and physically separated from parking lots.
- Provide secure bike parking at parks, with racks located near each use area. Add self-service bike repair stations at community parks, on trails and at popular cycling destinations.
- Publish bike and walking route information online and in the department's public materials such as the recreation program guide.
- Encourage drop-in group walks at several park sites around Cupertino and publish a schedule of these.
- Improve connections and paths between parks and surrounding uses, such as schools and nearby neighborhoods.
- Explore providing improved drop-off areas, very short-term parking, convenient car pool parking space, and other improvements to encourage carpools and shuttles and reduce demand for inefficient single-occupancy vehicle parking.
- If a potential city shuttle service is explored, participate in the process, and identify key park and recreation needs and destinations.

## Master Plan Goal 3

### **MP3. Distribute parks and facilities throughout the community for easy and equitable access.**

3a. Provide parks within walking distance of most residential areas.

- Strive to provide parks within a ½ mile (10-minute) walk of residents in neighborhoods zoned for the following: Single Family Residential (R1), Single Family Residential Cluster (R1C), and Residential Duplex (R2), Multiple Family Residential (R3) and Mixed Use Planned Development (P).
- For new "neighborhood parks" that are intended to provide "neighborhood facilities", strive for parks that are:
  - City-owned or designated for public access;
  - Open year-round and accessible during regular park hours;

- Located in the city;
- Not designed to provide County-wide or regional service; and
- Aim to provide a minimum of three unrestricted, self-directed recreation uses. These do not require a permit, reservation, membership, staff presence or advance scheduling to participate, such as (but not restricted to) seating, playgrounds, looped walking paths, drop-in tennis courts, drop-in basketball courts, picnic areas, turf areas for play, and similar amenities that can be freely enjoyed and serve casual daily neighborhood use.
- Consider areas where residents have access to less than 3 acres parks as “underserved.”
- Supplement neighborhood parks with parks that provide specialized facilities to meet unique recreation needs, such as dog parks, urban plazas, trail corridors, joint use sports fields, community/recreation buildings, or other special features.

3b. Continue to implement the parkland acquisition and implementation program to meet community recreation needs.

- Provide a minimum of three acres per 1,000 residents, as per General Plan policies.
- Apply acquisition strategies that balance land costs, availability and recreation needs and strive to maintain or exceed the City’s existing level of service of 3.6 acres of parkland and open space per 1,000 residents as the community grows through the year 2040.
- Prioritize neighborhood park land acquisition in underserved areas in north and east Cupertino; evaluate potential acquisitions by how well the site meets the criteria noted above for new “neighborhood parks” or “neighborhood facilities.”
- Provide new neighborhood parks of sufficient size in underserved areas to provide opportunities for social gathering, play and active recreation.
- Pursue partnerships with School Districts to add, enhance or improve public access to recreation facilities at school sites and to develop vacant school-owned property, especially in underserved areas.
- Explore expanding Joint Use Agreements with schools, especially in underserved areas, to include public access to play areas, sports courts, sports fields and other indoor and outdoor recreation amenities.
- Acquire land through easement, joint use agreement or ownership for trail and riparian corridors.
- Consider unique options, opportunities and partnerships to meet residential and specialized park needs. These include, but are not limited to, privately owned public open space (POPOS), park partnerships outside of the city (e.g., Santa Clara County or adjacent cities), renovated buildings, jointly developed / joint use facilities, and street rights-of-way for permanent or temporary park space.
- Coordinate with new developments or redevelopments on park land dedications or the provision of in-lieu fees. If in-lieu fees are provided, regularly evaluate the fees and ensure these are sufficient to cover the cost to acquire park land when it becomes available.

3c. Expand recreation opportunities by enhancing park and facility access.

- Implement programmatic solutions to enhance recreation options throughout the city. These may include, but are not limited to, mobile or pop-up programs (staff-led activities) and movable facilities (e.g., climbing wall, dance floor, movie screen that can be set up in different locations.)
- Explore options to increase access to existing non city-owned community facilities, such as gymnasiums, swimming pools, tennis courts and theaters/performance space provided by

the School Districts, De Anza College and non-profit organizations in Cupertino. Assess opportunities to increase public use through scheduling changes, programming provision, and/or reductions in fees or subsidies.

- Improve entryways to parks and recreation facilities to make them more attractive, accessible, and welcoming. Ensure parks and recreation facilities are as welcoming to visitors traveling by foot and bicycle as they are to those arriving by automobile.
- Consider programmatic and physical improvements to improve access by motorized and public transportation. Improve drop-off areas and loading/unloading zones; address parking needs while considering autonomous vehicle trends; facilitate or connect residents to shuttle services, transit and transportation options.
- Provide recreation facilities that are usable year-round and in all seasons. Update agreements that limit recreation use of City facilities to expand usage windows.
- Explore methods to deliver more use from existing facilities. Consider adding programming at buildings that are currently closed evenings or weekends, revising field use permits to an hourly or usage basis rather than 'blanket' permits to encourage more efficient usage, or other ideas.
- Embrace and strive for universal designed access to parks and facilities for all people, regardless of ability. Strive for universal design to make existing and new parks and facilities more user friendly and accessible to populations with special needs, parents with young children and others who benefit from wider access routes, seating and resting points, shade, universal and family-friendly restrooms, and similar accommodations.

## Master Plan Goal 4

### **MP4. Reininvigorate and revitalize parks and recreation facilities and diversify offerings to support broad and inclusive recreation interests.**

- 4a. Embark on a program of strategic reinvestment in and renovation/expansion of major facilities to meet community priorities.
  - When major reinvestment is needed in existing recreation facilities, evaluate the benefit before doing a like-for-like replacement. Consider repurposing, or a more significant remodel to retool the current inventory of facilities and better meet community needs.
  - Improve the user experience, including welcoming entry sequences, the addition of social/lobby/lounge spaces, and convenient dropoff plus comfortable areas to wait for pickup when renovating existing indoor facilities.
  - Consider the new facility needs (see 4b) when evaluating reinvestments and enhancements to Quinlan Community Center and Cupertino Sports Center, two large facilities which could be remodeled or expanded to address broader recreation interests and needs.
  - Incorporate findings of Public Works facility assessment reports into recreation facility planning and capital project proposals. (For example, incorporate into such planning the Citywide 2018 Building Condition Assessment that is currently in preparation,)
  - Consider whether a smaller facility should be phased out or repurposed once its uses can be incorporated into a facility that better accommodates its program. Monte Vista Recreation Center and the Wilson Park ceramics studio are two examples of aging facilities that house important programs, yet were not designed for the current use.
- 4b. Consider adding new major facilities to meet community needs at existing parks, through renovations to existing facilities, or at sites acquired in the future.



- Prepare a business and operations plan prior to developing new major facilities to help identify the optimal size, amenities, location, programming, fees and revenue and operating model for facilities with high operating costs, such as a performing arts center or an aquatic facility. Evaluate grouping similar uses (e.g., maker space, art studio space, performing arts) for synergies and operating efficiencies.
- Evaluate options for joint-use partnerships and/or renovation of existing facilities (public, private or partner) prior to building new ones.
- Explore potential equity partners, operating partners and sponsors before planning and designing major facilities.
- Consider adding the following facilities:
  - Performing Arts/Fine Arts Center
  - Technology Center/Incubator Hub/Maker Space
  - Gymnasium/Recreation Center
  - Year-round Aquatics (see 4c below)
  - Expanded or Satellite Senior Center/Multi-generational Center
  - Improved/Relocated Teen Center

4c. Expand swimming and water play opportunities.

- Continue to operate the Blackberry Farm pool complex as a place for leisure and swimming. If feasible in the future, seek to expand the swimming season.
- Pursue partnerships with other entities that have swimming pools in and near Cupertino, especially focused on securing time for family swimming, swim lessons, lap swimming, and aquatic exercise.
- Evaluate providing a new year-round aquatics complex in the city, based on a business and operations plan that recommends a design program. A full range of aquatics programming provides the most opportunity for users and also increases revenue potential. Programs that focus on varied recreation opportunities for families and for all ages and abilities, will draw a higher number of users than a single type of programming or a pool designed for one primary user type.
- Provide more water play features (splash pads/spray play areas/interactive water features) for play in warm weather.

4d. Diversify play experiences to support extraordinary play.

- Encourage play for all age groups, including children, teens, adults and seniors
- Provide a universally-accessible destination play areas in an easily accessible location such as a large neighborhood park.
- Provide inclusive elements in new play areas and in existing ones when renovating or updating them, and to all play areas over time.
- Consider users of all ages, backgrounds, needs and abilities when developing recreation programming.
- Pilot an adventure playground or nature play area to stimulate the imagination by including sand and water play, or interactive elements with movable and loose parts
- Provide unique destination play areas in community parks
- Provide temporary “pop-up play” programs and amenities in different locations around the city

- Add “unstructured” and varied play opportunities that look beyond modular, traditional manufactured play structures.

4e. Improve the functionality and usability of existing facilities for field sports.

- Design multi-use sports fields to support multiple sports: rectangular fields should be designed to allow for soccer, lacrosse, Ultimate Frisbee, etc.
- Provide at least one cricket/multi-use field.
- Make investments in softball and baseball fields to get more playing time and more use out of these facilities, such as allowing for continued or expanded youth soccer in outfield areas during non-ball game times or designing to accommodate kickball or different base distances.
- Partner with school districts on expanding community use of school sports fields.
- Consider whether to create an artificial turf field, which could allow sooner use after wet weather than natural turf.
- Evaluate whether lighting any sport fields is appropriate to extend evening usage hours.
- Manage sport fields to maximize and optimize use.

4f. Add new features and facilities at existing parks to create variety and respond to diverse recreation interests.

Provide at least one special feature or facility at each large neighborhood park, so that each park offers something unique in addition to the traditional park features of playgrounds, sports fields, and picnic tables.

Consider incorporating the ideas for additional features suggested by the community during the Master Plan process when renovating existing or building new parks:

Covered/shaded picnic areas for smaller groups (5-25)

More outdoor event space

Outdoor games, such as chess tables, giant checkers or Jenga, outdoor ping pong tables

More courts and types of courts (basketball, bocce, pickleball, badminton, volleyball, futsal; and which address the community’s diversity)

Outdoor “living rooms”, “libraries” and seating areas

Outdoor fitness equipment

Additional dog parks and dog exercise space

Bike skills area or pump track

Roller hockey

Disc golf course

Community gardens

Healing garden

Teaching/educational garden

Develop a process for collecting and evaluating future community proposals for new features in parks, including identifying whether there are partner resources for implementation.

4g. Provide social hubs, group gathering spaces and activity areas to support social interaction, self-directed group activities and drop-in users.

- Add a variety of seating options and grouping of seating in parks: benches, moveable seating, plop benches, seat walls
- Create activity hubs by locating seating areas, shade, and other elements that encourage people to linger near places that attract daily activity (playgrounds, dog parks, etc.)

- Provide shaded, re-servable and first-come, first served medium and large group picnic areas at multiple sites across Cupertino.
- Incorporate accessible outdoor fitness hubs in parks, locating these near activity areas.
- Provide restrooms in higher use parks.
- Provide Wi-Fi and shaded/covered outdoor working areas with charging stations in selected parks to encourage students and employees to be outdoors.

## Master Plan Goal 5

### **MP5. Support social gatherings, events, programs and activities for people of all ages, abilities, cultures, and interests.**

- 5a. Facilitate and provide events, fairs, and festivals that foster community cohesiveness.
  - Continue to facilitate and refresh community-wide events, fairs and festivals at Memorial Park, as well as other suitable community spaces.
  - Improve facilities and infrastructure at Memorial Park to better accommodate festivals.
  - Provide smaller events in neighborhood parks, such as movies in the park, concerts, arts and crafts, outdoor fitness, and recreation activities that would appeal to nearby neighbors.
  - Support temporary unique events, such as "pop-up" parklets or temporary street closures for special programs.
  - Increase outdoor programs and events that support health, wellness and fitness, such as races, walkathons, walking groups, boot camps, and 10,000 step challenges.
  - Explore opportunities to host events at new venues, including potential partnerships, joint-use arrangements or special event policies such as exist for Cali Mill Plaza and Main Street Park/Town Square.
- 5b. Rethink facilities, programs and services to empower Cupertino youth and teens.
  - Develop and program a new café-style activity center for teens which could include maker/incubator spaces and social entrepreneurship programs, potentially in partnership with a school or library district or other entity, or at a new or re-purposed venue.
  - Add more challenging and adventurous recreation facilities, such as climbing spires and bike skills parks and provide introductory "lessons" and social activities to encourage use.
  - Provide more evening and nighttime teen activities and social events.
  - Involve youth and teens in designing park spaces and planning events and programs.
  - Connect youth and teens to volunteer opportunities and internships.
  - Support teen opportunities for skill building, college application assistance, employment training, trips and excursions.
  - Facilitate and coordinate more events such as <hack> Cupertino that merge fun, social and educational opportunities.
  - Evaluate and pursue opportunities to offer stress reduction activities for teens.
- 5c. Support lifelong learning and recreation for adults and seniors, responding to the increasing population of these demographic groups.
  - Provide services targeting different age groups, including young adults, adults, older adults, young and fit seniors, older and frail seniors, as well as multi-generational activities.
  - Expand programs, activities and services designed for seniors and older adults outside the Senior Center at other facilities and destinations.
  - Increase opportunities to get seniors outdoors—through programs such as kite flying, guided walks, garden parties and socials, and lawn/patio bowling.

- Increase opportunities for senior fitness and senior sports, recognizing that seniors are staying active longer.
  - Increase programming that targets young/active seniors, including at the Sports Center.
  - Add programming space and associated infrastructure to the Senior Center when resources are available, to address the significant increase in the 65+ senior population (140% in the Bay Area from 2010-2040).
  - Add senior-friendly athletic and fitness facilities, such as pickleball courts, bocce courts, and senior-oriented outdoor fitness equipment.
  - Consider re-naming and re-branding the Senior Center as a multi-generational facility, and expanding its hours and offerings to add programming for a wider age range.
- 5d. Increase arts and cultural programming, and emphasize collaboration with partners.
- Increase the amount of arts and cultural programming available in Cupertino, including programs, events and festivals associated with fine arts, cultural programming, music, educational arts, literary arts and media arts.
  - Continue to offer cultural programming and events, working with community cultural groups to tailor these to the diverse interests and backgrounds of Cupertino's residents.
  - Encourage smaller scale "mini-art" performances (e.g., busking programs, short/small performances, or temporary art installations) in parks or under-utilized public spaces to bring more performing arts viewing opportunities to residents.
  - Incorporate artists and art into youth recreation programming, partnering with schools and other organizations.
  - Consider partnership opportunities to provide maker space/incubator hub programming merged with art interests to support programs and classes such as computer animation, videography, graphics, website development, music recording, etc.
- 5e. Support environmental education and nature interpretation programming.
- Continue to provide quality environmental education and nature programming at McClellan Ranch Preserve, including both indoor and outdoor programs.
  - Continue to increase the opportunities for gardening and food production in Cupertino. Provide community garden space at other locations besides McClellan Ranch Preserve.
  - Partner with schools to create outdoor classrooms and curricula to bring environmental education options closer to students. Consider more natural areas in parks adjacent to schools, such as Varian and Portal parks.
  - Provide more challenging nature-based activities in parks and recreation facilities, such as tree climbing, orienteering, overnight camping, outdoor survival training, canoe/kayak training (in pools or at reservoirs/lakes), etc.
- 5f. Provide outdoor recreation programs in neighborhood parks.
- Support organized play opportunities, classes and activities in parks. Consider programming options led by staff, contract staff and partners.
  - Provide a mix of fun and learning opportunities, including learning new activities, skills, sports and information about local history, nature and culture.
  - Offer outdoor exercise and programs to support health and wellness, such as outdoor yoga, tai chi, badminton, volleyball, kickball, and boot camps, and including some free or low-cost programming.

- Explore options for mobile or pop-up programs (staff-led activities) and movable facilities (e.g., climbing wall, portable movie screen) that can be set up in large or small neighborhood parks and other locations where appropriate.
  - When renovating neighborhood parks, explore options to add infrastructure, facilities or utilities to support neighborhood programming and events. For example, add electrical service, include paved areas that can be used as stage spaces, choose pavilions/tables that can be used as outdoor “classrooms” as well as for picnic/party reservations.
- 5g. Define the city’s program services areas to more effectively manage and provide programs, events and activities.
- Continue to provide and enhance services in the following program services areas: Arts & Culture; Events and Festivals; Child, Youth and Teen Development & Leadership; Education & Nature Interpretation; Lifelong Learning & Enrichment; Seniors/Older Adult Programs; Aquatics; and Sports, Fitness and Exercise.
  - Add and increase program options or partner/promote/support services by others in the following program services areas: Culturally Diverse Programming; Play and Outdoor Recreation; and Therapeutic Recreation
  - Provide or continue to provide the following supplemental services to support community activities and ensure programming excellence: Adaptive/Inclusive Recreation Accommodations; Community Outreach and Neighborhood Services; Park and Facility Reservations, Rentals and Permits; Sports Field Scheduling; Partnership and Volunteer Coordination.
  - Consider improving efficiency, consistency and user experience of the reservations process by enhancing staff or training as needed to coordinate reservations at all facilities.
- 5h. Develop and update recreation program management tools, data-tracking procedures and fees.
- Continue to implement the new registration software to facilitate program registration, facility reservation and data tracking.
  - Define a fee philosophy, methodology and cost recovery goals for fees and charges for programs and services.
  - Re-evaluate options for park and facility rentals to expand options for part, half and full day reservations to support more family gatherings and group activities.
  - Create and implement a program evaluation and forecasting tool to assist in decision-making about what types of programs to provide, which classes to cancel and when to introduce new or trending activities.
  - Track program participation, cost recovery, and customer satisfaction data by program service area and supplemental service area to track participation, measure the success of different types of programs, and evaluate programming needs.
  - As part of data tracking, consider requesting demographic and geographic data from participants to track what demographic and geographic areas of the city are well-served and underserved.
  - Provide staff and analyst resources to regularly evaluate data, report findings, and develop recommendations.
  - Conduct a periodic program review and analysis to help maintain program quality, responsiveness and relevance.
- 5i. Clarify roles, responsibilities, communication and scheduling procedures and provide staff training to enhance program quality and customer service.



- Enhance program quality by ensuring that recreation staff receive program training, certifications and professional development opportunities, as well as direction and mentorship, particularly when new programs are initiated.
- Clarify staff policies and procedures, as well as the chain of command, on program decision-making.
- Improve relationships and communication with partners, volunteers and contract providers by appointing a coordinator lead for each.
- Continue to discuss partnership options to offer joint programs and services or programs in joint-use facilities with the De Anza College, Cupertino Union School District, Fremont Union High School District, the Cupertino Library, YMCA and other partners.
- Increase drop-in programs, short-duration programs with three or fewer classes, and flexible program registration options to meet the needs of busy residents.
- Develop an outreach mechanism to solicit and evaluate community suggestions for new programs, activities or offerings.

## Master Plan Goal 6

**MP6. Create high quality recreation experiences, places and services that are welcoming, safe, responsive, comfortable and reflective of Cupertino's unique character.**

- 6a. Design and develop high quality, high functioning parks and social spaces.
- Develop and implement design, development and programming guidelines as well as maintenance standards to elevate the quality, functionality and uniqueness of parks.
  - Balance customized design with maintenance needs, and desire for consistent elements for maintenance efficiencies, in creating unique, artistic or themed amenities and facilities in parks. Involve maintenance staff in decision-making about park design and elements to include in parks.
  - Design multi-use spaces and facilities to be flexible and easily adaptable to address changing community needs over time.
  - In site renovation and development, design parks and facilities to take into account the supervisory needs of program staff and parents to watch over children as they participate in activities. Consider sight lines, the proximity of play areas and restrooms, the location of benches, and distance of parking and dropoff areas to the program space.
  - In site renovation and development of parks and facilities, collaborate with County Sheriff and County Fire staff to secure design input relating to safety aspects. Take into account the needs and practices of public safety personnel, including after-hours sheriff patrols and emergency access needs.
  - Provide support amenities such as lighting, trash receptacles, water fountains, dog dishes, restrooms, loading/unloading zones and parking to reflect site functional needs. For example, provide restrooms inside indoor facilities in neighborhood parks to better support staff-led program activities for children. Ensure parking and drop-off areas and loading/unloading zones support facility use, events and programs.
  - Apply a consistent template for informational, directional and site identity signage in parks and trail corridors.
  - Provide improved natural lighting in buildings, acoustics and sound attenuation, energy and resource efficiency with maintenance, upgrades, and new construction projects.

- 6b. Incorporate Cupertino's identity and placemaking into park and facility design, renovation and revitalization.
- Involve nearby neighbors, stakeholders and interest groups in the planning, design and development of parks, recreation facilities and trails.
  - Add elements to City parks and facilities that reflect Cupertino's unique environment, interests and community characteristics.
  - Integrate art and unique elements and vary designs to elevate Cupertino's system and enhance user experiences.
  - Highlight natural features/topography and protect historic buildings and landscapes to emphasize Cupertino's identity.
  - Provide interpretive elements in parks to educate the community about the city's history, cultural diversity and nature. Enhance existing interpretive elements and monuments to tell a story about Cupertino and the surrounding region.
  - Invest in high-quality materials, art, details, storytelling and other methods to elevate design to create Cupertino-worthy facilities. Recent examples high-quality facilities are Franco and Sterling Barnhart Parks, the Don Burnett Bicycle-Pedestrian Bridge and the McClellan Ranch Environmental Education Center.
  - Design parks with site themes, special elements and different color and material palettes so that each has a unique character.
  - Explore opportunities to integrate Cupertino's sister city relationships into park features and programming.
  - Design and redevelop parks to provide the facilities, activities and programs best suited for the service area based on the site's history, the desires/demographic characteristics of nearby neighbors, and the surrounding neighborhood's character, including current and future development, land use and density.
  - Consider new trends and needs, as well as the preferences of nearby neighbors, before replacing amenities or facilities at the end of their lifecycle. Avoid replacing failing amenities and facilities in-kind without reviewing current needs.
- 6c. Develop and implement customized guidelines and best practices for sustainable and efficient park design and development.
- Consider permeable surfacing in at least 75% of new paved trails and 50% of new parking lots.
  - Use local and recycled materials in building and services.
  - Pursue green building or LEED-compliant construction in the development of indoor facilities. [This does not require LEED certification.]
  - If additional parking is needed at a site, prior to converting existing green space to parking use, evaluate if underground or structured solutions are viable (including financially), and explore opportunities to share parking at nearby sites or other such options.
  - Develop water-efficient, climate-controlled irrigation systems in all new parks. Update current irrigation systems when parks are renovated to improve water efficiency.
  - In new splash pads, spraygrounds and fountains, prioritize designs that use systems which clean and recirculate the water, or that collect the water and use it for irrigation.

- Incorporate water efficient fixtures in all new restrooms and water fountains. Add low-flow devices in all existing restrooms toilets.
  - Consider the use of graywater where available for irrigation at parks and possible public demonstration purposes.
  - Support the city's Zero Waste Policy (adopted December 2017) by encouraging recycling and composting.
  - Initiate a system-wide recycling program for all parks. Provide recycling receptacles, information and publicity at all large special events.
  - Compost grass clippings, leaves, twigs, branches, and other garden or compostable refuse generated in public parks. Continue to chip trimmed tree branches from appropriate species and repurpose as mulch.
  - Continue to reduce the use of toxics and hazardous chemicals through Cupertino's Integrated Pest Management program.
  - Emphasize efficient, renewable, and/or clean energy sources including solar.
- 6d. Improve parks and recreation hospitality and comfort to enhance recreation user experiences.
- Make parks more comfortable by providing or enhancing support amenities such as benches, shade structures, water fountains and bike racks.
  - Provide clean, inviting, accessible restrooms in large neighborhood parks and community parks, and other high use or well programmed sites. Include good ventilation and amenities such as mirrors and baby changing stations.
  - Provide small social spaces, seating areas and activity hubs in parks.
  - Provide shaded areas in parks, trails and outdoor spaces, using shade trees, shade "sails" or permanent structures.
  - Provide benches, tables, and places to relax in parks. Provide benches at intervals along looped paths and trails.
  - Add device charging stations/plugs in parks or facilities at higher-use gathering areas where demand exists. Consider solar-powered options for outdoor benches and tables.

## Master Plan Goal 7

### **MP7. Provide, manage and maintain parks, facilities, programs and services through sound management and stewardship, sustainable choices and the wise use of resources.**

- 7a. Leverage resources and diversify funding sources to support capital development and ongoing operations.
- Continue to be fiscally and financially prudent in funding the park and recreation needs of the Cupertino community.
  - Coordinate with City leaders to expand the Public Works and Recreation and Community Services Departments' resources to support additional park land and facilities, park and natural area maintenance, recreation activities and the arts.
  - Develop a fee philosophy and cost recovery goals for programs and rental facilities to reflect changing market conditions and the community's ability to pay.
  - Explore adding a facility use fee to all program fees to provide dedicated funding for maintenance, renovation and facility replacement.
  - Expand staff capacity for grant writing, grant management and the solicitation of sponsorships and donations.

- Diversify funding sources, considering sponsorships, bond measures, operational levies and other alternatives to fund capital projects, operations, maintenance, and programming.
- Evaluate options to develop and adopt an impact fee methodology to support park, recreation facility and trail development and operations in residential, commercial and industrial areas.
- Leverage resources by collaborating with partners, stakeholders and volunteers. (See 6d.)
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7b. Steward resources and maintain assets in a sustainable manner to ensure high quality parks and facilities.

- Ensure that a high level of park maintenance continues to provide safe and attractive parks, and enhance user experience.
- Ensure maintenance and operations dollars are available before constructing new facilities; create and adopt an associated policy.
- Evaluate establishing a 'sinking fund' or other funding strategy to address major maintenance and planned replacements of facilities and equipment.
- Increase maintenance where needed to support increased programming, activities and facility reservations in parks.
- Invest more funds in natural resource stewardship, and protect cultural, historical and natural resources in parks.
- Improve maintenance efficiencies. Avoid difficult-to-maintain artistic amenities that do not function well.
- Integrate native and/or climate appropriate plants where possible. Consider turf alternatives, except where turf is delivering a beneficial use (sport field, golf course, play area etc.)
- Invest in conservation practices and technology to conserve and sustain resources and reduce utility and water costs.
- Add solar-powered features in new or renovated facilities where appropriate.
- Provide electric vehicle charging stations in parking areas.
- Ensure that current and future community needs and benefits are considered before replacing old or worn facilities like-for-like.
- Ensure resources are available to provide maintenance and upkeep of existing facilities to lengthen their lifespan and reduce the number of deferred projects in the future.
- Invest in training for city tree crews and engage outside professional services as needed to ensure sustainable and effective tree management. Update and expand the city tree inventory to include all mature trees on city parkland and rights-of-way. Consider creating a staff Urban Forester position.
- Train staff in maintenance and stewardship of natural areas, green infrastructure, and bioswales, so that these features thrive and the integrity of natural resources on city property is maintained. Involve expert professional services as needed to support informed ongoing care for habitat areas.
- Develop guidelines for vegetation management in the Stevens Creek Corridor to promote natural resource stewardship.
  - Include a role for participation by trained or supervised volunteers; provide periodic oversight and guidance regarding the corridor conditions and management by qualified professionals.
- Focus on storm water management and green infrastructure when designing or renovating city parks. For example, consider installing a 'storm water management garden' on city or public property to showcase green infrastructure techniques.

- Work with Sustainability Division staff on a long-term climate adaptation plan to prepare parks and natural resources for future climate change (increased flooding, warmer temperatures, less predictable rainfall, increased extreme heat days e.g.)
- 7c. Enhance communication, availability of parks and programming information, and customer service.
- Refresh the Department's identity to align with Master Plan vision, mission and goals as part of a regular strategic planning process.
  - Regularly update the City's website using the most current information from the Department's rebranded image.
  - Use the City's website to collect contact information for people who would like to be on mailing lists to receive updates about programs, events and services.
  - Provide easy-to-find calendar schedules of City drop-in programs, events and community meetings to facilitate participation.
  - Provide information about available transportation assistance, connections to social services, and other resources available to residents in the community.
  - Continue to offer communication support in multiple languages to diverse groups; in the long term, continue to monitor needs to provide information, signage and materials in different languages.
  - Make it easier to register, reserve and use parks, facilities and programs via online programs suitable for computer, tablet or phone use.
    - Pursue software, network and connectivity improvements that allow users to register for programs more conveniently and from more locations.
    - Implement procedures that are as simple and flexible as possible for users to make or change reservations and registrations.
  - Maintain the ability to report unsatisfactory park conditions or concerns using the web or a smartphone app (such as the current Cupertino 311 app).
  - Encourage all staff who have customer contact (including maintenance, administrative and recreation staff) to participate in customer service and cultural diversity training to address American customs as well as the perspectives of other countries and cultures, and to strengthen ability to deliver a positive, welcoming experience for customers.
- 7d. Track, monitor and report data to measure performance in providing high quality parks and services.
- Identify 8-10 Department performance measure to track annually that will measure progress and communicate success in providing services (participation, satisfaction, cost recovery, per capita investments, e.g.)
  - Provide resources to collect and evaluate data on participation / recreation use by service area and other key metrics; provide in an annual report.
  - Identify and implement the processes needed to track and measure services. Coordinate new registration system software with needed data-tracking processes.
  - Continue conducting online customer feedback surveys to collect data on customer satisfaction; invite ideas for desired new facilities, programs and activities.
  - Conduct a community recreation survey approximately every 5 years to better understand community recreation priorities and needs.
  - Update GIS data for parks and facilities to use in lifecycle planning, maintenance tracking and long-range park and facility planning.



- 7e. Collaborate with partners, stakeholders and volunteers to take advantage of opportunities, widen participation and strengthen offerings.
- Continue coordinating with the School Districts to identify joint-use opportunities for indoor and outdoor facilities, co-development opportunities for new parks and facilities, and opportunities to support shared program initiatives by sharing information and facilitating regularly coordination meetings.
  - Enhance recreational programs and service through partnerships with other agencies and non-profit organizations that provide recreational programming. Maintain and strengthen active collaboration and existing agreements with such agencies and non-profit organizations, including the Library District and Northwest YMCA, to ensure progressive excellence in the facilities, programs, and services provided to the diverse and growing Cupertino population.
  - Emphasize and foster existing relationships with local non-profits and support synergies. Strengthen communication and collaboration with additional local service organizations whose missions align with city goals.
  - Pursue opportunities to partner with the business community in areas of joint interest to provide excellent park and recreation facilities and diverse, robust recreation offerings in the city.
  - Establish partnerships with private organizations or non-traditional partners where suitable, to provide expanded offerings to the community.
  - Identify equity partners to help build, operate and/or program new public facilities.
  - Pursue partnerships with private developers that are providing common open space to make such spaces available to the public.
  - Expand volunteer opportunities for all ages; continue to identify and publicize volunteer opportunities that support youth development programs; make volunteer opportunities easier to locate on the Department website.
  - Continue discussing joint opportunities with other jurisdictions, such as adjacent cities, Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, and Santa Clara County, to achieve Master Plan goals.
  - Explore and continue efforts to cultivate business partners and sponsorships for facilities, activities and services that reflect shared interests and/or also help address employee needs.

