

4.0

GENERAL POLICY

GUIDELINES

CHAPTER 4.0

GENERAL POLICY GUIDELINES

4.1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

This chapter covers general guidelines and policies that the City can use to make decisions on issues regarding parks and recreation facilities and programs. *Specific recommendations for implementation are contained in Chapter 6.* This chapter can also be used by staff, elected and appointed officials to develop annual goals and objectives for work programs and to be a guide when periodically updating the “Parks and Recreation Facilities Element of the Santa Paula General Plan.”

Policy recommendations are broad and address areas that include both facilities and programming. The Park Policies section will provide a framework for the City Council and staff as they face decisions about meeting recreation program and facility needs. The action items are meant to be considerations, methods and/or steps the City could use when faced with each particular policy issue.

The City of Santa Paula offers a variety of special interest recreation programs. Some activities are offered by other organizations in the community with support from the City. The policies and action items contained in *Section 4.2, Park Policies*, of this Master Plan are offered to enhance the provision and coordination of existing programs and help determine guidelines and methods for developing new programs for the community.

Many of the identified actions are already practiced by City staff. Some may not be possible to implement immediately due to the City's heavily scheduled resources and current financial situation but could be phased in over time. The benefits should result in a greater feeling of community while meeting the residents' recreation needs.

4.2 PARK POLICIES

The following Park Policies should be reviewed, modified and updated as necessary and then put into practice by the City.

The policies and corresponding action items in this section are intended to provide guidance to the City of Santa Paula in:

- Planning, designing and building new parks and recreation facilities in the future;
- Renovating existing parks and recreation facilities;
- Financing new parks and recreation facilities; and
- Continuing ongoing maintenance and operations.

These policies and action items are general enough to allow flexibility, while being specific enough to provide the City staff, sports organizations, and community groups with clear directions on how they should proceed when faced with park decisions. Each policy deals with a rather broad topic, while the action items that follow each policy are more detailed. Again, specific implementation recommendations that the City should consider pursuing are contained in *Chapter 6*.

In order to meet the five acres per one-thousand population standard contained in *Chapter 1*, the City will need to aggressively pursue policies and actions that will allow it to acquire additional parkland that is not currently planned for. This may be accomplished by a number of methods, including:

- Parkland dedication by future developers;
- Joint-use agreements with schools, other agencies, and non-profits that the City could count as parkland in its park formula;
- Regional park development in coordination with the County or State;
- Acquisition of additional parkland through the use of redevelopment, state grants, and
- Fund raising and acquisition and development of usable trail systems throughout the City.

As discussed in *Chapter 3.5*, the City should pursue a path of land acquisition to expand services and additional amenities at Teague Park, Las Piedras Park and Harding Park. However, if other parkland acquisition opportunities present themselves, and City Council determines it would be important and beneficial to the community to preserve the land for park purposes, it should take advantage of those opportunities to meet the recommended park standard and provide the park acreage required to supply the park facilities it needs to meet service demands in the future. In summary, the City should continue its goal of trying to attain the standard of five acres per one-thousand/population, while setting its priorities for parkland acquisition for the development of specific recreation facilities it needs to meet service demands.

4.2.1 GENERAL PARK POLICIES

Policy 1: Endeavor to attain the park land ratio of five acres per one-thousand residents.

Action Item 1.1: Require the dedication of five acres of parkland per one-thousand/population or payment of market value in-lieu fees for acquisition and development by new residential development projects in the City, consistent with the Quimby Act and the City's Park Fee Impact Ordinance.

Action Item 1.2: Whenever possible, require land dedication instead of allowing the payment of in-lieu fees (even if the City does not have funds for development), so that park land can be secured for the future.

Action Item 1.3: While requiring the ratio of five acres of parkland per one-thousand population or the equivalent market value in-lieu fees, allow the flexibility of trading off required acreage, i.e., giving credit to developers for developing finished parks, where appropriate as long as the City receives full value. As an example, if a

developer is required to dedicate 10 acres of undeveloped parkland worth a market value of \$500,000 an acre, the City could accept seven acres of land and \$1.5 million in approved park improvements.

- Action Item 1.4: Adopt a strategy of land acquisition that will allow the City to expand services at existing park sites when unrestricted park acquisition funds become available.
- Action Item 1.5: Explore ways to acquire open space and trail systems that could add to the City's park land total.
- Action Item 1.6: Explore ways to utilize catch basins and drainage areas for open space and park uses, even if they flood periodically during the rainy season.
- Action Item 1.7: When new schools are developed, pursue acquiring adjacent property through dedication, donation or grant funding to expand sports fields, playgrounds and open space with joint use agreements.
- Action Item 1.8: Consider acquiring individual lots and areas in older developed portions of the City that are underserved with park land to develop mini parks for the residents' use.
- Action Item 1.9: Explore establishing a Community Foundation or "Friends of Santa Paula Parks" organization for the purpose of soliciting park land donations; applying for private grants the City cannot apply for on its own; and for fundraising to acquire park land and open space.
- Action Item 1.10: Explore ways to work with commercial recreation businesses to provide conduit financing through lease purchase bonds to acquire park property for commercial recreation development that will serve the community, such as a sports complex, performing arts center, water park, etc.
- Action Item 1.11: Explore ways to work with schools, other government agencies and non-profit organizations to acquire and provide additional park land and facilities.

Policy 2: Review and update Park Impact Fee Ordinance.

- Action Item 2.1: Under the authority of the Quimby Act, review and continually update the City's use of the Quimby Act to insure the City receives parkland dedication from new residential developments.
- Action Item 2.2: Assure that the City's Park Impact Fee Ordinance is kept current and reflects the appropriate impact fee for residential development.
- Action Item 2.3: Adopt by resolution definitions of minimum park sizes and park service areas for both community and neighborhood parks to use when negotiating land dedication from developers.

- Action Item 2.4: Require that any and all park sites have an average gradient of 5% or less (rough grade) to be accepted by the City for parks and recreation purposes. If the City desires to accept park land dedication with a gradient greater than 5% it should require the dedication of 1½ times the required developer land dedication.
- Action Item 2.5: Update, every two to three years, the number of persons per dwelling unit for all housing types including, but not limited to, single-family dwelling units and multi-family dwelling units.
- Action Item 2.6: Consider an amendment to the Park Impact Fee Ordinance that would add a requirement that residential in-fill projects and residential remodeling where more than 500 square feet of additional space on the lot are being added be required to pay the park impact fee.
- Action Item 2.7: Undertake a study to assess the feasibility of adopting an AB1600 Recreation Facilities Impact Fee on commercial and industrial development within the City, as described in *Chapter 1.5.3*, to provide for acquisition, development and operation of Park and Recreation facilities.

Policy 3: Consider community needs for facilities and open space when trying to achieve the total park land needed to meet service demands.

- Action Item 3.1: While striving to acquire the land necessary for existing park expansion and to meet the City's desired park ratio of five acres per thousand residents, land acquisition should be considered in the overall context of the community's need for park facilities. Although this citywide Park and Recreation Master Plan identifies potential park expansions and locations, as well as the need for new mini parks and neighborhood parks, the actual park sizes, locations and numbers may vary as the City implements this Master Plan over time. For example, providing a specific facility, such as a teen center or gymnasium, may be more important than meeting acreage standards in the future.

4.2.2 PARK LOCATION POLICIES

Policy 4: Develop general criteria and guidelines for locating community, neighborhood, and mini parks.

- Action Item 4.1: Use the following criteria and guidelines in locating and orienting new parks:
- a) Require all new development areas to provide the appropriate number of mini parks, neighborhood parks and community parks to serve the proposed residential density for the proposed development.
 - b) Require proposed park locations to be reviewed by City staff, the Recreation Commission and the Planning Commission prior to acquisition, dedication or

approval for safe, efficient, and convenient access and relationship to surrounding uses.

- c) Community parks should be located at the juncture of major and/or collector streets to provide for safe, efficient, and convenient vehicular access, and to allow for easy surveillance by law enforcement.
- d) Locate community park-type athletic field complexes adjacent to major arterials.
- e) Use community/neighborhood parks as focal points for community development. Locate community parks to be highly visible and easily accessible.
- f) Consider community/neighborhood park locations adjacent to school sites and even incorporating school sites when feasible.
- g) Provide appropriate buffers between community/neighborhood parks and adjacent residential development to help minimize noise and glare from lighted fields.
- h) Encourage the development of mini parks in those areas currently under served by neighborhood parks.
- i) Locate neighborhood parks and or mini parks adjacent to collector streets for safe, efficient, and convenient access. Access (vehicular access) off arterial streets should be discouraged.
- j) Locate community parks based on a two (2) mile service radius to ensure even distribution of park facilities throughout the City. (Exhibit 6.1 *Service Areas for Existing, Future and Potential Community and Neighborhood Parks*)
- k) Locate neighborhood parks based on a one mile (1) service radius to ensure even distribution of park facilities throughout the City. (Exhibit 6.1 *Service Areas for Existing, Future and Potential Community and Neighborhood Parks*)
- l) Orient neighborhood and mini parks to encourage convenient and safe pedestrian access.

Policy 5: Establish criteria for selecting land for potential parks (not including future parks sited within recorded Specific Plans)

Action Item 5.1: Require that any land identified for possible parkland possess the following attributes:

- a) Parcel must be of minimum size to serve its intended purpose.

- b) Parcel should have at least one side contiguous with a major or collector street.
- c) Parcels should preferably be vacant and undeveloped, although re-development or reconstruction opportunities should be considered as well.
- d) Avoid land that requires extensive hazardous material clean up. However, land that has already been cleaned up may be highly desirable for park and recreation uses.

Action Item 5.2: Determine if any structures on the identified sites could be reused or retrofitted to meet City recreation needs. It is generally less expensive to reuse or retrofit existing buildings. All potential buildings should be evaluated for seismic and structural safety.

Policy 6: Provide parks and recreation facilities that compliment one another and are evenly distributed throughout the City.

Action Item 6.1: Site new neighborhood and community parks to compliment the location of existing and future community/neighborhood parks. Community parks should be located centrally in the community, with neighborhood and mini parks distributed around the community park.

Action Item 6.2: Recognize that various other factors influence the location of parks and recreation facilities. Service areas are just one of several factors that should be used in determining the location of new parks in the City. These factors include:

- a) Land use availability.
- b) Landform and land usability.
- c) Compatibility with surrounding land uses.
- d) Location – Is it easily accessible to residents of the surrounding neighborhood(s), either by walking, biking or public transportation?

4.2.3 PARK ACCEPTANCE POLICIES

It is important for the City to have policy guidelines for accepting parkland dedications that are required of developers. This ensures the City that the parkland dedicated to serve residential developments will provide its intended benefit to the community.

Policy 7: Establish criteria for park dedication.

Action Item 7.1: Adopt community park guidelines and development standards outlined in *Appendix E*.

Action Item 7.2: Adopt neighborhood park guidelines and development standards outlined in *Appendix E*.

Action Item 7.3: Adopt special purpose parks and amenities guidelines and development standards outlined in *Appendix E*.

Policy 8: Continue the current procedure that requires proposed parkland be reviewed and evaluated by the City Council prior to its acceptance by the City.

Action Item 8.1: Council may consider the following criteria, in addition to any other the Council deems relevant:

- a) Topography, soils, soil stability, drainage, location of land in subdivision available for dedication.
- b) Size and shape of the subdivision and land available for dedication.
- c) Location of the site in relation to the surrounding neighborhood(s).
- d) Location of the site with regard to accessibility by neighborhood residents and contribution to neighborhood security.
- e) The amount, usability and location of public-owned property available in combination with dedication lands in the formation of public parks and recreations facilities.

Policy 9: Establish clearly defined criteria for determining appropriate park maturity level before acceptance of a park for public use.

Action Item 9.1: Require the developer or builder of each new turn key park to maintain the newly completed park for a 120-day period. At the end of this mandated period, the City should meet with the developer's or builder's representative(s) to inspect the park and evaluate its condition. The City may then elect to either accept maintenance and operation of the new park, or issue a detailed letter to the developer or builder that identifies all items requiring replacement, adjustment or improvement. The developer or builder should have up to 60 days to address the City's concerns, and then another inspection should be scheduled with City staff.

Policy 10: Identify community/subdivision design features that are ineligible for park credit.

Action Item 10.1: Prohibit park credit for community or subdivision design features which do not provide recreational functions. Design features not eligible to receive park credit may include, but are not limited to, the following:

- a) Planning area edges
- b) Planted community or subdivision entries or medians
- c) Meandering streams, fountains or other water features

- d) Paseos, greenbelts, trails, walkways, setbacks and other similar features that are used for transportation and are not destinations in and of themselves
- e) Streetscapes
- f) Slopes greater than 3:1
- g) Easements
- h) Sites with an average gradient of more than 5% (rough grade)
- i) Sites with drainage structures (box channels, swales, etc.) designed for less than a 10-year storm event. Should the City want such property it should require 1½ times the required land dedication.

Policy 11: Develop a consistent system for determining credit for private parks and recreation expenditures.

Action Item 11.1: When a development project requests park credit for private park facilities within a gated community, the required amount of parkland developed for credit should be 1½ times the amount due per the City's parkland dedication ordinance.

Action Item 11.2: Allow no credit for private park facilities less than four acres in size unless determined by the City to fulfill a need or facility requirement for a specific neighborhood within the City.

4.2.4 FACILITY NEEDS RATIO POLICIES

Policy 12: Annually review and assess the recreation facility needs presented in this master plan in order to meet the present and future recreational demands of Santa Paula residents.

Action Item 12.1: As part of the annual budget process, explore all available opportunities to meet or reduce the deficit of Park and Recreation facilities as shown in this master plan.

Action Item 12.2: As new facilities come on line; update the inventory of recreation facilities presented in this master plan.

4.2.5 COMMUNITY PARK DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION POLICIES

Policy 13: Establish base-level facilities and services area radius for a typical community park.

Action Item 13.1: Define base-level park development guidelines for community parks (see Table E-1, *Base Level Development Guidelines for Community Parks*).

Action Item 13.2: Strive to locate community parks within a two (2) mile service radius.

4.2.6 NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DEVELOPMENT AND LOCATION POLICIES

Policy 14: Establish base-level facilities and service area radius for a typical neighborhood park.

Action Item 14.1: Define base-level park development guidelines for neighborhood parks (see Table E-2, *Base Level Development Guidelines for Neighborhood Parks*).

Action Item 14.2: Strive to locate neighborhood parks within a one mile service radius (see Exhibit 3.2, *Service Areas for Existing Neighborhood Parks*).

4.2.7 EXISTING PARK SITE ENHANCEMENT POLICIES

Policy 15: Evaluate existing parks on a regular basis and identify those sites that require enhancement, renovation and/or improvements.

Action Item 15.1: Assign high priority to improvement, rehabilitation and renovation of existing parks.

4.2.8 PARK PHASING POLICIES

Policy 16: Strive to streamline and simplify the park planning and review process.

Action Item 16.1: Limit redundancy between City departments and committees where feasible when processing park plans.

Action Item 16.2: Continually monitor the internal process for resolving conflicting views, issues and ideas between departments that may arise during the park planning and review process to ensure that approval of park plans are not unduly delayed. It is also important that the City communicates with one unified voice to the builder, developer or contractor building or renovating parks.

Action Item 16.3: Avoid prolonged delays in processing park plans. In general, the total City review period, inclusive of plan checks, landscape plan review, Technical Committee review, bidding for and selecting a landscape architect and issuance of mass-grading permits should generally take four to six months. Longer delays may occasionally be necessary for controversial or extremely complicated projects; however, the City should strive to review and approve park plans in less than six months.

Action Item 16.4: Proposed parks should be evaluated by City staff for potential safety concerns. Preferably this evaluation should occur during the processing stage once park plans have been submitted to the City for review. Potential safety or health concerns should be identified and submitted in writing to the applicant, land owner, developer or other responsible party, with a deadline identified for correction of any existing or potential safety or health issues.

Policy 17: Guidelines for preparing conceptual master plans for parks and facilities.

- Action Item 17.1: Ensure that the placement of buildings, open air facilities, and landscape plantings are harmonious, and compatible with adjacent uses.
- Action Item 17.2: Coordinate the locations and species of plants with architectural and site design.
- Action Item 17.3: Confirm that the program and facilities of each park are compatible with their location and role as identified in the citywide Parks Master Plan.
- Action Item 17.4: Consider the context of local history and culture when developing the park theme. Utilize available historic artifacts and other resources where possible.
- Action Item 17.5: Design and build all parks and recreation facilities to be fully accessible to all park users.
- Action Item 17.6: Develop a site plan that ensures optimum comfort and security for all park users.
- Action Item 17.7: Achieve a creative balance of functional and aesthetic criteria in the design of each park.
- Action Item 17.8: Ensure that the design meets budget requirements and is compatible with previous planning documents, including the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Policy 18: Guidelines for determining the process for building and developing parks and recreation facilities.

- Action Item 18.1: When taking into account whether or not the City should have developers build parks or dedicate parkland and the City build the parks, the City should consider the following:
- Advantages for City assuming primary responsibility for building and developing parks and recreation facilities include:
 - a) The City has direct control over park design and construction.
 - b) The City can directly set the parameters for park design.
 - c) Having the City take charge of building and developing the parks and recreation facilities would reduce coordination time with developers, their design teams and third-party contractors.
 - d) The City can ensure that parks are built with the recreation facilities it really needs (i.e., facilities identified in the Needs Analysis).

- Advantages for having developers assume primary responsibility for building and developing parks and recreation facilities include:
 - a) Costs could potentially be lower resulting in more park development.
 - b) Parks and homes are coordinated and built in concert.

Action Item 18.2: When construction of parks is undertaken, either by the City or by a developer, the City should consider hiring a project management firm that works on behalf of the City. Employing an outside project management firm can offer several advantages over hiring additional City staff for potentially short term park projects. Some of these advantages are identified below:

- a) Allows the City to hire a specialist in overseeing park construction. Such firms are often successful in streamlining the park design and construction process, keeping park projects on or under budget and on schedule, ensuring that park quality/integrity is not compromised, and seeing that finished parks are well designed and do not require above average maintenance.
- b) City staff is freed from the time-consuming task of overseeing the designing and building of new parks and recreation facilities.
- c) Project management firms can be contracted on a project-by-project basis, thus not committing the City to long term expenses.
- d) Allows the City to benefit from the experienced staff of a project management firm, thus avoiding the cost and expense of hiring and training construction managers that are City employees.
- e) Independent project management firms may be better able to dedicate time to one park project, versus in-house staff that may be overloaded with divergent assignments and unable to focus attention to a specific park project.

4.2.9 RECREATION PROGRAM POLICIES

Parks and Recreation is important in Santa Paula. Staff has done an excellent job providing programs and services with limited resources. The challenge will be how to continue to respond to a very diverse community and provide the necessary facilities and services efficiently and effectively under the current budget constraints. Revenue development should be a major goal for the future to insure funding for delivery of park and recreation services.

Activities are conducted not only by the City, but also by a variety of organizations within the community. These organizations include the Boys & Girls Club, Little League, Library and others. The City supports or coordinates with many of these groups to provide services.

The following policies and action guidelines are offered to enhance the provision and coordination of existing programs and develop new programs to meet community needs. City staff has already implemented some of the suggested practices in part, and does an excellent job responding to the community's recreation needs. After reviewing these policies and guidelines, staff may wish to revisit and reevaluate some of the current methods of delivering services as it works through its annual work program and began to bring them in line with the actions below.

Policy 19: Monitor existing programs and services and use the following guidelines when developing new recreation programs and services that meet the expressed needs of the community.

- Action Item 19.1: Make programs that serve youth, seniors and families a priority over programs for individuals or special interest groups. For example, there may be special interest pressure to fund a doggie park or an equestrian center, but funding after-school programs for children and/or adult day care programs for seniors may meet more needs in Santa Paula for the health and well being of the community.
- Action Item 19.2: Continue evaluating current programs by analyzing participation vs. cost ratios. Redesign or eliminate activities that are no longer cost effective or no longer meet community needs. Utilize those resources to develop new programs with higher participation to cost ratios.
- Action Item 19.3: Make local and citywide family events that promote a sense of community a priority for support by the City.
- Action Item 19.4: Whenever possible, facilitate and collaborate with other agencies, youth sports groups and local businesses to provide programs and services in a cost-effective manner.
- Action Item 19.5: Make after-school activities, such as recreation, enrichment programs, homework assistance or tutoring, a priority to support.
- Action Item 19.6: Offering additional and expanding existing senior citizen programs and activities should be a priority. Work with seniors to determine the types of services needed for specific areas. Strive to increase programming for Hispanic seniors. Increase senior transportation programs to provide access and entice seniors to the senior center.
- Action Item 19.7: Promote the implementation of fee based contract recreation classes that are desired by youth, families and seniors.
- Action Item 19.8: Review scheduling at the Community Center and consider programming it with fee based classes Monday through Thursday mornings and Saturday mornings. Friday, Saturday afternoons and evenings, and Sundays should be programmed with facility rentals. The City should also implement recreation classes for a fee at the Depot Meeting Room; the Boys & Girls Club (when

not being used for Boys & Girls Club activities such as in the evenings when adult recreation classes could be offered); and possibly, at school sites where there are multi-purpose rooms that would be available to offer exercise classes, yoga, and other type classes that do not require specialized equipment.

- Action Item 19.9: Consider reinstating the Farmers Market at the Railroad/Depot Plaza and hold it on Fridays from 1:00pm – 5:00pm in the afternoon. This will both serve the community and attract tourists to start their weekend in Santa Paula. The City should rent concession booths to non-farmers market vendors, such as arts and crafts vendors, prepared food vendors, etc. in order to generate revenue to pay for the cost of supporting the setup of the Farmers Market.
- Action Item 19.10: Consider offering youth sports programs, particularly after school sports on a seasonal basis and summer youth sports camps on a fee basis with scholarships available for participants meeting established income guidelines.
- Action Item 19.11: Consider enhancing and expanding citywide events and festivals by partnering with community organizations or contracting with promotion companies so that there is a mix of different types of themes and a balance of different types of activities offered at the festivals and citywide events.
- Action Item 19.12: Consider partnering with the skateboard industry to offer demonstrations, competitions, and other skateboarding events at the skate park.
- Action Item 19.13: Consider enhancing or expanding cultural programs such as after-school music, dance, and theater offered as either fee based classes or in coordination with volunteer cultural groups primarily for youth and teens.
- Action Item 19.14: Consider setting aside an existing location for a dog park. This should be accomplished through development of a Santa Paula Dog Park Foundation which would do fundraising to support the development and operation of the dog park. The users pay the cost and the activity does not impact the City's financial resources for delivering park and recreation programs.
- Action Item 19.15: Continue to work with teens to develop programs and activities, as well as positive and safe places to hang out with friends. Explore the possibility of renting a store-front or commercial business in the downtown area to operate a volunteer teen center.
- Action Item 19.16: When possible, the City should partner with the Santa Paula Airport to publicize and promote activities at the airport, such as flying lessons, the air museum and airport events.
- Action Item 19.17: The Santa Paula Oil Museum should partner with the other museums scheduled to open in Santa Paula to increase its marketing effort and secure industry involvement to increase attendance and its tourist appeal and promotional programs.

Action Item 19.18: Consider expanding volunteer opportunities such as Adopt-a-Park, Teen Internships, Neighborhood Cleanups, Habitat Restoration, Youth Sports Coaches and Officials, etc. to enhance volunteer efforts in the City.

Policy 20: Whenever possible, support efforts in the community to provide adequate human services for those in need.

Action Item 20.1: Consider using the senior center as a local clearinghouse to work with local service providers to assure that access to services is available to residents through the provision of direct services or referrals to other programs.

Action Item 20.2: Consider providing the community with a “Human Services Guide” which would provide networking opportunities for licensed day care programs and day care homes to share information and promote their operations.

Action Item 20.3: Consider providing referral assistance to State Day Care licensing agencies through the Community Services Department and provide sites for training for residents wishing to start family day care homes that are put on by State licensing agencies.

Action Item 20.4: Consider instituting a teen intern job training program during the summer in both park maintenance and recreation for at-risk youth.

Action Item 20.5: Consider establishing a volunteer operated “Seniors Driving Seniors” program to assure that adequate transportation to and from the Senior Center, doctors’ appointments and shopping is available for senior citizens.

Action Item 20.6: Make senior lunch programs and home meals delivery for seniors a priority for senior programming.

Action Item 20.7: Support volunteer organizations, such as Caregivers to assist the elderly.

Policy 21: Whenever possible, support and encourage relationships with volunteer, non-profit organizations, service clubs and local businesses that provide recreation for the community.

Action Item 21.1: Consider hosting an annual forum to meet with community groups to discuss what each organization has planned for the year, to share resources and avoid duplicating services. Look for an opportunity to set up a “Coordinating Council” to meet on a regular basis in an effort to effectively use community resources.

Action Item 21.2: Meet with local youth sports organizations at least twice annually to discuss participation numbers as well as field use and allocations for the year.

Action Item 21.3: Provide support when possible for volunteer groups that conduct special activities open to the entire community.

- Action Item 21.4: Make it a practice of obtaining the on-going support of community organizations and local businesses to assist in the planning, sponsoring and staging of large-scale community events.
- Action Item 21.5: Expand community participation of local non-profit organizations including sports groups and service clubs by providing fundraising opportunities or allowing them to distribute promotional information at City community events.
- Action Item 21.6: Consider developing long term programming relationships with the Boys & Girls Club, such as, co-sponsoring a boxing program, young teen dances, fee-based contract instructional classes, etc.

Policy 22: Solicit feedback regularly from the community.

- Action Item 22.1: Consider conducting annual town hall meetings or public workshops with the Recreation Commission and other appropriate City and school district representatives to discuss program needs and to allow community input.
- Action Item 22.2: Create ways for the community to provide staff with input regarding program needs. This could be with small informal neighborhood meetings or focus groups, attending and speaking at meetings with community organizations or hosting an open house on a Saturday at the Community Center. Staff should use a variety of methods to reach out, since every neighborhood is unique.
- Action Item 22.3: Evaluate programs, policies and procedures annually by soliciting feedback from participants as well as non-participants with postcard evaluations or phone interviews. Contact non-repeating participants to find out why they did not want to participate in the program any longer.
- Action Item 22.4: Conduct annual participation and preference surveys to determine program and facility needs. Different approaches should be taken to do the surveys citywide or by region or neighborhood depending on what information is needed.
- Action Item 22.5: Compile the results of these surveys and report the results to the City Council to help evaluate and monitor the success of current programs, and to promote the efforts of parks and recreation in general.
- Action Item 22.6: Analyze and review on a yearly basis the cost to provide recreation programs on a per participant ratio, and solicit feedback from participants to determine if the fees charged for the program reflect the participants' ideas of the value of the program.

Policy 23: Develop, expand and support volunteer programs in the community.

- Action Item 23.1: Conduct meaningful, highly visible, community volunteer recognition programs that allow the City Council the opportunity to express their appreciation for citizen volunteer efforts. This could be done at City Council meetings or at an annual “Recognition Event” co-sponsored with a local service club or business.
- Action Item 23.2: Capitalize on obtaining volunteers from organizations that require community service projects from members. Volunteers could be recruited from Scouts working on high honors as well as from high school students needing community service hours to graduate or go to college.
- Action Item 23.3: Support volunteers with leadership training and supervision to help them do their job successfully.
- Action Item 23.4: Utilize non-profit agencies that promote volunteer services, to help recruit and train volunteers.
- Action Item 23.5: Consider coordinating the City’s entire volunteer efforts through a central authority. When financial resources allow, the City should hire a part time volunteer coordinator. Grant programs through the Older American Act and/or HUD should be explored to fund such a position.

Policy 24: Look for ways to improve existing recreation facilities and parks that meet the community’s needs. Look for creative and cost-effective ways to provide recreation activity space.

- Action Item 24.1: Review existing joint-use agreements with the local school districts to improve and expand the City’s ability to provide more recreation programs for the community.
- Action Item 24.2: Discuss issues concerning expanding existing joint-use agreements with school districts to include reciprocal no-fee use policies and possible joint development of recreation facilities on school sites that could be used by the schools during school hours and by the City and other groups when school is not in session.
- Action Item 24.3: Explore ways to improve existing parks and recreation buildings to accommodate increased use for current and future recreation programs.
- Action Item 24.4: When developing recreation facilities, make sure they are multi-purpose and flexible to insure maximum use efficiency. Facilities should include a limited catering kitchen and use of movable wall partitions in large activity rooms to expand activity opportunities.

- Action Item 24.5: Improve existing facilities with enhanced lighting and planned recreational activities to encourage evening use of community buildings. Work with program staff and the Police Department to encourage regular use of buildings by the community for neighborhood watch meetings, information forums and special classes and activities.
- Action Item 24.6: Develop a functional or design development plan for existing as well as for new facilities with the input from program staff and park users to assure that facilities will meet the community's activity and program needs.
- Action Item 24.7: Identify operational and maintenance costs of each facility prior to improving existing or developing new facilities to adequately plan for future budget considerations. The plan should address implementing a user fee schedule and policies that identify an adequate overhead charge for program and users fees as well as cover direct program costs. The plan should also suggest policies concerning what program fees and overhead costs may be waived.
- Action Item 24.8: Consider using and looking for program space in vacant or under-utilized commercial, industrial or institutional buildings to provide neighborhood activities and services, both long-term and temporary, in areas that do not have neighborhood recreation centers.
- Action Item 24.9: Consider ways to encourage commercial development of recreation facilities that are highly specialized and/or may be considered trendy so that the City can concentrate on long term facilities and programs.
- Action Item 24.10: Work with local businesses and service clubs to set up scholarship programs to provide participation opportunities for those who cannot afford to pay for fee programs.

Policy 25: Collaborate with City Departments to provide programs and services that enhance the quality of life in Santa Paula.

- Action Item 25.1: Consider having a police presence at community events to distribute public safety information and to acquaint the community with public safety personnel in a positive way.
- Action Item 25.2: Work with Code Enforcement to develop programs that instill neighborhood pride, such as, annual "Clean-up Days" and neighborhood beautification programs.
- Action Item 25.3: Provide grant funding through the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) Program to improve home exteriors and neighborhood aesthetics.
- Action Item 25.4: Consider programs that offer rewards for holiday decorating to include a "Home of the Month" to encourage pride of ownership.

Action Item 25.5 Consider expanding the number of parade events throughout the year.

Policy 26: Explore creative or alternative funding opportunities for programs and capital projects.

Action Item 26.1: Explore the establishment of a community foundation to provide an opportunity to receive tax deductible donations as well as establish a community partnership to apply for grant funding.

Action Item 26.2: Apply for competitive/needs grant programs through the State of California's 2002 Bond Act Programs. This program not only funds capital improvements but programs as well.

Action Item 26.3: Explore naming rights, sponsorships and asset management opportunities to create ongoing revenue to repay Revenue Bonds used to build new recreation facilities or for maintenance and operations of existing facilities.

Policy 27: Conduct an annual cost-benefit analysis of programs and services.

Action Item 27.1: Evaluate user and program fees prior to the budget process to ensure that fees cover direct costs as well as the appropriate overhead.

Action Item 27.2: Develop policies regarding which programs the City wants to subsidize.

Action Item 27.3: Continue to evaluate user and program fee policies and identify ways to increase recreation revenues through user fees, concession and lease agreements on an annual basis.

Policy 28: Promote and facilitate the distribution of programming information to all residents, including non-English speaking residents in their primary language.

Action Item 28.1: Explore ways to print and distribute a recreation program schedule at least twice per year, preferably three or four issues per year, either by developing new revenue, such as an annual subscription rate, by accepting advertising and/or sponsors, or by collaborating with community organizations like the Chamber of Commerce.

Action Item 28.2: Publish programming information in as many languages as possible to include major portions of the population.

Action Item 28.3: Consider creating a "Santa Paula Resident Card" that residents can purchase for \$10.00 per year per household. Each household would receive a copy of the program schedule three or four times per year and a fixed discount on the fees for recreation classes. A resident would use the card to pay the resident fee for activities; otherwise they would have to pay the non-resident fee. The income from the resident card could pay for the printing and mailing of the program schedule and staffing to develop and offer recreation classes at the Community Center.

4.2.10 OTHER FACILITY IMPLEMENTATION POLICIES

Policy 29: Evaluate the location criteria in joint development of schools and parks in an effort to maximize open space and facility development opportunities.

- Action Item 29.1: Consider locating community parks adjacent to elementary and middle schools, when mutually agreeable to both the City and the appropriate School District.
- Action Item 29.2: Coordinate with the School Districts to ensure that locations of existing and future portable classrooms on elementary, middle school and high school campuses minimize the impact on available field space.
- Action Item 29.3: Use the school service radius areas (Exhibit 3.3, *Existing Public Parks and Schools*) as criteria to determine which City neighborhoods have the greatest priority for developing public open space, fields and recreation facilities.
- Action Item 29.4: Encourage the development of community park sites adjacent to high school sites to maximize school athletic space for community sports groups through joint use agreements with the high school.
- Action Item 29.5: Encourage development of neighborhood parks adjacent to elementary and middle schools to provide the opportunity for shared use of playgrounds, fields, picnic facilities and sports courts through joint use agreements.

Policy 30: Review the existing joint use agreements with school districts to improve and expand the City's ability to provide more recreation programs for the community.

- Action Item 30.1: Discuss issues that would expand an agreement to include reciprocal no-fee use policies and possible development of recreation facilities on school properties. The facilities could be used by schools during the day and City or community programs after school and evenings. These facilities could include sport courts, lighted ball fields, gymnasiums, theatres, and swimming pools.
- Action Item 30.2: Identify and address problematic issues associated with existing joint use agreements with the school districts. These issues may include scheduling, maintenance and operation, usage conflicts, shared maintenance costs etc. It is recommended that each joint use agreement be as specific as possible relative to the times and days of the week each group will be able to use the recreation facilities and sports fields. The agreement should specify the waiver of rental fees and identify each group's responsibility for the costs for maintenance and operations including security, utilities and replacement costs. The agreement should also set forth a procedure for quick arbitration of possible conflicts.
- Action Item 30.3: Work with school district staff to improve facility appearance and make school facilities more "user friendly" for after school and evening participants.

Suggest possible solutions such as assigning City staff on school sites to coordinate recreation uses and installing improvements such as enhanced lighting and informational signs on school sites. Private security firms may also be considered to ensure public perception of a safe environment.

- Action Item 30.5: Consider assigning a single contact person for the City and a single contact person for each school district that the City has an agreement with to have the responsibility of coordinating the agreements and resolving issues or conflicts.
- Action Item 30.6: Develop site agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) between community groups using specific school facilities under the umbrella of the agreements the City has with the school districts. This will decrease the number of issues relating to who's responsible for what when there is third party use of school facilities.
- Action Item 30.7: Encourage City and school district staff to meet at least quarterly to discuss maintenance and operations issues. Meeting minutes should be typed up and distributed to all participants to allow for quick identification of any possible misunderstandings. The minutes should also identify issues and items requiring further follow up.

Policy 31: Seek opportunities to satisfy field space demands of sports leagues by installing artificial turf so that increased use does not further impact park and school fields.

- Action Item 31.1: Locate artificial turf on sports fields as a means to increase field time available to sports leagues. Sports field use today is a function of the attention given to recreation, organized sports, and physical fitness. The City, user, and spectator each have expectations of facility performance. The performance is related to the traffic demands and the resource input for construction and field care. Field overuse occurs when the traffic volume exceeds the performance capability.

Sports field demands are basic to ownership expectations and, thus, determine the ownership values. As ownership values connect with the demands to be made the expectations for the site evolve. The demands and expectations determine the degree of maintenance intensity required with the associated expenditures for developing a maintenance program. Optimum care of sports fields includes enough fertilizer applied as needed to meet the performance expectation, timely uniform irrigation, mowing, aeration, topdressing, rolling, over seeding, and repair of traffic injury. A high traffic level results from actual use of approximately 18 game-time hours of soccer/week or 12 game-time hours of youth football/week or 30 game-time hours of baseball/week. If City demand exceeds these guidelines then artificial turf is an excellent alternative.

The advantages of artificial turf are that:

- It provides year-round playing surface;
- It reduces field maintenance costs up to 75% and;
- It provides a consistent playing surface for practice, leagues, and tournaments.

The initial cost to install an artificial turf field versus a natural turf field is approximately double. However, the cost can be recouped in maintenance savings in as little as 4-7 years. The estimated life span of an artificial turf field is 12-15 years depending on weather conditions and types of uses. Some of the draw backs to artificial turf include:

- It gets very warm to play on during hot weather. The hot surface problem can be alleviated by installing a sprinkler system to cool the turf during the hot summer months.
- It can be punctured by sharp items such as high heels and thus access needs to be limited to flat or athletic shoes.
- It can discolor due to accumulation of dirt, sand, or other blowing material so it needs to be power washed periodically.
- Artificial turf will retain trash, especially shells from sunflower seeds, peanuts, etc. so the turf needs to be vacuumed periodically.
- Access to artificial turf fields should be limited by secure fencing to prohibit unauthorized activities and vehicle access that may damage the turf system.

The numerous advantages include:

- The fields can accommodate different types of sports including softball, baseball, soccer, football, etc. without developing worn spots.
- Field is available year around and can be played on immediately after a rain episode which may take hours or even days for a natural turf field to become playable.
- The new artificial turf fields have eliminated past problems associated with skin burns, splitting seams, and slippery surfaces when wet.

A 2004 survey of players who competed in ASA tournaments indicated a 93% approval rating of artificial turf fields.

Besides decreased maintenance requirements and maintenance cost savings there are a number of lease purchase financing programs especially designed for municipalities for artificial turf fields. These programs make installing artificial turf fields even more financially advantageous.

Action Item 31.2: Explore opportunities to work with County and/or State Park and Recreation agencies to develop multi-purpose fields on county regional facilities to satisfy some of the demands for sports fields.

Policy 32: Seek opportunities to work with commercial recreation developers and operators to provide certain types of recreation facilities operated by the private sector.

Action Item 32.1: Explore opportunities to lease land, provide conduit financing or develop joint use agreements with private operators of recreation facilities such as Batting Cages, Sports Field Complexes, Dance Studios, Roller/Ice Hockey Arenas, Swim Parks, Fitness/Health Centers, Community Theatres, and Gymnasiums.

Policy 33: Develop a program to bring all parks and recreation facilities into ADA compliance.

Action Item 33.1: Create a list of all sites requiring ADA compliance measures (including accessible play surfacing, drinking fountains, and picnic tables, and develop an implementation plan and schedule for the compliance.

Action Item 33.2: Pursue funding, including grants and matching funds, to implement ADA compliance efforts.

4.2.11 PARK FINANCING POLICIES

Policy 34: Develop recreation facilities that will generate revenues to off-set operating costs.

Action Item 34.1: When developing recreation facilities, the design should include opportunities to generate revenue from admission, asset management, user fees and possibly parking in order to cover operating costs.

Action Item 34.2: Recommend, when appropriate, fee schedules for programs and uses that cover costs including an appropriate percentage of fees to cover overhead.

Action Item 34.3: Prior to development, identify operational and maintenance costs of recreation facilities to adequately plan for future budget considerations.

4.2.12 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM POLICIES

Policy 35: Develop a comprehensive approach of using a variety of methods to fund/finance facility development.

Action Item 35.1: The City should use redevelopment resources for park acquisition and development whenever possible and where appropriate.

Action Item 35.2: The City should apply for and use Community Development Block Grant funding for existing park improvements that are CDBG eligible.

- Action Item 35.3: The City should apply for and make full use of California State Grants for park acquisition and development, open-space preservation, historic restoration, neighborhood improvement programs, and preservation of natural resources.
- Action Item 35.4: The City should determine if some or all of the types of bond financing available to the City are appropriate both politically and logistically for funding facility improvements and park acquisition.
- Action Item 35.5: The City should consider development agreements with the school districts serving Santa Paula to jointly fund and share school district facilities such as sports fields, gymnasiums, pools, and meeting room space when new schools are built.
- Action Item 35.6: The City should consider partnering with non-profit organizations such as the Boys & Girls Club to fundraise and share costs for development of joint use facilities.

4.2.13 OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE POLICIES

Policy 36: Identify possible methods and actions that the City could consider to enhance its ability to provide adequate maintenance of parks.

- Action Item 36.1: Consider conducting a study to define all of the operating costs associated with the operation of City facilities and provision of City recreation programs. A fee structure can then be developed to more fairly cover the costs associated with the use of the facilities and participation in the programs.
- Action Item 36.2: The City should encourage corporate sponsorship of parks and recreation facilities or programs and promote an adopt-a-park program to businesses and organizations. Large-scale corporate sponsorships have been successfully pursued in other cities to offset maintenance and operations costs. It may require retention of outside consultants to accomplish this in Santa Paula.
- Action Item 36.3: Consider setting up and publicizing volunteer programs for park upkeep and fulfillment of service hour requirements. These programs should be highly visible and easy to join and can be targeted to various segments of the population (i.e., seniors, teens).
- Action Item 36.4: Conduct a complete assessment survey and inventory of all parks and recreation facilities in the City. The inventory should expand upon the inventory prepared for this updated Parks and Recreation Master Plan which identified the number and type of each item in each park. City staff should begin by evaluating and recording the condition of all park and recreation elements, including sports fields, back stops, park benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles, lights, drinking fountains, paved areas and parking lots, irrigation,

restrooms, etc. After identifying each item's condition using a standard to be developed by City staff (for example, Exceeds Standards, Meets Standards or Needs Improvement), City staff will need to estimate the remaining useful life of each item.

Action Item 36.5: Utilizing the expanded inventory developed by City staff (*see Action Item 36.4*), City staff can use this information to determine when buildings, park structures, site furnishings, pavement areas and landscaping need to be replaced, replanted or rebuilt. Funds can then be budgeted annually to accomplish this purpose.

Policy 37: Ensure that recreation facilities are well-managed and well-maintained, and that high quality programs are available to the community by employing an adequate number of well-trained staff.

Action Item 37.1: Provide membership and networking opportunities for staff to meet with other professionals in the parks and recreation field to discuss issues and share ideas.

Action Item 37.2: Provide support for in-service training to create greater job mobility and career ladders in parks and recreation. Specialists from other non-park and recreation disciplines could participate in such programs.

Action Item 37.3: Contract for services with nonprofit agencies and commercial vendors for recreation programming when a savings can be achieved without lowering service levels or conflict with legal authority.

4.2.14 MASTER PLAN REVIEW AND UPDATE

The City, through the Community Services and Planning Departments can monitor the development of its park system by tracking park improvements and analyzing the number of facilities built, against current population gains. Capital expenditure budgets and funding efforts should be driven by this methodology. It will be important for the City to monitor demographic shifts over the life of this Master Plan to enable fine tuning to take place as demographics change.

Efforts to obtain funding from the recommended sources should be monitored on an annual basis to evaluate which sources appear most promising at any given time. The capital expenditure budget priorities can then be revised as funding sources appropriate to specific development programs become available.

Programs should be monitored annually as well. This should include an analysis of registration and participation numbers, revenue, and actual cost recovery of participant and user fees. Programs that do not generate adequate revenue, appropriate overhead cost percentage, or cover direct program costs should be considered for termination unless otherwise deemed necessary by the policy making body of the City.