



July 27, 2009
General Plan Update Task Force Meeting

**Excerpts from the San Jose 2020 General Plan:
Goals & Policies Related to Parks & Recreation and Trails & Pathways**

The following pages contain language from the current General Plan related to Parks & Recreation and Trails & Pathways. These excerpted pages can serve as a reference for Task Force members to use in comparing the current San Jose 2020 General Plan Goals & Policies with those proposed for the Envision 2040 General Plan Update.

Proposed Goals, Policies, and Implementation Strategies for the Envision San Jose 2040 General Plan are provided under separate cover.

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- and sites should be designed to be compatible with the character of the designated historic resource. In particular, development proposals located within the Areas of Historic Sensitivity designation should be reviewed for such design sensitivity.
6. The City should foster the rehabilitation of individual buildings and districts of historic significance and should utilize a variety of techniques and measures to serve as incentives toward achieving this end. Approaches which should be considered for implementation of this policy include, among others: Discretionary Alternate Use Policy Number 3, permitting flexibility as to the uses allowed in structures of historic or architectural merit; transfer of development rights from designated historic sites; tax relief for designated landmarks and/or districts; alternative building code provisions for the reuse of historic structures; and such financial incentives as grants, loans and/or loan guarantees to assist rehabilitation efforts.
 7. Structures of historic, cultural or architectural merit which are proposed for demolition because of public improvement projects should be considered for relocation as a means of preservation. Relocation within the same neighborhood, to another compatible neighborhood or to the San José Historical Museum should be encouraged.
 8. For proposed development sites which have been identified as archaeologically sensitive, the City should require investigation during the planning process in order to determine whether valuable archaeological remains may be affected by the project and should also require that appropriate mitigation measures be incorporated into the project design.
 9. Recognizing that Native American burials may be encountered at unexpected locations, the City should impose a requirement on all development permits and tentative subdivision maps that upon discovery of such burials during construction, development activity will cease until professional archaeological examination and reburial in an appropriate manner is accomplished.
 10. Heritage trees should be maintained and protected in a healthy state. The heritage tree list, identifying trees of special significance to the community, should be periodically updated.
 11. The City should encourage the continuation and appropriate expansion of Federal and State programs which provide tax and other incentives for the rehabilitation of historically or architecturally significant structures.

Parks and Recreation

Public parks and recreation areas are an important and necessary element of the urban community, providing for many of its open space and leisure activity needs. A sufficient supply of park land and open space is important to enhance the livability and the social and environmental quality of a city. A wide variety of parklands and facilities are needed to serve the City's many unique and diverse environments: the urban Core (Downtown), neighborhoods framing the Downtown Core, suburban neighborhoods and semi-rural hillside areas. Developed parks, natural open space areas and recreation facilities are necessary for a balanced and vital community. The manner in which open space is preserved and recreational lands and opportunities developed reflect the diverse interests of the City's residents. Neighborhood parks provide recreation facilities close to home and are easily accessible to residents. In addition,

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Parks and Recreation

open space areas provide other benefits, such as providing heat reduction during the summer months.

The City has actively pursued a program of park land acquisition. The City utilizes a variety of financing mechanisms, including the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, Park Impact Fee Ordinance and the Construction and Conveyance Tax, to acquire and develop park land.

As of 1992, approximately 16,300 acres of Federal, County and City owned public park land had been acquired within the City's Sphere of Influence. The majority of this land consists of County owned hillside open space, creekside park chains, and Federal owned wetlands as part of the San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. These areas comprise part of a regional park system which is envisioned to provide a "greenbelt" of open space around the urban area of the City. The City manages approximately 4,000 acres of this total acreage for neighborhood, district and citywide parks, park chains along several major waterways, community centers, historic facilities and sports facilities. Some of these sites have been developed for the delivery of a wide variety of leisure activities and other sites remain unimproved because of the City's limited budget for operations and maintenance costs associated with parks. In addition to lands owned by public park and recreational agencies, the parks and recreation system in San José also includes properties owned by private utilities, including the Santa Clara Valley Water District, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company, school districts and other agencies.

Flood control rights-of-way, utility corridors, school yards and water supply reservoirs are familiar examples of facilities which form an integral part of San José's recreation-oriented open space resources. A significant concern is the growing number of school closures in

many neighborhoods of the City which result in a loss of usable open space and a traditional source of community services.

Due to high land costs, development patterns, and special credit and exemption provisions in existing City financing mechanisms, the City has been unable to acquire a sufficient amount of neighborhood serving park land to meet its service level objectives. In order for the City to maintain a high quality of life, creative solutions will be needed to provide alternative methods of alleviating park land deficiencies. Alternative forms of neighborhood serving park land mitigation should be considered for high density housing projects, particularly in the Downtown Core and Frame Areas and along major transit and arterial corridor connections to Downtown. New private development should be encouraged to provide a greater amount of recreation and open space facilities on site or in close proximity to meet the park and open space needs it generates. Alternative methods of providing central city development with access to open space and recreation facilities should include consideration of: outdoor plazas and gathering areas; landscaped pedestrian oriented streetscapes; indoor and roof top recreation and open space amenities; publicly accessible private recreation facilities, such as swim cabanas, tennis clubs, and fitness centers; freeway underpasses and air rights; proximity to civic and cultural facilities; and the availability of public transportation providing access to other park and open space lands beyond reasonable walking distance.

Level of Service goals for Parks and Recreation services are set forth in the Services and Facilities section of this Chapter.

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Parks and Recreation Goal:

Provide park lands and recreation areas which enhance the livability of the urban environment by providing parks for residential neighborhoods, preserving significant natural, historic, scenic and other open space resources, and meeting the open space and recreation services needs of community residents.

Parks and Recreation Policies:

1. The City should consider as an objective the provision of neighborhood or community park within reasonable walking distance for each resident. That portion of a Citywide or regional park which provides recreational accessibility for nearby residents in the same manner as a neighborhood or community park should be considered as meeting this objective.
2. Public parks, open space lands and other similar public areas should be located, oriented and designed in such a way as to facilitate their security and policing.
3. Through the development review process, private open space and recreation facilities should be encouraged in high density residential projects, mixed use projects and major employment complexes in the vicinity of major transit corridors in order to meet a portion of the open space and recreation needs of residents, employees and visitors that will be generated by that development.
4. The City should accept open space land dedications only when public ownership will preserve the natural and scenic beauty, protect natural and man-made landmarks, or provide a land supply to meet future recreational needs.
5. The development of public and private recreational uses in rural and hillside areas should be low intensity and sensitive to geologic hazards, water resources, natural habitats, and visual impacts, consistent with allowed densities and development standards for residential and other uses.
6. In the design and maintenance of parks, consideration should be given to impacts on wildlife. In particular, it should be recognized that native plant species may be best suited for providing wildlife cover and food sources and that herbicides, pesticides and fungicides may be damaging to native plants and wildlife.
7. The City encourages the Santa Clara Valley Water District, school districts, the Pacific Gas and Electric Company and other public agencies and utilities to provide for appropriate recreational uses of their respective properties and rights-of-way. Consideration should be given to cooperative efforts between these entities and the City to develop parks, pedestrian and bicycle trails, other open space areas, and recreational facilities and programs.
8. The City should consider the conversion of abandoned railroad rights-of-way into multi-purpose trails.
9. The City encourages the County and other appropriate jurisdictions to direct the expenditure of regional park funds to provide parks and other open space lands and recreational resources within, or in close proximity to, the urban population.
10. The City should continue to work cooperatively with local school districts in identifying and evaluating surplus school sites for potential park lands acquisition. In furtherance of this policy, the City should maintain and periodically update the School Site Reuse Plan.
11. The City should maintain and periodically update a plan establishing criteria and standards for the provision of parks and recreation services.

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Scenic Routes



"Leisure and Life 2000" meets this objective.

12. The City should promote the enactment of Federal, State and local legislation intended to facilitate the acquisition of surplus property of public agencies for parks, open space and recreation purposes.
13. The City encourages the County and other public agencies to accept dedications of open space lands of regional significance, including watersheds, wildlife habitats, wetlands, historic sites, and scenic lands. The City also encourages private entities to preserve open space lands.
14. Bikeways, hiking trails, equestrian trails, rest areas and picnicking accommodations should be provided, wherever feasible, within parks and trails corridors designated on the Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram, to access the hillsides, ridgelines, baylands, significant waterways, and other scenic areas.
15. In the design of parks, consideration should be given to providing features, facilities, and services that promote tourism and make San José an attractive location for economic development as

well as serve the needs of San José residents.

16. The City should facilitate the creation and improvement of neighborhood and community parks by using the Parkland Dedication Ordinance, the Parallel Impact Fee Ordinance, and the Construction and Conveyance Tax.
17. Parks should be designed and constructed in a manner which allows access to each type of recreational experience for people of all abilities to the maximum extent possible.
18. In the planning of future park expenditures, the provision of new park and recreation facilities and improvements in park deficient areas should be considered a top priority.
19. The City should consider negotiating with property owners and local school districts in newly developing residential areas for the dedication of playground/recreation portions of future school sites to the City, providing for long term low cost leasing of these playgrounds back to the school districts. Under this arrangement, when a school district declared a site as surplus the playground portions of it would automatically revert back to the City, ensuring public use in perpetuity.

Scenic Routes

The City of San José has many scenic resources which include the broad sweep of the Santa Clara Valley, the hills and mountains which frame the Valley floor, the baylands and the urban skyline itself, particularly high-rise development. It is important to preserve public thoroughfares which provide visual access to these scenic resources. The designation of a scenic route applies to routes which afford especially aesthetic views. Two types of scenic routes are designated on the Scenic Routes and

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Trails and Pathways



3. The design of Landscaped Throughways should include a high standard of architectural detail and landscaping in order to create a consistent and attractive visual quality.
4. Any development occurring adjacent to Landscaped Throughways should incorporate interesting and attractive design qualities and promote a high standard of architectural excellence.
5. Any development along Landscaped Throughways entering the City should be designed to provide attractive gateways to the City.
6. Development along designated Rural Scenic Corridors should preserve significant views of the Valley and mountains, especially in, or adjacent to, Coyote Valley, the Diablo Range, the Silver Creek Hills, the Santa Teresa Ridge and the Santa Cruz Mountains.
7. The planning of Rural Scenic Corridors should take into consideration the potential for providing access to such public facilities as parks, recreation areas, bike trails and cultural attractions.
8. Roadway design on Rural Scenic Routes should minimize impacts on native flora and natural topographic features.
9. Billboards adjacent to all scenic routes should be strongly discouraged.

Many major streets and other roadways in San José afford scenic views of hillsides, although they may not qualify as designated scenic routes. Special consideration of street design should be taken so as to preserve views of hillsides wherever they occur.

Trails and Pathways

The many creeks and streams traversing San José which connect many of the area's large regional parks offer an unparalleled opportunity to create a network of trails and pathways. This network can link a large urban population with the significant open space and recreational opportunities afforded by public parks and other open space lands in the baylands, hillside areas and throughout the Santa Clara Valley. A trails and pathways network can provide access to these important natural areas and recreational opportunities without dependence on either the automobile or congested urban streets. A

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trails and pathways network also provides an alternative means of commuting and can encourage bicycling and walking not only as a form of recreation, but as a means of transportation.

Trails and pathways can also provide local opportunities for persons who wish to jog, bike, ride horses or just hike along natural creeksides. This recreational opportunity for nearby residents and employees, plus the aesthetic advantages of the natural riparian setting of creekside areas enhances the value of development on adjacent properties.

The Scenic Routes and Trails Diagram is described in the Land Use/Transportation Diagram Chapter of this General Plan. This section describes the Trail and Pathway designations on the Diagram which identify the corridors planned for the City.

Trails and Pathways Goal:

Provide a network of trails and pathways throughout the City in order to maximize the City's recreational opportunities and to provide alternate means of both commuting and reaching regional parks and other natural areas.

Trails and Pathways Policies:

1. The City should control land development along designated Trails and Pathways Corridors in order to provide sufficient trail right-of-way and to ensure that new development adjacent to the corridors does not compromise safe trail access nor detract from the scenic and aesthetic qualities of the corridor.
2. When new development occurs adjacent to a designated Trails and Pathways Corridor, the City should encourage the developer to install and maintain the trail.
3. Design, construction and management of trails and pathways should be carefully executed in order to minimize environmental disturbance.
4. Bridges and other public improvements within designated Trails and Pathways Corridors should be designed to provide safe and secure routes for trails, including grade separation of roadways and trails whenever feasible.
5. The City should promote cooperative interagency planning of trails and pathways in order to establish and encourage their use for both recreational purposes and as alternate transportation routes.
6. The incorporation of trails and pathways into lanes used for public and utility purposes is encouraged.
7. Trails should be built to meet the trail standards established by the Department of Public Works. Trail design should provide sufficient light, vertical and horizontal clearance, and landscape setbacks from adjacent development to ensure a safe and aesthetically pleasing recreational experience.
8. In areas which are already developed and where insufficient right of way exists to provide trails separate from existing roadways, the City should consider interim trail alignments along public roadways to provide linkages with trail corridors and public transportation facilities.
9. Trails and pathways should be designed and constructed in a manner which allows safe access to each type of trail experience for people of all abilities to the maximum extent possible.
10. In addition to trails proposed along major watercourses, additional trail routes should be established on abandoned railroad rights-of-way. ■