



PARK SYSTEM COST ESTIMATES

Appendix C presents the park costs associated with maintaining, improving, and expanding park system. This appendix includes two tables:

- **Table C-1: Park System Cost Estimates** identifies costs by site for capital improvements, land acquisition, park development, future reinvestment and maintenance.
- **Table C-2: Arcata Average Costs** reflects the cost per acre for acquisition, design, development, improvements, and maintenance for each park type. These average costs are used to calculate the total costs noted in Table C-1.

A. PARK COST ESTIMATES

Table C-1 presents the costs associated with the current park system, as well as maintenance costs that will be incurred after sites are renovated and new parks are brought online. The goal of this table to identify the amount of funding needed to create a sustainable park system, where assets are maintained to contribute to community livability and vitality.

The table illustrates the costs for all recommended park system improvements to meet identified recreation needs through the year 2020. The utility of this spreadsheet is that maintenance and capital can be calculated quickly if priorities and available funding changes. Consequently, this appendix provides a useful tool to gauge project costs as funding resources decline and/or rebound in the future.

In Table C-1, individual park sites are noted by their park classification, as these appear in the City's park and facility inventory. Existing park sites appear first, followed by proposed new parks, partnerships, and non-capital projects. Information in the table is organized as noted below.

Site Information

The first three columns include reference information about each park or proposed site:

- **Park Name:** This is the site name as noted in the inventory. In some cases, proposed parks are identified by their proposed location.

- **Total Acres:** This column reflects park acreage, as noted in the park and facility inventory. Target acreage for proposed parks is noted as well.
- **Park Type:** This column notes the existing or proposed park type.

Capital Costs

The next several columns note the projects needs and estimated costs associated with recommended capital projects, including park acquisition, design, development, improvements, and partner site improvements/investment. Recommendations are noted by an “X” indicating the type of improvement needed. Total capital costs are noted for each site at the end. Each category is described below:

- **Parkland Acquisition:** Land acquisition for various types of parks can be targeted in areas of identified need. In some areas, it may be wise to acquire park sites in targeted areas when opportunities arise, or before the opportunity is lost. Acquisition costs vary by the type of the park land that is acquired.
- **Park Design/Planning:** New park designs or master plans will be needed at new sites, along with several existing sites where redevelopment is recommended. As noted in Chapter 5, these may range from simple site designs to full master planning efforts.
- **Park Development:** Parks should be developed or redeveloped according to the Design and Development Guidelines presented in Appendix B. Sites may be developed/redeveloped in phases as funding allows. In the table, the percentage of anticipated development through 2020 is noted (% redeveloped). Existing parks may only need to be partially redeveloped based on the extent of needed improvements.
- **Improvement:** While some existing City parks need redevelopment, some site only need minor improvements (which do not require a new site design or master plan). This may include adding site furnishings and playgrounds as per design guidelines, improving trail access to facilities within the park, or other minor improvements.
- **Partner Site Improvements:** This Plan recommends that the City of Arcata collaborate with key partners (namely schools) to meet some identified recreation needs. This column represents an

anticipated City contribution to site improvements or enhancements.

- **% Redeveloped:** This column notes the anticipated level of park development—in either development of a new park or redevelopment of an existing park—through the year 2020.

Reinvestment Costs

Capital reinvestment involves replacing outdated or worn facilities as scheduled based on their age and use. Funds should be set aside annually so that the City has money on hand to replace facilities when needed. This reduces the need to remove unsafe facilities or sink funds inefficiently into facilities that are past their prime. This section of the table notes:

- **Total Reinvestment Costs:** A total is presented based on funds set aside through the planning horizon (2020). Since these are future reinvestment costs, the amount is based on the anticipated development if recommended park projects were carried out immediately.
- **Annual Reinvestment Costs:** This column notes the amount that should be set aside annually after the park is developed or improved. Even before a site is redeveloped, the City can begin to set aside funds for site improvements. Reinvestment costs may be less if parks are well maintained, but more if basic and preventative maintenance are not well funded.

Maintenance Costs

The final three columns note annual maintenance costs to take care of the park system. Maintenance costs are divided into three service tiers: low, medium, and high. The assignment of sites to maintenance tiers should reflect the amount of maintenance needed at the site, based on factors such as the level of development and frequency of use. However, the availability of maintenance funds will also play a role in the maintenance level of service.

- **Low LOS:** This basic level of care provides only the required maintenance, including litter removal, graffiti removal, mowing and restroom cleaning. It provides sufficient maintenance for health and safety, but not for asset preservation. Under this level, capital maintenance/reinvestment needs will be accelerated in

developed parks. Small, infrequently used neighborhood parks may be maintained at this level.

- **Medium LOS:** This enhanced level of care typically includes higher maintenance frequencies (e.g., for litter removal, mowing, and restroom cleaning) and additional maintenance tasks for facilities or landscaping for preservation of assets. This moderate level of service is often needed at sites with moderately-high use to offset impacts. Special use parks, linear parks, and more frequently used neighborhood parks should be maintained at this level, when feasible, because of their level of use.
- **High LOS:** This highest level of detailed maintenance typically includes higher task frequencies, extra attention to specialized facilities (e.g., community centers, sports field complexes) and specialized landscaping and pruning. Because of costs, this highest level of service is often provided at the City's community parks or signature parks (sites with high visibility and use).

Maintenance level of service for natural area also can be carried out at various levels:

- **Low LOS:** This basic level of care allows for hazard removal and checks for invasive species. A low level of service can be applied to undeveloped natural areas, with minimal public access or use.
- **Medium LOS:** These sites will be managed to control invasive species and to ensure appropriate use. This level of service also allows for some trail upkeep and an enhanced level of care for moderately developed natural areas.
- **High LOS:** This highest level of service applies to high-use natural areas with well-developed passive recreation facilities. A natural resource management plan may provide specific direction on maintaining or improving the natural resource value of these sites.

B. AVERAGE COSTS

Table C-2 identifies average costs per acre for park maintenance, development, and improvements. Average costs are customized for the City of Arcata, based on their unique park system and the City's anticipated development for each park type.

Cost Assumptions

All costs presented are estimated in 2009 dollars, not accounting for inflation. To assist City planners into the future, these costs should be adjusted for inflation as well as the changing market value of labor and materials. Costs are based on the following assumptions:

- Average real estate costs for land acquisition range on average from \$50,000 to \$200,000 per acre. Special use sites (such as riverfront property) are presumed to be more expensive than natural areas. Large parcels outside the City may be acquired more cheaply than indicated.
- In Arcata, park designs and master plans will cost on average \$25,000 to \$75,000 per site, depending on factors such as the level of public involvement in the process. Simple site designs may be completed for less with City involvement.
- Park development costs are set according to industry standards for the Northwest. Average costs range from \$100,000 per acre for natural area development (with passive use facilities) to \$450,000 per acre for community parks. Note that most natural areas are not 100% developed, and other park types can incorporate natural areas that will decrease development costs. However, costly special use facilities (e.g., a recreation or aquatic center) would cost more than projected.
- Costs for site improvements were determined per site based on anticipated upgrades and the average size of parks within each type. For example, \$75,000 was allotted for neighborhood parks to cover a playground replacement or similar projects. This is a flat cost, not a cost per acre.
- Costs for improvements at partnership sites were based on the assumption that the City would contribute the same amount as a neighborhood park upgrade (\$75,000 for school sites). This is a flat cost, not a cost per acre.
- Capital reinvestment costs are based on an average 15-year lifecycle for playgrounds and other amenities. Per-acre reinvestment costs are much higher for neighborhood parks because of the level of development in these smaller parks. Costs range from \$1,500 for natural areas to \$250,000 per acre for neighborhood parks for improvements every 15 years. These will cover anticipated lifecycle upgrades, such as replacing playgrounds, resurfacing sport courts, painting and implementing concrete improvements for the skate park, repaving or

resurfacing trails, repairing and reseeding turf areas, installing high efficiency irrigation systems, renovating restrooms, etc.

In all cases, costs for trail corridors (linear parks) are based on acreage associated with a minimum 20-foot corridor (2.4 acres per mile). Key findings related to this information are presented in Chapter 6.

