

city of
ARCATA

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

Final Plan

OCTOBER 2010



ARCATA PARKS & RECREATION MASTER PLAN

FINAL PLAN

October 2010

Prepared by:



MIG, Inc.
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The City of Arcata greatly appreciates the efforts of numerous City residents, staff, officials, and professionals who contributed to this planning effort. The interest and involvement of all citizens will continue to support the success of our park and recreation system.

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1. Introduction

INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 2007, the City of Arcata began updating its Parks & Recreation Master Plan to identify the park, facility, and open space needs of the community through the year 2020. This revision, based on the foundation set in the 1979 Plan and the 1994 technical update, makes recommendations for meeting future recreation needs, and presents an implementation strategy for parks and recreation system improvement and use.



This Plan presents a vision for a sustainable and interconnected system of parks, recreation facilities, trails and natural areas as integral livable community elements. It addresses the recreation needs of residents city-wide by incorporating their views and preferences into the planning process. Combining a technical resource analysis with an assessment of community priorities, this Plan proposes specific standards and guidelines for developing, protecting, and maintaining quality parks, natural areas, recreation facilities and trails. Most importantly, this Plan provides the City with a roadmap and directions to develop the park and recreation system that will best meet the community needs through 2020 and beyond.

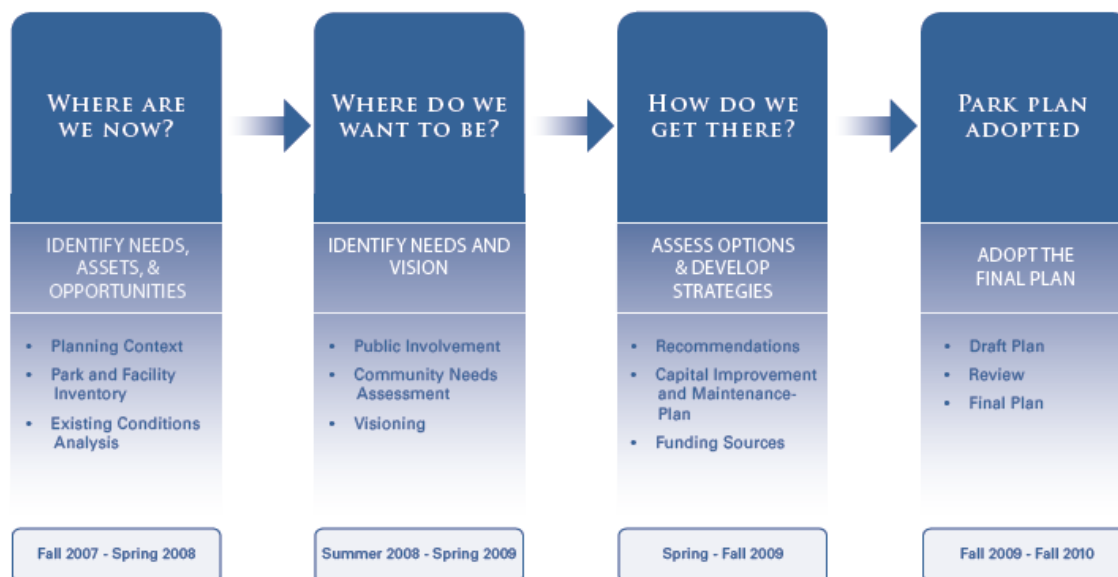
A. PLANNING PROCESS

Beginning in the fall of 2007, the planning process included four major phases. Figure 1 illustrates the planning process, which is described below.

- **Phase I: Where Are We Now?** Phase I included a review of demographics, recreation trends, and the planning context to provide a foundation for the planning process. In this phase, City parks and facilities were inventoried, mapped, and evaluated to document existing resources and assess their condition. Phase I efforts were summarized in two reports: the Community Profile and Parks & Facilities Summary.
- **Phase II: Where Do We Want to Be?** In Phase II, a variety of public involvement efforts were initiated to solicit feedback from the community about their recreation preferences. This outreach was combined with a GIS analysis of park access, a level of service analysis of park acreage, and a facility analysis to determine community needs. The information was documented in the Community Needs Assessment Report.
- **Phase III: How Do We Get There?** Once needs were identified, Phase III involved developing plan elements to support the community's vision for parks and recreation and provide direction for park maintenance, acquisition, and development. Recommended projects were summarized in a capital improvement plan, accompanied by a financing strategy for implementation.

- Phase IV: Park Plan Adopted.** Phase IV included the preparation of a full draft of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan to provide the City with a successful and sustainable plan to protect and enhance City assets through 2020 and beyond. The draft Plan was presented to the community, the Parks Advisory Committee (PAC), City staff, the Planning Commission and City Council for review and refinement prior to adoption.

Figure 1: Planning Process



B. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

To develop a solid foundation for the Plan, the City of Arcata solicited feedback from a broad spectrum of residents regarding their needs, preferences, attitudes, and vision for parks and recreation services. This public involvement process was incredibly successful. More than 1,300 people responded to a variety of activities conducted throughout the planning process (Table 1). This level of participation helps ensure that the plan reflects the Arcata community, including various age groups and diverse special interests.

Table 1: Public and Staff Involvement

ACTIVITY	# OF PEOPLE
Parks and Recreation Questionnaire	1,113
City Workshops*	97
Public Visioning Workshop	35
Stakeholder Interviews	9
Sports Focus Group	9
Sports Provider Questionnaire	16
Staff Kick-off Meeting	18
PAC Meetings	14
TOTAL	1,311

* Note: The count for City Workshop attendance is based on workshops where presentations were made. Staff members were available at several other forums to discuss the planning process and hand out questionnaires.

C. MASTER PLAN DOCUMENT ORGANIZATION

This plan is organized into seven chapters and three appendices. Each section is described below.

- **Chapter 1: Introduction** describes the purpose of the plan, the planning process, the public involvement process, and the organization of this report.
- **Chapter 2: Planning Context** defines the planning area, including natural resources, land use, demographics, and recreation trends that influence the provision of parks.
- **Chapter 3: Existing Parks and Facilities** describes the park classification system, the park and facility inventory, and the condition of developed parks.
- **Chapter 4: Community Needs** summarizes the results of the needs assessment, highlighting public involvement findings, proposed park and facility standards, guidelines, and needs.
- **Chapter 5: Recommendations** describes the recommendations for park development and improvements to be implemented through the year 2020. These include a description of the proposed park system, directions to address system-wide development issues, and specific recommendations to improve existing parks.
- **Chapter 6: Implementation** presents an adaptive cost model and strategy for implementing recommended projects, which takes into account past and future parks and recreation funding levels.

Appendices include the following:

- **Appendix A: Park and Facility Inventory** includes a complete inventory of parks and recreation facilities by provider within the Arcata planning area.

- **Appendix B: Design and Development Guidelines** provides a set of guidelines for park development, including the types of resources that appropriate in various types of parks.
- **Appendix C: Park System Cost Estimates** notes the costs associated with recommended projects in this Plan, including acquisition, design, development, improvements, capital reinvestment, and maintenance.
- **Appendix D: Priority Project Cost Estimates** notes costs for all projects identified as Priority I in this Plan.
- **Appendix E: Potential Sources of Funding** includes a description of potential sources for capital, operations and maintenance funding.



2. Planning Context

PLANNING CONTEXT

The City of Arcata is a unique community on the northern end of Arcata Bay. The character, climate and natural resources of the area, as well as community demographics and recreation trends, all play a significant role in park development and planning. This chapter briefly summarizes these elements to provide a foundation for the Park & Recreation Master Plan.



A. PLANNING AREA

The City of Arcata is located in northern California, about 100 miles south of the Oregon border and 275 miles north of San Francisco. The City is situated at the north end of Arcata Bay, which is part of Humboldt Bay on the Pacific Coast. Divided by Highway 101, Arcata is located only six miles north of Eureka, the Humboldt County seat. The City is also connected via Highway 101 to Crescent City and the Oregon Coast to the north, and via Highway 299 to Redding to the east.

The planning area for this study is defined as Arcata's sphere of influence established by the Arcata General Plan 2020, which includes City-owned parkland inside and outside of the City limits. A map and description of this existing park system is included in Chapter 3.

Natural Resources

Native inhabitants of the Wiyot Tribe settled here thousands of years ago, attracted by the area's natural resources. The Wiyot called the area Goal-la-nah, meaning "a land a little above the water."

Today, people are still attracted to the bay, the beauty and the natural resources of Arcata. The City is surrounded by forested coastal mountains to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west. The Mad River flows along the north edge of the City, and the Arcata Marsh lies at the edge of Humboldt Bay. These resources are incredibly important to residents, and help define the character of Arcata.

The City of Arcata maintains a strong commitment to its open space. Natural, non-developed areas offer scenic views, protect natural resources, and contribute to the town's unique character, aesthetic appeal, and high quality of life. Arcata's parks, waterways, agricultural lands, wildlife sanctuary, and forests help establish a strong community identity and sense of place. Open space also provides a number of more practical functions, such as protecting water quality, providing wildlife habitat and corridors, maintaining green buffers in and around the City, and allowing for the preservation of important historic and cultural sites. Open space areas also provide opportunities for recreation, education, scientific research, and locally produced food.

Several forests, wetlands, and riparian corridors are protected and, to some extent, made appropriately accessible for recreation and public use. Some of this parkland is highlighted below:

- **Forests:** The City of Arcata owns 2,109 forested acres titled the Arcata Community Forest. These forests have served many functions, including supporting recreation, education, watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and sustainable timber harvesting. Forest revenue approved through the 1979 Forest Land Initiative has been used to support additional park acquisition and development and maintenance.
- **Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary:** The Arcata Marsh project provides secondary treatment for the City's wastewater and serves as an important natural and recreational area. Located just south of the City center, the Marsh is a popular spot for bicycling, walking, jogging, and bird watching. Bird blinds and trails provide access to visitors, while minimizing human impact on plant and animal life. The marsh is along a major migrating route for over 250 species of birds. It contains significant plants, mammals, insects, invertebrates, and amphibians, including river otters, raccoons, gray foxes, bobcats, Pacific tree frogs, red-legged frogs, rough-skinned newts and dragonflies.
- **Riparian Corridors:** The Mad River, at the north edge of Arcata, provides an important resource for the City. Arcata also has a number of creeks, sloughs, and wetlands that have received increasing attention through the Arcata Creeks Management Plan. This plan provides guidance for their management and restoration. These efforts will improve flood control, fresh water habitat, riparian habitat, scenic enjoyment, water quality, education, public safety, fish habitat (fish spawning, fish migration), open space, recreation, marine habitat, and ground water recharge.

In addition to the ecological resources in the City, Arcata is surrounded by natural resources and parkland owned by other jurisdictions. For example, the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the Mad River Slough and Wildlife Area provide over 1,000 acres of open space just beyond the City boundaries. More than 20 percent of Humboldt County is designated as open space, forests, or recreation areas. More than 30 national, state, and county parks, beaches, recreational areas, forests and reserves in Humboldt County support the local economy and provide many significant environmental benefits. As tourism is a significant source of the area's revenue, parks and recreation will continue to play a vital role in Arcata's future.

Land Use and Development

Arcata's land use patterns have been shaped by many factors and reflect more than 150 years of community development. Early settlement occurred around a central plaza in town. This area continues to be the commercial, cultural, social, and civic center of the community. Many of the lumber mills that operated into the mid 1900s are closed, and the abandoned mill sites are undergoing a slow transformation to other uses. Humboldt State University, with a 160-acre campus, is now the community's major employer and regional education center. The Arcata Marsh is a world-renowned wastewater treatment facility and wildlife refuge.

In Arcata, in addition to the Plaza area, there are several distinct neighborhood activity centers that support residential and commercial development. These include:

- **The Valley West Neighborhood Center**, in northern Arcata between State Routes 101 and 299, includes a shopping center, visitor-serving commercial areas, a mix of businesses, and nearby residential areas.
- **The Westwood/Sunset Neighborhood Center**, in the western part of the City, includes a shopping center and commercial businesses, Arcata Elementary School, and surrounding residential areas.
- **The Sunny Brae Neighborhood Center**, in southeastern Arcata, includes Sunny Brae Shopping Center and adjacent professional offices, restaurants, the Sunny Brae Middle School, and surrounding residential areas.
- **Northtown**, between the Plaza and Sunset Avenue across the highway from the University, includes a mix of commercial businesses, professional offices, restaurants, and medium-high density residential development.
- **The Bayside Neighborhood Center**, in the south-eastern part of the City, includes several commercial businesses, the Jacoby Creek School, the Bayside Post Office and Grange, and surrounding low-density residential areas.
- **The West End Employment Center**, in northeastern Arcata, has a mix of general and limited industrial uses, including the Aldergrove Industrial Park.
- **The Samoa Boulevard Revitalization Area**, in the southern part of the City, includes limited industrial and commercial businesses on both sides of Samoa Boulevard, vacant land west of "K" Street, and a proposed business park site south of Samoa Boulevard.

Several older neighborhoods were not designed with modern planning standards and techniques, and consequently, their lot sizes, subdivision designs, and street configurations do not reflect current development standards. Each of these areas has distinct park and open space needs.

B. DEMOGRAPHIC CHARACTERISTICS

Demographic factors, including current numbers, anticipated growth, age distribution, family composition and size, income, and poverty, all play a role in recreation participation and interests. For example, seniors tend to participate less in active and competitive recreation. However, as the average age of the general population increases nationwide, older adults are staying active longer, remaining engaged in social events, trail-related activities, low-impact sports and recreation programs geared toward health, fitness, and life-long development. A growth in this demographic group suggests a demand for certain types of recreation activities, which can be cross-checked by public involvement findings. The following key findings were identified in the demographic analysis.



- **Current Population:** According to 2008 population estimates from the California Department of Finance, Arcata currently has 17,558 residents. The City's population has grown 5.4 percent since 2000, when the U.S. Census data counted 16,400 people within the City limits.

- **Future Growth Estimates:** Although the population growth rate continues to slow, Arcata's population is projected to increase between 0.50 and 0.63 percent annually until 2020. More than 18,500 residents are forecasted to be living in the city by the year 2020, according to the Arcata Economic Development Strategic Plan. As the population grows, there will be an increasing demand for park and recreation services.
- **Regional Populations:** Despite a less than 1% annual growth rate for the City's population, the Parks and Recreation Department estimates that approximately 54% of its services are provided to people who live outside of Arcata. Consequently, the Department is a regional provider that serves residents and nonresidents alike.
- **Age Distribution:** Given the presence of Humboldt State University, a disproportionate number of young adults live in Arcata as compared to the County and the State population data. Despite the presence of these students, the population in Humboldt County continues to age.
- **Family Size and Family Households:** Census data indicates that the average family size in Arcata is decreasing. The number of family households (with children under 18) is decreasing as well, even though the total number of households in Arcata is increasing. Housing costs within the City may be causing young families to relocate to outlying areas in search of affordable housing.
- **Age Projections:** By 2020 Arcata's age distribution is expected to be somewhat split between large numbers of college-age and retirement-age residents. Since Humboldt State provides a variety of recreation facilities and programs, new programs and services should target older age groups and find ways to utilize students' skills to support and enrich Arcata's parks and programs.
- **Race/Ethnicity:** Arcata's ethnic diversity generally has remained the same over the last ten years. According to the 2000 Census, the population was 85% white, with small percentages of African Americans (1.6%), Native Americans (2.7%), Asians (2.3%), and multi-racial groups (5.3%) and others (3.5%).
- **Income/Poverty:** An analysis of income, poverty, cost of living, and housing affordability suggests that many residents in Arcata do not have a great deal of disposable income to spend on recreation. Median family income in Arcata (\$36,716) is about seven percent below that of Humboldt County (\$39,370) and a dramatic 44 percent below that of California (\$53,025). The City will need to maintain affordable recreation opportunities, while balancing the need for revenue generation.

C. RECREATION TRENDS

The following trends influence recreation participation, community desires for recreation, and park and facility needs throughout Arcata.

- **Projected Growth:** New recreation amenities, facilities, and services will be needed to meet the demands of a growing population. Because the population in Arcata is growing at a slow to moderate rate, development and services should be targeted toward the age groups and geographic areas where the most growth is occurring.

- **Aging Population:** More facilities and programs will be needed to serve a growing senior population in Arcata. National trends suggest that aging baby boomers tend to remain active in physical, social and intellectual recreation opportunities.
- **Growing University:** The increasing young adult population associated with Humboldt State University (HSU has a target student population of 10,000+) will intensify the demand for active (competitive and/or extreme) and passive (trail-related and social) recreation activities. However, the University provides their own recreation facilities and programs to address many student needs. Arcata's trails, natural areas and outdoor recreation opportunities will continue to appeal to this population in the future.
- **Active Lifestyles:** Because of other commitments, adults increasingly prefer informal, self-directed recreation and fitness activities over structured, directed programs. Drop-in and short-format activities are a better fit for active lifestyles.
- **Sedentary Lifestyle:** Obesity in all ages nationwide has continued to increase in recent years. The lack of even moderate physical activity is having health repercussions for the general population. Recreation service providers need to promote active living and provide opportunities for formal and informal physical activity. Arcata's effort to encourage residents and visitors to walk, jog and bicycle for both recreation and transportation is a great way to counter sedentary lifestyles.
- **Programs:** Life-long learning is an important aspect of recreation programming, particularly for aging communities. Programming trends favor providing multi-generational programs and facilities, which allow youth, teens, adults, and seniors to recreate together. Since the family unit has been changing, the notion that "families who play together stay together" is being updated. As single-parent families and grandparent-based parenting have become more common, recreation programs and services are finding new ways to respond to this diversity.
- **Environmental Integration:** The protection and preservation of our natural environment through park design is an important value in Arcata. Environmental protection and sustainability are integral components of recreation policies and practices, including park design, forest and open space maintenance and management, operations and programming. Parks and natural areas provide residents of all ages with opportunities to experience nature and the outdoors. These experiences can prevent nature-deficit disorder in children, a condition described in Richard Louv's book, "Last Child in the Woods."
- **Walkable Communities:** Trends show that participation in trail-related recreation has been increasing locally, regionally, and nationally. Most communities are responding to an increasing desire to enhance community connectivity by providing trails that link key destinations within a city. Promoting walking, biking, and other forms of non-motorized transportation will also support the health and wellness of Arcata residents and the environment. The efforts of the HP3 Coalition (a group of interested citizens and local non-profits and agencies working towards a regional trail network) to link Arcata to the surrounding region by trails will enhance connectivity.



- **Neighborhood Densities:** Increased infill and mixed use within City limits will fill vacant lots designed for development. Also, new residential development, smaller yards, narrower streets, and more densely-developed areas have amplified the need for parks and open space.
- **Community Development:** Parks and recreation facilities are increasingly valued for their role as catalysts in economic and community development. Animated public spaces, natural open space, waterfront access, and special events serve as magnets for residents and out-of-town visitors. The provision of parks and recreation in Arcata will make a significant contribution to neighborhood centers, as well as attract tourists, employees, and even students to Humboldt State University.
- **Public Participation in Parks and Recreation Planning:** Public involvement has shifted in recent years to including community members in many aspects of the planning, design, and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities. Public involvement and volunteerism develops a sense of public ownership, pride, and support for community resources.
- **Current Economic Climate:** The national economic slowdown is affecting many areas, contributing to wage freezes, unaffordable housing, increasing poverty rates, and a lack of disposable income. While Arcata may not experience the huge downturn affecting some California communities, the current economic situation may affect the community's growth rate and ability to fund capital projects. It also may affect public access to recreation activities in Arcata, in terms of costs, transportation, and program scheduling. On the other hand, the downswing may also generate more close-to-home travel and interest in "free" recreation activities, such as playing on playgrounds, bird watching and taking nature walks. The City may see an increase in facility use for these reasons. Either way, it is important to keep in mind that current economic conditions are temporary, and circumstances likely will change before 2020, the planning horizon for this Master Plan.
- **Finance:** Given shrinking federal, state, and local revenue, many park and recreation agencies are running their operations as businesses and looking for new, creative sources of funding to continue to provide quality parks, programs and services. As a result, a balance is needed between providing low-cost services and using entrepreneurial approaches to generate more revenue.
- **Partnerships:** The growing use of partnerships has been a successful response to shrinking resources and increased competition for available funding, as well as the public outcry for better accountability and stewardship. Relationships with potential partners are important, including those with incorporated municipalities, schools (including Humboldt State University), non-profit agencies, business, grassroots organizations, religious organizations, and individuals.

An understanding of these demographic factors and recreational trends has been incorporated into the assessment of recreation needs, presented in Chapter 4.



3. Existing Parks and Facilities

EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

The ideal park system is made up of a variety of parks, providing diverse recreation and open space opportunities. In Arcata, developed parks, natural areas, and greenways allow residents and visitors to engage in various leisure pursuits, such as playing on playgrounds, walking or biking on trails, attending community events, going on picnics, playing or watching sports, and enjoying the scenic and peaceful outdoors.



This chapter notes the parks and facilities in Arcata that provide these recreation experiences. It presents a refined classification system, summarizes the park and facility inventories, and notes the condition of City-owned parks and facilities.

A. PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

The Park & Recreation Master Plan includes an updated park classification system to facilitate future planning and help define appropriate levels of service for various types of parkland. These park types are defined below:

- Neighborhood Parks:** Located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, neighborhood parks are small parks that provide access to basic recreation opportunities for nearby residents. Designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities, neighborhood parks often include amenities such as playground equipment, outdoor basketball courts, picnic tables, pathways, and multi-use open grass areas. These sites support neighborhood and family gatherings, enhance neighborhood identity, preserve open space, and promote health and wellness by providing close-to-home opportunities for physical activity. Neighborhood parks may include small-scale natural areas, such as riparian areas, and can contribute to environmental sustainability by incorporating sustainable design elements. These parks generally are one to five acres in size and serve residents within a ½-mile radius. Smaller mini parks (of less than one acre) will have a smaller service area (less than ¼ mile). Examples of neighborhood parks include Cahill Park and Windsong Park.
- Community Parks:** Community parks are larger parks that provide both active and passive recreation opportunities that appeal to the entire community. These sites are generally designed around organized, active recreation, supported by facilities such as sport fields and outdoor courts. These parks also serve as community gathering spaces, offering a variety of facilities that can accommodate small or large groups, such as recreation centers, group picnic areas and shelters, rental space, festival space, amphitheaters, and large playgrounds. This combination of facilities supports lifelong fitness, health and wellness, and social opportunities that bring diverse groups of people together, building stronger families and communities. Since these sites generally attract a large number of people from a wide geographic area, support facilities, such as off-street parking and restrooms, are required. Community

parks may also include significant natural areas and trails, which provide opportunities to enjoy nature and relieves stress from urban living. The optimum size of community parks is between 15-30 acres. Arcata Community Park and Redwood Park are examples of community parks.

- **Special Use Areas:** Special use areas include stand-alone recreation facilities not located within larger parks. These include single-purpose sites, such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, boat ramps, skate parks, outdoor theaters, urban plazas, and gardens. Outdoor areas may incorporate native plantings or small natural areas. Special use areas promote a variety of personal, social, and economic benefits depending on facility type and location. In some cases, these facilities may attract new residents and businesses and support tourism. Arcata Plaza and Arcata Skate Park are examples of special use facilities.
- **Linear Parks/Greenways:** Greenways and linear parks include natural or built corridors used to link features together and provide green buffers between communities or around the city. Greenways and linear parks typically support trail-oriented activities, including walking, jogging, biking, and skating, which play a major role in health and fitness. These parks may incorporate smaller scale neighborhood park amenities, such as play areas, picnic areas, or exercise trails. Trails between key destinations can help create more tightly-knit communities, improve children's access to schools, and provide opportunities for non-motorized transportation. Trails in greenways can increase opportunities to experience nature. Linear parks may include railroad rights-of-way, active transportation or utility rights-of-way, wildlife corridors, or elongated natural areas defined by drainage features or topographical changes. Greenways and linear parks may be of various lengths and widths, and these corridors typically support facilities such as viewing areas, picnic tables, or trailheads. Examples of linear parks include Janes Creek Linear Park and D Street Linear Park.
- **Natural Areas:** Natural areas are undeveloped lands left in a natural state for conservation or outdoor recreation. These parks are designed to protect and manage unique or significant natural features, such as rivers and streams, wetlands and marshes, steep hillsides, environmentally sensitive areas, and wildlife habitats. Some natural areas may have limited access due to resource conservation needs. Sites may provide a number of ecological benefits, such as shoreline protection, wildlife habitat, stormwater filtration, riparian corridor and wetland preservation, and erosion control. Where appropriate, natural areas may support passive, outdoor recreation, such as trail-related opportunities, bird and wildlife viewing, environmental interpretation and education, and nature photography. These parks provide opportunities to promote conservation and stewardship, develop an appreciation for nature, and improve health and wellness by providing a physical and mental refuge from the built environment. The size and shape of the natural area will vary depending on the resource it protects. An example is the Arcata Community Forest.
- **Undeveloped Sites:** Undeveloped sites include land that has been acquired by the City for possible future park improvements. These sites are not managed as natural areas, although they do provide green space in the City. Their size varies depending on the purpose of their acquisition. An example of an undeveloped site is California Park.

In addition to these types of parks, the City maintains several non-recreational landscaped areas, which are not part of the formal park system. These areas are tracked because of their maintenance requirements.

- Beautification Areas:** Beautification areas are landscaped areas, typically located along street right-of-ways and intersections, entry features, and parking lots. Beautification areas can incorporate flowers, shrubs, trees, native plants, or other ecologically appropriate landscaping to add green space to the urban environment, provide visual and economic benefits, and promote environmental health. Through the use of signage, fountains, or other features, these areas also may add to community identity. Unlike parkland, beautification areas have reduced recreational value.

B. PARK INVENTORY

The City of Arcata is a unique community, in terms of the parks and recreation opportunities it provides. The City owns and maintains more than 3,744 acres of parkland at 41 sites (Table 2). More than 97% of this acreage is provided as natural areas or undeveloped park reserves. Consequently, less than 2.5% of the City's park system consists of developed parks.



As shown in the table below, park development is not divided evenly among the existing park types. Most developed parkland (over 63.7%) is provided at two large community parks: Arcata Community Park and Redwood Park. Remaining acreage (approximately 32 acres) is distributed among 21 small parks, consisting of special use areas (19%), neighborhood parks (10.7%), and linear parks/greenways (6.6%). Map 1 illustrates the park system by classification.

Table 2: Parkland by Classification

PARK TYPE	NUMBER OF SITES	ACREAGE	% OF DEVELOPED PARK SYSTEM
Developed Parks			
Neighborhood Parks	12	9.46	10.7
Community Parks	2	56.56	63.7
Special Use Areas	6	16.86	19.0
Linear Parks/Greenways	3	5.86	6.6
SUBTOTAL	23	88.74	100%
Undeveloped Parks			
Natural Areas	15	3,625.40	
Undeveloped Sites	5	29.89	
SUBTOTAL	18	3,655.29	
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	41	3,744.03	

Note: The City anticipates purchasing Carlson Park, which is included as an undeveloped park site in the inventory.

Other Park Resources (Other Providers)

Several other public agencies and private groups also provide parks and recreation opportunities within Arcata. Major providers are noted below. This acreage is not counted with City parks, although this parkland and/or recreation facilities are taken into account in the assessment of community park and recreation needs. A complete inventory of parks and recreation facilities provided by others is included in Appendix A.

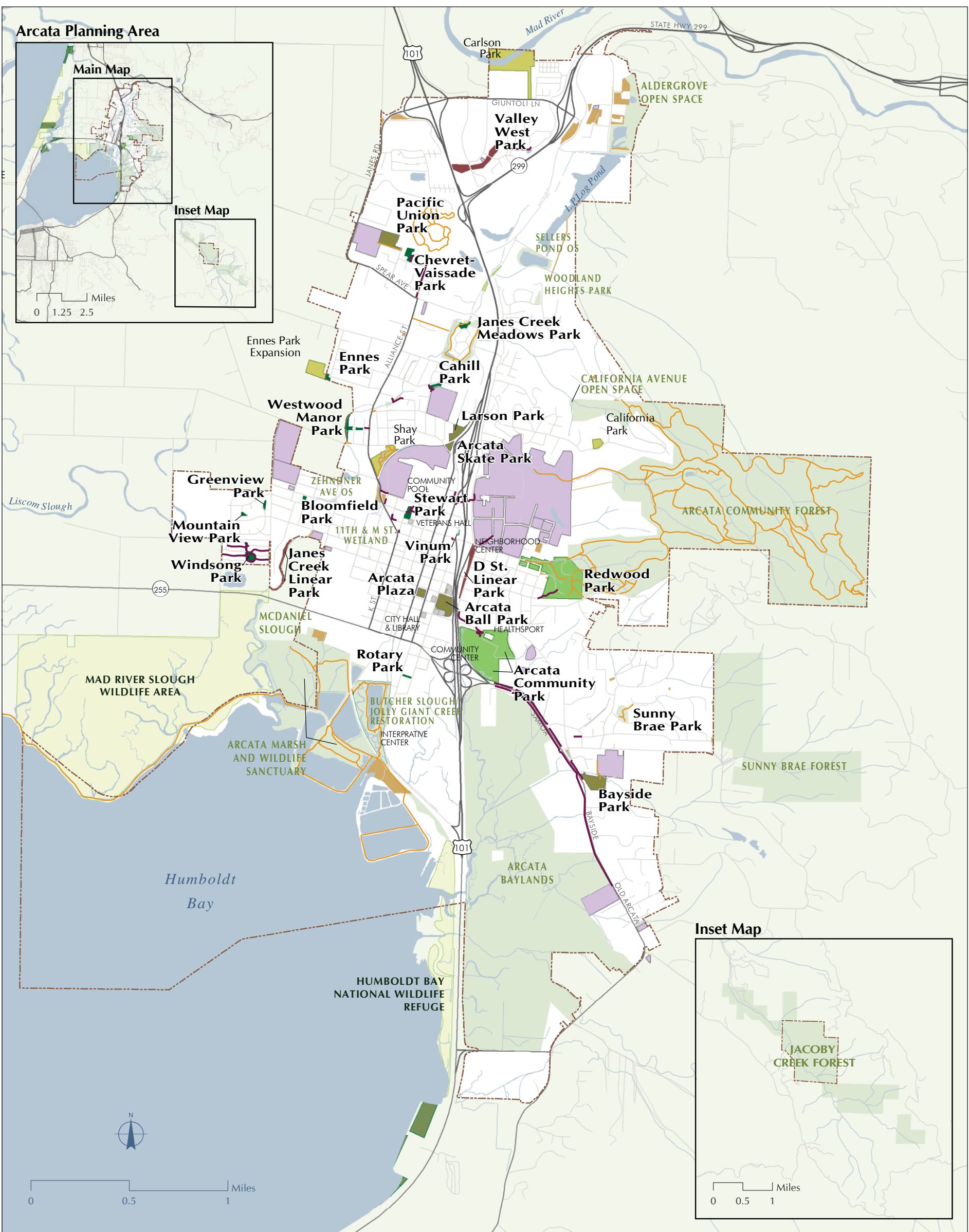
- **Schools:** There are a number of public and private schools in Arcata that contribute sport fields, sport courts, playgrounds, and gymnasiums in Arcata. In addition, Humboldt State University (HSU) is a major provider of a variety of recreational facilities and programs, primarily serving faculty, staff, and students. The HSU Student Recreation Center has a climbing wall, fitness center, weight room, and indoor field space (artificial turf). School facilities are noted by site in Table A-2 in Appendix A.
- **County, State, and Federal Agencies:** Humboldt County Parks, the Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, and several other agencies maintain significant natural areas and trails in or near Arcata. These are summarized in Table A-3. In addition, nearby National Parks and National Forests help attract tourists to the region.
- **Private, Non-Profit, and Land Trusts:** Private and non-profit organizations in and around Arcata also provide land and facilities offering recreation opportunities. Noted in Table A-3 of the appendix, these sites include a private golf course, a health club, pool and sport fields, as well as preserved natural areas. The Arcata Community Pool is managed by a separate State-recognized Park and Recreation District and located adjacent to Arcata High School. HealthSPORT is a private health club located in Arcata Community Park.

Because of the significance of trails in the Arcata area, the Hammond Coastal Trail is worth noting separately. Humboldt County Parks maintains this 5-plus mile hiking/biking/equestrian trail and greenway as a component of the California Coastal Trail. The trail connects to Hiller Park, which offers restrooms, picnic areas, playground, sports fields and its own network of coastal meadow and forest trails. This trail, along with the park sites noted above, supplement the opportunities provided by the City of Arcata Parks Division.

C. FACILITY INVENTORY

The City of Arcata is responsible for the development and maintenance of a variety of recreation facilities within its parks. These include sport and athletic facilities, indoor and outdoor recreation facilities, and other park amenities (Table 3). As noted in the table, the City of Arcata is a major provider of facilities such as community centers, sports fields and playgrounds. Additionally, public schools provide many active-use facilities in Arcata. The community relies on schools, HSU, and other providers to help meet facility needs. Appendix A provides a complete inventory of the City's parks and facilities.





Parks and Recreation Master Plan

City of Arcata, California



Map 1: Existing Parks & Open Space



September 2010 | Data Source:
City of Arcata, California

Community Park

Neighborhood Park

Linear Park

Special Use

Undeveloped

Natural Area/
Open Space (OS)

Other Open Space
(Not City-Owned)

Public Building/
City Parking

Other Public Land

School

Private Facility

City Limits

Water body

Creeks

Existing Hard
Surface Trail

Existing Soft
Surface Trail

Local Roads

Minor Arterials

Major Arterials

Table 3: Summary of Facilities by Type

FACILITY TYPE	CITY PARKS	PUBLIC SCHOOLS	HSU	OTHER	TOTAL
Sport Fields					
Baseball	1	3	-	2	6
Football Field	-	-	1	-	1
Soccer Field	5*	6*	1	-	12
Softball Field	3	1	1	-	5
Outdoor Athletic Facilities					
Basketball Court	5	11	1	2	19
Disc Golf	-	1	1		2
Skate Park	1	-	-	-	1
Tennis Court	3	3	-	-	6
Indoor Facilities					
Community Center	6	-	-	1	7
Gymnasium	1	6	2	1	10
Pool	0	0	1	3	4
Other Park Amenities					
Community Garden	1	-	-	1	2
Bocce	2	-	-	-	2
Group Picnic Area	3	-	1	7	10
Playground	16	11	-	1	28
Restrooms (Outdoor)	6	0	1	5	13
Parking (Off-Street)	9	varies	varies	-	9

Note: Other providers include other County, State, Federal and non-profit agencies. * Not all fields are adult regulation size.

Existing Trails

The City of Arcata has a significant number of trails, providing a valuable recreation resource to the community. The planning area includes nearly 19 miles of trails, which are summarized in Table 4 by type. In 2009, an additional 5.6 miles were planned/proposed for development.

Significantly, only one trail in this inventory is hard surfaced. Most soft surface trails do not provide accessibility for people with disabilities, but are preferable for some recreation activities, such as running, hiking, mountain biking and riding horses. Most hardened surfaces are accessible, with the exception of some masonry surfaces. Hard surfaced, multi-use trails are often ideal for recreation and non-motorized transportation, including walking, biking, skating, rollerblading, skateboarding, and scooter use. See Appendix A for more details on existing trail surfacing and amenities.

In addition to the recreation trails noted here, the City of Arcata provides a number of bike lanes for non-motorized transportation. While the Parks and Recreation Master Plan will

only address recreation trails, access to parks and trails via interconnected non-motorized transportation routes should be provided.

Table 4: Recreation Trails in Arcata

TRAIL TYPE	EXISTING MILEAGE	PROPOSED MILEAGE	TOTAL MILEAGE
Pedestrian	5.9	1.8	7.7
Pedestrian/Bicycle	5.30	3.7	9.0
Pedestrian/Equestrian/Bicycle	7.7	0.0	7.7
TOTAL	18.9	5.6	24.4

Note: Proposed trail mileage reflects trails that are through design phase and ready for construction. The majority of these trails are owned and maintained by the City.
Source: City of Arcata, 2009.

D. EXISTING CONDITIONS

Early in the planning process, City parks were evaluated to assess their current condition. A park tour was completed in fall 2007, rating facilities within developed parks on a three-point scale. On average, most parks were in fair condition, with the majority of linear parks/greenways in fair to poor condition. In general, special use areas were in better condition than other park types.



The evaluation helped identify several system-wide issues, which present opportunities for improvements:

- **Aging facilities:** Many parks and facilities in Arcata were developed in the 1960's and 1970's. Aging facilities at several sites are outdated, in need of repair, or in need of replacement.
- **ADA accessibility:** The City of Arcata strives to provide accessible recreation opportunities. At some sites, however, ADA accessibility could be improved when parks are renovated. For example, the City should provide an accessible path of travel through the site, linking all amenities. When amenities such as picnic tables, water fountains, restrooms and benches are replaced, the City should consider more accessible varieties. Accessible safety surfacing should be provided at five sites where it is lacking.
- **Connectivity:** Connectivity at several sites could be enhanced by improving crosswalks, providing linkages to nearby paths and sidewalks, adding perimeter pathways in parks, and considering access from nearby neighborhoods, bus routes, and bike paths.
- **Park aesthetics, image, and identity:** Elements such as consistent park signage, communication kiosks, and attractive plantings at park entrances could improve the image of City parks.

- **Site master planning/design:** Many sites in the Arcata park system deserve a fresh look. As a policy, the master planning and design process should include nearby neighbors, youth, special interest groups, and potential volunteers for stewardship and maintenance. Current trends in recreation should be considered, as well as unique facilities that could provide new recreation opportunities in Arcata.
- **Sustainability and stewardship:** Site master planning and renovations will create opportunities to integrate native plants, bioswales, improved stormwater management, green design and other sustainable elements into the park system.

Key findings from this condition evaluation are reflected in the community needs assessment (Chapter 4), as well as recommendations for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan (Chapter 5).



4. Community Needs

COMMUNITY NEEDS

A critical component in the development of the Parks & Recreation Master Plan is the community needs assessment. The purpose of the needs assessment is to establish in quantifiable terms the need for City parks and recreation facilities in Arcata. It combines public feedback with a technical analysis of park access to determine the level of service at which parks and facilities should be provided to meet current and future needs.



This chapter summarizes key findings and conclusions from the Community Needs Assessment Report, including key findings from the public involvement process. It raises important considerations regarding the City's level of service and provides a foundation for the recommendations presented in Chapter 5.

A. PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT FINDINGS

To create a master plan that reflects the recreation preferences, needs and values of the Arcata community, the planning process included multiple forums for community outreach. As noted in Chapter 1, more than 1,300 people participated in the planning process. This level of involvement is outstanding for a community of Arcata's size.

Overview of Activities

Residents of various ages and interests were engaged in the planning process through many different outreach activities. These activities are described briefly below.

- **Parks and Recreation Questionnaire:** From November 14, 2007, to March 1, 2008, the City of Arcata administered a community questionnaire to collect both adult and youth input on a range of park and recreation topics. This questionnaire was distributed to residents at community center events and programs, board or community group meetings, and events to reach as many people as possible. The questionnaire was also available online at the City's website. Approximately 875 flyers were distributed at three area schools (Arcata Elementary, Sunny Brae Middle, and Jacoby Creek Charter School) to encourage youth input. In addition, 985 email solicitations were sent to HSU faculty, City staff, members of City Committees, and Mainstreet Members to engage more residents in the planning process.

Although not a scientific survey, the online and paper questionnaires were designed to solicit feedback from a broad spectrum of the community. A total of 1,113 people completed questionnaires during this timeframe. Of those, approximately 831 questionnaires were collected at City workshops (described on the next page) or at drop-box sites at the following locations:

- North Coast Co-Op
- Wildberries Market
- Safeway
- United Indian Health Services

- Courtyards Apartments
 - Mad River Hospital
 - Emeralds Laundry
 - Mosko's Coffee shop
 - Muddy's Coffee Cup
 - Mokka's Hot Tubs and Café
 - Humboldt State University
- **City Workshops:** The City hosted a variety of customized workshops to improve community outreach during the planning process. Each presentation included a slide show summary of the planning process and interactive display boards. In addition, participants were encouraged to fill out a park and recreation questionnaire. Ninety-seven people attended workshops that were held in conjunction with the following board and community group meetings from November 2007 to February 2008:

Board/Community Group Meetings

- Forest Advisory
- Open Space and Agriculture Committee
- Parks and Recreation Committee
- Friends of Arcata Marsh
- Arcata Mainstreet Board
- Arcata Rotary
- Arcata Kiwanis
- Fuente Nueve School
- Humboldt State University (classes)

City staff were available at various programs and events to describe the planning process, distribute questionnaires, and answer questions. These included the following:

Community Center Programs

- Basketball
- Gymnastics
- Play Center
- Arts in the Afternoon
- Senior Program

Community Center Events

- Bowl of Beans
- Holiday Craft Market

- **Stakeholder Interviews:** From September to November of 2007, MIG, Inc., conducted nine interviews with key stakeholders and community leaders from the City of Arcata. The interviewees represented a variety of organizations, and most had both a personal and professional relationship with parks and recreation. The purpose of the interviews was to solicit community perceptions about parks, recreation, and open space in Arcata and to identify issues and challenges facing the community.

- **Public Visioning Workshop:** Thirty-five Arcata residents gathered for a Public Visioning Workshop on November 6, 2007, to discuss recreation needs, share their vision for parks and recreation, and offer their views on the strengths, challenges, and needs for the City's park system. Workshop attendees also indicated their top priorities for park and recreation improvements by participating in an interactive voting exercise.
- **Sports Focus Group:** Ten representatives of sports leagues in Arcata met on September 10, 2007, to discuss their vision for parks and recreation and their views on the strengths, challenges, and needs for the City's park system.
- **Sports Provider Questionnaire:** Several organized sport groups were contacted to obtain information on the number of teams in their leagues, frequency of play and practice, and perceived facility needs. Sixteen providers completed questionnaires to provide feedback for the Parks & Recreation Master Plan.
- **Planning Advisory Committee (PAC):** The PAC met on September 10 and October 16, 2007, to discuss the planning process. Their discussion included a description of the strengths and weaknesses of the Arcata parks and recreation system, their priorities, and their vision for the future.
- **Staff Kickoff Meeting:** Eighteen City staff gathered for a kickoff meeting on November 6, 2007, to discuss park and recreation needs and the strengths and weaknesses of the City's park system. Attendees also discussed their future vision for parks and recreation in Arcata, along with how their organization could contribute to that vision.

Key Findings

Significant themes, issues and findings identified during outreach activities are noted below. These bullets highlight the community's demand, preferences, and needs for parks, facilities and programs. Key findings from the Parks & Recreation Questionnaire are summarized first, followed by comments from other activities.

- Most questionnaire respondents (98%) consider parks, recreation and open space to be *important or very important* to Arcata's quality of life.
- Overwhelmingly, the top benefit of parks and recreation as identified by questionnaire respondents is *providing opportunities to enjoy nature/outdoors* (46%). Other key benefits include protecting the natural environment (16%), providing opportunities for youth (14%), and improving health and wellness (9%).
- Nearly half (48%) of respondents use Arcata's park system *to enjoy the outdoors or nature*. Other top reasons for using City parks include: walking or biking for exercise (16%), participating in family activities (10%), and playing sports (10%).
- Respondents indicated the following are priority park needs in Arcata: *multi-use trail corridors* (22%), and large, multi-use parks that serve the whole community (20%), natural areas (19%), parks with river, creek, or water frontage (15%), and small parks in my neighborhood (13%).
- Questionnaire respondents indicated that *off-leash dog areas* (19%) are the most desired type of recreation facility in Arcata, followed by community gardens (13%),

outdoor basketball or tennis courts (9%), playgrounds (8%), community center/indoor recreation space (8%) and sport fields (7%).

- The top two types of natural areas most needed in Arcata, ranked by respondent preference selecting each, are *preservation areas with public access & interpretive trails* (34%), and large natural areas that provide peace/solitude (30%). Less than 3% of respondents favored natural areas with limited or no public access.
- According to questionnaire respondents, the top reason to develop more trails in Arcata is to increase options for *non-motorized transportation* (40%). Nature experiences (24%), exercise (16%), and recreation (13%) are other important reasons to develop more trails. Less than 4% of respondents felt that more trails were NOT needed.
- Nearly 79% of respondents are *satisfied* to very *satisfied* with the level of park, natural area and recreation facility maintenance in Arcata.
- Just over 71% of respondents *feel safe* or very *safe* in Arcata parks, natural areas and recreation facilities. Over a quarter of respondents (27%) feel unsafe or less than safe, meaning the perception of safety is an issue worth addressing.
- Just over half (51%) of respondents would be *willing to pay more* for improvements to Arcata's park system. Another 34% don't know, and only 15% would not be willing to pay more.
- In an open-ended question, respondents were asked to indicate the park and recreation opportunity they value most in Arcata. Of the 595 responses received, most people (22%) valued *Redwood Park/Community Forest for their trails and beauty*. Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary (13%) was noted for its trails and opportunities to explore nature. Other significant answers include: Redwood Park (picnic area and playground), Arcata Community Center, and neighborhood parks and playgrounds.
- Questionnaire respondents added a variety of write-in responses about parks and recreation services. Top comments included *safety concerns* (88), an appreciation of the quality of parks and services (85), and a desire for trail enhancements or more trails (81).
- From a list of 25 activities, the most popular recreation activities in Arcata include: *walking, dog walking, bicycling, hiking, and jogging*. All are trail-related. Ranked activities are noted in Table 5 below.
- *Participating in beach activities and bird watching* ranked #6 and #7 respectively in the most popular activities, which is consistent with respondents' desires to enjoy nature and the outdoors.
- Social events, such as *participating in cultural events and fairs and festivals*, ranked #10 and #11 respectively.
- *Basketball* is the first organized sport noted on the list (#13), followed by soccer (#14). This is typical for many communities.



Table 5: Recreation Participation

RANK	ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION RATE	PREFERRED RANK	LATENT DEMAND
1	Walking	6.82	4	-3
2	Dog Walking	3.82	7	-5
3	Bicycling	3.56	3	0
4	Hiking	3.46	2	2
5	Jogging	2.68	11	-6
6	Beach activities	2.52	1	5
7	Bird Watching	2.40	10	-3
8	Playground Visit/Play	2.35	12	-4
9	Swimming Pool	1.97	9	0
10	Cultural Events	1.73	8	2
11	Fairs and Festivals	1.73	5	6
12	Volunteer Activities	1.61	16	-4
13	Basketball	1.60	14	-1
14	Soccer	1.29	15	-1
15	Picnicking	1.09	13	2
16	Other	1.02	19	-3
17	Skateboarding	0.99	23	-6
18	Disc Golf	0.94	20	-2
19	Baseball	0.90	23	-4
20	Football	0.83	25	-5
21	Tennis	0.78	18	3
22	Fishing	0.76	17	5
23	Canoe/Kayaking	0.74	6	17
24	Softball	0.69	22	2
25	Bocce/lawn bowling	0.53	21	4

Note: The participation rate is based on the number of times in a 30-day period respondents were engaged in these activities in Arcata or elsewhere. Latent demand is the disparity between the ranking of actual participation and desired or preferred participation. In other words, the most preferred form of recreation is beach activities (#1); but this activity is ranked 6th based on how often people play at the beach. This creates a latent demand of 5. A high latent demand usually suggests that convenient, close-to-home opportunities to engage in these activities are not available.

- When respondents were asked what activities they would like to do most given unlimited time and resources, the top five ranked activities were *beach activities, hiking, biking, walking, and fairs and festivals*. The top four are still trail-related, but with a desire for more nature trails for bird watching.
- Latent demand is the disparity between actual participation and desired or preferred participation. This information can help to identify specific types of needed recreation opportunities for a community. The activities with the highest latent demand in Arcata include *canoeing/kayaking* (+ 17), attending fairs and festivals (+ 6), engaging in beach activities (+ 5), and fishing (+ 5).

In addition to the questionnaire, significant feedback was provided by residents and staff in other forums. Some key comments relating to park and recreation needs are noted here.

- In a penny jar activity, workshop participants were asked to “vote” for their priorities for park and recreation improvements. Participants were given three pennies to put in jars, indicating how they would like the City to spend money on parks acquisition, maintenance, improvements and development. *Acquiring natural areas and open space* received the most support, followed by *developing more trails* (Table 6).

Table 6: Priorities for Improvements

	OCT. 2007	DEC. 2007	JAN. 2008		
TYPE OF IMPROVEMENT	VISIONING WORKSHOP	CRAFT MARKET	BOWL OF BEANS	TOTALS	%
Acquire more natural areas/open space	52	444	70	566	28%
Develop more trails	31	272	59	362	18%
Provide more recreation programs	27	194	33	254	13%
Add specialize recreation facilities	27	179	49	255	13%
Renovate existing parks	22	162	31	215	11%
Improve maintenance	18	125	27	170	9%
Acquire and develop new parks	27	115	34	176	9%
TOTALS	204	1,491	303	1,998	100%

- Participants in the Community Workshop described the following strengths of the City’s park and recreation system: *good programs for children and seniors, quality maintenance, and geographic accessibility.*
- The community’s *vision for parks and recreation* included a well-maintained park system that offers special events and programs, and demonstrates environmental, arts, and cultural awareness.
- According to Community Workshop participants, *challenges for the park and recreation system* include population growth and demographic changes, funding, safety, and maintenance. To face these challenges, there will be a need for revitalizing small parks, serving underserved areas, acquiring secure funding, improving park safety, increasing trail opportunities, and supporting the current maintenance level of service.
- Arcata’s key stakeholders indicated that the main benefits provided by parks, recreation facilities, natural areas and trails included the following: *enhancing individual and community health and wellness through exercise*, protecting the environment and enhancing City aesthetics, and creating a better community by improving the quality of life.
- According to stakeholders, the biggest challenges faced by the City of Arcata include: *improving maintenance funding and workload*, addressing safety concerns in parks (i.e., unauthorized camping, drug use, off-lease dogs), and adapting to changing demographics (especially age and income).

- Stakeholders indicated that the following *neighborhoods are underserved*: Giuntoli, Valley West, West End Neighborhood, the South G Street area, as well as the areas around Ennes, Bloomfield, Greenview, and Rotary Parks.
- The facility improvements stakeholders felt were most needed in Arcata included *the provision of trails*, the development of sports fields, the renovation of several playgrounds, and the addition of park lighting. Stakeholders emphasized a need for expanding partnerships to create a regional bike trail to attract visitors and to service Arcata trail users.
- Stakeholders noted that *maintenance improvements were needed*. According to their comments, this likely will require additional maintenance staff, volunteer efforts, and dedicated maintenance funding.
- According to sport providers in Arcata, the highest priority sport field needs include completing plans to *update the Arcata Ball Park*, improving drainage at Community Park soccer and softball fields, adding lighting and developing all-weather sports fields to increase capacity for play.
- Sport providers also noted that a variety of *active-use facilities are needed* in Arcata, such as batting cages, climbing walls, rugby fields, BMX tracks, tennis and racquetball courts, and even bicycle/walking paths to improve access to sport facilities.
- Members of the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) felt that many City *parks should be upgraded*, citing specific improvements at several parks. They also indicated that improving community participation in parks through expanded programming or additional events would increase public support for parks.
- PAC *priorities for the park system* include improving safety, reminding residents of the value of Arcata's parks through community outreach, positioning Arcata as a regional soccer tournament destination, capitalizing on Arcata's location as an eco-tourism destination, and promoting the economic development value of Arcata's parks to the community.

B. PARKLAND NEEDS

Different people prefer different types of park experiences. What appeals to some residents may not meet the needs of others. The need for parkland in Arcata takes into account the community's desire for diverse recreation experiences, including active and passive recreation opportunities, the need for open space, natural resource management and/or preservation, and opportunities to enjoy the outdoors. A balanced, sustainable, well-developed park system provides this range of experiences.



Community needs for parkland were determined during the planning process and supported by a technical analysis of park resources to determine parkland needs. Presented in the Recreation Needs Assessment, this technical analysis included the following:

- An evaluation of the existing level of service for parks in Arcata;
- A geographical access analysis that identified park service areas and current gaps in service;

- The development of customized level of service standards for parkland based on unique community preferences and demands for recreation opportunities; and
- An assessment of citywide parkland needs by park type, based on these proposed standards.

Key findings from the needs assessment analysis are summarized below.

Level of Service (Parkland to Population)

To determine if residents are well served by the City's park system, the supply of parkland can be compared to the number of people served. This supply/service comparison is discussed in terms of park level of service (LOS). Park LOS is a measure of the minimum amount of land needed to provide all of the recreation opportunities desired in a community. Park LOS is expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents.

Table 7 presents the City's existing level of service for parkland by park type. This ratio is based on the City of Arcata's current park acreage (3,744 acres) and the City's current population (17,244 residents).

Table 7: Park Level of Service (LOS)

PARK TYPE	LOS (ACRES/1,000 RESIDENTS)
Neighborhood Parks	0.55
Community Parks	3.28
Special Use Areas	0.98
Linear Parks/Greenways	0.34
SUBTOTAL	5.15
Natural Areas	210.24
Undeveloped Sites	1.73
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	217.12

Note: LOS calculations are based on a 2007 population of 17,244 residents (California Department of Finance).

As noted in the table, the City of Arcata provides more than 217 acres for every 1,000 residents. This level of service is unusually high, because of the acreage held in natural areas. On the other hand, the City provides only 5.15 acres per 1,000 residents of developed parkland. Since this developed parkland includes many smaller sites with limited amenities, the City is limited in terms of active recreation facilities.

While more developed parkland could be provided to accommodate active recreation uses, the current park distribution reflects the unique values of Arcata residents. Public outreach confirms that park preservation and non-motorized transportation are clearly valued. Residents desire a park system that emphasizes natural areas and trails, to the extent that these types of parks and facilities are perceived to be the most needed. Despite the fact that the City of Arcata already provides an abundance of natural areas, the acquisition of natural areas is still perceived by many to be the top priority for improving the park system. When combined with the results of the LOS analysis, more active and passive recreation opportunities are needed, creating a need for well-developed parks and accessible natural areas.

Service Areas (Geographical Access)

In most cities, an ideal park system provides residents with access to basic recreation amenities within walking or biking distance (1/2-mile). This travel distance provides close-to-home opportunities to play on playgrounds, sport courts (basketball, tennis, or volleyball) and open lawn areas. In Arcata, neighborhood parks, community parks, some special use sites (e.g., Larson Park and Pacific Union Park) and a linear park (Valley West Park) help meet this need. Map 2 illustrates these services areas, based on ¼ mile access and ½ mile access/service areas. Unshaded areas reflect gaps in service, where basic recreation amenities are not provided within a ½ mile travel distance.

Despite relatively good park coverage in western Arcata, there are still a number of service gaps in the City. Unserved areas are described below:

- **West Arcata—Ennes Park Area.** The area north of Ennes Park and south of Spear Avenue is unserved. Currently, this area is zoned as Agriculture Exclusive and is beyond the City's Urban Service Boundary. This area could be served by an expansion of Ennes Park. When developed, motorized and non-motorized improvements that provide access to Ennes Park (Expansion) and other nearby parks will help address this need.
- **West Arcata—Mountain View West.** The area west of Greenview and Mountain View Parks is unserved. Currently, this area is zoned as Agriculture Exclusive, and build-out is not anticipated during the time frame for this Plan. However, Greenview and Mountain View Parks are too small to meet nearby recreation needs if the area begins growing. In the long-term, the City should look for a larger park site, and consider selling Mountain View Park or transitioning it to open space.
- **West Arcata—North of Samoa.** The area south of 10th Street, west of K Street, but north of Samoa Boulevard is unserved. Currently, this area is designated Limited and General Industrial. At this time additional residential development is not planned for this area. A new park will be needed here if more residential development occurs.
- **Southwest Arcata—South of Samoa.** South of Samoa Boulevard, particularly east of G Street, is unserved by basic recreation opportunities. Opportunities to meet park needs include acquiring a new site. The City of Arcata should take into account increasing needs generated by a planned City facility (transitional housing and service center) proposed for this area.
- **Southeast Arcata—Baylands.** Although the area is well-served by parkland, basic recreation amenities are limited in southeast Arcata. Currently, Jacoby Creek Charter School is meeting needs in this low-density residential area. If the area experiences additional residential growth, recreation amenities could be added to an appropriate location in Arcata Baylands.
- **East Arcata—Sunny Brae Area.** The Sunny Brae area does not have close-to-home access to basic recreation amenities. This area is zoned for Low Density Residential housing, with some areas that are more sparsely developed (Very Low Density Residential and Agriculture Residential). Sunny Brae Middle School and Sunny Brae Park (a wooded natural area) are in this vicinity. However, acquiring new parkland should be considered for meeting recreation needs in Sunny Brae.

- **East Arcata—California Park Area.** The neighborhood near undeveloped California Park is unserved. This area is zoned as very low density residential, and further development is not anticipated. Although California Park is smaller than desired for neighborhood park, providing basic recreation amenities would help meet nearby needs. These areas lack walkability. There are wide arterial streets with no sidewalks. A larger site is needed to eliminate the needs for residents to drive for even the basic park playground.
- **East Arcata—North of HSU.** This area east of Highway 101 and north of Humboldt State University is unserved. This area, which predominately houses college students, is zoned high, medium, and low-density residential. HSU provides recreation facilities and sport fields to meet student needs in this area.
- **Northeast Arcata—Woodland Heights Area.** The area around Woodland Heights Park (a natural area) lacks nearby recreation amenities. An existing agreement requires this site to be maintained in a natural state. Although this site is small and opportunities for development are limited by utilities located within the site, the City could meet needs in this area by petitioning to develop minor passive amenities here. These areas lack walkability. There are wide arterial streets with no sidewalks. A larger site is needed to eliminate the needs for residents to drive to reach even the basic park playground.
- **Northeast Arcata—East of 299.** As noted on the map, northeast Arcata is not served by basic recreation amenities. The majority of land east of Highway 299 is zoned General or Limited Industrial. This area is not expected to develop in such a way that a neighborhood park is needed; however, recreational amenities such as picnic areas, walking trails and par courses would serve the large workforce in this area.
- **North Arcata—East of Hwy 101 North of 299.** The Valley West Neighborhood is a mix of medium and high density housing along with general commercial and industrial uses. It contains the majority of visitor accommodations and has very limited developed park and recreation amenities. Additional recreation amenities, including but not limited to a larger playground, trail system and play/sports field, would begin to address the neighborhood needs.

Of the eleven areas noted above, parks to improve the geographic accessibility of basic recreation amenities are needed in six areas.

- Ennes Park Area
- North of Samoa
- South of Samoa
- Sunny Brae Area
- California Park
- Woodland Heights Area

While the other four areas do not have basic recreation amenities within a travel distance of ½ mile, extensive development is not anticipated within the planning horizon. In some cases, schools and other types of parks can help meet interim needs in these areas.

Proposed Park Standards and Needs

Minimum parkland standards can be adopted to serve as a guide for the development of the future park system. This future park system should be based on the vision for parks and recreation set forth by the community in the public involvement process. The standards proposed in the Parks & Recreation Master Plan are based on the level of service and type of service desired by the Arcata residents. These standards are unique, reflecting community priorities and desires.

Table 8 summarizes proposed park standards and needs by park type. Park need is expressed as the number of additional acres of parkland needed for development. Because this reflects a need for park development, some of these park needs may be met by undeveloped parkland or park sites that were acquired for other uses (such as natural areas).

This Plan proposes a total level of service of 220 acres per 1,000 residents. While supporting both Arcata's great commitment to natural areas and need for more developed park types, the Plan provides for a balanced park system. This includes increases in the level of service for:

- Neighborhood Parks (4-6 additional parks)
- Special Use Areas (2 additional parks)
- Linear Parks and Greenways (several additional trail corridors and the expansion of Valley West)

It notes a need for approximately 260 acres of natural areas to be acquired in a manner that is consistent with City goals. It includes a standard for community parks based on the sufficiency of current parks in meeting growing needs. (No new community parks are needed.)

Table 8: Park LOS, Proposed Standards and Needs

PARK TYPE	EXISTING LEVEL OF SERVICE	# OF EXISTING PARKS	EXISTING ACREAGE (Amount)	PROPOSED STANDARD (Acres/1,000)	ADDITIONAL DEVELOPED ACRES NEEDED ^A
					Future Population (2020) ^B
					18,500
Neighborhood Parks	0.55	12	9.46	1.60	20.14
Community Parks	3.28	2	56.56	3.28	4.12 ^C
Special Use Areas	0.98	6	16.86	2.25	24.77
Linear Parks/Greenways	0.34	3	5.86	2.75	45.02
Natural Areas	210.24	15	3625.40	210.24+	260.00
Undeveloped Sites	1.73	5	29.89	-	-
TOTAL	217.12	43	3,744.03	220.12	354.00

^A This column notes the amount of additional acreage needed for each park type that may be met through the development of undeveloped parkland or other park types (e.g., natural areas).

^B Population forecast is based on data from the Arcata Economic Development Strategic Plan.

^C Acreage needs for community parks are too low at this point to prioritize acquisition of another community park. Expansion of existing community parks should be considered.

Land Acquisition Needs

Some of the acreage identified in Table 8 has already been acquired by the City and is held in undeveloped park reserves or other park types. (Plans to acquire Carlson Park are underway. This park has been counted as an undeveloped site in this document for planning purposes.) A total of 30.83 acres of parkland has already been acquired or acquisition is under way, including:

- California Park (1.31 acres)
- Woodland Heights Park (0.94 acres)
- Ennes Park Expansion (4.12 acres)
- Carlson Park (19.80 acres)
- Shay Park (4.66 acres)

The City of Arcata should plan to acquire an additional 354 acres by 2020 to meet these identified needs. Most of this acreage is for natural areas and trails. Only 18 acres is for developed parks, such as neighborhood parks and special use areas.

C. RECREATION FACILITY NEEDS

The assessment of recreation facility needs in Arcata was based on an analysis of recreation participation and current use, trends that help predict future use, guidelines for future park development, and proposed level of service and need. Specifically, the analysis included:

- An analysis of the proposed design and development guidelines for neighborhood and community parks to identify opportunities for park enhancement and facility development;
- A review of trail options to support connectivity;
- A demand analysis for other types of facilities; and
- A summary of needs.



Key findings are noted below. See the Needs Assessment Report for the complete evaluation and analysis.

Design and Development Guidelines

Design and development guidelines were created for each park type in Arcata to provide direction regarding the amenities and facilities that should be provided. Presented in Appendix B, these guidelines include a definition of each park type, their benefits, typical size and service area. Additionally, the guidelines note the types of amenities and facilities to provide or avoid within each park type. Facilities are listed in the following categories:

- **Minimum Resources** include basic resources that should be provided in all parks of this classification;
- **Additional Resources** include amenities and facilities that are appropriate within parks of this classification based on space, funding, and community interest; and
- **Conflicting Resources** are amenities and facilities that are not compatible with a classification's function. These features should not be included within this park type.

Design and development guidelines provide direction based upon park type and function. This analysis identifies opportunities for park development, focusing on missing resources in neighborhood parks and community parks. It also takes into account whether the park meets proposed guidelines for park size, provides resources, and is free from conflicting park uses.

Key Findings from the design guideline analysis include the following development opportunities and needs.

- **Active Resources in Neighborhood Parks:** In neighborhood parks, each site should have some type of active recreation amenity to support a wider variety of recreation opportunities. Active resources are needed at eight sites.
 - Bloomfield Park
 - Cahill Park
 - Ennes Park
 - Janes Creek Meadows Park
 - Mountain View Park
 - Stewart Park
 - Vinum Park
 - Westwood Manor Park
 - Windsong Park

The following active resources should be considered in neighborhood parks: basketball, tennis, and volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, skate spots, par course, shuffleboard lanes, bocce, informal sports fields, etc. The presence and design of these resources may be influenced by site constraints, such as site size and topography (see below).

- **Park Size and Development:** Ideally, neighborhood parks should be of sufficient size and design to incorporate minimum and desired recreation facilities. Design guidelines suggest that all neighborhood parks should be at least one acre in size, but preferably larger. Eight existing parks are smaller than one acre, limiting their recreation potential and creating higher park system maintenance costs. Additional land adjacent to these parks should be acquired where available, or the City may consider converting smaller neighborhood parks to natural areas (green space) if a larger site can be acquired nearby.
- **Community Park Resources:** According to design guidelines, community parks should include a play area, sports court, picnic shelter, open turf area, trails/pathways, permanent restrooms, parking, and at least one additional recreation resource. Redwood Park needs some type of additional active amenity. Facilities to support bocce, volleyball, badminton, or horseshoes could support group activities there. Forest recreation opportunities, such as a par course, expanded ropes course, or disc golf are other options. Arcata Community Park needs permanent restrooms near the playground and ball fields and facilities to support group gatherings to support tournaments and other small or large group events.

Trail Connectivity

More trails are needed in Arcata to increase options for safe, non-motorized transportation, reduce chronic disease associated with inactivity, support nature experiences, provide low-cost alternatives for transportation and exercise, and create connections to neighboring communities and the California Coastal Trail. Public involvement results and regional, state and national trends indicate that trail use is increasing. As indicated by public comments, a network of interconnected, multi-purpose trails with regional linkages is desired to link parks to key destinations. Additionally, additional recreation opportunities can be supported by trails within parks, such as ADA accessible loop trails, as well as mountain bike, fitness, nature, and equestrian trails.

In fall 2009, the City proposed to add an additional 5.4 miles of pedestrian trails at four sites: Arcata Baylands, Arcata Community Forest, Arcata Community Park, Sunny Brae Park, Valley West Park and the Rail with Trail Connectivity. Trails at Arcata Community Park, Valley West Park and the Rail with Trail Connectivity were planned to be hard surfaced. Additional trail needs within parks were identified:

- ADA accessible (hard surfaced) looped trails are needed in all new parks, as per park design and development guidelines.
- Interpretive nature trails are needed, especially in conjunction with the riverfront development of Carlson Park.
- Trails and trail facilities are needed in natural areas to support public demand for a variety of trail-related experiences. Mountain biking, equestrian, interpretive, and hiking trails are needed, plus support facilities (e.g., interpretative signage and kiosks; boardwalks, overlooks, and viewpoints; bird houses, bird nest platforms, and blinds; horse trailer parking and horse ties; bike racks, benches, trailheads, etc.).

In addition, needs for a number of multi-purpose trail corridors were identified. A recently-completed, County-wide trail planning effort proposes several trails, bike routes, and bike boulevards in Arcata to increase the number of people using non-motorized transportation. Continued coordination with the Humboldt County Regional Trail Plan and the Humboldt People Powered Pathways (HP3) Coalition is needed to develop proposed multi-purpose and recreation trails. To meet the demand for trails, the City should also seek additional opportunities to link City parks to other parks and key destinations. Multi-purpose trail needs include:

- Connect Arcata parks to key destinations with a north-south trail through the City, extending from the Annie & Mary Rail-Trail in the north to the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge in the south.
- Link to regional trail systems, by extending the Annie and Mary Rail Trail into northeast Arcata.
- Collaborate with the Humboldt People Powered Pathways (HP3) coalition on proposed bikeways that provide access to parks, such as the proposed Class I off-street bikeway to Carlson Park.
- Connect parks to the proposed trails in the HP3 Plan where feasible. For example, connect Redwood Park to the proposed Class I trail that begins at Arcata Community Park and extends southward through Arcata Baylands. Connect the

Arcata Community Forest (Community Tract) to the proposed Class I trail extending to the Aldergrove Open Space and connecting to the Annie & Mary Rail-Trail.

- Create trail development that connects parks and natural areas with business, commercial, industrial and residential sections of town.
- Situate new parks along proposed trail routes to enhance access and connectivity.
- In new linear park corridors, consider pairing hard-surfaced multi-purpose trails with soft-surfaced jogging or dog-walking trails. Also consider adding par course equipment (no impact or low impact fitness stations) to add to the trails' recreation potential.

Other Recreation Facilities

As noted in key findings from the public involvement activities, Arcata residents desire several types of recreation facilities. In addition to trails, these included off-leash dog areas, playgrounds, sport fields, other active recreation elements, indoor recreation space/indoor sport complex, and community gardens. These facility needs are discussed below.

- **Off-leash Dog Areas:** Off-leash dog areas were identified as one of the top facility needs in Arcata. Even local sport providers noted a desire for designated dog parks to minimize the conflicting use of dogs on the fields. Because of the expressed desire for off-leash dog areas, the City should consider two geographically dispersed (north and south) dog parks to meet this need.
- **Playgrounds:** Neighborhood and community parks should include play area(s) to serve children ages 2-12. Many play areas in City parks will need upgrades or replacement in the next few years to continue meet community needs. In addition, a destination playground should be considered in Redwood Park to provide enhanced play experiences in the community. Where appropriate, playground designs should incorporate the surrounding natural environment with play amenities.
- **Sport Fields:** Improvements to increase play are needed for sport fields. These include more or better support facilities, such as restrooms, covered areas, bleachers, concessions, announcers' booths, storage sheds, and a locker room. Lighted fields and all weather fields are also in high demand to increase capacity for play. Because of the wear and tear caused by use of wet fields, local fields are frequently closed during rains, limiting leagues and programs. Improved field drainage at the Arcata Community Park is needed. In addition, participation in the following sports is increasing locally, creating a growing need for these types of fields:
 - Soccer
 - Football
 - Senior and girls softball
- **Active Recreation Elements:** Public involvement findings noted a demand for sport courts and similar active-use facilities. Based on these findings and the results of the design guideline analysis, there is a greater need for basketball, tennis, outdoor racquetball, and volleyball courts, plus facilities such as batting cages, climbing walls, rugby fields, BMX tracks, skate spots, horseshoes pits, bocce, etc. These types of active-use facilities should be considered in neighborhood and community parks to help meet this need.

- **Indoor Recreation Space:** Arcata has several indoor facilities that provide recreational, social, educational, and cultural activities within the community. These include:
 - Community Center at Arcata Community Park;
 - Interpretive Center at Arcata Marsh;
 - Neighborhood Center at the D Street Linear Park;
 - Redwood Lodge, Redwood Lounge and Judo Hut at Redwood Park.
 - Far North Climbing Gym, a private indoor rock climbing facility and home to North Coast Adventures Center.
 - HealthSPORT, a private athletic club that includes a swimming pool, gymnasium, workout room and classrooms, is located within Arcata Community Park.
 - Humboldt State University (HSU) provides indoor recreation facilities, including a climbing wall, fitness center, weight room, and indoor field space.

Although there is a demand for an indoor sports complex, with indoor soccer fields, a playground, and recreation space, this need may be best met in the short term by renovating existing structures to expand their recreation potential and partnering with Healthsport, HSU, and the School District.

- **Swimming Pools:** Currently, there are four pools in Arcata, although none are City-owned:
 - Humboldt State University;
 - Arcata Community Pool;
 - Baywood Golf Course (outdoor); and
 - HealthSPORT.

The City should continue to monitor community needs for indoor and outdoor swimming, as current pools age or as circumstances change (such as a pool's closure to the public). At this time, no need for a pool is noted.

- **Water Access:** In the Park and Recreation Survey, respondents noted a high frequency of participation in beach activities, as well as a desire to participate in canoeing/kayaking, fishing, and even beach activities more than they currently do. The installation of a replacement dock at South I Street and the development of Carlson Park on the Mad River should emphasize water access points to help meet these identified needs. These facilities may include a non-motorized boat launch, swimming beach, fishing pier, and even trails and overlooks to support nature interpretation in the river corridor.
- **Community Garden:** Currently, there is one community garden in Arcata at the First Presbyterian Church, as well as a site under development at Bayside Park. Bayside Park also home to an extensive CSA (community supported agriculture) and educational farm. Because of the increasing awareness in the value of locally grown food and participation in community gardening, additional community garden sites are needed to provide access to residents residing in medium and high density housing neighborhoods where private lawn space is minimal or non-existent.



5. Recommendations

RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter presents recommendations for park development and improvements to be implemented through the year 2020. They include strategies and actions to sustain and enhance the City of Arcata's park and recreation system. They are based on public feedback obtained through community outreach, as well as the park and facility needs noted in the Community Needs Assessment.



Some of the recommendations noted here already reflect current practices and policies of the Arcata Parks and Recreation Division. These have been included to provide comprehensive directions for the future. These recommendations, as well as the proposed park system map, have been reviewed by City staff and the Parks Advisory Committee for consistency with overall plan goals. Recommended actions are used to create a list of capital and non-capital projects. When funded, priority projects will be implemented to enhance the park system.

Plan recommendations are organized in three categories:

- Proposed park system (new parks and trails);
- Park development and maintenance strategies; and
- Renovation and rehabilitation of existing parks.

A. PROPOSED PARK SYSTEM

The ideal park system for Arcata is one made up of a hierarchy of different types of parks, each offering a variety of recreation and/or open space opportunities. Its goal is to provide every resident with convenient access to a variety of recreation opportunities and park experiences.

This park system is built upon a broad foundation of natural areas, which preserves significant natural resources and provides ample opportunities to explore Arcata's environment. Upon this foundation, community parks and special use areas provide diverse recreation opportunities. Small neighborhood parks, at the top of the hierarchy, provide close-to-home recreation opportunities. Finally, trail corridors and pathways link these park sites to key community destinations.

Proposed System Map

Map 3 illustrates the proposed park system. The map notes existing park and recreation resources, along with the conceptual location of proposed park sites that are recommended for development. Important notes about the map include:

- These proposed park sites reflect the need for recreation opportunities within noted areas. This map does not pinpoint exact locations for proposed parks. Instead, it suggests general areas for park or facility development, based on community needs, land-use patterns, the expertise of key City staff, and current plans for development

within the City. The final location of park sites will be determined later based on land availability, acquisition costs, and property ownership at the time of acquisition.

- Colored asterisks indicate proposed neighborhood parks, special use areas, and linear parks (expansion areas). The symbols show the general location for each proposed park.
- Proposed park sites are coded with a letter and number (such as NP-3). The code refers to the following: neighborhood parks (NP), special use areas (SU), and linear parks (LP). The numbers are for reference only and are included on the system map and with recommendations for each site in this chapter.

Proposed Parks

Upon build-out, the City of Arcata will need a number of new parks to provide recreation opportunities within ½ mile of most residents. The Parks & Recreation Master Plan recommends the acquisition and development of four to six neighborhood parks, two special use areas, and one linear park (expansion) to meet community needs to the year 2020. These include the following sites, which are noted counter-clockwise on the map.

- Carlson Park (SU-1)
- Valley West Area (LP-1)
- Ennes Park Expansion (NP-1)
- Shay Park Area (SU-2)
- North of Samoa (NP-2)
- South of Samoa – Rotary Park (NP-3)
- Sunny Brae Area (NP-4)
- California Park Area (NP-5)
- Woodland Heights Park (NP-6)

The proposed new park sites are described briefly below by park type, with neighborhood parks listed first. Several of these sites are proposed for acquisition and development based on anticipated development patterns. Actual projects should be phased according to future economic conditions and growth. Following the project number and name, the anticipated acreage needed to meet proposed park standards for these park types is noted.

NP-1 Ennes Park Expansion (4.1 acres)

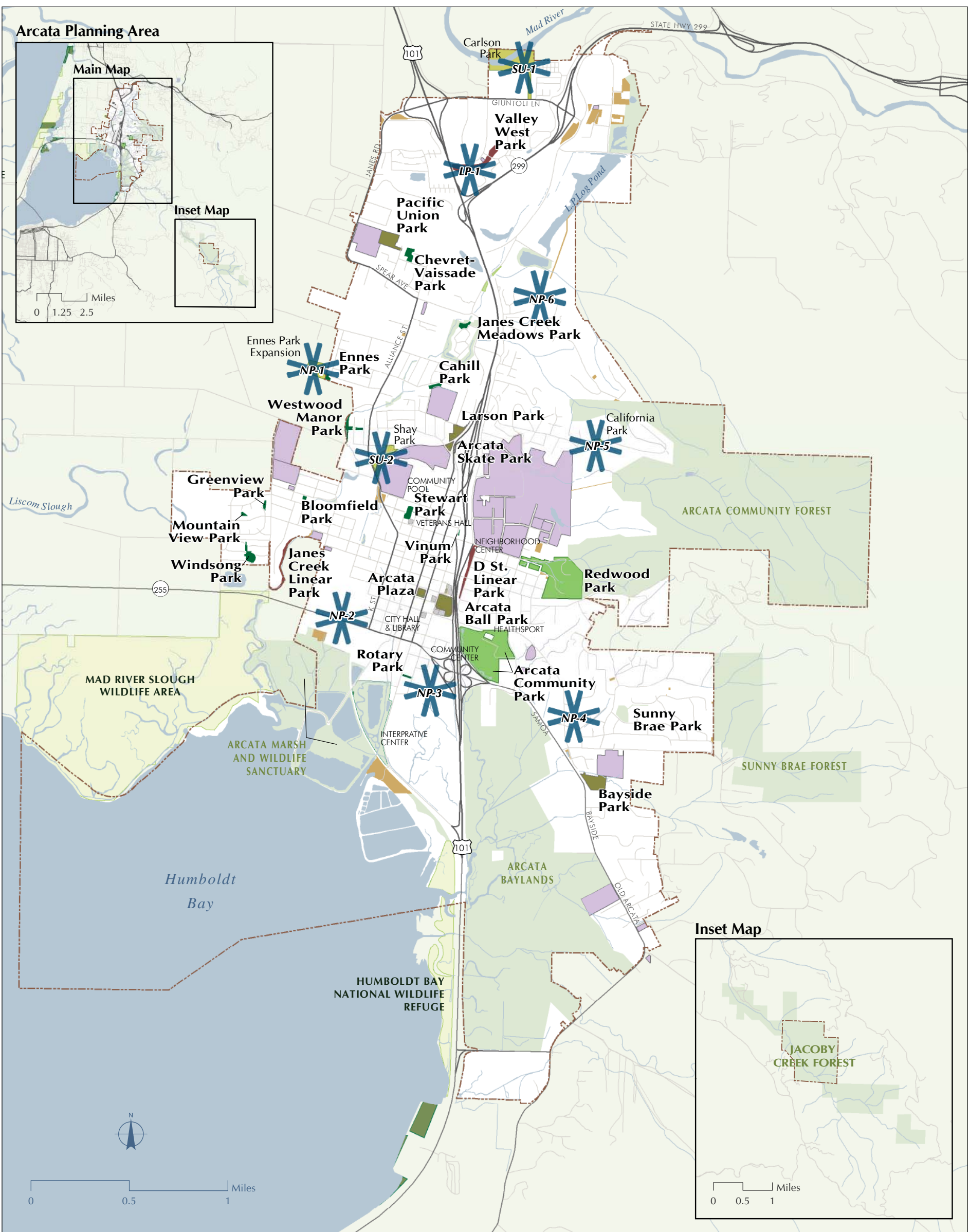
This city-owned expansion area, adjacent to the 0.47 acre Ennes Park, will help satisfy demands for park opportunities caused by nearby development. This site should include a perimeter trail and various active-use amenities as per design guidelines. A dog park may be considered here.

NP-2 North of Samoa (3 acres)

The area south of 10th Street, west of K Street, but north of Samoa Boulevard will need recreation resources when that area develops. This 3-acre site should connect to the proposed Rail with Trail corridor in this area.

NP-3 South of Samoa (5 acres)

A new neighborhood park is needed south of Samoa Boulevard to support the existing neighborhood as well as planned City services and housing east of G Street. The City



Parks and Recreation Master Plan
City of Arcata, California



**Map 3:
Proposed Parks**



September 2010 | Data Source:
City of Arcata, California



Proposed Park/
Expansion Area



Community
Park



Neighborhood
Park



Linear Park



Special Use



Undeveloped



Natural Area/
Open Space (OS)



Other Open Space
(Not City-Owned)



Public Building/
City Parking



Other Public Land



School



Private Facility



City Limits



Water body

Creeks

Local Roads

Minor Arterials

Major Arterials

should strive to acquire 5 acres to meet neighborhood park needs to serve the mixed uses of residents and businesses in this neighborhood. This area could also serve as a location for a dog park.

NP-4 Sunny Brae Area (4 acres)

The Sunny Brae Neighborhood is very deficient in park space. While keeping Sunny Brae Park as a natural area park, the City should look for opportunities to acquire another 4-5 acre site in this vicinity. In the short term, the City should also consider a children's play area at Bayside Park (especially serving ages 2-5) to compliment the facilities offered at Sunny Brae Middle School.

NP-5 California Park (2 acres)

The 1.3-acre California Park is undeveloped, and the area lacks nearby recreation resources. Although this wooded and steep site has significant natural resources, the City should consider opportunities to acquire additional acreage and add appropriate neighborhood park amenities to meet nearby needs. A trail and small playground are options.

NP-6 Woodland Heights Park (2 acres)

The 0.9 acre Woodland Heights Park is undeveloped, and the residents who live around this natural area are not served by basic recreation amenities. Although a current agreement requires this site to be maintained in a natural state, the City should reclassify this site as a neighborhood park, acquire additional acreage to expand the existing site, and petition to be able to develop minor passive amenities (e.g., a nature-themed playground and interpretive trail) here. Opportunities for development are limited by the topography and underground infrastructure throughout the site.

SU-1 Carlson Park (19.8 acres)

The City of Arcata should purchase as planned the Carlson Park site along the Mad River. The 19.8 acre site will be a significant special use park, providing water access, group picnic facilities, interpretive trails, natural areas, and other recreation opportunities.

SU-2 Shay Park (4.7 acres)

Shay Park is an undeveloped park property between Arcata HS and Alliance Street. Although residents who live here are served by other nearby parks, this site provides a well-located open space area that could support several recreation elements, such as a dog park, trails, nature study area, nature-themed playground, small scale Frisbee golf, basketball and community garden. This site should also connect with the proposed Rail with Trail project.

LP-1 Valley West Expansion (3 acres)

Additional park acreage is needed in the Valley West Area, which is rapidly developing with residential and commercial uses. As an extension of Valley West Park, this acreage would serve nearby neighbors, employees, and tourists lodged at nearby hotels. Consequently, this park should incorporate multiple uses and be accessible via pathways connected to nearby hotels. As a first step, the existing city-owned property should be developed to provide more active recreational opportunities.

Proposed Trails

To meet the community's demand for trails, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan recommends an interconnected, multi-purpose trail system with regional linkages. In addition, recommendations address needs for other types of recreation trails, such as mountain bike, fitness, nature, and equestrian trails.

A recently-completed trail planning effort in Humboldt County proposed several pathways and bikeways to increase non-motorized transportation county-wide.

The Humboldt People Powered Pathways (HP3) Plan proposed several Rail/Trail projects, Class I, II, and III trails, and recreation trails. This effort was followed by an update of the Humboldt County Regional Trails Master Plan completed in 2010.



The trail system proposed in this Parks & Recreation Master Plan is designed to compliment the HP3 Plan. To meet the local demand for trails, the City of Arcata should continue to partner with the Humboldt People Powered Pathways (HP3) Coalition. The City should also seek additional opportunities to link City parks to other parks and key destinations.

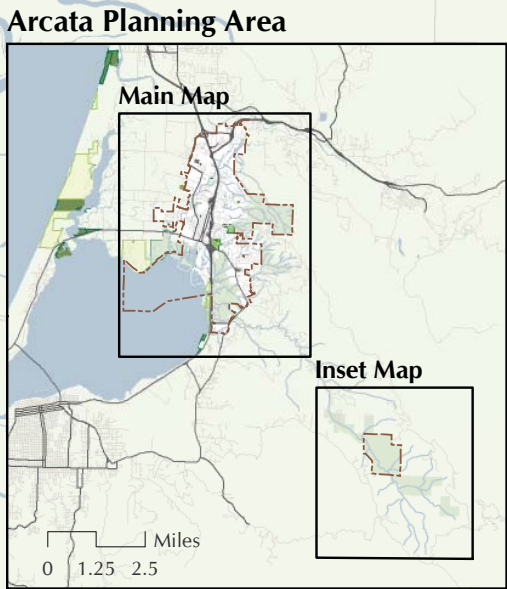
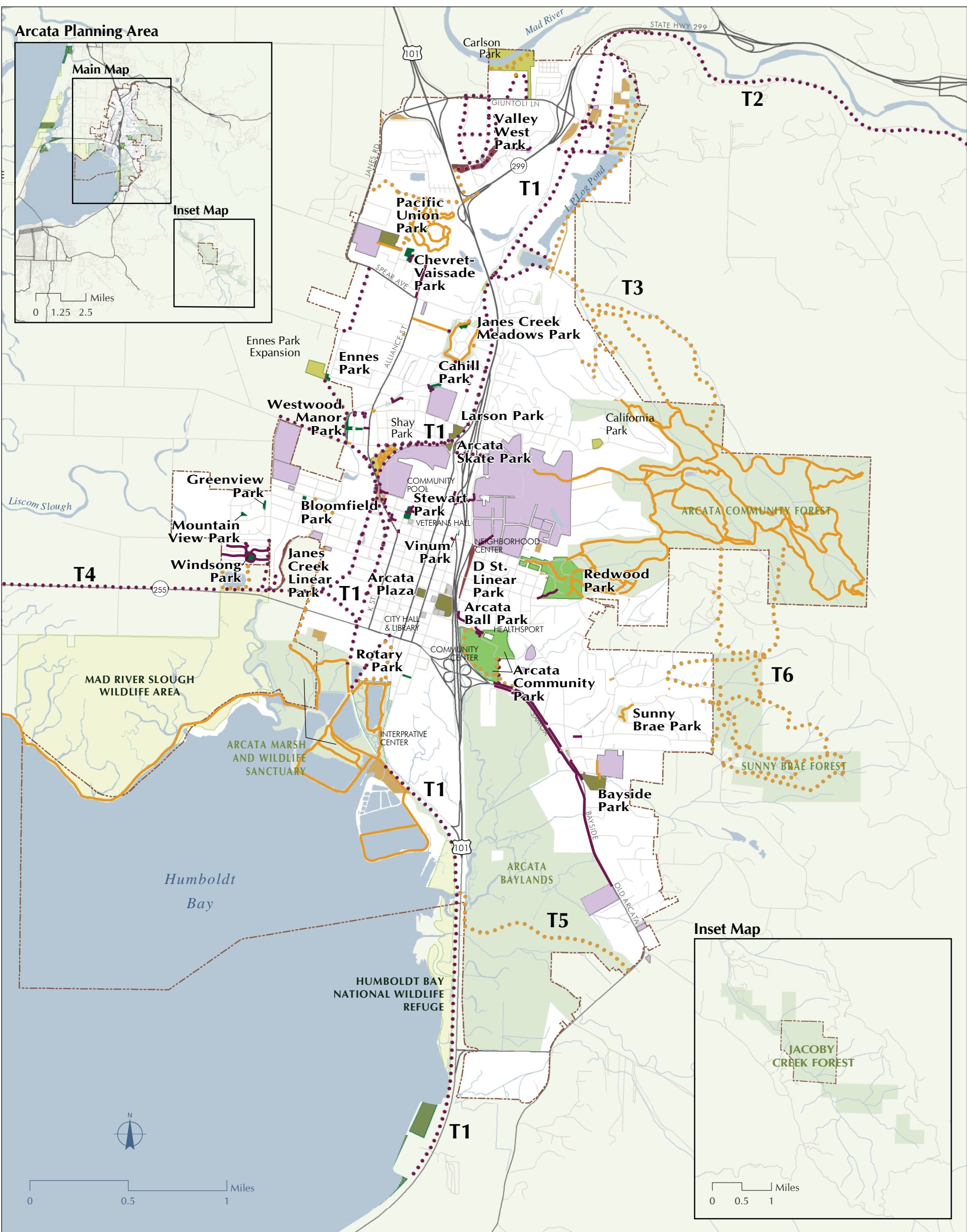
Map 4 illustrates the trails plan, including proposed trails and pathways recommended for implementation by the Arcata Parks & Recreation Division. Important notes about this map include:

- In some cases, this map does not pinpoint exact trail routes. Instead, it suggests general areas for trail development, based on community needs, land-use patterns, the expertise of key City staff, and current trail plans within the City. Final trail routes will be based on land availability, acquisition costs, and property ownership when trails are developed.
- Proposed multi-use trails and recreation trails are labeled on the map as T-1, T-2, and T-3. Proposed trails within larger parks are illustrated but not labeled.

Multi-use and Recreation Trails

Several hard-surfaced multi-use trails and soft-surfaced recreation trails are proposed in this Plan. These proposed trail corridors are noted below and illustrated in Map 4.

- **Arcata Rail with Trail Corridor (T-1):** A proposed Class 1 multi-purpose trail should be developed north-south through Arcata, connecting the Annie & Mary Rail-Trail to Larson Park, Shay Park, proposed NP-2, Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary, and the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.
- **Annie & Mary Rail-Trail (T-2):** The hard-surfaced Annie & Mary Rail-Trail is proposed to extend into northern Arcata and connect to Blue Lake.
- **Aldergrove Open Space/Arcata Community Forest Trail (T-3):** A soft-surfaced trail is proposed to extend from the Arcata Rail with Trail (T-1) east of Highway 101, through the Aldergrove Open Space and along the LP Log Pond. This trail is planned to connect to other trails approaching the Arcata Community Forest.



Parks and Recreation Master Plan

City of Arcata, California



Map 4: Proposed Trails



September 2010 | Data Source:
City of Arcata, California

- | | | | |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Existing Hard Surface Trail | Community Park | Other Open Space (Not City-Owned) | City Limits |
| Proposed Hard Surface Trail | Neighborhood Park | Public Building/ City Parking | Water body |
| Existing Soft Surface Trail | Linear Park | Other Public Land | Creeks |
| Proposed Soft Surface Trail | Special Use | School | Local Roads |
| | Undeveloped | Private Facility | Minor Arterials |
| | Natural Area/ Open Space (OS) | | Major Arterials |

- **Route 255 Connection (T-4):** This proposed hard-surfaced trail is planned to follow Samoa Boulevard/Route 255 west to Jackson Ranch Road, where it will connect to a Class 2 Bikeway in an HP3 proposed rail with trail corridor.
- **Baylands Trail (T-5):** This soft-surfaced trail is proposed to run east/west through Arcata Baylands Park, connecting to T-1 at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge.
- **Forest Trails (T-6):** Several soft-surfaced, recreation trails are proposed to connect the Arcata Community Forest to the Sunny Brae Forest.
- **Other Trail Connections:** Several additional trail segments are proposed in Arcata to enhance connectivity in the City, increase trail-related recreation opportunities, and connect parks. These are noted on Map 4 and can be seen near Carlson Park, West Valley Park, Pacific Union Park, Ennes Park, Westwood Manor Park, Shay Park, and Windsong Park.

Trails within Parks

In addition to the multi-use and recreation trails noted above, trail recommendations include significant trail development or improvements within several park sites, including Arcata Baylands, Arcata Community Forest, Arcata Community Park, and Sunny Brae Park. When feasible, ADA accessible trails should be provided, such as permeable accessible trails. Other options for enhancing trails within Arcata Parks include:

- Provide ADA accessible looped trails in all new parks (except where topography makes this infeasible), as per park design and development guidelines. Immediate improvements should be made to the trail at Janes Creek Meadows Park to establish an accessible route design.
- Ensure that interpretive nature trails are part of the riverfront development of the Carlson Park. Where topography allows, this trail should be ADA accessible.
- Look at opportunities to provide trail facilities in natural areas, to support public demand for trail-related recreation experiences. Provide support facilities as needed.

B. PARK DEVELOPMENT AND MAINTENANCE STRATEGIES

During Plan development, several overarching issues were identified regarding park development and maintenance. This section includes recommendations to address these issues, along with specific strategies for park design and development, including:

- Design and development guidelines
- Active use amenities
- Master planning
- ADA upgrades
- Park design strategies
- Natural area management
- Maintenance best practices

Design and Development Guidelines

The Arcata Parks & Recreation Master Plan includes guidelines for the design and development of parks by their type and function (Appendix B). These guidelines include a

definition of each park type, recreation benefits, and the typical park size and service area. Also, they note the types of amenities and facilities that should be provided and avoided within each park type. Facilities are listed in the following categories:

- **Minimum resources** include basic resources (i.e., bicycle parking, park identification signage, ADA-compliant pathways) that should be provided in all parks of this classification;
- **Additional resources** include amenities and facilities that are appropriate within parks of this classification based on space, funding, and community interest; and
- **Conflicting resources** are amenities and facilities that are not compatible with a classification's function. These features should not be included within this type of park.

Recommendations

- Adopt Master Plan design and development guidelines for all park types.
- Prior to acquisition, ensure that potential park sites have the capacity to meet the design and development guidelines, particularly in regards to size requirements.
- Use the design and development guidelines in all master planning processes to ensure that all new and redeveloped parks have the recommended amenities and facilities to meet community needs.

Within the parameters of these guidelines, parks and open space should be developed according to the unique needs of nearby residents and local site characteristics. For example, site designs should take into account environmental features (e.g., topography, tree cover, water features, drainage, vegetation, etc.) and neighborhood characteristics (e.g., population density, household prices, yard size, the amount of hardscape/pavement in the area, etc.) Nearby neighbors and interested citizens should be invited to participate in the master planning process.

Active Use Amenities

Design and development guidelines were used in the Needs Assessment analysis to identify facility needs within existing parks. Eight neighborhood parks are lacking in active resources, such as sport courts, sport fields, and par courses. Public feedback suggested that the following types of active resources are desired in local parks: basketball courts, tennis courts, and volleyball courts, horseshoe pits, skate spots, par course, shuffleboard lanes, bocce, etc.

Recommendations

- Redesign and integrate active use resources into the following neighborhood parks where feasible:
 - Bloomfield Park
 - Cahill Park
 - Mountain View Park
 - Vinum Park
 - Westwood Manor Park
 - Windsong Park

- Provide active use resources in new parks as per design and development guidelines to expand recreation opportunities in the City.
- Consider grouped sport facilities at appropriate sites to provide opportunities for tournament play and revenue generation.
- Provide additional support facilities for sport fields, such as restrooms, covered areas, bleachers, concessions, announcer's booth, storage shed, and locker room. Provide lighted fields, all weather fields (synthetic surfacing), and drainage improvements to increase capacity for play.

Master Planning and Design

Many parks and facilities in Arcata were developed in the 1960's and 1970's. Several sites in the park system are underdeveloped and/or have aging facilities. Rather than simply replacing outdated amenities and facilities (such as playgrounds), this Plan recommends that the City develop site master plans for larger parks or site designs for smaller parks to give parks a fresh look prior to renovation.



The extent of the master planning process will vary by park type. Park planning and design may range from a simple park drawing to the development of concept plans, with public review and refinement. As a policy, each master planning process should include public participation and consider recreation trends, unique community desires, and site-specific opportunities to provide new or expanded recreation experiences. It should also integrate community values for stewardship, natural resource preservation, safety, accessibility, and enhanced play opportunities in park planning and design.

Recommendations

- Prepare park master plans or park designs prior to site development, major improvement, or renovation to promote cohesive, sustainable, quality design and to ensure that plans are consistent with community needs.
- Include nearby neighbors, youth, special interest groups, and potential volunteers for stewardship and maintenance in each master planning process.
- Design, develop, and renovate parks to maximize park access and recreation opportunities at each site. Consider covered or lighted facilities, multi-use facilities, sport field overlays, removal of barriers, and the provision of support amenities and facilities to encourage park use for all ages and abilities.
- Integrate natural areas, native plants, bioswales, improved stormwater management, green design and other sustainable elements into the park system through master planning efforts.
- Consider landscaping, facility design, and other elements in site master plans to maximize maintenance and operations efficiencies.
- Implement CPTED strategies (Crime Prevention through Environmental Design) in all site master plans to improve perceptions of park safety, maximize visibility, define park boundaries and public use areas, and improve access.

- Enhance park aesthetics, image, and identity by considering elements such as consistent park signage, communication kiosks, and attractive plantings at park entrances at new parks and renovated sites. These enhancements should be appropriate for the park type as described in the design guidelines (Appendix B).

ADA Upgrades

The City of Arcata has steadily incorporated accessible amenities and facilities into the City's park system. Currently, most playgrounds have ADA surfacing, and some sites incorporate accessible amenities, such as picnic tables and benches. However, many sites lack an accessible path of travel to link facilities. Five sites are in need of playground surfacing improvements. To address ADA needs throughout the park system, this Plan recommends that the City update the ADA Transition Plan to evaluate accessibility in parks and recreation facilities as required by the American with Disabilities Act.

Recommendations

- Update the ADA Transition Plan for Arcata's parks and recreation facilities.
- Incorporate ADA guidelines into all master planning efforts. Provide an accessible path of travel through each site, linking all facilities. Add accessible amenities such as picnic tables, water fountains, restrooms and benches. Ensure that accessible safety surfacing is provided at all renovated play areas.

Park Planning and Design Strategies

Aside from the recommendations noted above, there are several strategies that could be employed by the City of Arcata to expand and enhance the park system. Many of these strategies are based on feedback obtained during the public involvement process.

Recommendations

- Balance the need to provide new parks and natural areas with the need to protect and preserve the community's investment in existing parks and facilities.
- Ensure diverse park experiences by providing a variety of active-use parks in Arcata. Plan and design future parks to meet the following standards:
 - Neighborhood Parks (1.6 acres/1,000)
 - Community Parks (3.0 acres/1,000)
 - Special Use Areas (2.25 acres/1,000)
- Provide access to basic recreation amenities (playgrounds, sport courts, open lawn areas) within a ½-mile radius of most residents.
- Acquire linear parks and greenways as needed to develop multi-purpose trails and recreation trails as proposed in this Plan, link to the regional trail system, and preserve wildlife corridors.
- Acquire natural areas on an opportunity basis to meet City goals for securing a greenbelt around the City, preserving specific habitats and watersheds, providing flood control, and completing linkages between parks and other natural areas.
- Consider options to develop recreation elements in natural areas where appropriate (e.g., ropes course, Frisbee golf, canopy tours, mountain biking, etc.).

- Continue to partner with the School Districts, Humboldt State University, County, State, and Federal Agencies, and other significant providers in the area to help meet community needs.
- Collaborate with key schools that already help meet close-to-home recreation opportunities:
 - Arcata Elementary
 - Jacoby Creek Charter School
 - Pacific Union
 - Sunny Brae Middle School
 - Arcata School District (Charter)
- Consider a more comprehensive partnership with the School Districts to maintain and program sports fields at school sites.
- Create a capital replacement schedule/reinvestment plan to afford the replacement of facilities and equipment when needed.

Natural Resource Management

The City of Arcata owns extensive natural areas, which makes it unique in many ways. Feedback obtained during the public involvement process reinforces the notion that residents value the environmental and recreation benefits associated with the protection of natural areas. Moreover, residents want these areas to remain accessible, instead of being closed to public use. Public use and protection of natural areas presents some unique challenges, and the City needs an overall management plan to document best use management practices, sustainability strategies, restoration efforts, and public access requirements and/or restrictions.

Recommendations

- Develop an open space management plan, identifying high-value resource areas and strategies for management and/or restoration.
- Develop site master plans to guide natural area site development to ensure that amenities, such as trails, trailheads and interpretive resources, are best located to enhance use and minimize impacts on the environment.
- Continue acquisition of natural areas around and adjacent to the City boundary.

Maintenance Practices

As the park system continues to grow, the City of Arcata will need to track park maintenance needs and tasks to ensure that each site individually—and the park system as a whole—are maintained at a desired level of service. The new maintenance protocol should take into account increased needs for aging facilities, detailed attention at specialized facilities, and more work as new facilities are added to existing parks and new parks are brought online.

Recommendations

- Develop an on-line maintenance management system to plan and track maintenance tasks.

C. PARK RENOVATION, REHABILITATION, AND DEVELOPMENT

Several improvements are recommended in existing City parks to renovate and revitalize these sites. New neighborhood parks, special use areas, natural areas, linear parks and trails are recommended to increase recreation opportunities in underserved areas. Table 9 presents a list of all recommended projects in this Plan. Existing parks with recommended improvements are noted first, organized alphabetically by park classification. Proposed parks and trails are listed next by park type, in order by their reference number. Proposed partnerships with other jurisdictions and recommended non-capital projects are noted last.



Project Priorities

The recommended projects noted in Table 9 include more tasks than can be accomplished by 2020, the timeframe for this Plan. For this reason, City staff and the Parks Advisory Committee have assigned project priorities based on a customized prioritization scorecard developed for Arcata. The scorecard is based on community values and vision for the park system, as set forth in this Plan. By applying these criteria, the City can make decisions about what projects should move forward first when funding is available.

The following criteria were used to prioritize all projects in Table 9.

- **Enhances sustainability:** Projects that sustain existing resources, improve maintenance efficiency, reduce life-cycle costs, or otherwise promote environmental sustainability should be given high priority.
- **Increases trail connectivity:** Priority should be given to projects that improve options for non-motorized transportation and provide convenient access to the network of parks and trails. Developing trails and acquiring corridors that tie to the regional trail system should be considered high priority projects.
- **Improves park access:** Projects that improve accessibility for all users, including various ages, skill levels, and mobility should be considered a high priority.
- **Expands recreation opportunities:** Priority should be given to projects that expand the City's recreation opportunities and provide active-use resources.
- **Serves future growth areas:** Acquiring and developing new parks sites in future growth areas should be considered a high priority to meet increasing demands for recreation opportunities.
- **Enhances natural areas:** Projects that provide access to natural areas, restore habitats, improve ecological health, and support environmental education should be considered as high priorities.
- **Supports community values and strengthens the community:** Priority projects should strengthen community identity, safety, and livability. Projects should take into Arcata's unique needs and preferences. Priorities may include projects that provide water access, reduce crime in parks, support social cohesion, attracts tourism, support other City resources and initiatives, etc.

- **Utilizes available funding:** Projects that have the potential to be funded through grants, donations, partner contributions, or other existing funding source should receive higher priority than projects without other identified funding opportunities.
- **Encourages participation and recognition of partners for matching funds and volunteer efforts.**

Priority projects will be carried forward into the City's annual Capital Improvement Plans (CIP), based on funding availability. As funding resources change in the future, so will this list of prioritized projects. Projects may be re-prioritized at any time if unanticipated funding becomes available or community priorities change.

Table 9: Recommended Improvements for Existing and Proposed Parks

PARK NAME	TOTAL ACRES	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROJECT PRIORITY		
			I	II	III
EXISTING SYSTEM RENOVATION AND IMPROVEMENTS					
SYSTEM-WIDE					
All developed parks		Implement ADA upgrades as noted in transition plan, providing an accessible path of travel linking facilities, upgrading restrooms, providing accessible parking according to guidelines, installing accessible playground safety surfacing, and adding accessible amenities (picnic tables, water fountains, benches).	√		
Natural areas		Build trails and trail facilities in appropriate natural areas to support public access. Provide ADA accessible trails when feasible. Consider interpretative signage and kiosks; boardwalks, overlooks, piers, and viewpoints; bird houses, bird nest platforms, and bird blinds. Consider appropriate recreation elements as per design guidelines.	√		
Dog parks		Identify appropriate sites for the development of two dog parks (in northern and southern Arcata). Consider Ennes Park expansion, Shay Park, Valley West, the Sunny Brae area or other sites.	√		
Sport fields		Provide field drainage improvements and consider additional support facilities, such as lighting, restrooms, covered areas, bleachers, concessions, announcer's booth, storage shed, and locker room.		√	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS					
Bloomfield Park	0.23	Develop site design, including the following:	√		
		Replace play equipment.		√	
		Implement site design.		√	
Cahill Park	0.73	Develop site design.		√	
		Address alignment and crossing of Stromberg Avenue.			√
		Replace play equipment.		√	
		Daylight creek at tow of hill slope.		√	
		Implement site design.		√	
Chevret-Vaissade Park	1.47	Enhance trail access through the Potawat Village.	√		
		Move basketball court to active use area in park.			√
Ennes Park (See NP-1)	0.47	Pursue site annexation.	√		
		Negotiate the removal of existing easement with Arcata School District	√		
		Develop master plan for entire site, including expansion area.	√		
		Provide a perimeter trail around site and connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods.		√	
		Develop active use amenities and facilities at site (as per master plan).		√	
		Develop a playground.	√		
		Construct a picnic area.		√	
		Consider an off-leash dog area.		√	
		Develop entry points for access by residents in planned residential units.		√	
		Implement site master plan.		√	
Greenview Park	0.36	Develop site design, including the following:		√	
		Replace play equipment.		√	
		Implement site design.		√	
Janes Creek Meadows Park	0.82	Improve trails to provide ADA accessibility and neighborhood connectivity	√		
		Connect west side to planned residential development on 30 th Street.	√		
Mountain View Park	0.26	Develop site design, including the following:			√
		Replace play equipment.		√	
		Implement site design.			√
Rotary Park	0.28	Develop site design including better visibility.	√		
		Construct sidewalk access between G and F Streets.		√	
		Implement site design.	√		
Stewart Park	1.29	Improve access to the rail with trail corridor.	√		
Vinum Park	0.09	None			
Westwood Manor Park	1.72	Develop site design, considering the following:		√	
		Ensure access to any development that extends Foster Avenue		√	
		Implement site design.			√
Windsong Park	1.74	Add a picnic area.			√
		Connect site to McDaniel Slough via trail.		√	
		Connect site to Ennes Park via trail.		√	
Subtotal	9.46				

Table 9: Recommended Improvements for Existing and Proposed Parks

			PROJECT PRIORITY		
	TOTAL ACRES				
PARK NAME		RECOMMENDATIONS	I	II	III
COMMUNITY PARKS					
Arcata Community Park	30.35	Develop a perimeter trail connecting to sidewalks.	√		
		Develop trail along 7th Street hillside and around seasonal wetland, adding interpretive signage, viewpoints, benches, and connection to perimeter trail.	√		
		Provide seating (benches/bleachers) for soccer fields.	√		
		Construct permanent restrooms near the playground and ball fields.		√	
		Add a volleyball court and/or disc golf practice baskets.			√
		Provide site amenities to support tournament uses.			√
		Implement Community Center improvements, such as:		√	
		Improve ventilation in the gymnastics room.		√	
		Convert exterior westside seating area to recreation space.		√	
		Increase building security. (Consider adding staffing in the reception area.)			√
		Expand park maintenance facility to add storage space and a plant nursery.			√
Redwood Park	26.21	Develop a site master plan to renovate site, improve safety, and expand uses.	√		
		Include the following elements:			
		Re-surface the basketball court.	√		
		Construct a destination playground (thematic children's play area).	√		
		Add an amphitheater or performance area.		√	
		Enlarge/improve the 14th Street parking lot; rehabilitate 14th Street roadway.			
		Provide festival or event space with utility hookups.			√
		Integrate additional active-use amenities to support family and picnic use (e.g., bocce ball, horseshoes, badminton, volleyball, etc.)	√		
		Provide parking for horse trailers at trailhead park lot.	√		
		Enhance the trail system, providing designated ADA, equestrian, bike/pedestrian, nature, and mountain biking trails.	√		
		Improve trail signage, adding directional and interpretive signs.	√		
		Consider forest recreation opportunities, such as a par course, expanded ropes course, and/or disc golf.		√	
		Open up the vegetation between the forest and park interface to improve safety and provide a more inviting entrance to trail heads.	√		
		Renovate, replace, or remove the Boy Scout Hut.		√	
		Renovate or replace the Redwood Lounge.		√	
		Construct a caretaker's residence.			√
		Alternatively consider replacing the Scout Hut, Lounge and caretaker's residence with one building.		√	
		Implement site master plan.	√		
Subtotal		56.56			
SPECIAL USE AREAS					
Arcata Ball Park	4.15	Implement Phase 2 of the master plan to include the following:	√		
		Replace Bleachers, scorebooth, maintenance shop	√		
		Add a second concession stand			√
		Complete 7th Street Façade, park entryway and sidewalk improvements	√		
		Add site amenities such as batting cages, pedestrain access to left field		√	
		Provide netting around the park perimeter.	√		
Arcata Plaza	1.01	Install bollards to divert street traffic during community events.	√		
		Complete infrastructure improvements, such as electrical, lighting and water.	√		
		Add facilities to enhance programming options.		√	
		Improve pedestrian traffic patterns on all four interior corners		√	
		Review layout for the planter in the center of the Plaza			√
Arcata Skate Park	0.65	Provide access to Arcata HS, Shay and Larson Parks via rail with trail corridor.	√		
		Enhance skate park with new equipment and updated features		√	
Bayside Park	4.72	Complete the community garden currently under development.	√		
		Construct community garden supporting facilities.	√		
		Refine and implement master plan for site, including the following elements:	√		
		Develop a children's play area.		√	
		Develop a trail network to enhance pedestrian use and improve connectivity.		√	
		Build an outdoor classroom area (with restrooms) to support programming.		√	
Larson Park	2.18	Implement site design to include the following:			
		Complete current tennis court expansion and addition of children's play equipment, bocce ball courts and landscaping.	√		
		Consider additional shared use/maintenance of adjacent school open space.			√
		Develop site as trailhead. Provide access to Arcata HS, Larson Parks, Arcata Skatepark and other sites via the rail with trail corridor.	√		
		Expand the parking area.	√		
		Remove invasive vegetation, such as Monterey pine.	√		
Pacific Union Park	4.15	Consider additional shared use/maintenance of adjacent school open space area.			
		Pave roadway to maintenance shop.			√
Subtotal		16.86			

Table 9: Recommended Improvements for Existing and Proposed Parks

			PROJECT PRIORITY		
PARK NAME	TOTAL ACRES	RECOMMENDATIONS	I	II	III
LINEAR PARKS/GREENWAYS					
D Street Linear Park	1.23	Develop site design to enhance recreation and community use opportunities and address the following elements: Renovate the Neighborhood Center kitchen, entryway and storage. Renovate front parking lot to maximize spaces Install active play amenities, e.g., bocce, par course, horseshoes. Consider an off leash dog area Retain opportunity for linear non-motorized connectivity from 7th - 14th Streets Implement site design.		√	√
Janes Creek Linear Park	1.04	Develop trail. Provide directional and interpretive trail signage.		√	√
Valley West Park	3.59	Develop site master plan to enhance recreation opportunities and address the following elements: Acquire an additional 4 acres to connect this site to nearby commercial (hotel) and residential areas. Develop a perimeter trail around the site. Add a basketball court Renovate/enhance the play area. Install a multi-use play field. Provide irrigation. Consider an off leash dog area. Consider alternatives to the groundwater retention basins. Implement site master plan.	√	√	√
Subtotal		5.86			
NATURAL AREAS					
Aldergrove Marsh	23.02	Rehabilitate and expand the perimeter trail; consider access for all. Consider the feasibility of youth "intown" fishing opportunities. Ensure connection with Annie and Mary Trail.		√	√
Arcata Baylands	570.72	Develop site master plan, including the following elements: Construct trail as planned. Develop a perimeter trail around the site. Provide interpretive trail signage (nature and agricultural history). Review site for potential Hostel or other rental use. Develop a site management plan with review of easements and potential incomes. Provide a signed entryway along the bike path off Samoa Blvd. Implement site master plan.	√	√	√
Arcata Community Forest	2679.99	Arcata Community Park Tract Extend trail as planned. Improve parking areas including parking for horse trailers. Open up the vegetation between the forest and park interface to improve safety and provide a more inviting entrances to trail heads. Update trail master plan. Improve enforcement of "No Camping" ordinance to reduce site impacts. Link this site to the Aldergrove Open Space via the Ridge Trail. Link this site to the Sunny Brae and Jacoby Creek Forest tracts. Jacoby Creek and Sunny Brae Tracts Develop a site master plan, including the following elements: Develop horse, bike and pedestrian trails with interpretive signage. Develop trailheads and signed entryways. Develop trailhead parking. Connect Sunny Brae tract to Redwood Park. Consider active recreation elements. Implement site master plan.	√	√	√
Arcata Marsh & Wildlife Sanctuary	226.38	Install a replacement dock at South I Street. Install a dock from the Klopp Lake Parking lot to reach the deeper water channel. Widen the Interpretive Center access road for maintenance/emergency vehicles. Provide a permeable ADA accessible trail. Enhance interpretive signage Connect to the Rail with Trail corridor.	√	√	√
Butcher Slough/Jolly Giant Creek	11.58	Consider trail connectivity			√
Janes Creek Meadows Open Space	9.74	Improve trails contiguous with Janes Creek Meadows Park and connect to adjacent neighborhoods. Develop connectivity trail to the Janes Creek Pedestrian Bridge as planned in the 30th Street development project.	√	√	
McDaniel Slough	88.40	Acquire access from Samoa Boulevard to the City's levee trail.	√		
Sellers Pond Open Space	7.34	Create development and management plan. Implement development and management plan.		√	√
Sunny Brae Park	2.93	Improve recreation trails linking neighbors and install directional sinage.	√		
Woodland Heights Park	0.94	See NP-6 in proposed neighborhood parks.	√		
Subtotal		3,621.04			
EXISTING SYSTEM TOTAL		3,709.78			

Table 9: Recommended Improvements for Existing and Proposed Parks

PARK NAME	TOTAL ACRES	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROJECT PRIORITY		
			I	II	III
PROPOSED PARKS AND TRAILS					
PROPOSED NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS					
Ennes Park Expansion (NP-1)	4.12	Pursue site annexation.	√		
		Negotiate the removal of existing easement with Arcata School District.	√		
		Develop master plan for entire site, including expansion area.	√		
		Provide a perimeter trail around site and connectivity to adjoining neighborhoods.		√	
		Develop active use amenities and facilities at site (as per master plan).		√	
		Develop a playground.	√		
		Construct a picnic area.		√	
		Consider an off-leash dog area.		√	
		Develop entry points for access by residents in planned residential units.		√	
		Implement site master plan.		√	
North of Samoa (NP-2)	3.00	Acquire a 3+ acre site north of Samoa Boulevard for a neighborhood park, including a connection to the proposed Rail with Trail corridor if feasible.		√	
		Create site master plan.			√
		Implement site master plan.			√
South of Samoa (NP-3)	5.00				
		Acquire a 5-acre site south of Samoa Boulevard for a neighborhood park, including a connection to the proposed Rail with Trail corridor and AMWS if feasible.	√		
		Create a site master plan.		√	
		Implement site master plan.		√	
Sunny Brae Area (NP-4)	4.00				
		Acquire a 4+ acre site for a neighborhood park to serve existing and future development in this area.		√	
		Create a site master plan that considers the recreation amenities provided at Sunny Brae Middle School.		√	
		Implement site master plan.			√
California Park (NP-5)	2.00				
		Acquire an additional 1+ acres adjacent to the existing undeveloped park.		√	
		Create a site design.			√
		Develop the site as planned.			√
Woodland Heights Park (NP-6)	2.00				
		Acquire an additional 1+ acres adjacent to the existing undeveloped park sell property to purchase a 2 acre parcel in this neighborhood.		√	
		Reclassify site as neighborhood park.		√	
		Create a site design.		√	
		Develop the site as planned.		√	
Subtotal		20.12			
PROPOSED SPECIAL USE AREAS					
Carlson Park (SU-1)	19.80				
		Develop site master plan, incorporating the following elements:	√		
		Construct ADA accessible trail to river access.	√		
		Develop a picnic area	√		
		Include low impact active recreational amenities, such as horseshoe pits.	√		
		Develop an ADA accessible looped trail network on the site.	√		
		Construct a non-motorized boat access.	√		
		Implement the site master plan.	√		
Shay Park (SU-2)	4.66				
		Develop a site design, preserving open space while providing recreation amenities to meet existing and future neighborhood needs. Consider the following:		√	
		Develop a nature-themed playground.		√	
		Consider a nature study area and interpretive trails.		√	
		Add a community garden.		√	
		Consider this site for an off-leash dog area.		√	
		Add recreation uses, such as a basketball court and Frisbee golf course.		√	
		Ensure connectivity via rail with trail project.	√		
		Implement site design.		√	
Subtotal		24.46			
PROPOSED LINEAR PARKS/GREENWAYS					
Valley West Expansion (LP-1)	3.00	Acquire 3+ acres to connect Valley West Park to nearby commercial (hotel) and residential areas and provide additional recreation opportunities to existing neighborhood.	√		
Subtotal		3.00			
PROPOSED NATURAL AREAS					
Opportunity Fund	75+	Create an opportunity fund to acquire natural areas to meet City goals.		√	
Subtotal		75.00			

Table 9: Recommended Improvements for Existing and Proposed Parks

PARK NAME	TOTAL ACRES	RECOMMENDATIONS	PROJECT PRIORITY		
			I	II	III
PROPOSED TRAILS*					
Arcata Rail with Trail Corridor (T-1)	10.80	Pursue joint use of corridor with North Coast Rail Authority, Caltrans and USFWS.	√		
		Plan and construct a Class 1 trail, including links to the Annie & Mary Rail-Trail, Larson Park, Shay Park, Proposed NP-2, Proposed NP-3, Arcata Marsh, and the National Wildlife Refuge.	√		
Annie & Mary Rail-Trail (T-2)	3.60	Identify Trail Manager		√	
		Extend this trail into northern Arcata to connect to the Arcata Rail with Trail Corridor.		√	
Aldergrove Open Space/Arcata Community Forest Trail (T-3)	2.40	Acquire easements and/or fee title to corridor		√	
		Plan and develop a soft-surfaced trail that extends from the Arcata Rail with Trail Corridor east of Hwy 101 through the Aldergrove Open Space, near the LP Log Pond to the Arcata Community Forest.		√	
Route 255 Rail with Trail (T-4)	4.80	Acquire access to corridor		√	
		Plan and develop a trail that follows Samoa Boulevard (255) west to Jackson Ranch Road.		√	
Baylands Trail (T-5)	0.00	See Baylands Park.	√		
Forest Trails (T-6)		Plan and develop soft-surfaced trails connecting to the Arcata Community Forest to Sunny Brae Forest.		√	
Trail Opportunity Fund	25.00	Create an opportunity fund to acquire and develop additional trail corridors. These may include multi-use (hard surfaced) or recreational (soft surfaced) trails.	√		
Subtotal		46.60			
Partner Site Improvements					
Bloomfield Campus		Partner on capital upgrades to enhance recreational use of school site.			√
Arcata Elementary Campus		Partner on capital upgrades to enhance recreational use of school site.			√
Pacific Union Campus		Partner on capital upgrades to enhance recreational use of school site.			√
PROPOSED SYSTEM TOTAL		169.18			
Non-Capital Projects and Plans					
ADA Transition Plan		Update the City's ADA Transition Plan to assess compliance and identify needed upgrades throughout the park system.	√		
Natural Resource / Open Space Management Plan		Develop an open space management program to compliment the Open Space Protection Program and Acquisition Matrix to develop strategies for management, maintenance and/or restoration.		√	
Maintenance Mangement Plan		Develop a maintenance management plan and online system to plan and track maintenance tasks and costs.	√		
Subtotal		0.00			
TOTAL		3,878.96			

* Proposed trail acreage is an estimate based on 2009 anticipated routes, which have been further updated in 2010. Acreage assumes a 20-foot corridor, but may vary depending on final routes for proposed trails upon development.



6. Implementation

IMPLEMENTATION

This chapter identifies an implementation strategy for funding the improvements recommended in this Plan. It includes a strategy to fund priority projects, which takes into account existing sources of funding and anticipated project costs. The chapter introduces a park system cost model that can be updated and adapted as funding resources change. Rather than focusing on capital projects alone, the model presents true park costs for each site, include acquisition, design, development, improvements, capital replacement, and maintenance. An overview of potential funding sources is provided as well, so that the City of Arcata can move forward with developing the envisioned park system.



A. PARK AND RECREATION FUNDING

In Arcata, most funding for parks and recreation comes directly from the City's General Fund. In FY 2009/10, the funding allocation for nearly 90% of parks and recreation funding comes from General Fund dollars (Table 10). This accounts for approximately 17.5% of all General Fund dollars, which is significant. On the other hand, funds set aside for Parks and Recreation represent only 5.3% of all City funds. Few other funds support parks and recreation, and the percentage of other funds directed toward parks and recreation vary tremendously depending on the amount of money allotted for capital improvements. In accordance with the provision of the "forest management and parkland initiative of 1979," at least 20% of the net revenues derived from the harvesting of timber shall be directed towards acquisition, development, operation, and maintenance of parklands, as identified in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

Changing Funding Levels

City funding for parks and recreation has fluctuated over the last several years, depending on capital funding availability. Table 10 shows that park and recreation funding recently peaked in FY2006/07 at \$4.96 million; substantially higher than the current amount, budgeted at \$1.94 million. This reflects not only a difference in the amount of capital dollars available for projects, but also a difference in the amount of General Fund dollars directed towards parks and recreation. Table 11 illustrates the changes in funding support for parks and recreation since 2004. These elements are noted separately, since parks maintenance and management is part of the Public Works Department, and recreation is administered by the Environmental Services Department.

Table 10: Parks and Recreation Funding, 2004-2010

	2004-05 ACTUAL	2005-06 ACTUAL	2006-07 ACTUAL	2007-08 ACTUAL	2008-09 ESTIMATED	2009-10 BUDGETED
General Fund Dollars						
Parks and Recreation	1,280,370	910,344	1,944,925	1,220,087	1,732,990	1,734,193
SUBTOTAL	6,562,783	6,430,757	7,916,771	7,392,044	9,068,146	9,937,508
Other City Funds						
Parks and Recreation	568,237	295,717	3,017,087	247,517	348,753	204,711
SUBTOTAL	19,019,719	10,461,938	17,590,076	14,772,880	27,170,117	26,537,038
TOTAL PARKS & REC	1,848,607	1,206,061	4,962,012	1,467,604	2,081,743	1,938,904
TOTAL CITY FUNDS	\$25,582,502	\$16,892,695	\$25,506,847	\$22,164,924	\$36,238,263	\$36,474,546

Note: Other Funds include special revenue funds, capital improvement funds, special assessment district funds, trust funds, enterprise funds, internal service funds, and redevelopment funds.

Source: City of Arcata 09/10 Annual Budget; 07/08 Annual Budget.

Table 11: Park Activities and Recreation Activities, 2004-2010

	2004-05 ACTUAL	2005-06 ACTUAL	2006-07 ACTUAL	2007-08 ACTUAL	2008-09 ESTIMATED	2009-10 BUDGETED
Parks Appropriations	476,665	496,533	1,484,010	725,300	1,266,043	1,181,925
Recreation Appropriations	374,502	413,811	492,902	504,967	582,147	566,237
TOTAL	\$851,167	\$910,344	\$1,976,912	\$1,230,267	\$1,848,190	\$1,748,162
Maintenance for Developed Parks	416,629	442,221	472,249	601,854	624,281	647,844

Note: Appropriations include personnel, materials and services, capital outlay, and grant programs. Parks maintenance is based on the appropriations for Parks, minus the capital outlay. There were no grant programs noted in these figures. The City allocates funds for natural area management in separate budgets.

Source: City of Arcata 09/10 Annual Budget; 07/08 Annual Budget.

Appropriations include personnel, materials and services, capital outlay, and grant programs. As shown in the table, Recreation funding increased steadily until FY09/10, when it dropped slightly (approximately 3%). While Parks funding has varied dramatically due to variations in capital outlay, maintenance funding has increased steadily since 2004.

Maintenance Cost per Acre

According to the FY09/10 Annual Budget, the City of Arcata has allocated approximately \$6,170 per developed park acre to maintain city parkland (not including natural areas). [The City's budget includes \$647,844 for 105 acres at 28 sites.] This amount is reasonable, but slightly lower than comparable park systems. Comparable park systems often allow between \$5,000 and \$9,000 per developed acre for maintenance, depending on their level of service and level of park development. It is more difficult to gauge how much the City is spending on the maintenance and management of natural areas. These funds are spread across several budgets, including Wastewater Treatment and Forest Management. Since natural/undeveloped acreage represents 97% of the park system, further investigation is needed to evaluate the adequacy of maintenance funding for natural areas.

Existing Sources of Revenue

As noted previously, the majority of parks and recreation funding comes from the City's General Fund or fees that feed into the General Fund. Specific sources of funding for recreation activities and parks activities are noted below. (See Appendix E for an overview of existing and potential funding sources.)

Table 12: Funding Sources for Recreation Activities (FY09/10)

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Operating	
General Fund	\$325,822
Recreation Program Fees	239,415
SUBTOTAL	\$565,237
Projects/Capital Outlay	
Planning/Development Fees	1,000
SUBTOTAL	1,000
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	\$566,237

Source: Arcata 09/10 Annual Budget

Table 13: Funding Sources for Parks Activities (FY09/10)

SOURCE	AMOUNT
Operating	
General Fund	\$536,144
Park Rentals	\$55,000
Parks Reimbursement	\$10,000
Industrial Park Fund*	\$15,000
Construction Tax Fund	\$0
Windsong Assessments	\$17,000
Janes Creek Assessment	\$17,700
SUBTOTAL	\$649,844
Projects/Capital Outlay	
General Fund	\$15,800
General Fund Carryover	\$22,000
Proposition 40 Grant Funds (Carryover)	\$248,000
Forest Fund	\$0
Construction Tax Fund	\$5,000
Community Center Trust Fund	\$3,000
Parkland in-Lieu (Ballpark)	\$0
Parkland in-Lieu (Valley West)	\$94,850
Parkland in-Lieu (Larson Park)	\$80,000
Parkland in-Lieu (Janes Creek Meadows)	\$13,269
HealthSport Note Fund	\$7,000
Capital Improvement Fund	\$0
Redevelopment (Larson Park)	\$25,000
USTA Grant (Larson Park)	\$17,162
SUBTOTAL	\$532,081
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	\$1,181,925

* FY 09/10 is the last year this fund is available.

Source: Arcata 09/10 Annual Budget

B. PARK SYSTEM COSTS

Variable economic circumstances are changing the way we think about park system costs. In the past, park improvement plans often considered the costs associated with new capital projects first, in conjunction with increased maintenance and operations costs as new projects were brought online. These plans were based on an assumption that current maintenance needs were met, and to some extent, maintenance funds were consistently increasing to keep pace with inflation and the growth of the park system.



Nowadays, more park systems are seeing inadequate maintenance funding and growing maintenance backlogs. Deferred maintenance deteriorates park assets. Facilities are aging, lifecycles are decreasing, and renovation needs are growing. Instead of being consistent, maintenance funds in some park systems are fluctuating with General Fund dollars, which are subject to cuts as the economy slows. Unless money is available for capital outlays, the park system is managed and maintained at this low level of service.

Although maintenance dollars for developed parks in Arcata have remained steady, capital reinvestment has been more sporadic and varies substantially depending on the availability of funding. A more systematic approach is needed to provide funding to replace aging facilities. Once sites are more fully developed or redeveloped, the City must adjust expectations for parks maintenance to protect these public investments.

Estimated Park System Costs

Arcata's park system is extraordinary in many ways, with countless opportunities to further enhance community livability, health and wellness, and economic vitality by capitalizing on its park and natural areas. However, the existing resources evaluation presented in Chapter 3 demonstrated that many existing parks are undeveloped with aging facilities. For this reason, this Plan recommends that City parks are developed and maintained at a new level of service.

To implement these recommendations, the Parks & Recreation Master Plan presents a park system costs model that portrays the true costs for park development, park reinvestment, and maintenance, so that sufficient funds are set aside to enhance the park system. The park system cost model, presented in Appendix C, calculates costs for each site based on the anticipated projects to be implemented. Based on average costs per acre for park acquisition, design, development (redevelopment), improvements, capital reinvestment and maintenance, the total cost to implement all projects recommended in this Plan is approximately \$77.8 million. The majority of funds are directed toward new park development to meet the needs of unserved areas or toward the redevelopment of existing parks (Table 14).

When this park system is realized, Arcata will need a strategy to maintain these parks at a higher level to protect its investments, plus set aside funds to replace or upgrade amenities and facilities at the end of their lifecycles. Once the park system is developed, the

estimated cost annually for maintenance and reinvestment is \$4.7 million—much higher than existing maintenance funds. Table 15 shows the breakdown of these estimated costs. Their strategies for implementation are briefly described below.

Table 14: Estimated Park System Costs (Capital)

PROJECT	EXISTING PARKS	PROPOSED PARKS	TOTAL
Acquisition	\$0	\$14,332,500	\$14,332,500
Design/Planning	\$365,000	\$575,000	\$940,000
Development	\$26,759,955	\$33,917,000	\$60,676,955
Improvement	\$1,625,000	\$0	\$1,625,000
Partnership Improvement	\$0	\$225,000	\$225,000
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	\$28,749,955	\$49,049,500	\$77,799,455

Note: Costs are presented in 2009 dollars, not accounting for inflation.

Table 15: Estimated Annual Maintenance and Reinvestment Costs for Proposed Park System

	EXISTING PARKS	PROPOSED PARKS	TOTAL
Maintenance*	\$2,084,508	\$754,200	\$2,838,708
Capital Reinvestment	\$984,093	\$899,933	\$1,884,026
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	\$3,068,601	\$1,654,133	\$4,722,734

Note: The maintenance cost presented here is based on a recommended level of service for each park in the proposed park system after improvements are completed.

Maintenance

The costs noted in Table 15 are based on average costs per acre for maintaining parkland and replacing park facilities. As shown in Appendix C (Table C-2), these costs vary by park type. Maintenance costs for high-use developed parks, such as community parks, will be higher than infrequently used parks, such as smaller neighborhood parks. Large natural areas require far less maintenance dollars per acre for typical care (although additional funds may be invested in restoration or rehabilitation projects).

In general, maintenance of developed parks can be carried out on three levels, representing three different service tiers:

- **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.

As noted in these definitions, sites should be assigned to maintenance tiers, based on factors such as park development level and frequency of use. However, the availability of maintenance funds will also play a role in assigning maintenance level of service.

Once parks are developed or redeveloped, maintenance funding should be adequate to preserve the City's investment in these assets. Estimated costs are based on assigned maintenance tiers that are noted in Appendix C for all existing and proposed parks. These costs can be adjusted and tiers reassigned once the City completes the recommended Maintenance Management Plan and Natural Resource/Open Space Management Plan.

Capital Reinvestment

Capital reinvestment involves replacing outdated or worn facilities as scheduled based on their age and use. Instead of investing these capital funds sporadically, whenever money is available, the City should set aside funds annually so that the City has money on hand to replace facilities when needed. This strategic replacement of amenities and facilities should be scheduled based on the anticipated lifecycle of various amenities and facilities. This reduces the need to remove unsafe facilities or sink funds inefficiently into facilities that are past their prime.

When developing the recommended Maintenance Management Plan, the City of Arcata should determine the anticipated lifecycle of facilities—based on local materials, weathering, and conditions. A customized reinvestment and replacement schedule should become part of the City's maintenance strategy.

For the Parks & Recreation Master Plan, costs are based on an average replacement cycle of 15 years. The actual lifecycle of facilities may be longer or shorter. For example, an approximate range of replacement figures are identified for several amenities below. To maintain this, regular, standard maintenance and repair must be scheduled each year.

Replace/Rehabilitate approximately every 5 years (3-7 years):

- Turf areas, active sports field turf

Replace approximately every 10 years (8-12 years):

- Drinking fountains
- Fencing and gates – chain link material
- Guardrails and handrails – aluminum
- Aluminum bleachers
- Ball field backstops
- Baseball and softball facility dug outs
- Flagpoles – aluminum
- Basketball court surface material
- Concrete picnic tables and benches
- Concrete trash cans with liners
- Turf areas, passive area turf
- Trail surface material – minimal slope conditions

Replace approximately every 15 years (12-18 years):

- Playground equipment
- Outdoor basketball / sports courts (resurface)
- Guardrails and handrails – galvanized steel
- Park site monument signage
- Concrete bollards

Replace approximately every 20 years (15-25 years):

- Picnic shelters (group and individual)
- Free standing walls and retaining walls
- Irrigation systems

C. PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

Chapter 5 included a table that noted all capital and non-capital projects recommended in this Plan (Table 9). Using customized prioritization criteria, projects were divided into three categories:

- **Priority I:** Priority I projects should be implemented first to address the most pressing needs for the park system. All funding resources should be pursued to implement these projects as soon as funding allows.
- **Priority II:** Priority II projects are important for increasing park services as the community grows. The rate of population growth and city development will determine the pace of implementation.
- **Priority III:** While important, Priority III projects are not likely to be funded in the timeframe for this Plan. These projects are consistent with the vision for this Plan

and community goals for the park system. They should be implemented if funding is available to support them.

These categories reflect an implementation strategy based on funding availability, more than a timeline for implementation. As economic circumstances change, so will the project timeline. Any project with a dedicated source of funding can be reprioritized for implementation.

Costs for Priority Projects

To understand the financial requirements for implementing priority projects, costs for all Priority I Projects were calculated using the assumptions outlined in the park system cost model Presented in Appendix D, these costs include park acquisition, design, development, improvements, capital reinvestment and maintenance—but for priority projects alone. The total estimated costs for Priority I capital projects total nearly \$42 million (Table 16).

Table 16: Estimated Costs for Priority Projects

PROJECT	ESTIMATED COSTS
Acquisition	8,910,000
Design/Planning	610,000
Development	31,592,450
Improvement	875,000
Partnership Improvement	0
TOTAL PARK SYSTEM	\$41,987,450

Note: Costs are presented in 2009 dollars, not accounting for inflation.

Funding Options

The capital and maintenance costs associated with Priority I projects is sizable. Implementing these projects would require multiple sources of funding, including a rebound in revenue associated with residential development and construction, along with a sizable General Obligation Bond or similar funding package. To identify funding options, Appendix E presents an overview of potential funding resources.

Given current economic circumstances, many residents are hesitant to support additional taxes (bond or levy). The City of Arcata must carefully consider the timing of any type of voter-approved funding package. This type of funding option is not recommended at this time.

In the short-term, this Plan recommends a more conservative approach. This strategy includes the following:

- **Follow through on existing plans for capital projects:** The City of Arcata has funding allocated or set aside for several capital projects. These include the acquisition of Carlson Park, the development of Larson Park, significant improvements at Valley West Park, final development of Janes Creek Meadow Park, irrigation system upgrades, hazard tree removal, and several smaller projects.

- **Evaluate funding options for Priority I Projects:** The entire package of priority project may take the City several years to implement, through the 2020 planning horizon and beyond. As funding availability changes, these projects should be continuously reviewed by City staff in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Committee. Projects with identified sources of funding can move forward in the short term.
- **Complete the ADA Transition Plan:** An ADA Transition Plan will give the City a more complete picture of required upgrades to meet federal accessibility standards. Implementing ADA upgrades has been noted as a priority for the City (Table 9). Key findings from this plan should be incorporated into the recommended projects list if not already noted.
- **Ensure maximum dollars from traditional funding sources:** Parkland in-lieu fees, impact fees, construction taxes, etc. should be evaluated to ensure that the City is receiving the maximum funds possible from these sources.
- **Continue to apply for grants:** The City should continue to take advantage of grants and federal funds, especially those for trail development available at this time.
- **Build on successful efforts:** The development of Janes Creek Meadows Park has created a well-designed focal point for the neighborhood, but also a highly popular site that is drawing people from surrounding areas. Successful projects like this will help strengthen the vision for the park system, by revealing the opportunities that exist for redeveloped neighborhood parks. The City should continue to support “model” efforts that will help build support for future park efforts.
- **Engage volunteers:** The City should fund a position for a volunteer coordinator and partnership facilitator. With additional coordination, Arcata may be able to increase the use of volunteers for park stewardship, maintenance, and programming. Additionally, volunteer patrols in parks can improve the park and trail safety, by discouraging or reporting nuisance behavior, identifying unsafe conditions, and patrolling trails on bike, horse, or foot to improve safety by creating a presence in City parks. Volunteers can also contribute toward park development, with individuals and business offering their labor and expertise on capital projects. These volunteers require more oversight to ensure projects are built to City standards.
- **Strengthen partnerships:** The City should continue collaborative partnerships to help meet community needs. For example, schools fill a variety of recreation needs, although their sport fields are not maintained to the same level of service as the City’s. The Parks Department may consider taking on this sport field maintenance to increase field use (taking the pressure off of overused City fields). Joint school/park development can be considered where the City will have difficulty acquiring land to meet nearby needs.
- **Develop trails:** Because of the level and frequency of trail use, trail development is one of the best and most cost-effective ways to increase the number of people in parks. Trails for recreation and non-motorized transportation can improve access to existing park sites, as well as promote health and wellness and improve quality of life.
- **Watch for signs of a rebounding economy:** Depending on changing economic circumstances and the City’s willingness to put forth a voter-approved funding package, a GO Bond may be considered in the long term to address a partial

package of priority projects. Bond packages that involve geographically dispersed projects, upgrades at popular parks, and a variety of new recreation opportunities (appealing to a wider audience) often are more likely to receive community support.

Strategic Decisions

The Arcata Parks & Recreation Master Plan is a roadmap to the future. It provides directions for achieving a well-balanced park system, where the provision of active recreation opportunities is balanced with the need to preserve natural resources. It promotes a park system based on a vision that resonates with citizens: Vibrant parks, well-maintained facilities, peaceful green spaces, and interconnected trails link the community together to strengthen the fabric of the City. Through a high level of public involvement, this Plan has captured and conveyed the community's vision, so that residents, City leaders, and staff feel empowered to make strategic decisions to improve the community through parks and recreation.

In these uncertain economic times, this Plan recommends proceeding with caution. It identifies a great need for park redevelopment, maintenance, and asset replacement to address deteriorating facilities and underdeveloped parks. However, it also recommends expanding park opportunities to meet changing community needs and expectations.

Arcata should progress steadily to implement these changes over time. As the economy rebounds, the City will have more flexibility to implement funding measures that can be supported by the community. In the meantime, the City can strengthen relationships—with volunteers, partners, park constituents, neighbors, and the community overall—to make the most of the opportunities afforded by their extensive and unique park and recreation system and continue to be ready to capitalize on finding or gifting opportunities as they arise.



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