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Parks and Recreation



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Introduction

The City provides high-quality facilities and services that help residents lead healthier, happier lives. Gilroy residents can walk, bike, hike, play, and learn in one of Gilroy’s many parks or recreation facilities. Gilroy has won several park design awards from the California Park and Recreation Society, including awards for Christmas Hill Park (home of the Garlic Festival), Las Animas Park, San Ysidro Park, and El Roble Park. In 2013 the City of Gilroy Recreation Department received an Award of Excellence from the California Park and Recreation Society for the Christopher High School Aquatic Center, which was a joint project between the City of Gilroy and the Gilroy Unified School District. The Parks and Recreation Element builds on this legacy of excellence and plans for the future of Gilroy’s park and recreation facility system and recreation and cultural program offerings.

Parks and Recreation Definition and Facility Classification System

The Land Use Element and the Land Use Diagram include the Parks and Recreation land use designation which identifies existing developed parklands. Sites for new parks that will be required to serve future development are not yet identified, pending further planning for the new development areas. Such future parks will be identified on the Land Use Diagram with the symbol , which represents a “floating” designation intended to indicate a general area within which a park site will likely be located.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides much greater detail regarding the city's existing and future parks and recreation system. The following is a description of the various park and recreation facilities, including park facilities; historic and cultural facilities; and visual and performing arts facilities.

MINI-PARK

Mini-parks can have a visual value by providing a green space in the urban landscape. If seating is included, mini-parks can also be a social gathering place, particularly in areas of high activity or population density.

Size: 1 acre or smaller

NEIGHBORHOOD PARK

Neighborhood parks are the basic unit of the park system and serve as the traditional urban recreational and social focus of the neighborhood. Neighborhood parks should serve as extensions of the residential fabric, allowing for recreational and social activities that cannot be accommodated in residential yards due to size or density limitations. They should be designed for both active and passive recreation activities tailored to the specific needs of the neighborhood, and should address the needs of all age groups and physical abilities. Park design should be special and unique and enhance neighborhood and community identity. Park features that create a community-wide "destination" should not be included in a neighborhood park. Restrooms, off-street parking, and lighted recreation facilities would generally not be considered for neighborhood parks because they encourage park use by those beyond the intended service area. However, such facilities may be considered if specific park program needs dictate.

Size: 1 to 10 acres

NEIGHBORHOOD/SCHOOL PARK

The neighborhood/school park is similar in size and function to a neighborhood park, but is located immediately adjacent to a school. Some of the recreational functions can be combined with the school site, such as hard courts, sports fields, and play areas, to maximize efficient use of resources. As part of the park master planning process, scheduling and use allocations need to be determined to minimize scheduling conflicts between school and neighborhood use of facilities and to coordinate operations issues such as maintenance.

Size: 2 to 10 acres

COMMUNITY PARK

Community parks focus on meeting the recreational needs of the community-at-large. They allow for group activities and other recreational pursuits that are not recommended at neighborhood parks. While community parks also often meet the needs of neighborhoods, frequently community parks are "destination" parks with special facilities,

such as lighted sports fields, amphitheaters, and gymnasiums that serve the entire community. Restrooms, off-street parking, night lighting of facilities, and other active recreation facilities are typical park elements that encourage higher levels of public use and longer user-days when compared to neighborhood parks. In addition, community parks may have unique landscape features that enhance community identity.

Size: 20 acre minimum

COMMUNITY/SCHOOL PARK

The community/school park is similar in size and function to a community park but is located immediately adjacent to a school. Some of the recreational functions can be combined with the school site, such as hard courts, sports fields, play areas, and off-street parking, to maximize efficient use of resources. Restrooms, off-street parking, night lighting, and other active recreation facilities can also be found at community/school parks. As part of the park master planning process, scheduling and use allocations need to be determined to minimize scheduling conflicts between school and community use of facilities and to coordinate operations issues such as maintenance.

Size: 20 acre minimum

PARK PRESERVE

The primary purpose of the park preserve is to protect unique natural resources while providing for compatible, limited public recreation use. Passive recreational uses (e.g., hiking, nature appreciation, and picnicking) that are not in conflict with resource protection are encouraged. Natural resource open space areas that do not allow for compatible public recreation use would not qualify as a park preserve and would not be included in the park land classification system.

Size: No minimum or maximum size

TRAILS/LINEAR PARKWAYS

Trails and linear parkways offer opportunities for recreation while connecting various areas of the City, as well as parks and park preserves. Trails serve as part of a regional trail network and connect to the City's on-street bicycle route system for recreational use as well as providing a means of alternative transportation. Walking trails within a park or park preserve are not a trail/linear parkway, except that major connecting trails in parks, and park preserves would include trail route identification and would be included in total City trail mile calculations.

Size: No minimum or maximum length

SPORTS PARK

Sports Parks focus on active recreational facilities, especially for organized sports. Consolidation of multiple sports fields at one location allows for efficiencies of



maintenance and scheduling. With a focus on active sports, sports parks do not have all of the amenities of community parks.

Size: 20 acre minimum

SPECIAL USE FACILITY

Special use facilities meet citywide recreational needs and are not necessarily located in parks. Special use facilities generally meet a specific recreation or cultural function and do not fall into one of the other classification categories. Multipurpose uses should be encouraged, provided that additional uses do not conflict with the intended special use. Existing special use facilities in the City include the Ascension Solorsano School Gymnasium, the Gilroy Golf course, Gilroy Historic Museum, Senior Center, Wheeler Community Center, Willey Cultural Center, Gilroy Community Youth Center, Aquatics Center at Christopher High School, and the Ranch Site Environmental Center.

Size: Depends on facility

Park Development and Maintenance

A wide variety of parks serve Gilroy residents. The Gilroy parks system includes four community parks (Christmas Hill Park/CHP Ranch Site Area, Las Animas Park, and Hecker Pass Park), eight neighborhood parks (Sunrise Park, Carriage Hills, Farrell Avenue, Miller, Village Green, Los Arroyos, Cydney Casper and San Ysidro), four neighborhood/school parks (El Roble Park, Carriage Hills, Rainbow, and Del Rey), three mini parks (Butcher Park, Forest Street, and Renz), two sports parks (Gilroy Sports Park and Gavilan Sports Park), miles of trails, and many other recreational and special use facilities. Policies in this section provide for the maintenance and development of parkland and park facilities.

Goal PR 1

Provide a comprehensive and coordinated system of convenient, attractive, and high-quality parks to meet the current and future recreation needs of Gilroy residents.

PR 1.1 Complete System

Develop and maintain a complete system of parks that provide opportunities for both passive and active recreation. **MPSP** **SO**

PR 1.2 Healthy Community

Encourage Gilroy residents to be healthier and more active by providing park and recreation facilities to meet the needs of all residents. **MPSP** **SO**

PR 1.3 Parks and Recreation System Master Plan

Maintain and implement the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan to guide the planning, design and implementation of a citywide system of parks and recreation facilities and programs, including cultural and other special use facilities. **MPSP**

PR 1.4 Park Land Standard

Maintain the City's established standard of five acres of developed park land per thousand population.

- a) This standard includes neighborhood/school parks, community and community/school parks, sports parks, trails/linear parkways, and special use facilities (see *Park and Recreation Definition and Facility Classification System* above).
- b) Park preserves and limited active recreation use areas are valued at five percent of their total acreage toward meeting this standard.
- c) Golf courses, non-accessible open spaces, and private recreational facilities are not included in this standard. School lands are not included unless there is a long-term lease agreement for their use as City recreational facilities.

SO RDR

PR 1.5 Facilities and Services Timing

Ensure that the development of parks, trails, and community and recreation facilities and services keeps pace with development and growth within the city.

MPSP SO

PR 1.6 Open Space Areas

Open space areas in new development with natural or wildlife value, not including parks and recreation facilities, should be owned and maintained by a homeowner's association or other private or non-profit entity. Such areas shall not be dedicated for inclusion in the city parks and recreation system, due to public safety, access and maintenance costs. **SO MPSP**

PR 1.7 Residential Development Project Review

Review all new residential development projects for consistency with the Parks Master Plan. **RDR**

PR 1.8 Park Land Dedication

Require developers of new residential subdivisions to dedicate land for development of parks and recreation facilities, which may include cultural facilities, to serve the subdivision, neighborhood, and community. At the City's

discretion, the developer may pay fees in lieu of dedication to assist in land acquisition and facility development in other locations. **SO** **RDR**

PR 1.9 Public Parkland Preservation

Require that any public parkland converted to non-recreational uses is replaced in-kind to serve the same neighborhood, consistent with California's *Public Park Preservation Act of 1971*. **RDR** **MPSP**

PR 1.10 Facility Distribution

Strive to establish new parks and recreation facilities throughout the community so that a park or park facility is within walking distance of all residents. **RDR** **SO**

PR 1.11 Parks as Buffers

Consider the use of parks or recreational corridors as buffers between incompatible land uses **SO**

PR 1.12 Physical Access

Ensure that all facilities and parks comply with State and Federal accessibility codes and standards, such as those established by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and California Building Standards Code. **SO**

PR 1.13 Gated Residential Developments

Public parks and recreation facilities shall only be located within privately gated residential developments if public access and use of the facilities is unrestricted. **SO** **RDR**

PR 1.14 Recreation Facilities in New Development

Encourage the provision of public and private recreation facilities in residential developments, especially publicly accessible, privately maintained facilities. Consider public accessibility and the establishment of sustainable funding for maintenance costs before accepting public recreation facility dedications. **SO**
RDR

PR 1.15 Alternative Financing Methods

Consider additional financing methods to support implementation of parks and recreation facility improvements and ongoing maintenance, including grants, joint use agreements, private donations, corporate sponsorships, endowments, in-kind services, user fees, bonding, and establishment of special districts. **FB**

PR 1.16 Development of Public Parks

Planning for the development of public park lands in proximity to residential development should take into consideration the need for preservation of the privacy, security, and maintenance of the adjacent residential property. Whenever practicable, a roadway or other means to provide a separation between parks and adjacent residential properties shall be employed. **MPSP**

PR 1.17 Public Street Frontage

Provide maximum practicable public street frontage for public parks, trails, and recreation and cultural facilities. Land use adjacencies that compliment public use and sustainability, and incorporate design for public safety, should be encouraged. **RDR**

PR 1.18 Community Gardens on Public Lands

Explore opportunities to create community gardens on surplus public lands where adequate separation from adjacent residential properties can be established, and for which sustainable funding mechanisms are established to pay for maintenance and the cost of services (e.g., water). **PSR**

PR 1.19 Public Connections

Encourage new developments to include visible, public connections to parks, trails, and recreation facilities when such public access would improve the connections for current and future users. **RDR**

PR 1.20 Interconnect Public Parks

Strive to connect parks to one another and to the communities they serve through a series of interconnected trails and bike lanes. **MPSP**

PR 1.21 Private Agreements with City

Encourage developers and property owners to enter into formal agreements with the City to maintain trails adjacent to their properties. **JP**

PR 1.22 Parks and Recreation Facility Design

Ensure that the design of parks and recreation facilities are consistent with best practices and standards for facility design. **RDR**

PR 1.23 Alternative Financing Methods

Consider additional financing methods to support implementation of public art and funding for ongoing maintenance, including grants, joint use agreements, private donations, corporate sponsorships, endowments, in-kind services, user fees, bonding, establishment of special districts, and fees on new development.

FB

Recreational and Cultural Programs

The City of Gilroy provides an extensive menu of recreational and cultural programs. Gilroy residents can participate in sports, dance, music, art, computer, games, education, swimming, and fitness programs. Many of these programs are offered in one of Gilroy's recreation facilities, including the San Ysidro Youth Center, Museum, Cultural Center, Senior Center, and Wheeler Community Center. The recreational and cultural programs improve the health and overall well-being of Gilroy residents. Policies in this section provide for the maintenance and expansion of Gilroy's recreational and cultural programs.

Goal PR 2

Support recreational and cultural programs that promote wellness, fun, lifelong learning, skill development, personal enrichment, and positive relationships.

PR 2.1 Recreational Needs

Provide recreation facilities and programs that are responsive and accessible to the diverse cultures and age groups that comprise the Gilroy community. **SO**

PR 2.2 Financial Access

Provide partial subsidies of some recreation programs depending on the user group and facility type. User fees should be charged for use of some facilities and participation in many recreation programs, but fee rates shall be affordable so that most residents are not excluded for financial reasons. **SO**

PR 2.3 Youth Recreation Scholarships

Support fundraising efforts for the Youth Recreation Scholarship program to provide financial support for qualifying families who want to participate in public recreation programs but are unable to due to economic constraints. **SO**

PR 2.4 Youth Partnerships

Encourage partnerships with community groups that can assist with outreach to youth populations, including the South County Youth Task Force, non-profit organizations, faith-based organizations, and public safety agencies. These

partnerships can provide much needed community resources and non-traditional recreational programs to at-risk and disengaged youth. **SO**

PR 2.5 Senior Services

Continue to provide services for Gilroy’s senior population and support the Senior Center. **SO**

PR 2.6 Activity Guide

Encourage Gilroy residents to participate in recreational and cultural programs by publishing a listing of all recreational programs, activities, and special event offerings. **PI**

PR 2.7 Public Awareness of the Arts

Encourage Gilroy residents to participate in cultural activities and events through a variety of media outlets. **PI**

PR 2.8 Public Art

Encourage public and private efforts to install public art in public facilities, parks, and other public areas while considering long-term maintenance costs to the taxpayer. **JP**

Community Support and Partnerships

The City of Gilroy is responsible for parks and recreation in Gilroy, but it relies on partnerships with non-profit organizations, the private sector, and the Gilroy Unified School District to meet the recreational and cultural needs of its residents. Policies in this section provide for the continuation and enhancement of existing community partnerships while developing new partnerships to strengthen Gilroy’s parks and recreation offerings.

Goal PR 3

Coordinate with local and regional organizations and agencies to provide the highest quality parks and recreation facilities and programs to Gilroy residents.

PR 3.1 Partnerships with Nonprofit Organizations

Coordinate with non-profit organizations that can assist in:

- a) Providing recreation programs;
- b) Reaching populations that could benefit from but do not regularly participate in recreation programs;
- c) Fundraising for facilities and program development; and
- d) Operating special use facilities. **SO JP**

PR 3.2 Private Sector Services and Partnerships

Develop public/private partnerships where such collaborations are beneficial to the community. Examples of potential partnerships include:

- a) Concessions and leases of public facilities to private organizations;
- b) Leasing of private facilities for the operation of City programs;
- c) Private donations and sponsorship of public facilities and programs; and
- d) Contract maintenance services. **SO** **JP**

PR 3.3 Partnerships with Local and Regional Public Agencies

Identify opportunities to expand partnerships with local and regional public agencies that can assist in providing recreational facilities and programs, including Santa Clara County Parks, California State Parks, Valley Water, Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, Bay Area Ridge Trail Council, City of Morgan Hill, Gilroy Unified School District, Gavilan College, and the Gilroy Police Department. **SO** **IGC**

PR 3.4 Joint Use Facilities

Continue to coordinate with the Gilroy Unified School District to establish areas of agreement for shared use, maintenance, and development of facilities for community recreation use at existing and future school sites. **IGC**

Implementation Programs

Table 7-1: Parks and Recreation Implementation Programs	2021-2023	2024-2028	2029-2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p>1. Parks and Recreation System Master Plan Review and update the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan every ten years to reflect current conditions and community needs. Use the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan to guide the maintenance and addition of parks and recreation facilities and services. The Master Plan review shall:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Evaluate progress in implementing recommended projects; b) Verify accuracy of population and land use projections; c) Adjust capital projects funding based on identified additional funding sources and unforeseen opportunities; and d) Review user needs at all parks and facilities and provide appropriate responses through specific facility or park master plan revisions. Review and adjust operations and maintenance budgets including cost recovery goals. e) Identify private property that abuts existing and planned trails and consider creative methods in which the City may enter into formal trail maintenance agreements with property owners. <p>Implements Policy: PR 1.3 Responsible Department: Recreation Department</p>		X	X		

Table 7-1: Parks and Recreation Implementation Programs	2021-2023	2024-2028	2029-2040	Annual	Ongoing
<p>2. Recreation Activity Guide Maintain and implement an activity guide for recreation programs, leagues, and special events at a minimum of two times per year.</p> <p>Implements Policy: PR 2.5</p> <p>Responsible Department: Recreation Department</p>					X