



Parks, Recreation, and Open Space
Information for Task Force Discussion on August 24, 2009

Task Force Parks Discussion Questions:

1. How do we successfully provide 3.5 acres per 1,000 population to meet the parks and open space needs of existing and future residents?
2. What types of facilities should be counted towards meeting the Parks Service Goal and to what degree should these facilities be counted towards meeting the goal (i.e. school playgrounds and private, but publicly accessible, recreation facilities)?
3. Given the scarcity of vacant land and large development sites, how should we meet the Parks, Recreation and Open Space needs of residents living in and adjacent to the Villages?
4. Should future Parks investments in underserved areas be focused on enhancing/expanding existing facilities rather than on building new ones?

Staff Recommended Policy Direction on Key Parks Issues and Above Questions

1. Parks and open spaces of various types contribute to San Jose's unique identity
 - The Guadalupe River Park should be developed as San Jose's vibrant, grand central park.
 - San Jose should create an interconnected system of neighborhood parks, regional parks, community gardens, dog parks, trails, etc.
2. All residents should have access to a "Balanced Park System"
 - A balanced park system provides all residents access to parks, open space, community centers, dog parks, skate parks, aquatics facilities, sports fields, community gardens and other amenities.
 - Equitable access to these amenities provides for a high quality of life for all residents.
 - San Jose should retain a citywide goal of 3.5 acres per 1,000 population, recognizing that there will be variation in the character of the open space and park amenities across the City. In proposed Villages and Corridors which have limited vacant land and/or large development sites open space and park amenities may need to be provided through smaller gathering spaces, tot lots, and/or amenities provided through public/private partnerships, instead of traditional neighborhood parks. Access to sports fields and regional-serving facilities should be provided through the trail and bicycle network.
 - San Jose should continue to count school playground lands towards meeting a portion (up to 2.5 acres) of the citywide goal of 3.5 acres of neighborhood and community serving park space per 1,000 population. Currently, the City of San Jose has 1.6 acres/1,000 population of neighborhood/community parkland and 1.4 acres/1,000 population of accessible school grounds

for a combined total of 3.0 acres/1,000 population.

- Incorporate, into the Green Print and Envision San Jose 2040, the Urban Accords goal of providing park/open space/school sites within 1/3 mile of all residents. Through an analysis of San Jose's Planning Areas contained in the draft "Greenprint 2009 Update," there are currently 51 residential areas in the City that do not have access to a park, school or open space within 1/3 mile. These areas have the highest need for either new parks, or better connectivity (through trails and/or the bikeway network) to existing parks.
 - The draft "Greenprint 2009 Update" states the following: "When opportunities arise to place new or expanded facilities in the future, the City should always look for opportunities to serve these residents. However, before looking to place a new park in these neighborhoods, the City should first make every attempt to expand existing facilities which may be outside the 1/3 mile radius but would serve these residents nonetheless. By expanding existing and using the trail, street or bikeway system to connect residents to these facilities the City can provide a wider range of recreation opportunities to a greater population while minimizing operation and maintenance costs. If there are no opportunities to serve these residents by expansion (or connection to) existing facilities outside of the 1/3 mile radius then the City should consider placing a new facility within these areas if the number of households warrants a park."
3. Areas planned for new residential development (such as North San Jose and certain villages) should have as much park acreage as possible
- In the past, certain areas of the City have been developed without consideration for adequate park space and they have been park deficient from day one. Future Villages and Corridors will include higher density housing that typically incorporates less private open space, increasing the importance of providing high quality public open space.
 - The North San Jose Area Development Policy is a good recent example because the Policy requires that neighborhood and community parkland be provided concurrent with residential development, providing for a balanced park system. While the goal of 3.5 acres of neighborhood/community parkland in North San Jose may not be attained, the North San Jose Taskforce was very clear that this standard should be kept as a long term goal.
4. Largely built out areas, such as Downtown, should have access to a large park system, even if the residents will need to walk or ride bicycles to get to the larger parks (i.e., Guadalupe River Park)
- To meet neighborhood-serving needs for the Downtown, the City should partner with the private sector to provide for playgrounds and other neighborhood amenities that don't require large sites within the core areas.
 - To meet the needs for sports fields, festival areas, and trails, connections between residential areas and these destinations should be strengthened. For example, the trail and bicycle network should be completed as planned to provide access for residents and other users.
 - The City should pursue the addition of multiple amenities in existing spaces within built out portions of San Jose to ensure that the needs of residents are being met. A recent example is the new community center and skatepark at Roosevelt Park.
5. Work toward the Green Vision goal of providing 100 miles of trails within San Jose (by 2022) and provide additional trail miles by 2040.

Additional Background Information

What is the goal of 3.5 acres/1,000 population?

- The existing San Jose 2020 General Plan contains the following goal: *For parks and recreation: 3.5 acres of neighborhood and community serving recreational lands per 1,000 population, of which a minimum is 1.5 acres of neighborhood, community or locally serving regional/City-wide park lands and up to 2 acres of school playgrounds, and all of which is located within a reasonable walking distance of the project; 7.5 acres of regional/City-wide park lands per 1,000 population; and 500 square feet of community center floor areas per 1,000 population.*

What is the Quimby Act?

- The Quimby Act can be reviewed at <http://www.sjparks.org/pdopio/quimby.asp>.

What are the City's Parkland Dedication Ordinance, Park Impact Ordinance, and Park In-Lieu Fees?

- The Parkland Dedication Ordinance is Section 19.38 of the San José Municipal Code. The Park Impact Ordinance is Section 14.25 of the San José Municipal Code. You can reference these sections of the Municipal Code from the "Municipal Code" link on the right-hand side of the City's main web page at www.sanjoseca.gov.
- In addition to the information in the Parkland Dedication and Park Impact Ordinances, additional information on the Park In-Lieu Fees is available at <http://www.sjparks.org/pdopio/>.

What are the Urban Environmental Accords?

- In 2005, the City of San Jose signed on to the Urban Environmental Accords, a declaration of participating city governments to build ecologically sustainable, economically dynamic, and socially equitable futures for their urban citizens. The Accords include a goal to provide "...an accessible park or recreational open space within a half-a-kilometer (approximately 1/3 of a mile) of every resident by 2015." Additional information is available at: <http://www.sanjoseca.gov/esd/urban-accords.asp>.