



## Parks and Recreation Commission 2025 Draft Workplan

**Staff Liaison:** Sarah Robustelli, Division Manager

**Lead Department:** Community Services

### About the Commission

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Commission is to advise the City Council on matters pertaining to the activities of the Open Space & Parks, Golf, and Recreation divisions of the Community Services Department, excluding daily administrative operations.

Timeframe covered by Work Plan is calendar 2025. The Commission is composed of seven members. See Palo Alto Municipal Code (PAMC) 2.25 Sections 2.25.010, 2.25.030, 2.25.040, 2.25.050, and 2.25.060. Residency is required. Further requirements are that members shall not be Council Members, officers, or employees of the City of Palo Alto. Each member of the Commission shall have a demonstrated interest in parks, open space, and recreation matters.

For more information about the Parks and Recreation Commission please visit our [webpage](#).

### Current Commissioners

- Nellis Freeman (Chair)
- Jeff Greenfield (Vice Chair)
- Amanda Brown
- Anne Warner Cribbs
- Yudy Deng
- Shani Kleinhaus
- Bing Wei

### Mission Statement

The purpose of the Parks and Recreation Commission is to advise the City Council on policy matters pertaining to the activities of the Open Space, Parks and Golf Division, and the Recreation Division of the Community Services Department.

**Prior Year  
Accomplishments**

**Master Plan**

- The ad hoc met with staff on December 3, 2024 to review the FY 2025 - 2029 CSD Capital Plan for Parks, Open Space, and Golf projects.
- The ad hoc recommended updates to the CIP project list and provided input.
- The PRC reviewed and provided feedback on the CIP plan on December 18, 2024. Based on direction, the CIP plan was brought back for review and discussion again on January 28, 2025.

**Park Dedication FY25**

- Worked with staff reviewing a prioritized list of 7 potential locations for parkland dedication suitability.
- (Will) present and discuss 2 sites to (potentially) recommend for partial parkland dedication.
- Updates for Tower Well Site, dedicated as parkland in March 2024:
  - As directed by City Council, reviewed and then supported recommended name change of Tower Well Park to Frederick Eyerly Park in May 2024.
  - Ribbon-cutting ceremony in April/May 2025.

**Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan (BCCP) Update**

- Working to revive the BCCP effort that began in October 2017 and stalled on several occasions
- Met on multiple occasions with staff to determine a path forward including an estimated timeline
- Review of multiple chapters in progress, including:
  - Work to update the draft to reflect current conditions
  - Work to define scope of modifications to the existing draft plan along with recommendations for future amendments and/or plans
  - Work to highlight environmental stewardship and sustainability
  - Considerations of workflow and best practices for managing facilities and human impact

**Nature Preserve Access Policy**

- Met on multiple occasions with staff, including supervising rangers, to review current policy and visit open space preserves (OSPs). This included evaluating the current Access Policy implementation and acceptance, and potential trail access changes at the Baylands and Pearson-Arastradero Preserves:
- Baylands Nature Preserve: analysis and recommendations to be shared with the PRC in April 2025.
- Pearson Arastradero Preserve: analysis and recommendations to be shared with the PRC in April 2025.
- Recommendations shared with PABAC for feedback in April 2025, prior to discussion at PRC.
- Collaborated with staff to identify areas in need of increased signage.
- Worked with staff to pinpoint locations that would benefit from the installation of additional bicycle racks.

**Recreation Wellness Center**

- Collaborated with City staff on stakeholder and community outreach initiatives.
- Held weekly ad hoc meetings (with occasional staff participation) to conduct outreach and research on the Recreation Wellness Center's needs, potential locations, facilities, programs, and activities.
- Raised public awareness about the need for a city-operated Recreation Wellness Center.
- Partnered with the City of Palo Alto and the Friends of the Recreation Wellness Center to draft and sign a Letter of Intent (LOI) on December 3, 2024, outlining the relationship between the City and the Friends group.
- Provided regular status updates to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) during monthly meetings.

- Co-hosted a community meeting with City staff in January 2025 to discuss the proposed center and explore potential locations.
- Continued collaboration with the Friends of Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center Board of Directors, providing updates to the PRC based on relevant input received.

### **Bicycle / E-Bike Policy and Access**

- Implementation of Council Direction from 2/27/2023 for all bikes in the Baylands and Arastradero Preserve to consider and recommend policy to address:
  - Reduction of speed limit.
  - Whether and where to restrict bicycle and horse access.
  - Adding bike racks at trailheads in open space, where lacking.
- PRC ad hoc met throughout the year, working with staff to review policy and regulations regarding the use of e-bikes and electric conveyances in parks and open space areas. This included Palo Alto, neighboring cities, and regional, state, and national jurisdictions. We also met with park users to solicit feedback.
- Discussed policy considerations, including parks vs. open spaces, types of e-bikes, and state policy implications with CSD, Transportation and Safe Routes staff, and PABAC, including their E-Bike subcommittee.
- PRC ad hoc discussed balancing competing interests and priorities, including wildlife and ecosystem protection, recreation, bicycle transportation corridors, public access, equity, safety, enforceability, ADA requirements, and clarity and communication of rules on October 25, 2022.
- After considerable public comment and discussion, PRC unanimously recommended e-bike and electric conveyances policy and regulations for parks and open space on November 22, 2022.

### **Playing Fields and Raquet Sports**

- Policy and Best Practices Review:
  - Supporting staff by reviewing the best regional practices and making general policy cleanup recommendations.
  - Completed an initial review of the field use policy, identifying areas for further stakeholder engagement and review.
- Field and Turf Initiatives:
  - Recommending a synthetic turf replacement strategy for upcoming work at El Camino Park and the Stanford/Mayfield Soccer Complex.
  - Planning a community meeting to update field users on tournament clean-up responsibilities, goal storage, and stakeholder communications.
- Tennis Court Management:
  - Reviewed CPA reservation policies and proposed reserving a specific percentage of court usage for Palo Alto residents.
  - Organized community outreach with a tennis meeting scheduled for April 8, 2025, and explored ways to extend the use of existing courts (e.g., lights, additional porta potties).
  - Gathered and reviewed best practices for court reservation systems from neighboring cities to support local access.
- Pickleball Initiatives:
  - Supported and implemented pickleball lines at Fletcher School/Terman Park to increase access for students.

- Met with Pickleball Club leadership to discuss expanding access, including the possibility of multi-use courts at Mitchell Park.
- Coordination Efforts:
  - Coordinating with staff on the timeline for the racquet sports joint task force.

### Middle School Athletics

- Ad Hoc met January 29 to create a workplan.
- Reviewed of history of MSA, reviewed research and background gathered by staff.
  - Options included
    - ♣ 1) city remains the provider, with financial support to offset costs
    - ♣ 2) MSA contracts with outside organizations to operate the program or contracts out individual sports to specific non-profits.
- Staff's goal was to reach agreement/decision by school start August 15, 2025
- Staff researched information regarding possible vendors
- Staff working with purchasing about required process for MSA third party vendors.
- Ad Hoc scheduled a meeting March 28 with Mr. Tom Haxton and colleagues to listen to his vision for MSA
- Ad hoc and staff to continue to collect information on options including a timeline for presentation to Commission and report to City Council

<b>PROJECT/GOAL 1:</b>	CIP Review  Review the Capital Improvement Program (CIP) planning and prioritization process to ensure consistency with the Parks, Trails, Natural Open Space, and Recreation Master Plan. Collaborate with staff to evaluate current project alignment, enhance transparency in project selection, and implement best practices for long-term capital planning and inter-departmental coordination.			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Optimize implementation of the Parks Master Plan  Better Resource Allocation  Increased Public Trust	FY 25 Q2	Moderate staff time	Alignment with Master Plan Goals  Stakeholder Engagement/Transparency	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Policy 2.G, 6.A)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Review CIP and to ensure alignment with the Master Plan		Establish annual and periodic review best practices		Yes: Parks Master Plan (Chapter 5: Progress Reporting)

<b>PROJECT/GOAL 2:</b>	Park Dedication FY26 Pursue and evaluate top priority potential sites and identify potential new sites to recommend dedicating as parkland within our community			
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Increase dedicated parkland to provide recreational opportunities, promote the health and well-being of the community, and support biodiversity  Advance goals of 4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents, and within 1/2 mile of homes	FY 25 Q1- FY 26 Q2	Moderate staff time (CSD, CAO, Planning, PWE, Real Estate)	Recommendation of one or more sites for dedication as parkland	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Goals and Policies 1.B, 1.C, 4.D, 5.C) and Comprehensive Plan (Policy L-8.1)
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Work with staff to assess the suitability of Rinconada Gardens, San Antonio Avenue at Ponce Drive, Los Altos Treatment Plant Site (wetland area), and Baylands Measure E Site (landfill slope portion) for parkland dedication.		Pursue dedication of Greer Park sewer easement associated with the 2850 W. Bayshore Road development project  Review previously identified locations and consider new potential sites for park dedication		Yes
<b>PROJECT/GOAL 3:</b>	Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan (BCCP) Update			
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Work towards releasing the Baylands Comprehensive Conservation Plan which was previously developed but not completed  Establish updated standards, guidelines, and processes for environmental stewardship and infrastructure development and maintenance in the Palo Alto Baylands Nature Preserve	FY 25 Q1 - FY26 Q2	Moderate to high staff time	Generate an update on the current status of the BCCP, including estimated timeline for completion and recommended next steps	Yes (Parks Master Plan Program 4.A.1)
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Review May 2022 draft BCCP and work with staff to assess the status of document sections: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Up to date, complete</li><li>• Up to date, further updates required</li><li>• Outdated, update required</li><li>• Outdated, appropriate to omit</li><li>• Identify gaps that should be addressed</li></ul>		Move forward with BCCP updates as possible and appropriate  Work with staff to review the status of CEQA and other required environmental reviews  Work with staff to recommend a path forward for completing and releasing the BCCP, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Identify work that can be completed with current resources during FY25</li><li>• Identify any additional required resources and an estimated timeline</li></ul>		Yes

		for completion <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Identify work, which is out of scope for the BCCP, to be considered at a later date.</li></ul>		
PROJECT/GOAL 4:		Nature Preserve Access Policy  Access Policy Recommendation for Pearson-Arastradero and Baylands Nature Preserves - work with staff and stakeholders to review all access, including bicycles, e-bikes and other electric conveyances, equestrians, and pedestrians		
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Balance recreational access with stewardship of natural resources in the Baylands and Arastradero Nature Preserves  Considerations include habitat and wildlife protection, trail safety, community interests, and staff and infrastructure resources	FY 25 Q1 - FY 26 Q1	Moderate Staff Time	Forward updated access recommendations for Pearson-Arastradero and Baylands Nature Preserves to staff and/or City Council as appropriate.	Yes (Parks Master Plan Policy 6.D; Program 2.A.7)
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Follow up on FY24 Bicycle and Equestrian Ad Hoc recommendations re: unauthorized trail usage and stewardship of natural resources along trails.  Review Adobe Creek Loop Trail and Byxbee Park trail access.  Provide input to staff regarding an appropriate response to the 02/27/2023 City Council referral.  Follow up / review access and activity at Pearson-Arastradero Bowl Loop Trail area and Baylands Adobe Creek Loop Trail Bowl. <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Work with staff to implement a recommended trail closure in the bowl loop area at Pearson-Arastradero Nature Preserve</li><li>Work with staff to evaluate partial closure of the upper bowl at Pearson-Arastradero Nature Preserve</li></ul>		General trail network access review		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL 5:		Recreation Wellness Center  Work with staff to facilitate progress on the Palo Alto Recreation Wellness Center.		
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED

Recreation and Park facilities for the health and welfare of current and future generations	FY 25	CSD staff time, Public Works staff time	The City Council has directed staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission to assess public need, investigate the planning and construction of a new public gymnasium consistent with the Parks Master Plan, considering factors such as location, features, costs, funding, and demand, and to investigate fundraising	Council Approved (Parks Master Plan Goal 1; Policy 4.A)
Community engagement				Identified priority major project
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Community engagement with stakeholders and others, including existing facilities		Define relationship between Ad Hoc/PRC, Friends group, and the City of Palo Alto		Yes
Discussion of site alternatives – Greer Park, Cubberley, 10.5 acres, and others				
Confirmed location of site with Council Approval of site				
Commission support of LOI with Friends and City of Palo Alto				
Regular updates for PRC to ensure other Commissioners, City staff and stakeholders are kept abreast of updates				
PROJECT/GOAL 6:	Playing Fields			
	Review the playing fields synthetic turf replacement process and strategy with staff, and recommend updates, with a long-term focus			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Efficient and successful replacement of end-of-life synthetic turf fields	FY 25 Q1 - FY 26 Q2	Moderate staff time	Successful replacement of end-of life synthetic turf field.	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Programs 2.A.3; 2.C.3)
Optimized access to City playing fields			Turf study to be forwarded to city council for evaluation	
Proactive field management			Engage with stakeholders for feedback	
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Work with staff to review and recommend optimum synthetic turf replacement strategy, including materials, process, and definite timeline for Mayfield.		Meet with stakeholders periodically for feedback		Yes
Collaborate on the ongoing Turf Study by providing historical context and relevant past research and engaging with stakeholders to gather input.				
Work with staff to recommend an optimum synthetic turf replacement strategy for El Camino Park, based on the Turf Study findings.				

<b>PROJECT/GOAL 7:</b>		Racquet Courts Policy Update		
		Review and recommend updates to Racquet Sports policies, including tennis and pickleball		
<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
Proactive Pickleball and Tennis court management  Work with staff to develop fair and equity tennis court reservation system that promotes wellness for residents.  Understand current utilization, demand patterns, and user feedback for Pickleball and tennis courts.	FY 25 – FY 26 Q1	Moderate staff time	Court reservation policy update recommendation to city council	Yes: Parks Master Plan (Programs 1.F.1; 2.A.3; 2.C.3)
<b>HIGH PRIORITY</b>		<b>LOWER PRIORITY</b>		<b>COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE</b>
Meet with stakeholders periodically/monthly if necessary for feedback  Work with staff to review current USTA resident requirements as it relates to reserving court space in Palo Alto for non-residents  Investigate the feasibility of expanding Pickleball courts  Completion of a 30-day utilization report with hourly breakdowns (tennis and pickleball)  Survey response rate of at least 60% from current users Identification of at least 3 top pain points (e.g., peak congestion, reservation hoarding, low off-peak use)  Work with staff to convene and support the joint taskforce for racquet sports		Meet with stakeholders for feedback and review court reservation systems and use policy and recommend an update as appropriate		Yes

	<b>PROJECT/GOAL 8:</b>	Middle School Athletics			
	<b>BENEFICIAL IMPACTS</b>	<b>TIMELINE</b>	<b>RESOURCES NEEDED</b>	<b>MEASURE OF SUCCESS</b>	<b>STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED</b>
	Look into the Middle School Athletics Program and investigate alternative operational models and determine if alternative models would create better programming for the community.	FY 25 Q1 – FY 26 Q2	Moderate staff time	Forward recommendations to City Council for discussion.	Council Directed



HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
Gather information regarding contracting MSA program out to a different provider. Investigate non-profit funding sources to help offset registration fee		Looking at hiring methods to increase available coaches		Yes
PROJECT/GOAL 9:	Cubberley Project Work with staff to facilitate progress on the Palo Alto Cubberley Project			
BENEFICIAL IMPACTS	TIMELINE	RESOURCES NEEDED	MEASURE OF SUCCESS	STATE MANDATED / LOCAL LAW / COUNCIL-APPROVED
Recreation and Park facilities for the health and welfare of current and future generations  Community engagement	FY 25 Q4 - FY 26 Q2	High level of staff time CSD, ASD, CMO	Clear PRC input on space use and site activation policies.  Effective collaboration with staff on community engagement.  Increased community awareness and involvement.  Strong foundation for a successful 2026 ballot measure.  Master Plan recommendation forwarded to City Council for approval	Council Approved (Parks Master Plan Goal 1; Policy 4.A)  Identified priority major project
HIGH PRIORITY		LOWER PRIORITY		COUNCIL-DIRECTED POLICY UPDATE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide input on policy questions related to future use of space.</li><li>• Advise on near-term site activation strategies.</li><li>• Support completion of the Cubberley Community Center Master Plan.</li><li>• Support ongoing community engagement efforts</li></ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Support staff in preparation of a 2026 ballot measure to support redevelopment.</li></ul>		Yes