

PARKS AND RECREATION IN VACAVILLE

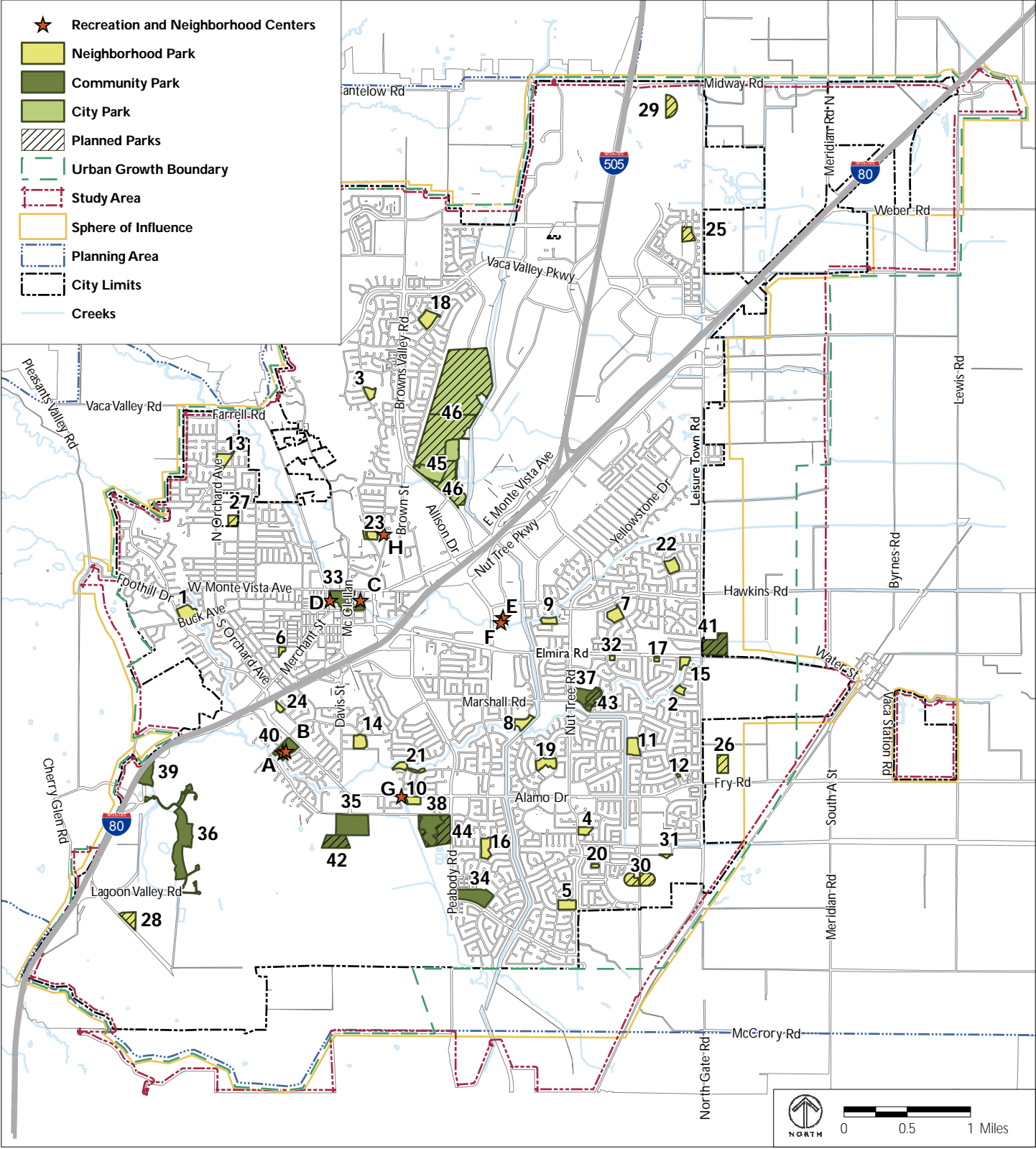
Vacaville features a wide variety of recreational facilities including parks, recreation buildings, trails, and open space. These areas provide children with a place to play, offer gathering space for community events, and allow residents to enjoy natural areas without leaving the city. This technical memorandum discusses the existing condition of Vacaville's parks, recreational facilities, trails, and open space, and describes applicable regulations, policies, and public commitment toward the City's provision of a quality parks and recreation systems.

A. Existing Conditions and Issues

The City's inventory of parks and recreation facilities ranges from small ½-acre bicycle rests to traditional neighborhood ball fields to large tracts of undeveloped open land. Park facilities are classified into four categories: neighborhood parks, neighborhood school parks, community parks, and city parks. Recreational facilities are classified into two categories: public open space and recreation centers.

1. Parks

The City's existing General Plan organizes parks into four categories: neighborhood, neighborhood school, community, and city parks. The following section defines each park category, as stated in the City's General Plan. Also discussed in this section are the City's park service standards. The locations of Vacaville's parks and recreation centers are illustrated on Figure 1.



- Recreation and Neighborhood Centers
 A Three Oaks Community Center
 B Walter V. Graham Aquatics Center
 C Georgie Duke Sports Center
 D John A. McBride Senior Center
 E Ulatis Community Center and Gardens
 F Vacaville Performing Arts Theater
 G Mariposa Neighborhood Center
 H Trower Neighborhood Center

Note: Park numbers on the map correspond to ID numbers in Tables 1, 2, and 3 of this memorandum.

Source: City of Vacaville.

FIGURE 1
 PARKS AND PARK FACILITIES

a. Neighborhood Parks

Neighborhood parks primarily serve the recreation needs of individual neighborhoods or a small portion of the city. The location serves the residential area within ½ mile of the park. Park facilities are usually oriented towards the recreation needs of children and include multi-purpose fields, playgrounds, recreation centers, and tot lots. As shown in Table 1, existing neighborhood park sites range in size from less than 1 acre to 10 acres. Proposed neighborhood parks are programmed within a 6- to 12-acre size range, depending upon the neighborhood park needs of the planning sector in which they are located. Each park's features and amenities are also listed in this section.

As shown in Table 1, the City has plans to develop or expand eight new neighborhood parks. These parks were planned as part of the 1992 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

Neighborhood Parks and Amenities:

- ◆ **Alamo Creek Park:** seven picnic tables, a playground, drinking fountains, benches, a tot lot, four backstops, two tennis courts, a half basketball court, nine fitness stations, and a horseshoe pit.
- ◆ **Arbor Oaks Park:** picnic tables, a playground and tot lot, a bicycle rack, three barbecue pits, and an open turf area with large shade trees.
- ◆ **Browns Valley Park:** a TGIFun trailer,¹ a tot lot, a playground, two benches, and a portable backstop.
- ◆ **Cambridge Park:** six picnic tables, a playground, two backstops, and a TGIFun trailer.
- ◆ **Cannon Station Park:** a large playground, a tot lot, picnic tables, a tennis court, and four half-court basketball courts in combination with a surface for roller blades or hockey.

¹ The TGIFun trailer is a before- and afterschool program run by the Community Services Department, offering students a place to start on homework, engage in arts and crafts, and participate in group games and other socialization activities.

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TABLE I **CITY OF VACAVILLE NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS**

ID	Name	Location	Acres
Existing Parks			
1	Alamo Creek Park	Alamo Dr. and Buck Ave.	9.5
2	Arbor Oaks Park	Arbor Oaks Dr. at Leeward Ct.	2.5
3	Browns Valley Park	Wrentham Dr.	4.4
4	Cambridge Park	Nut Tree Rd. and Cambridge Dr.	3.4
5	Cannon Station Park	Nut Tree Rd. and Opal Wy.	6.6
6	City Hall Park	Walnut Ave. at City Hall	1.6
7	Cooper School Park	830 Christine Dr.	6.6
8	Fairmont-Beelard Park	Beelard Dr. and Matthews Ct.	5.2
9	Hawkins Park	Summerfield Dr. and Newport Cir.	3.1
10	Larsen Park (Irene)	Alamo Dr. at Rosewood Dr.	4.3
11	Meadowlands Park	Vanden Rd. at Bluebird Dr.	8.0
12	Normandy Meadows Park	Meadowlark Dr. and Chateau Cir.	0.3
13	North Orchard Park	Orchard Ave. and Crestview Dr.	7.8
14	Padan Park	Alonzo Rd. and Padan School Rd.	6.5
15	Patwin Park	Elmira Rd. and Leisure Town Rd.	4.7
16	Pheasant Country Park	Madison Ave. and Nancy Cir.	7.0
17	Pocket Park	East of Ralph Ave. on Elmira Rd.	0.9
18	Ridgeview Park	Tipperary Dr. and Bluewater Dr.	7.3
19	Sierra Vista Park	West of Bel Air Dr. on Greenwich Cir.	4.2
20	Southtown Park #1	Salisbury Cir. and Turnbridge St.	1.0

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ID	Name	Location	Acres
21	Southwood Park	Southwood Dr. and Sherwood Ct.	3.8
22	Stonegate Park	Stonegate Dr. and Stonewood Dr.	6.0
23	Trower Park	Markham Ave. and Holly Ln.	4.0
24	Willows Park	South of Catalina Ct. on Ogden Wy.	2.0
Planned Parks			
25	Corderos Park	Parkside Dr. (North Village)	6.0
26	Fry Road Park	Leisure Town Rd. and Fry Rd.	TBD
27	Hemlock Park	Eldridge Ave and Hemlock St	4.2
28	Lower Lagoon Valley Park	TBD	7.9
29	North Village AP-2	South of Midway Rd.	TBD
30	Southtown Park	Cogburn Cir.	11.9
31	Southtown Pocket Park #2	Vanden Rd.	1.3
32	Wellsite Bike Rest 2	East of Christine Drive on Elmira Rd.	0.9

Note: ID refers to the park's label in Figure 1.

Source: City of Vacaville Community Services Department, 2010.

- ◆ **City Hall Park:** seven picnic tables, barbecue pits, exercise course, and a turf area with a bocce ball court.
- ◆ **Cooper School Park:** three picnic tables, three benches, a playground and tot lot, a full basketball court, a TGIFun trailer, and a multi-purpose field.

- ◆ **Fairmont-Beelard Park:** three picnic tables, three benches, a playground, a tot lot, three backstops, a basketball court, a multi-purpose field, and a jogging and bike trail.
- ◆ **Hawkins Park:** 13 picnic tables, a playground, a tot lot, a backstop, two tennis courts, multi-purpose turf, a basketball court, a horseshoe pit, two barbecue pits, and a ten-station exercise course.
- ◆ **Irene Larsen Park:** two softball fields.
- ◆ **Meadowlands Park:** eleven picnic tables, eight benches, a playground, a tot lot, three backstops, a basketball court, restrooms, a picnic shelter, and a TGIFun trailer.
- ◆ **Normandy Meadows Park:** 14,000 square feet of turf.
- ◆ **North Orchard Park:** two picnic tables, eight benches, a playground and tot lot, a backstop, four tennis courts, a half-court basketball court, two bicycle racks, a multi-purpose field, and jogging and bike trails.
- ◆ **Padan Park:** five picnic tables, ten benches, a playground, a tot lot, two soccer goals, two backstops, a basketball court, a bicycle rack, a multi-purpose field, a jogging and fitness circuit, and a TGIFun trailer.
- ◆ **Patwin Park:** two picnic tables, two benches, a playground, a backstop, a basketball court, a volleyball court, two bicycle racks, and a multi-purpose field.
- ◆ **Pheasant Country Park:** six picnic tables, four benches, a playground, a tot lot, a backstop, a basketball court, a ten-station exercise course, a multi-purpose field, and a barbecue area.
- ◆ **Pocket Park:** a multi-purpose field.
- ◆ **Ridgeview Park:** a playground and tot lot, a basketball court, a multi-purpose field, an exercise and fitness circuit, and picnic areas.
- ◆ **Sierra Vista Park:** a jogging path and a multi-purpose field.
- ◆ **Southtown Park #1:** a multi-purpose field and a central gathering area.

- ◆ **Southwood Park:** six picnic tables, a playground, a tot lot, a basketball court, a fitness and exercise circuit, a horseshoe pit, and access to Alamo Creek bike trail.
- ◆ **Stonegate Park:** a large playground, tot lot, fitness course, picnic area, multi-purpose field, portable backstop, and full basketball court.
- ◆ **Trower Park:** two picnic tables, four benches, a playground, a tot lot, a multi-purpose field, two barbecue pits, a bicycle rack, a basketball court, and the Boys & Girls Club.
- ◆ **Willows Park:** picnic tables, a playground, a basketball court, and a multi-purpose field.

b. Neighborhood School Parks

Neighborhood school parks are parks or playgrounds built adjacent to, but separate from, an elementary school. Some of these parks contain recreation centers operated by the City's Community Services Department. Neighborhood school parks fulfill a combined function of providing open space for the residential area within a ½-mile service area of the park as well as for the adjacent school. Proposed neighborhood school parks are programmed at a standard size of 6 acres. There are also a few existing elementary schools which have limited neighborhood recreation facilities and are restricted from daily use during school hours.

c. Community Parks

Community parks are designed to generally serve a portion of the city's population living within a 1- to 1.5-mile service radius. Community parks provide facilities such as lighted ball fields, swimming pools, and areas and buildings for community festivals and civic events as well as for organized sports and athletic competitions. While community parks serve larger areas of the city than neighborhood parks, a community park can also function as a neighborhood park for the area in which it is located. Community parks range in size from 10 to 40 acres. Table 2 lists the existing and proposed community parks in Vacaville and their addresses and acreages; community

park locations are shown in Figure 1. The following sections describe the features and amenities available at these parks.

TABLE 2 **CITY OF VACAVILLE COMMUNITY PARKS**

ID	Name	Location	Acres
Existing Parks			
33	Andrews Park	Monte Vista Ave. and School Rd.	16.4
34	Arlington Park (John)	Foxboro Pkwy. and Peabody Rd.	17.8
35	Keating Park (William)	California Dr. and Alamo Dr.	24.6
36	Lagoon Valley Park	4627 Peña Adobe Rd.	40.0
37	Nelson Park (Eleanor)	Nut Tree Rd. and Marshall Rd.	13.0
38	Patch Park (Al)	1750 California Dr. at Peabody Rd.	19.0
39	Peña Adobe Park	4699 Peña Adobe Rd.	8.0
40	Three Oaks Park	1100 Alamo Dr.	11.9
Planned Parks			
41	Elmira/Leisure Town Park	Elmira Rd. and Leisure Town Rd.	25
42	Keating Park (expansion)	California Dr. and Alamo Dr.	11.0
43	Nelson Park (Eleanor) (expansion)	Nut Tree Rd. and Marshall Rd.	6.4
44	Patch Park (Al) (expansion)	1750 California Dr. and Peabody Rd.	16.4

Note: ID refers to the park's label in Figure 1.

Source: City of Vacaville Community Services Department, 2010.

Andrews Park

A prominent feature of Andrews Park is the Great Wonders Playground, a children's play structure with peaked roofs designed to look like an enchanted

castle. This playground was rebuilt by the community in 2008 and includes a large variety of play equipment including swings and slides. The entrance to the playground is guarded by a large sculpted dragon. Adjacent to the Great Wonders Playground is a large shaded patio with multiple picnic tables. Andrews Park also offers a trail with historical kiosks, an additional picnic area including five barbeque grills, a restroom building, and electrical hookups.

Within Andrews Park is the Creekwalk. The Creekwalk includes a large central plaza connected to the downtown area across the historic School Street Bridge. The Creekwalk also includes several sets of stairways that provide easy access to a concrete path that follows Ulatis Creek. The pathway meanders through lush vegetation and provides views of a small waterfall. Since opening in April 2000, the Creekwalk has attracted a variety of events including festivals, fairs, the City's Fourth of July fireworks, and the holiday tree lighting and menorah ceremony. The City also hosts the Summer Concert Series at the Creekwalk, which features live music, food, and drinks on Friday evenings in the summer.

Arlington (John) Park

The 18-acre John Arlington Park includes a group picnic area with twelve tables, a playground, four baseball backstop cages, four baseball fields, two football fields, restrooms, a concessions building, a playground and a TGIFun trailer. The park provides off-street parking for 200 cars.

Keating Park

Located on State-owned property adjacent to the grounds of the California Medical Facility (CMF), Keating Park offers seven baseball fields with warm-up cages, bleacher seating, scoreboards, two restrooms, two concession stands, and storage. The park also has ten picnic tables and parking for 155 vehicles.

Lagoon Valley Park

South of Vacaville, directly east of Interstate 80, is Lagoon Valley Park. Forty acres of this park have been designated as a "Community Park," but the character of the park is influenced by over 300 acres of adjoining rolling hills,

valleys, and the 100-acre Lagoon Valley Lake. Within the 40 acres of Lagoon Valley Park are a large lake-side picnic and barbeque area with a paved boat launch for non-motorized boats, a dog park, a disc-golf course, an archery range, aero-modelers' field, restroom building, and paved parking areas. Trailheads provide access to the many nature trails into the open space east of the core area and around the lake. The open space encompasses hillsides within the Vaca Mountain range, and provides trail connections into Peña Adobe Park to the north. Lagoon Valley Lake was originally designed to be over 10 feet in depth and was previously used for sailboarding, fishing, and other recreational uses. Over the years it has become very shallow due to siltation. Although it was previously stocked with various types of sport fish, the lake no longer contains fish. Prior to 2009, the lake contained Sacramento Perch and California Blackfish.

Nelson (Eleanor) Park

The 13-acre Nelson Park includes two lighted softball fields, bleachers, electric scoreboards, score keeper huts, a concessions building, restrooms, three picnic tables, and a playground. This park contains 6 acres of undeveloped land.

Patch (Al) Park

Patch Park is primarily a lighted sports field complex constructed on land leased from the State of California. The park currently offers three softball fields and a football field, all with electronic scoreboards; an all-weather running track; picnic areas; restrooms; and off-street parking. The football field at Patch Park is home to the Vacaville Bengals, the city's Pop Warner Football team. A future park expansion of approximately 15 acres is planned.

Peña Adobe Park

Peña Adobe Park is located north of Lagoon Valley Park. This park is oriented around the historic Peña Adobe building and the adjacent Mowheen-Gowers museum. It offers a picnic plaza area adjacent to the Peña Adobe building and a large gazebo providing a total of 37 picnic tables. The park includes several acres of oak-shaded turf, a restroom building, and water foun-

tains. There are also two horseshoe pits, a small pond, and an antique farm equipment display.

Three Oaks Park

Three Oaks Park includes the Three Oaks Community Center and the Walter V. Graham Aquatics Center. The park also has the city's only skate park, a basketball court, 20 picnic tables with two barbecues, a playground, an open recreational field, four lighted tennis courts, and 228 off-street parking spaces.

Planned Parks

The City of Vacaville has plans to develop or expand four new community parks, as shown on Figure 1 and Table 2. These parks were planned as part of the 1992 Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.

d. City Parks

City parks are 100 acres or more in size and are designed to serve the entire city population as a community centerpiece and outdoor recreational space. The location of a city park should be centrally located to serve all areas of the city. A city park may include such facilities as a golf course, playfields, a swimming complex, or a gymnasium. It may also include large, natural open space areas for low-intensity or passive recreational use.

Centennial Park is currently Vacaville's only park classified as a city park. Located centrally within the city, it is accessible to all residents. Centennial Park consists of 265 acres, of which 35.7 acres have been developed. Its facilities include one pony league field, three little league fields, four Vacaville Youth Soccer League soccer fields, one wiffle ball field, one outdoor roller hockey court (marked on a parking area), four tennis courts, hiking trails, on-site parking for approximately 1,673 vehicles, restrooms, and a concession complex. There are also three soccer "hobby fields" which are no longer usable due to worn out artificial turf.

The City has plans to expand Centennial Park in the areas surrounding the existing developed park facilities. Existing and planned city parks are listed in Table 3, and are shown in Figure 1.

TABLE 3 **CITY OF VACAVILLE CITY PARKS**

ID	Name	Location	Acres
Existing Parks			
45	Centennial Park	501 Browns Valley Rd.	35.7
Planned Parks			
46	Centennial Park (expansion)	501 Browns Valley Rd.	TBD

Note: ID refers to the park’s label in Figure 1.

Source: City of Vacaville Community Services Department, 2010.

2. Park Service Standards

The City of Vacaville has park service standards for the provision of neighborhood, community, and city parks based on a ratio of the number of acres of developed parkland per 1,000 Vacaville residents. Table 4 provides the City’s standard park service ratios, the number of existing park acres developed to date, and the current ratios. As shown in the table, the City is currently deficient in meeting its park service standards for both Neighborhood and City park categories. To reach the City’s adopted park service standards, Vacaville would need an additional 46 acres of developed neighborhood parks and an additional 52 acres of city parks, for a total of 98 additional acres of developed parkland.

TABLE 4 **PARK SERVICE STANDARDS AND EXISTING PARKLAND**

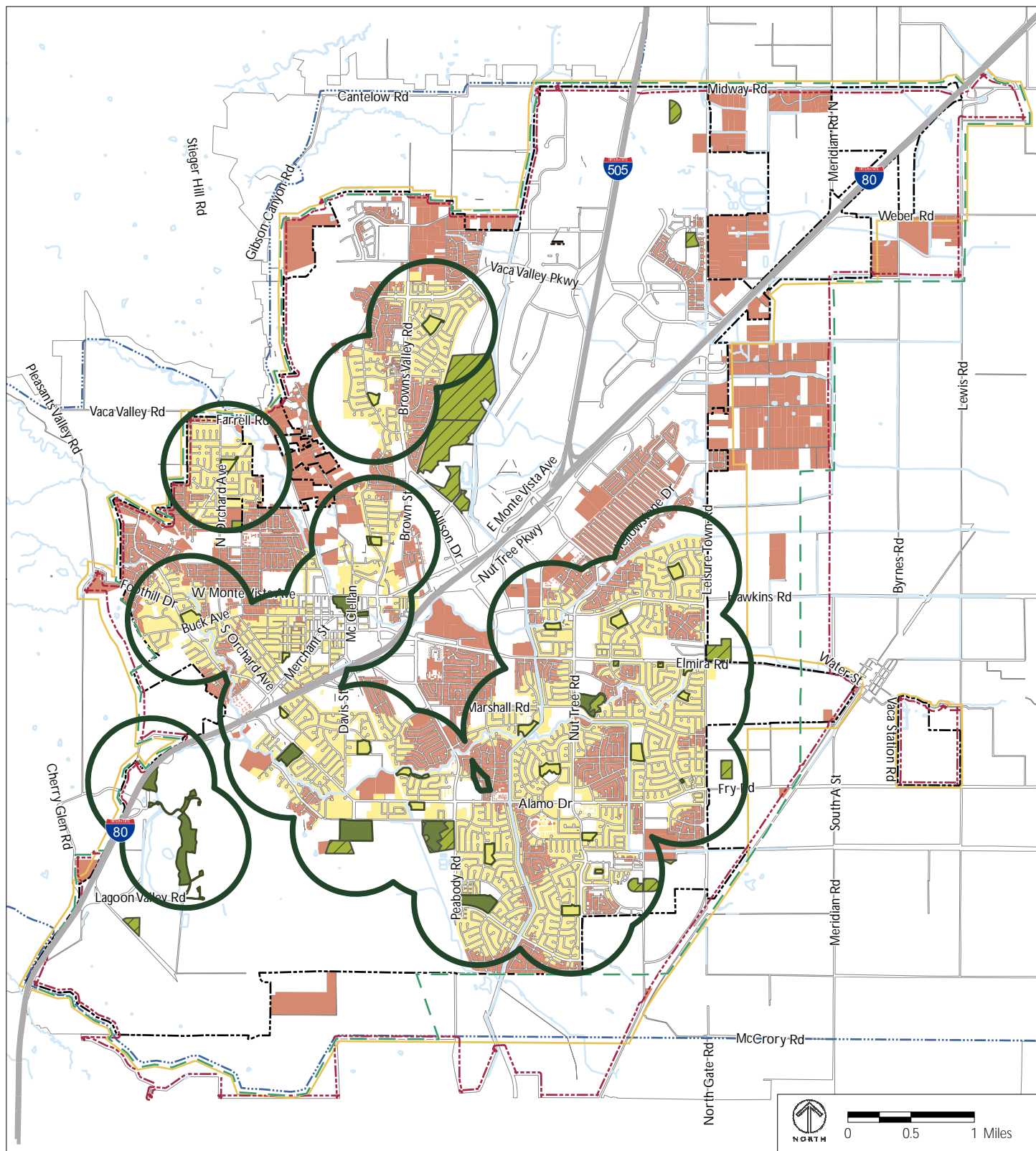
Park Type	City Standard Ratio (Acres per 1,000 Residents)	Existing Developed Parkland (Acres)	Current Ratio (Acres per 1,000 Residents)^a
Neighborhood	1.80	111.1	1.27
Community	1.70	153.2	1.75
City	1.00	35.7	0.41
Total	4.50	297.4	3.43

^a Based on a current population of Vacaville of 87,550 (not including group housing). City population from: State of California Department of Finance, 2010, *E1: City/County Population Estimates with Annual Percentage Change January 1, 2009 and 2010*. Group housing from: State of California, Department of Corrections, Offender Information Services Branch, Estimates and Statistical Analysis Section, Data Analysis Unit, *Average Daily Prison Population*, 2010, accessed online at http://www.cdcr.ca.gov/Reports_Research/Offender_Information_Services_Branch/Annual/IPOP2/IPOP2d0912.pdf.

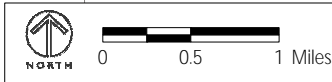
Source: City of Vacaville Community Services Department, 2010.

Areas of the city that are underserved by neighborhood and community parks (i.e. residential areas that are not within a ½-mile walk of a park) are shown in Figure 2. Residential parcels that are within a ½-mile walk of existing parks are also distinguished in Figure 2, and it can be seen that most residential parcels are within a ½-mile walk from an existing park. However, some portions of the western, central, and northeastern parts of the study area have residential areas that are not served by neighborhood and community parks. In addition, some areas that are within a ½-mile radius of an existing park are not necessarily within a ½-mile walking distance. This situation results from a street network that does not maximize pedestrian connectivity.

The City does not have service standards for open space or trails. Service standards for recreational facilities were developed in 1992 as part of the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan.



- | | | |
|---|-------------------|-----------------------|
| Areas within a 1/2-mile radius of existing neighborhood and community parks | Neighborhood Park | Urban Growth Boundary |
| Existing Residential Parcels | Community Park | Study Area |
| Areas within 1/2-mile walk of neighborhood or community park | City Park | Sphere of Influence |
| Areas not within a 1/2-mile walk of a neighborhood or community park | Planned Parks | Planning Area |
| | | City Limits |



Source: City of Vacaville.
 Note: residential areas within a 1/2-mile walking distance of neighborhood and community parks have been calculated using the walking distance along the street network. Areas that are within a 1/2-mile radius but not within a 1/2-mile walking distance result from a street network that does not maximize pedestrian connectivity.

FIGURE 2
 PARK PROXIMITY ANALYSIS

3. Community Centers and Neighborhood Centers

Community centers are designed for specific sectors of the community, such as seniors or youth. In addition to recreational programming, community centers are intended to house a wide range of public events, from seminars to craft fairs. Neighborhood centers house the after-school recreational programming offered by the City's Community Services Department. Vacaville's recreation centers are shown in Figure 1.

a. Community Centers

The following sections describe the community centers in Vacaville.

Three Oaks Community Center

The Three Oaks Community Center is located at 1100 Alamo Drive near Marshall Road within the Three Oaks Community Park, adjacent to the Walter V. Graham Aquatics Center. The facilities at the Three Oaks Community Center include an assembly hall with a stage, an activity room, a multi-purpose room, two meeting rooms, and off-street parking. Three Oaks Park is located behind the Community Center.

Walter V. Graham Aquatics Center

The Walter V. Graham Aquatics Center is located at 1100 Alamo Drive near Marshall Road, within the Three Oaks Community Park, adjacent to the Three Oaks Community Center. The Graham Aquatics Center offers two 35-foot waterslides, two low diving boards, one high dive, a swimming pool with 25-yard lap lanes, diving blocks, a children's activity area and playground, and barbeque areas. At the pool, recreational programming includes swim lessons, water polo and lifeguarding classes, water aerobics, and water walking classes. Additionally, the center has scheduled times for lap swim and open swim.

Georgie Duke Sports Center

Located within Andrews Park on East Monte Vista Avenue, the 12,600-square-foot Georgie Duke Sports Center offers a gymnasium and a multi-purpose room for sporting events. The Center is commonly used for volleyball and basketball games. It also contains a weight room and boxing ring.

John A. McBride Senior Center

Located at 91 Town Square Place, adjacent to Andrews Park, the McBride Senior Center is the only senior center in Vacaville. The McBride Senior Center offers a variety of recreational programming for those 50 years old and older, including field trips and tours, special-interest classes, volunteer opportunities, and special events. The center also offers space for on-going drop-in activities such as cards, bingo, pool, ceramics, and exercise. In addition to recreational opportunities, the McBride Senior Center provides social services focused on the needs of seniors.

Ulatis Community Center and Wedding Gardens

The Ulatis Community Center and Wedding Gardens are part of the Vacaville Cultural Center located at 1010 Ulatis Drive, described in A.1.c. The Community Center is a multi-purpose facility that can be configured to host a variety of events, with banquet seating capacity for 400 persons. The gardens surrounding the Community Center may be rented for weddings and other outdoor occasions.

Vacaville Performing Arts Theater

The Vacaville Performing Arts Theater (VPAT) is located in the Ulatis Cultural Center at 1010 Ulatis Drive. VPAT is a state-of-the-art performing theater equipped with professional sound and lighting systems, a full orchestra pit with capacity for 32 musicians, a professional-height fly system capable of moving full-sized scenery, and two large dressing rooms. The theater also has a 9-foot Kawai concert grand piano, a Baldwin upright piano, 100 music chairs, music stands, a conductor's podium, and lecterns.

b. Neighborhood Centers

Neighborhood centers are operated by the City of Vacaville Community Services Department and primarily offer afterschool programming for kindergarten through twelfth grades; they are also used for drop-in recreation. Drop-in activities at the neighborhood centers include organized sports, educational and recreational computer games, tutoring, English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, arts and crafts, Kids Unlimited Homework Club, and a summer program. Neighborhood centers include TGIFun Clubs (adjacent to elementary schools) and Prime Time Sites (adjacent to Middle Schools). In addition to organized programming, neighborhood centers also serve as drop-in centers where groups can meet for on-going, unorganized activities. Additionally, the Boys & Girls Club operates the following two neighborhood centers in Vacaville:

- ◆ Mariposa Neighborhood Center, *1625 Alamo Drive*
- ◆ Trower Neighborhood Center, *100 Holly Lane*

4. Recreational Programming

The City of Vacaville Community Services Department offers recreational programming for a wide range of ages and interests. Recreational programming is scheduled throughout the year and is advertised in the Events Guide, which is published seasonally. The Events Guide lists a variety of classes offered and upcoming community events. The following programs are described as follows:

- ◆ **TGIF.** The Thank Goodness It's Fun (TGIF) program is run by the Community Services Department and offers before- and afterschool enrichment activities for children ages six to twelve. TGIF is located adjacent to eight different school campuses throughout Vacaville.
- ◆ **Mobile Recreation.** Recreation staff travel to a different location each day after school from 3:00 pm to 4:30 pm, and to two locations daily during the summer from 9:30 am to 3:30 pm. Free activities include games, crafts, nature activities, arts, tutoring, and family support information.
- ◆ **Gymnastics.** The Community Services Department runs gymnastics programs at the Vacaville Skate Center. These programs offers both

creative movement for children ages one to three as well as beginning, intermediate and advanced level gymnastics classes for children ages three to twelve. Adult gymnastics classes are also offered.

- ◆ **Aquatics.** The Community Services Department runs aquatics programs, such as open swim, swim lessons, water polo, water aerobics, and adult lap swim. Aquatics programs run year round; most programs take place at the Walter V. Graham Aquatic Center.

In addition to these City-sponsored recreational activities, numerous other activities are offered by non-City entities in Vacaville, such as Boys and Girls Clubs of America, the Police Activities League, faith-based organizations, and youth sports leagues.

5. Open Space

City open space consists of parcels of land owned by the City of Vacaville and intended for maintenance or preservation in a natural or less-intensive developed state. Public open space lands include areas of geologic, agricultural, ecologic, and scenic significance as well as hazardous lands and public utility rights-of-way acquired for recreational use. Open space areas within and surrounding the city are generally either owned by Solano County or the City of Vacaville. However, some parcels are privately owned. Table 5 lists the designated open space areas in Vacaville and their acreages, and the areas are shown in Figure 3. Existing and planned detention basins are included as a distinct category of open space in Table 5 and Figure 3. Detention basins are not included in the existing General Plan as open space, but may be included in the future.

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TABLE 5 **CITY OF VACAVILLE OPEN SPACE AND DETENTION BASINS**

ID	Name	Approximate Acreage
Existing Open Space		
46	Alamo Creek Open Space & Bike Trail	73
47	Alamo Terrace Open Space	55
48	Allison Open Space	110
49	Alpine Open Space	29
50	Browns Valley Open Space	8
51	California Drive Open Space	5
52	Caliguiri Park & Preserve Open Space	29
53	Encinosa Creek Open Space	3
54	Gibson Canyon Creek Open Space	24
55	Glen Eagle Open Space	415
56	Gonzales Open Space	148
57	Hidden Oaks Open Space	8
58	Hidden Valley Open Space	14
59	Lagoon Valley Open Space	580
60	Laguna Hills Open Space	71
61	Lower Lagoon Valley Open Space	312
62	McMurtry Open Space	70
63	North Horse Creek Open Space	10
64	North Village Open Space	145
65	P.G.E. Right Of Way Open Space	88
66	Pena Adobe Open Space	54
67	PG&E Easement Open Space	9

TABLE 5 **CITY OF VACAVILLE OPEN SPACE AND DETENTION BASINS**
(Continued)

ID	Name	Approximate Acreage
68	Pleasants Valley Detention Basin Open Space	37
69	Southside Bike Trail Easement Open Space	15
70	Ulati Creek Open Space	83
71	Woodcrest Open Space	18
Planned Open Space		
72	Alamo Basin Open Space	21
73	Alamo Creek Ridge Open Space	260
74	Lagoon Valley Open Space & Hillside	363
Existing Detention Basins		
75	I-80 Detention Basin Open Space	5
76	Laguna Hills Open Space	23
77	Lauralwood Detention Basin	4
78	Midway Detention Basin 1 Open Space	1
79	Midway Detention Basin 2 Open Space	11
80	North Horse Creek Detention Basin 1 Open Space	2
81	North Village Detention Basin 1 Open Space	6
82	Pine Creek Detention Basin Open Space	24
83	Pleasants Valley Detention Basin Open Space	22
84	Prairie Rose Detention Basin Open Space	15
85	South Horse Creek Detention Basin 1 Open Space	2
86	South Horse Creek Detention Basin 2 Open Space	3
87	Southtown Detention Basin Open Space	20
88	Ulati Detention Basin 2 Open Space	2
89	Union Detention Basin Open Space	3

TABLE 5 **CITY OF VACAVILLE OPEN SPACE AND DETENTION BASINS**
(Continued)

ID	Name	Approximate Acreage
90	VacaValley Business Park Detention Basin Open Space	11
Planned Detention Basins		
91	Alamo Detention Basin Open Space	56
92	Lagoon Detention Basin Open Space	64
93	North Horse Creek Basin Open Space	11
94	North Village Detention Basin 2 Open Space	8
95	Ulati Detention Basin Open Space	35
96	Ulati Detention Basin 1 Open Space	7

Note: ID refers to the open space or detention basin label in Figure 3.
Source: City of Vacaville Community Services Department, 2010.

6. Museums

There are two museums located in the City of Vacaville: the Vacaville Museum and the Goheen-Mowers Museum. The Vacaville Museum opened in 1984 and is located at 213 Buck Avenue between Kentucky Street and West Street. The museum provides cultural and historical preservation for all of Solano County. In fulfilling its mission, the Vacaville Museum has produced 40 exhibits and numerous publications, and provides educational programs.²

The Goheen-Mowers Museum, located near the Peña Adobe building, is currently operated by the Peña Adobe Historical Society (PAHS) and is located on the grounds of Peña Adobe Park. The museum is a very small building that was previously attached to the Peña Adobe building. It currently houses

² Vacaville Museum website, <http://www.vacavillemuseum.org>, accessed May 5, 2010.

and showcases historic artifacts dating back to the early settlers and Native Americans of the surrounding region.³

7. Private Recreational Facilities

In addition to parks, recreational programming, and museums, there are a variety of privately-funded recreational opportunities for Vacaville's residents and visitors. This section describes private recreational opportunities, such as golf, ice skating and hockey, bowling, and art activities.

- ◆ **Green Tree Golf Club.** The Green Tree Golf Club, located on Leisure Town Road just south of Highway 80 in Vacaville, opened in 1969. The Club is open to the public, offering a full 18-hole regulation-length course, an Executive 9-hole course, a driving range, and golf lessons. The Club also hosts the annual Joe McFerran Benefit Golf Tournament in May.
- ◆ **Cypress Lakes Golf Course.** The Cypress Lakes Golf Course is a military golf course located on the Travis Air Force Base, but is open to the public. The Golf Course, built in 1960, is an 18-hole regulation-length course. In addition to the course, Cypress Lakes offers a driving range, golf lessons, junior programs, and a pro shop.
- ◆ **Vacaville Skating Center.** The Vacaville Skating Center is located on Davis Street, just north of Interstate 80. The Center is run by Vacaville Ice Sports, which provides programming for figure skating and hockey at all levels. Facilities at the Center include two NHL-size ice rinks, a snack bar, a full arcade, and free WiFi connectivity. The Vacaville Skating Center accommodates public sessions, a skating school, curling (a game involving sliding stones along the ice towards a target area), beginner hockey programs, synchronized skating, and freestyle skating. The Center is home to the Vacaville Adult Hockey League, the Vaca Valley Figure Skating Club, the Vacaville Jets Youth Hockey Program, the Solano Stars synchronized skating team, and the Wine Country Curling Club.

³ Peña Adobe Historical Society website, <http://www.penaadobe.org/>, accessed May 5, 2010.

- ◆ **Stars Recreation and Bowling Center.** The Stars Recreation and Bowling Center offers bowling, laser tag, and dining. The Center is located on Browns Valley Parkway, north of Interstate 80. The Center hosts bowling leagues for all skill levels.
- ◆ **Vacaville Art Gallery.** The Vacaville Art Gallery is a non-profit gallery located on East Monte Vista Avenue, northeast of Andrews Park. The building that houses the Gallery is leased by the Vacaville Art League from the City of Vacaville. The Gallery offers exhibit space and community events, such as exhibitions, shows, workshops, classes and demonstrations. The Gallery encourages community participation, particularly from students and younger artists, and provides space for the arts community to share and develop creative skills.
- ◆ **Planned Facilities.** The planned development for Lower Lagoon Valley is designed around a future 18-hole golf course.

B. Regulatory Framework and Other Agencies

This section describes the plans, policies, and regulations that pertain to parks and recreation in Vacaville.

1. Quimby Act

Since the passage of the 1975 Quimby Act (California Government Code Section 66477), cities and counties have been authorized to pass ordinances requiring that developers set aside land, donate conservation easements, or pay fees for park improvements. Revenues generated through the Quimby Act cannot be used for the operation and maintenance of park facilities.⁴ Vacaville does not have a Quimby ordinance.

⁴ Westrup, Laura, 2002, *Quimby Act 101: An Abbreviated Overview, Sacramento: California Department of Parks and Recreation*, available at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/quimby101.pdf>.

2. Regional Agencies, Plans, and Policies

This section describes the regional agencies, plans, and policies that pertain to parks and recreation in Vacaville.

a. Solano County

The Solano County Parks Administration and Planning Department is responsible for planning and operating parks within Solano County. The Solano County General Plan Park and Recreation Element includes plans for future parks within the county; no new parks are planned within the Vacaville General Plan study area. Lake Solano, located approximately 11 miles northwest of Vacaville, is the closest County park.

b. Solano County Resource Conservation and Open Space Plan

The County's Resource Conservation and Open Space Plan was last amended in 1999. The document includes general goals, policies, and plans for open space within the county, as well as resource management and resource conservation strategies. The Plan identifies open spaces within the Vacaville study area, including areas under Vacaville's jurisdiction such as the Lagoon Valley Park.

c. Solano Land Trust

The Solano Land Trust is a nonprofit organization that preserves agricultural lands, open spaces, and resources in Solano County. The organization accomplishes these goals through education, land management, and acquiring land and conservation easements. The organization was previously named the Solano County Farmlands and Open Space Foundation.⁵ The Trust does not own any open space areas within the Vacaville study area. However, they own 11 acres directly south of Lagoon Valley.

⁵ Nicole Byrd, Executive Director, Solano Land Trust, personal communication with Will Fourn, DC&E, June 4, 2010.

3. Local Plans

The Vacaville General Plan and the 1992 Vacaville Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan provide policy guidance for parks and recreation facilities in Vacaville.

a. Vacaville General Plan

The existing Vacaville General Plan contains a Parks and Recreation Element, which is an optional element under State law. Policies from the Parks and Recreation Element are listed in Table 6.

b. Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan

Vacaville's Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan was developed in 1992 to guide the development of parks, recreation, and open space facilities throughout the city. The Master Plan describes the existing conditions of parks and recreation facilities throughout the city, proposes new facilities, and includes policies to implement the Plan. The Plan establishes service standards for parks, recreation, and open space facilities and includes policies to distribute these amenities evenly throughout the city.

TABLE 6 **VACAVILLE GENERAL PLAN PARKS AND RECREATION
 ELEMENT POLICIES**

Policy Number	Policy
Policy 4.6-G 1	Develop a high-quality public park system that provides varied recreational opportunities accessible to all City residents.
Policy 4.6-G 2	Provide parks that reflect and respect Vacaville's natural setting.
Policy 4.6-G 3	Recognize the role that parks play in preserving natural features and establishing urban limits.
Policy 4.6-G 4	Establish standards for the provision of public parks to ensure adequate distribution, size, and service area.
Policy 4.6-G 5	Support the use of park facilities by persons working but not residing in Vacaville.
Policy 4.6-G 6	Encourage development of private and commercial recreational facilities at appropriate locations. Substitution of private recreational facilities for public parks is discouraged in order to ensure access to outdoor recreation by all sectors of the population.
Policy 4.6-G 7	Distribute public parks and recreational facilities throughout the urban service zone according to service area standards specified in this Element.
Policy 4.6-G 8	Evaluate the impact of proposed urban development on open space lands in terms of recreational opportunities and consider means of protecting these lands.
Policy 4.6-G 9	Make provisions for handicapped individuals to freely participate in all aspects of community life including recreational activities. Guidelines to be used in providing access for the handicapped shall conform to local, State and federal codes. Parks and recreational facilities shall be designed and built to meet the needs of the handicapped population.
Policy 4.6-G 10	Establish policies to prevent the degradation or despoilment of the City's parklands through inappropriate uses.
Policy 4.6-G 11	Provide neighborhood parks to serve the special recreational, cultural, and educational needs of different neighborhoods.
Policy 4.6-G 12	Locate new neighborhood parks adjacent to new elementary schools where possible.
Policy 4.6-G 13	Provide community parks encompassing a range of uses including active high investment (gymnasiums, swimming pools, etc.), active low-investment (playfields, etc.) and passive recreational facilities. Community parks shall contain facilities to serve the entire City or large portions of the City by providing recreational and cultural activities beyond those supplied by neighborhood parks.

TABLE 6 **VACAVILLE GENERAL PLAN PARKS AND RECREATION
ELEMENT POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

Policy Number	Policy
Policy 4.6-G 14	Plan park and recreational facilities in cooperation with concerned public and private agencies and organizations.
Policy 4.6-G 15	Solicit the views of the public in planning park and recreation facilities.
Policy 4.6-G 16	Provide a City Park with access to all facilities that is designed to serve as a community centerpiece.
Policy 4.6-I 1	Maintain a Public Parks Distribution Standard of 4.5 acres of park for every 1,000 residents with 1.8 acres/1,000 residents of neighborhood park, 1.7 acres/1,000 residents of community park, and 1.0 acres/1,000 residents of city park.
Policy 4.6-I 2	Establish typical size and service area standards for neighborhood, community, and city parks as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Neighborhood Parks – 6 to 9 acres; 0.5-mile service area. ◆ Community Parks - 10 to 40 acres; 1- to 2-mile service area. ◆ City Parks - 100 acres or more; centrally sited to serve all areas of the city.
Policy 4.6-I 3	Cooperate with special districts, the County, and the State to ensure that the needs of Vacaville residents for regional parks are met.
Policy 4.6-I 4	Implement the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan, consisting of the following elements: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Standards for all park classifications and guidelines for public open space. ◆ An assessment of existing and future parks, recreation and open space needs, including a review of opportunities to link the City's facilities with those of neighboring jurisdictions. ◆ Development of an action plan to provide for sites, funding and facilities to meet the City's needs. ◆ A schedule for acquisition, development, and maintenance of facilities. ◆ An Action Plan for the Community Services Department.
Policy 4.6-I 6	Develop the Trails and Trailhead system as shown in the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan. These trails provide access to and linkage of recreation sites and facilities, provide an alternative circulation system where more feasible and appropriate, and complement and tie in with the City's bikeways system.
Policy 4.6-I 7	Promote the environmental and recreational qualities of Lagoon Valley Community Park.

TABLE 6 **VACAVILLE GENERAL PLAN PARKS AND RECREATION
 ELEMENT POLICIES (CONTINUED)**

Policy Number	Policy
Policy 4.6-I 8	Preserve and enhance available riparian corridors, wildlife habitat, oak woodland, and other biotic resources within parks.
Policy 4.6-I 9	Require developers of moderate and high density projects that do not contain standard yards to incorporate private recreation areas into subdivisions and to create homeowners associations or similar mechanisms for developing, supervising, and maintaining such areas. These recreation areas are in addition to the public parks paid for by building or other fees. All other parks and recreation facilities required by this Plan shall be publicly owned, operated, and maintained and shall be funded, at least in part, by fees paid by new development.
Policy 4.6-I 10	Require all residential developers, including apartment builders, to provide public park and recreation facilities either by paying Park Development Impact Fees and/or dedicating sites in lieu of Park Development Impact Fees.
Policy 4.6-I 11	Encourage the dedication of landscaped and developed parks, trail sections and special requirements where these meet the standards established by the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan.
Policy 4.6-I 12	Cooperate with the school districts in developing standards for Neighborhood Schools Parks that ensure diversity, quality and innovation in design.
Policy 4.6-I 13	Locate parks and recreation facilities in relation to components of the Trails System, buffers, urban separators, and natural features. Wherever possible, site new parks in locations that encourage pedestrian access and that do not require that users cross arterials.
Policy 4.6-I 15	Use existing and new well sites, and other public lands, where feasible, for recreation or community gardens.
Policy 4.6-I 16	Review proposals for private recreation facilities for consistency with Plan policies and standards.
Policy 4.6-I 17	Implement Parks and Recreation Master Plan standards and policies for the City Park.
Policy 4.6-I 18	Coordinate all proposals for recreational facilities within the City Park as part of an overall landscape design under the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Master Plan.
Policy 4.6-I 19	Encourage private recreation facilities to locate east of Leisure Town in Agricultural Buffer areas when they are consistent with the underlying use.

Source: Vacaville General Plan, 1990.

C. Implications for the General Plan Update

The General Plan Update should consider the following issues with respect to the City's provision of parks and recreation services.

1. Meeting Park Standards

The City's standard of providing 4.5 park acres per 1,000 people is currently not being met. Vacaville needs more developed parkland, particularly in the neighborhoods in the western, central, and northeastern portions of the study area that are currently underserved by park and recreational facilities, as shown in Figure 2. In order to meet the City's standards, the City may want to consider adjusting the classifications of some parks within the city, lowering park standards, changing the park planning process to require the inclusion of parklands earlier in the residential subdivision process, adopting a Quimby Ordinance, and increasing park funding for acquisition, development, and maintenance. Some of these potential solutions are discussed in greater detail below:

- ◆ **Quimby Ordinance.** The City will consider adopting a Quimby ordinance requiring that in-lieu fees for park development be based on the value of the land actually being subdivided. This method is used successfully by many other agencies, and the City's Community Services Department staff has already drafted an ordinance specific to Vacaville.
- ◆ **Adjusting the Park Impact Fee.** The cost of developing parkland has increased dramatically in recent years due to four primary factors: 1) increases in labor and materials, 2) heightened playground safety requirements, 3) heightened ADA requirements, and 4) increased need for durability to resist vandalism and wear. Once land is acquired for park development, the City could ensure that sufficient funding is available to design and build the park by eliminating the portion of the fee collected for land acquisition (assuming a Quimby Ordinance is adopted) and adjusting the remaining fee to reflect a more accurate cost of developing park land based on current economic conditions.

- ◆ **Park Maintenance Funding.** Vacaville requires that Lighting and Landscaping Maintenance Assessment Districts (LLMAD) be formed to help fund the maintenance of neighborhood parks. This process frees up General Fund monies to better maintain the community and city parks (a portion also needs to be set aside for other recreational spaces such as buildings, trails, and even open spaces). The City may want to consider implementing a citywide LLMAD to balance out public support for park maintenance. This would save money by simplifying the administration of the many existing LLMADs.

2. Improvements to City-Owned Property

Certain lands and facilities owned by the School District(s) were previously included in the parkland inventory because these areas were available for the public's recreational use during non-school hours. In some cases, the City helped fund development and maintenance of some of these facilities, and paid to rent other facilities. The City has also participated in funding certain improvements to School District-owned land. However, these facilities are no longer available for public use. In the future, the City may want to consider funding only improvements on land owned by the City, or lands with a long tenure.

3. Neighborhood School Parks Category

The City's current classification of "Neighborhood School Parks" is confusing and has led to miscalculations of actual park acreage in the past. The City may want to consider eliminating the "Neighborhood School Parks" category name and grouping any parks in this category into the Neighborhood Parks category. Existing policies encouraging the location of parks next to schools could continue, but these parks would be categorized as "Neighborhood Parks."

4. Adherence to City Standards

Community Services Department staff has suggested that park standards, as outlined through General Plan policies and through Park and Recreation Master Plan guidelines, should be given more deference by staff, commissions,

and the Council. The City may want to consider requiring that all significant development proposals with a park and recreation component be reviewed by the Community Services Commission (in accordance with City Code Section 2.34.030).

5. Increasing Public Access to Open Space

The City may want to consider how to make more public open space lands, such as hillsides, detention basins, landscape buffers, and creek banks, available for public access. This could satisfy some of the increasing public demand for trails and open space, and maintenance costs for these areas could be shared between existing sources and recreation funding.

6. Updating the Park Inventory

It is important to have accurate data before making any conclusions about the status of the City's park and recreation system. Accurate data also provides a solid benchmark to gauge future success (or failure) toward improving the system. Some State regulations and laws (such as the Quimby Act) require the City to justify its provision of developed parkland when it requires that new development provide the same level of facilities and services to serve new residents. An indisputable inventory is important to legally justify land and fee extraction.

The Planning and Community Services Departments may want to consider jointly updating and maintaining the City's park inventory. Planning has taken an important step by recently updating the City's park GIS layer; these data could be shared with Community Services, updated as needed, and adopted as the City's park inventory.

7. Public Involvement in Park Planning

Residents are very interested in park and recreational facilities in Vacaville. During and after the General Plan Update process, it is important that the City continually engage the community in all aspects of park and recreation planning to both ensure that park planning and design reflect residents' needs

and desires, and to ensure that residents have a sense of ownership and “buy in” to park improvements.

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