



MOUNTAIN HOUSE

▶ PARKS, RECREATION AND LEISURE PLAN

FINAL PLAN | MAY 2021





Mountain House

PARKS, RECREATION AND LEISURE PLAN

Final | May 2021



Prepared by:
MIG, Inc.
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the residents who attended open houses and participated in the surveys to provide insights for this plan. Your contributions will help create outstanding parks and recreation opportunities for the entire Mountain House community.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Mountain House is a vibrant community where diversity, opportunity, and innovation support a high quality of life. Our community’s parks, facilities, trails, and programs reflect these qualities. They also play a pivotal role in attracting new residents and creating a healthy environment in which residents choose to live, work, and play. The *2021 Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* (the Plan) provides directions and guidelines for developing and managing this park and recreation system.

PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The Mountain House Community Services District (MHCS D or the District) is responsible for overseeing the development, maintenance, operations, and programming of the community’s parks and recreational facilities. This includes coordinating with different developers to continue to build out the system, while maintaining existing assets, stewarding natural resources, and initiating programs and events to activate the system.



In 2004, MHCSD prepared a plan to guide the implementation of facilities and programs to benefit future residents. The 2004 *Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* envisioned extensive park acreage along with dispersed small community centers, regional attractions, and private recreational areas such as a golf course and marina. Updated in 2011, the Plan presented detailed numerical guidelines that specified the amount, types, sizes, and locations of amenities and facilities to provide.

PLAN PURPOSE

The *2021 Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* establishes a refreshed vision for the park and recreation system. As the District prepares for incorporation, it updates guidelines and provides direction for the development, maintenance, operations, and programming of vibrant and sustainable parks and recreation facilities.

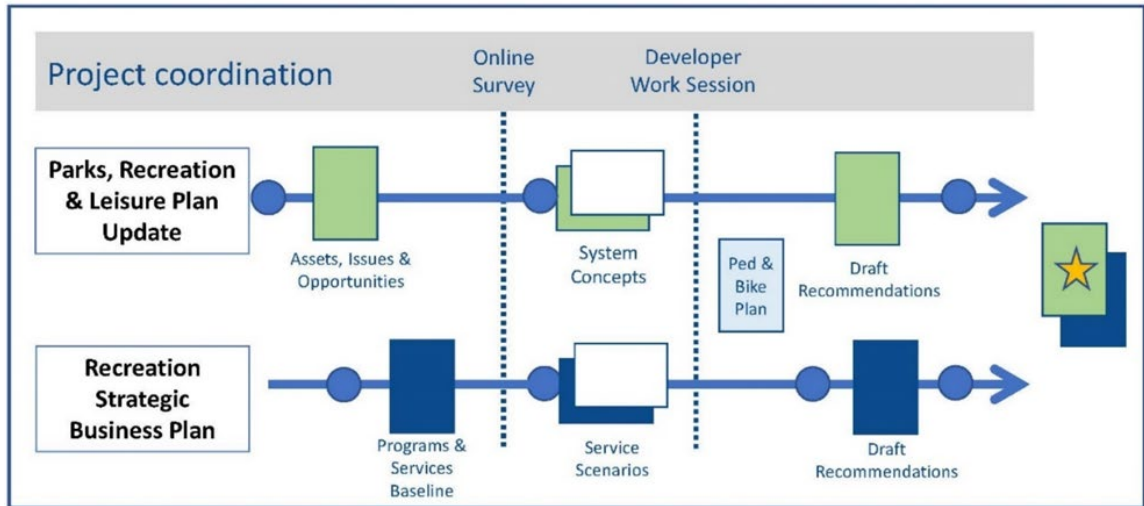
Today, the Mountain House is nearly one-half built out. Approximately 21,000 residents live here, including more culturally diverse residents than in nearby communities. More than half of the District's parks and recreation facilities are yet to be developed. Major facilities such as a community center and aquatic facility are in the planning stages and will represent a significant investment in capital construction and ongoing operations. However, recreation trends and community needs have evolved over the last 15 years. With these factors in mind, the District determined that the time was right to engage the community, refresh and refine the vision for parks and recreation, and update its plan and guidelines for the park system.



PLANNING PROCESS OVERVIEW

In April 2020, MHCS D began updating its *Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* to address park and facility development and reinvestment. In July 2020, the District initiated a Recreation Strategic Business Plan to strengthen guidance for recreation program provision, staffing and business practices. The two planning processes were conducted concurrently to inform one another, resulting in the development of a consolidated *Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* (Figure 1.1).

Figure 1.1: Coordinated Planning Process



The consolidated planning process included the development of several technical analysis documents refined through outreach to residents as well as multiple meetings with District staff, County staff, developers, and the Mountain House Board of Directors. Midway through the planning process, consultants and staff also began coordinating in the development of the *Mountain House Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*, which informed this planning process.



ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

MHCS D initiated the project as the COVID-19 pandemic began restricting in-person gatherings and meetings, so project meetings, stakeholder interviews and outreach were conducted using digital participation formats. Several advisory groups provided direction for the planning process:

- A Project Leadership Team, consisting of the District’s General Manager and key staff from Community Development, Public Works, and Recreation met throughout the planning process to guide project decisions.
- The development community, including Mountain House Investors (MHI) and Mountain House Developers (MHD), was involved at key milestones, as were other local jurisdictions and stakeholders.
- MHCS D’s Board of Directors met with the consulting team four times and heard regular updates from District staff over the course of the planning process.

INVOLVEMENT BY THE NUMBERS

of Community Members

735	Park Preferences Survey respondents
107	Trails Survey respondents
30	Community Workshop respondents

of Board Members, Stakeholders and Staff

11+	MHI, MHD, and associates
7	MHCS D Leadership Team members
4	MHCS D Board members
3	San Joaquin County staff
1	San Joaquin Delta College liaison

During Summer 2020, a community survey administered through MHCS D’s Open Town Hall service invited broad community participation into needs and priorities for parks and recreation, attracting 735 respondents in a few weeks. Follow-up questions about trails and additional recreation facilities were incorporated into a survey developed for the *Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* effort, allowing a second opportunity to check in with the broader community.

Mountain House staff also hosted a community workshop in March 2021 to share the refreshed concept for the park and recreation system, collecting input that was used to refine the final plan.





COORDINATION WITH OTHER DOCUMENTS

The 2021 *Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* was informed by the following documents:

- *Mountain House Master Plan*
- *Mountain House Specific Plans I, II, and III*
- *Mountain House Design Manual*
- *Mountain House Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan*
- *San Joaquin County General Plan*

Following this planning process, the Mountain House Master Plan and Specific Plans will be updated to reflect the revised guidelines in this Plan.

PLAN ORGANIZATION

- 1** The introduction describes the planning process.
- 2** Key Directions summarize the outreach and analysis findings that support the park and recreation concept introduced in this Plan.
- 3** Parks, Trails and Open Space defines new guidelines by park classification and type.
- 4** Recreation Facilities notes trends and guidelines for major facilities, sports and play areas.
- 5** Recreation, Operations, and Leisure Services describes the organization, staffing and policies that will guide park system administration, management and services.

An **Afterword** describes how to use this plan in making implementation decisions that will support park development and renovations.

Appendix A identifies each site, its acreage and development status.

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CHAPTER 2

KEY DIRECTIONS

CHAPTER 2: KEY DIRECTIONS

The public engagement process and technical analysis of the park system revealed that Mountain House has a strong foundation of parks. However, there are opportunities to refine the direction for the park system in response to community feedback and recreation trends. Community and advisory group guidance tell us that Mountain House parks and facilities should be more diverse, inclusive, interconnected, accessible, sustainable, and operationally sound moving forward. Since many of the District's parks and recreation facilities are yet to be developed, there are many opportunities to better address community needs through new development and park renovation. This chapter presents seven overarching directions to guide the development and renovation of the park and recreation system.

KEY DIRECTIONS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

- Respond to community demographics.
- Diversify the park experience.
- Create a walkable, bikeable community.
- Connect residents to nature and water.
- Centralize specialized facilities.
- Increase events and programs.
- Right-size the system.



RESPOND TO COMMUNITY DEMOGRAPHICS

Mountain House is more diverse than originally anticipated when the 2004 Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan was developed. This presents an opportunity to plan parks and facilities that better respond to existing and anticipated community demographics and identity.

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

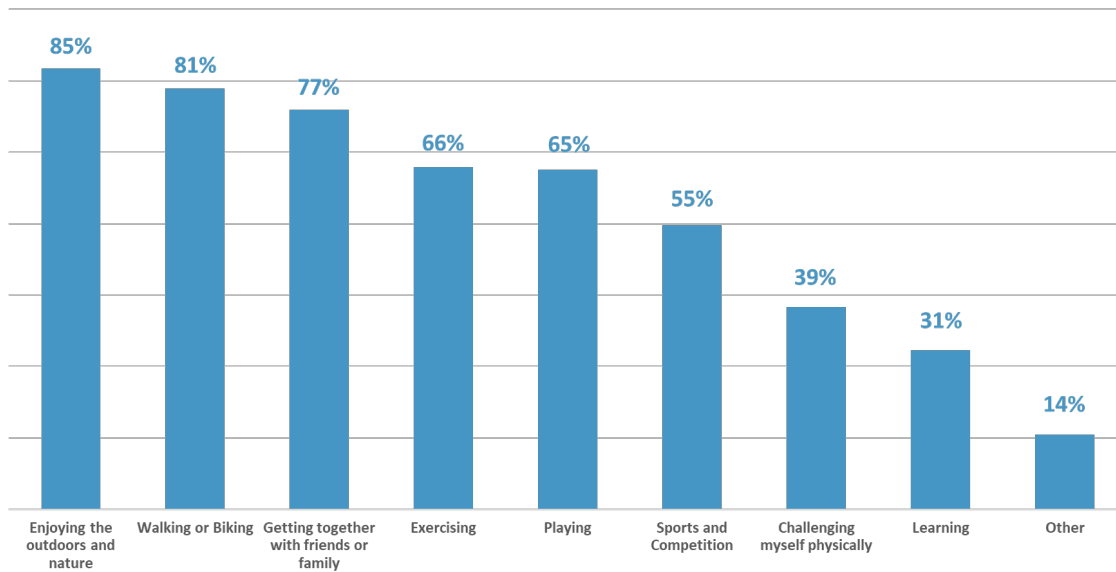
Mountain House Demographics	38% of residents are children under the age of 18	44% of residents are Asian and Indian	41% speak a language other than English at home
San Joaquin College will have 18,000 students at build out	\$131,000 is the median household income	98.5% of current households have a computer	Residents will increase from 21,000 to 39,000 at buildout

The 2004 and 2011 Plans proposed many traditional recreation elements, such as 38 soccer fields and 30 baseball/softball fields. In contrast, one cricket pitch was recommended, suggesting the extent to which traditional park amenities were favored over more diverse features that reflect the community’s current identity.

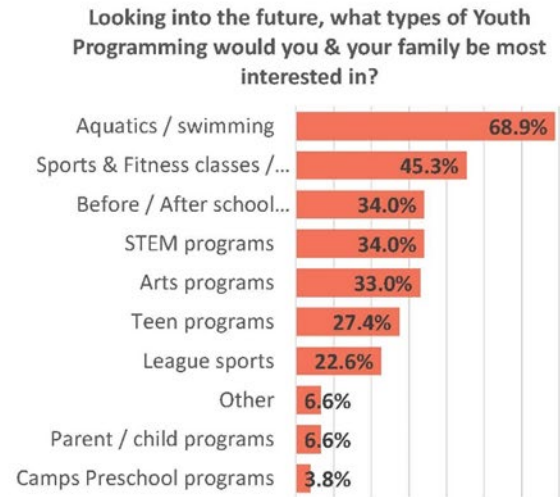
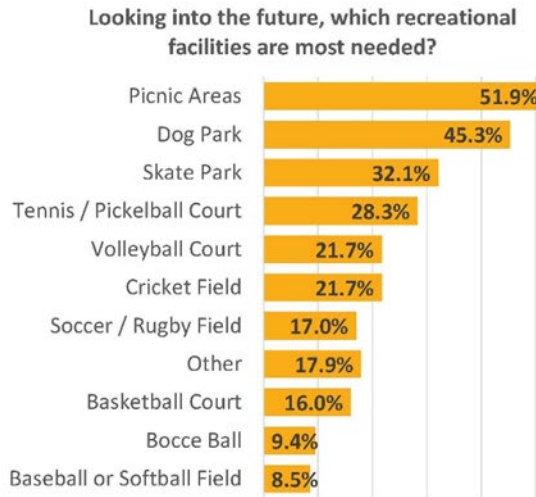
ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Engagement results highlighted the need to provide a variety of park opportunities and experiences. Findings showed community interest in active and passive recreation, low- and high-impact activities, both physical fitness and social activities, and a spectrum of facilities to support play, learning, and sports.

What do you do for fun and physical activity?



More residents noted a need for non-traditional facilities, such as skate parks, pickleball courts, and cricket pitches, than elements such as soccer or baseball/softball fields. A variety of youth opportunities are also desired.



N=107

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Incorporate recreation facilities such as cricket pitches, tai chi courts, badminton, walking paths, and shaded seating, which have shown to be popular with residents of Asian and Indian descent. Consider programs such as STEM camps and performing arts to meet community priorities and recreation preferences.
- Prioritize facilities and programs that increase recreation options for children, youth and teens. For example, provide youth-out-of-school and summer programs, sports, youth development and empowerment programs, and the arts to support diverse youth interests. Ensure there is a spectrum of youth activities ranging from preschool programming through teen “challenge” activities supported by both facilities and programs.
- Offer more low impact fitness and social activities to cater to the needs of older adults and seniors. Develop a multi-generational recreation center that includes active adult, senior and social space, providing more opportunities than a stand-alone senior center.



DIVERSIFY THE PARK EXPERIENCE

The 2004 Plan recommended that each neighborhood park be designed according to a similar design concept and developed with similar amenities and facilities. This update recommends diversifying park spaces to support unique interests, village identity, site character, a variety of experiences, and a mix of developed and nature-based recreation options.

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

Of all of the outdoor facilities recommended in the 2004 Plan, nearly all were traditional sports fields and courts, playgrounds, or picnic areas. Only three—community gardens, dog parks, and par courses—offered something different. New trends favor providing a greater variety of facilities to meet unique needs.

TRENDS INFLUENCING PARK DESIGN

- **Health, Fitness & Health Equity:** Magnified by COVID-19, parks of the future may provide a greater variety of individualized outdoor fitness options to support health and well-being.
- **Universal Design:** Universal, inclusive design features and elements that exceed ADA requirements are being integrated to encourage access, independence, safety, and comfort for all residents, including multi-generational groups.
- **Cultural Relevancy & Inclusion:** Cities are responding to cultural diversity by providing culturally-specific features, programs, and events, as well as amenities that are increasing in popularity across cultures (e.g., trails, soccer).
- **Active, Aging Populations:** As people live longer, older adults and seniors are avoiding traditional, stand-alone senior centers and demanding more active, social, cultural, multi-generational programs, events and volunteer activities suited to their interests and schedules.
- **Access to Water Features:** While ponds, fountains, and water features in the past often were added for community aesthetics only, nowadays cities recognize the benefits that water play and waterfront leisure space provide residents for recreation and relaxation.
- **Connections to Nature:** Given the well-documented benefit of being in nature, towns and cities are incorporating more natural areas in developed parks, providing programs to introduce people of all ages to nature and wildlife, and augmenting the ecological benefits of open space.
- **Resilience:** Climate change, wildfires, high winds, and water conservation needs are changing preferred landscaping to focus on native, drought tolerant plantings.

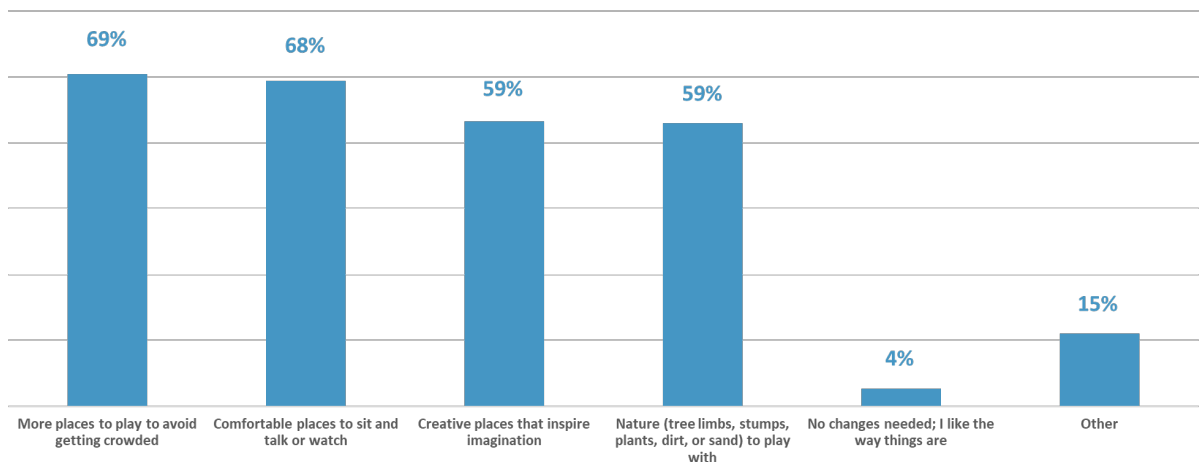


ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

- A greater variety of unique park features are desired in Mountain House.
- Survey respondents noted a need for more imaginative play spaces and nature play elements.
- When asked about sports, providing multi-use facilities and a greater variety of courts and fields were preferred. Increasing the numbers of traditional baseball/softball fields and bocce courts, however, were among the lowest community priorities according to survey respondents.

WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING FEATURES WOULD BE GOOD ADDITIONS IN MOUNTAIN HOUSE?	WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT WAYS TO IMPROVE SPORTS IN MOUNTAIN HOUSE?
85% Plaza with flexible seating	40% Multi-use courts and fields
68% Outdoor fitness equipment	38% More variety in courts and fields
57% Outdoor ping pong	29% More time for walk-ons
53% Community gardens	27% Better quality facilities for games and competition
49% Dog parks	21% More opportunities for reservations
29% Other	18% Support for players with different abilities
	10% Other

What would make taking kids to play or playing in parks better?



KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop parks and community gathering spaces that reflect the different characteristics of north, central, and south Mountain House.
- Diversify parks to support a variety of experiences and develop parks with a mix of recreation facilities. Avoid “ordinary” parks with standardized amenities and expansive lawns that have limited visual or sensory interest. Add art, different color palettes, varied amenities, and interpretive elements to enhance placemaking and create sites with unique appeal.
- Rethink play areas to offer engaging and unique play features, including nature play, water play, thematic play, and imaginative play, as well as challenging elements such as ziplines and climbing walls for youth ages 12 and up. Consider co-locating play equipment for ages 2-5 and 5-12 for parent convenience and safety, rather than providing these at opposite ends of a neighborhood park. Incorporate universal play features to make play areas accessible to all people regardless of age or ability.
- Develop new landscaping standards and plant palettes, eliminating turf where it is not useful as recreation space. Create less dense plantings, more natural features, and a varied plant palette to ensure plant health, provide shade and offer planting solutions that are resilient in windy conditions.



CREATE A WALKABLE, BIKEABLE COMMUNITY

Mountain House is envisioned as an interconnected community, where residents can walk and bike to parks, schools, the library, and other community destinations. This Plan provides an opportunity to enhance both active transportation and trail-related recreation, while improving access to parks and recreation opportunities in individual villages and District-wide.

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

Walking and biking are currently supported by multi-use and nature trails in Creek Park, along with wide sidewalks along key roadways.

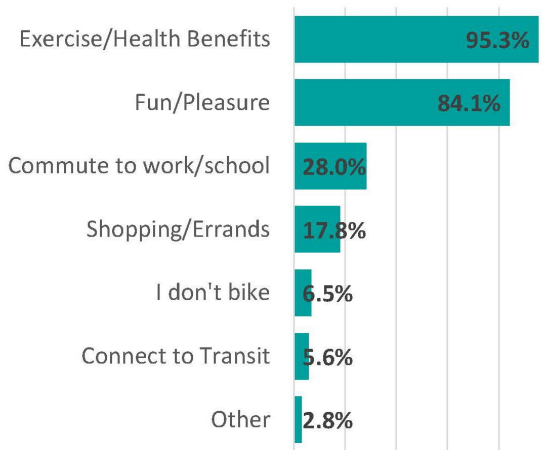
ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

- More than 80% of park survey respondents walk or bike for fun and physical activity.
- In the trails survey, respondents noted a greater need for off-street trails and paths for recreation than on-street paths for commuting to different destinations.
- The top desire is to have trails that support walking and biking to parks and recreation facilities.

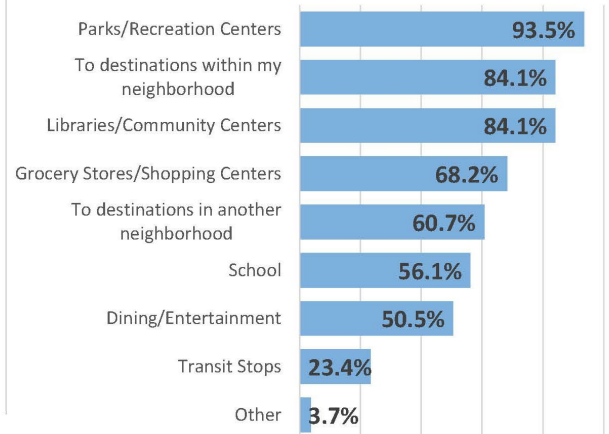
TOP 3 BICYCLE IMPROVEMENTS DESIRED

- 65%** Paved off-street paths, trails and greenways
- 58%** Comfortable on-street bike facilities
- 52%** Safe crossings at major streets

Why do you walk or bike?



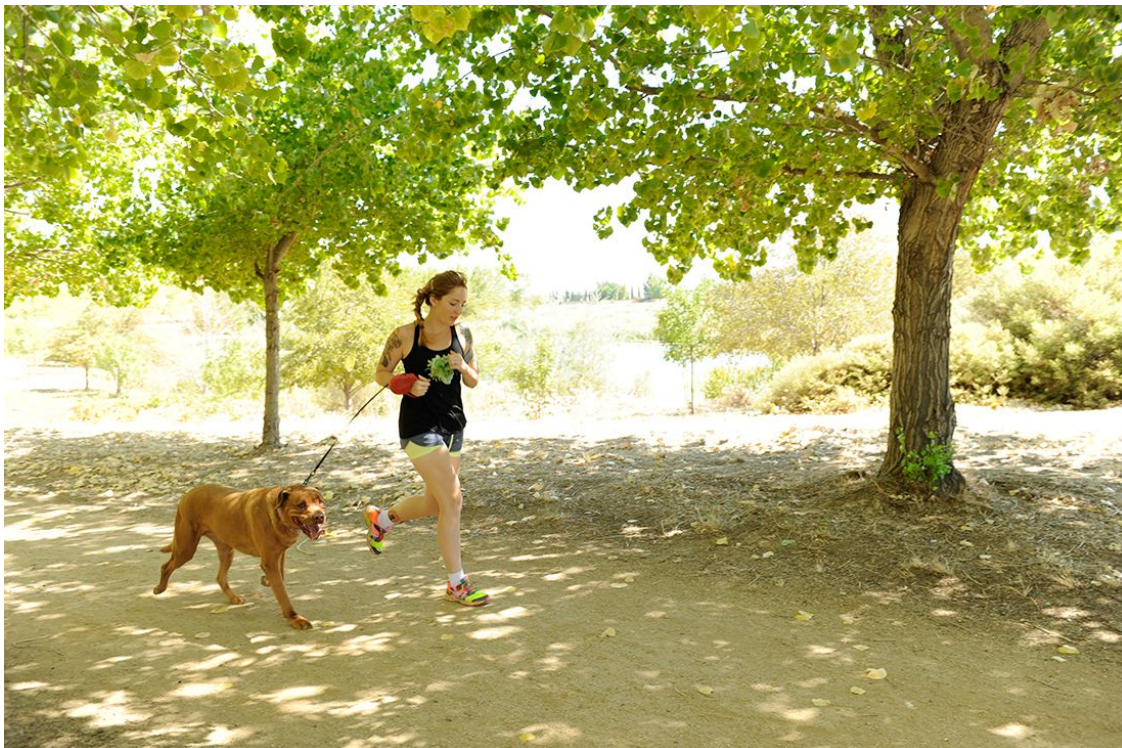
Where would you walk & bike to if safe, comfortable routes were accessible?



N=107

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Strategically connect parks with trails to enhance access to parks, support walking and biking to community destinations, and improve connections.
- Ensure that all community parks and major recreation facilities, such as recreation and aquatic centers, are accessible to pedestrian and bicyclists via the trail system.
- Vary trail experiences, providing bikeways that connect to different community destinations, loop trails within parks, and nature trails that provide access to the Old River, Mountain House Creek, and other natural areas.
- Ensure roadway crossing are clearly marked; for example, connect San Joaquin Delta College and South Community Park with a visible street crossing.
- Rethink the location of mini parks, as well as the co-location of parks and schools, to improve access to park and recreation options within walking and biking distance.



CONNECT RESIDENTS TO NATURE AND WATER

Mountain House Creek, Old River, lakes, and various wetlands and open space areas are integral to the character, beauty, and identity of the District's parks system, providing opportunities to relax and recreate in nature. Protecting and stewarding natural areas will benefit residents, while supporting ecological functions.

KEY FACTS & STATISTICS

The 2004 and 2011 Plans proposed developing approximately 30% of park acreage as neighborhood and community parks, while leaving 70% as trail corridors and open space. The 2021 Plan will need to find the right balance between providing developed parks and protecting open space.

The 2004 and 2011 Plans required connections to Old River for boating, fishing, and other uses. Guidelines included a marina to ensure water access. The earlier Plans were silent on ensuring access to the lakes north of Byron, which may not have been planned at that time. While a marina may not be needed or feasible, the future parks must ensure access to water.

More park agencies are incorporating natural areas and naturalized play spaces into parks, as research shows a strong link between being in nature with youth development and psychological well-being.

ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Access to and interaction with nature is a top community priority. Enjoying the outdoors and nature was the most popular online survey response for residents when asked what they do for fun and physical activity. Residents support adding nature play to parks.

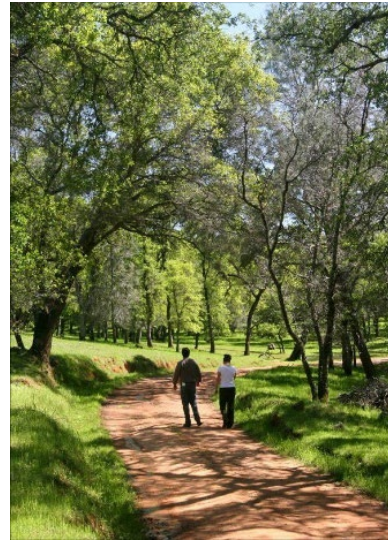
WHAT DO YOU DO FOR FUN AND PHYSICAL ACTIVITY?

- 85%** Enjoy the outdoors and nature
- 81%** Walk or bike



KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Clarify expectations for natural areas in parks and open space. Strengthen guidelines to address where and how open space areas are intended to protect natural resources or where these are landscaped to support beautification.
- Develop North Community Park to incorporate natural resources and offer more nature-focused recreation experiences.
- Support park uses along the creek and river that connect people to nature.
- Ensure access to the natural and man-made lakes and ponds north of Byron.
- Integrate nature play elements, community gardens, and similar elements to connect park visitors to nature in safe, healthy ways.
- Ensure that park use and nature access minimize impacts to wildlife habitat, sensitive natural areas, and water quality in wetlands, riparian corridors, and bioretention areas.
- Improve habitat by integrating native plantings and pollinator paths and patches into parks and trail corridors.



CENTRALIZE SPECIALIZED FACILITIES

Park agencies across the nation have found that smaller, stand-alone recreation facilities, such as community centers, senior centers, and swimming pools, have higher costs and lower recreation value than that of larger, centralized facilities. The District is now planning for its major recreation facilities, providing an opportunity to re-think their size, distribution, and programmed elements.

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

The 2004 and 2011 Plans proposed several small facilities, including a 10,000 - 20,000 square foot community/recreation center, a 12,000 - 16,000 senior center, plus a separate aquatics facility and gym. Current best practices favor the development of larger consolidated, multi-purpose, multi-generational recreation facilities that may be 40,000 – 60,000 in size.

ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

Community engagement results show a strong support for investing in large recreation facilities and more programming related to fitness, health, and wellness.

RECREATION FACILITIES

Looking into the future, the community may pursue building a recreation center and aquatics facility that could offer new types of recreation. Which of the following recreation opportunities are important to you for these facilities?

- 71%** Swimming lessons
- 62%** Fitness, sports, & wellness
- 58%** Lap swimming, water fitness
- 50%** Reservable indoor meeting & party rooms
- 39%** Art classes and spaces
- 33%** Community gathering rooms
- 20%** Challenge myself physically

Table 2.1: Funding Priorities

FUNDING PRIORITY	AVERAGE ALLOCATION	TOTAL FUNDS ALLOCATED	PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO FUNDED
Building facilities such as community centers, gyms, and swimming pools	\$3.37	\$2,159	91%
Developing larger community parks (with a variety of recreation and sports)	\$2.18	\$1,146	75%
Enhancing neighborhood parks (within walking distance of homes)	\$2.02	\$1,067	75%

Results of the top funding priorities from the parks preferences survey. Participants were asked to allocate \$10 across six potential investments. The table above shows the top three funding priorities.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Develop and operate a single multi-purpose, multi-generational recreation center with an aquatic center located at the same site. Guided by a business and operations plan, provide features that will increase operational efficiencies and maximize revenue potential. Avoid stand-alone gyms, senior centers, neighborhood-scale community centers, and pools.
- Locate specialized recreation facilities in a centralized area for easy access from all parts of Mountain House.
- Consider operational needs and cost recovery when providing specialized recreation facilities such as an amphitheater, large group reservable pavilions, a nature/interpretive center, or a non-motorized boat launch. Co-locate these with park uses and adjacent public and private uses that will maximize revenue potential.
- Provide specialized recreation facilities that support Mountain House’s recreation program directions. The guidelines should take into account location, visitor use, and support amenities.



INCREASE EVENTS AND PROGRAMS

Currently, the District does not have the resources to provide the types of recreation programs desired by the community. As new parks and recreation facilities are added, increased staffing and investment will be needed to expand programs, events, and other organized recreation activities.

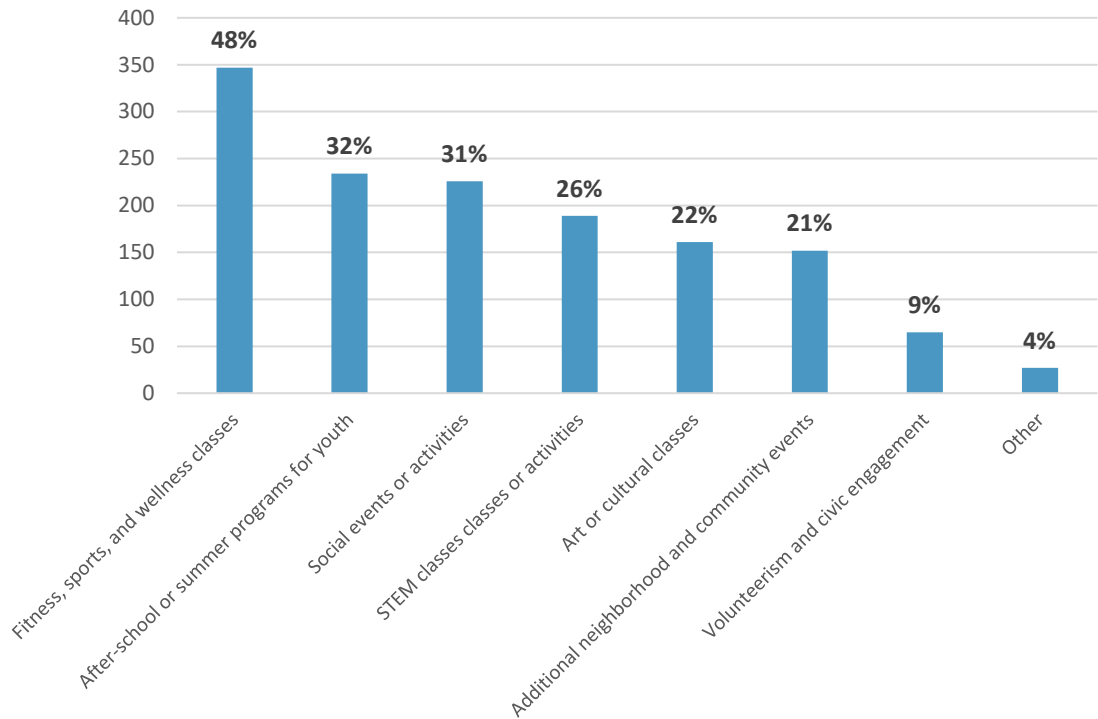
KEY FACTS & STATISTICS

The District currently has one recreation coordinator tasked with organizing programs and community events across the District. Current programming includes District-hosted special events offered in partnership with other groups or residents.

ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

- Residents would like the District to increase or expand fitness, sports, and wellness classes, as well as after school or summer programs for youth and more social events or activities in the next few years.
- When asked what types of recreation should be offered at new facilities, residents supported swimming lessons, lap swimming, and water fitness. This highlights a community demand for expanded aquatics programming.

What would you like to see Mountain House recreation programming offer in the NEXT few years? (Check your TOP TWO options.)



The top recreation priorities that emerged from an online preferences survey show residents desire more classes related to fitness, sports, and wellness as well as more events and programming, particularly more youth-oriented programming.

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Hire staff and test pilot outdoor recreation programs to gauge recreation interests while the recreation center and aquatics facility are under development.
- Operate new facilities to provide both organized programs and times for drop-in or walk-in recreation and play.
- Expand or rethink partnerships to fill gaps in recreation and meet community needs for increased and greater variety of events and programs.
- Increase volunteerism to support staff in the provision of programs and park stewardship.



RIGHT-SIZE THE SYSTEM

The original Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan proposed extensive park acreage, facilities, and landscaping that would have created substantial costs for the future park and recreation system. The community favors quality development and diverse opportunities that can be sustained at a manageable cost. This Plan re-thinks the amount, types and distribution of parks, facilities, and open space to ensure the affordability and cost efficiency of development, maintenance, and operations.

KEY FACTS AND STATISTICS

- The 2011 Plan recommended providing 727.5 acres of parks and open space, including a 299 acre golf course that would only serve specialized recreation interests. If built, this would have provided a level of service of 18.5 acres per 1,000 residents. In comparison, the County standard is 5 acres per 1,000 residents. The City of Tracy provides 6 acres per 1,000 residents, and the City of San Ramon 7.2 acres. The median for park agencies serving between 20,000 to 49,000 residents is 9.6 acres per 1,000, according to NRPA Park Metrics (2020).
- An order-of-magnitude facility comparison noted that many of the single-use, stand-alone facilities proposed in the 2004 and 2011 Plans (gym, senior center, and 50-meter pool) offered little programming flexibility and less opportunity for cost recovery.

Table 2.2: Comparison of Facility Operations by Type

FACILITY TYPE	STAFFING IMPACT	OPERATIONS IMPACTS	COST RECOVERY POTENTIAL	PROGRAMMING FLEXIBILITY
Neighborhood-scale center (open by reservation only)	○	\$	○	○
Senior center	◐	\$\$	○	◐
Stand-alone gymnasium	◐	\$\$	◐	◐
25-yard or 25-meter pool	◐	\$\$	◐	○
50-meter pool	◐	\$\$\$	○	○
Recreational and leisure pool	●	\$\$\$	◐ / ●	◐
Multi-use recreation and community center	●	\$\$\$	◐ / ●	◐
Multi-use recreation, community and aquatics center	●	\$\$\$\$	●	●

Key: ○ Low ◐ Medium ● High

The table above provides an overview of the staffing, operations, programming, and cost recovery for different types of recreation facilities.

ENGAGEMENT PRIORITIES

During interviews and meetings, City staff, stakeholders, developers, and Board members expressed the need to update guidelines to reduce development and maintenance costs, while increasing revenues to sustain the park system.

Imagine it is 10-15 years into the future. How would you describe Mountain House's niche in parks, recreation and leisure services to a person looking to move here?

Trails for walking	Variety of activities, including for seniors	Wholesome community	Diversity embraced in events and programs	Less baseball; more variety in sports	Active older adult	Skate park
Picnic & barbecue	Aesthetics/ well-maintained	Parks are updated	Meet the needs of demographics, such as more cricket	Programs that support cultural awareness	Places and trails for all ages and abilities	Inclusive, active community
Best tennis center in County!	18-hole golf course	Community-centric feel through events	League play and team sports	Activities for adults (ballroom, trails)	Things that kids can do, especially near home	Wide range of programs
Small town feel	Festivals, National Night Out and more	Village and neighborhood activities	Indoor gyms and facilities	Masters swimming	Dog Park!	Universally accessible park

What type of park and recreation agency do you need to be to achieve this?

Recreation Department	Financially self-sustaining	Strong volunteerism	Quality operations and maintenance
Become a city (for new revenues)	Innovative and contemporary	Strong community input and support	

Comments from an interactive work session with the MHCS D Board of Directors, held in July 2020, shows the desire to diversify parks and programs (notes in yellow), while focusing on financial sustainability, revenues, maintenance, operations, and programs (notes in blue).

KEY OPPORTUNITIES

- Reduce park acreage and high-cost features, such as highly-manicured plantings, maintenance-intensive mini parks, single-purpose facilities, and facilities with low or declining demand or limited opportunity for cost-recovery.
- Consider park and recreation costs along with other “city” needs as the parks and recreation system is expanded and the District transitions to a City.
- Create business and operations plans for major facilities and indoor program areas that factor in cost-recovery and revenue generation.
- Plan recreation facilities that provide flexible programming spaces to support full-day programming and accommodate changing needs.
- Support volunteerism and the formation of new partnerships to fill gaps in service.

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CHAPTER 3

PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

CHAPTER 3: PARKS, TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE

Building on the opportunities and key directions identified in Chapter 2, a new vision for the parks, trails and open space system emerged. This chapter describes the general vision, framework and specific guidelines for the parks, trails and open space system. The information will guide MHCS D as it builds out of the remainder of Mountain House and continues to manage, maintain, and renovate parks into the future.

The community envisions a consolidated system of parks, trails, and open space to support recreation, leisure, and other community benefits. Within this system, sites that are counted as “parks” play a different role than sites noted as “trail corridors” or “open space.”

- **Parks** are designed and developed to support recreation and community gathering space for Mountain House neighborhoods and the entire community. Parks are divided into two classifications (neighborhood and community) and several types, including multi-use community parks, special use parks, linear parks, village parks, and mini parks.
- **Trails** promote active transportation and connectivity in utility corridors not intended for extensive recreation use.
- **Open Space** includes landscaped and natural parcels that provide green space to support community aesthetics and ecological functions.

PARK, TRAIL AND OPEN SPACE CONCEPTS

The refined vision for parks, trails and open space emerged through community input along with conversations with District staff, developers, and stakeholders. It ensures that Mountain House will offer a variety of parks to meet community-wide and close-to-home recreation needs. It refines the park land classification system to include community and neighborhood parks, interconnected through a series of trail corridors and open space.

As defined in the maps and reference table on the following pages, the new concept for parks, trails and open space addresses the following goals:

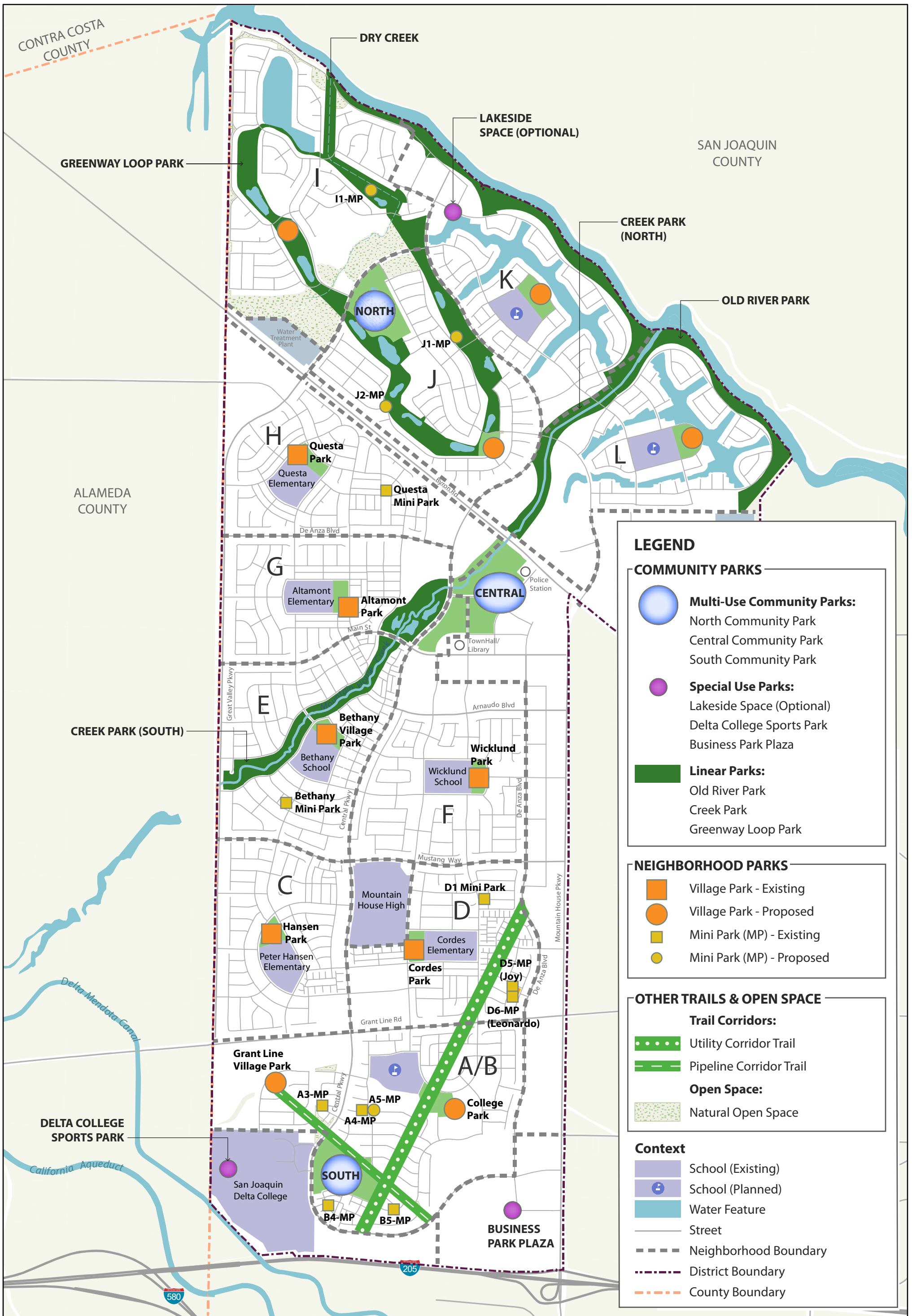
- Provides an interconnected system of parks, greenspace, and trails
- Diversifies neighborhood and community park facilities and recreation uses
- Creates a unique identity for each community park
- Develops the former planned golf course area as a linear park loop that connects other types of parks and open space
- Positions mini parks to provide service in unserved areas and to create recreation activity nodes along linear parks and trail corridors
- Focuses on community needs and avoids the development of regional attractions

- Centralizes major facilities to emphasize access, functionality, cost recovery, operational efficiencies, and programming flexibility
- Introduces special use parks to provide distinctive recreation options and gathering spaces for the entire community
- Right-sizes the District's level of service and investment
- Balances park functionality and aesthetics
- Designs spaces as flexible, multi-use areas
- Provides access to the river and lakes in north Mountain House
- Protects the creek and river corridors and enhance the ecological function of parks and open space, identifying key locations for natural areas

Figure 3.1 presents the *Parks, Trails and Open Space Concept*. An overview of all parks, trail corridors, and open space by classification is presented in Tables 3.1 and 3.2. See Appendix A for details about existing and proposed Mountain House parks and acreage.

Figure 3.2, *Park Access and Trail Connectivity* illustrates the bike and pedestrian trail system that supports park access, active transportation, and trail-related recreation. It includes all off-street or separated bikeways (Class I and Class IV) corresponding to the *Mountain House Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan* (Bike Plan). It also identifies the locations of trail staging areas (trailheads) and activity nodes along trails. This pedestrian and bikeway system corresponds to routes shown in the Bike Plan, which includes additional on-street bike routes, not shown here.





LEGEND

COMMUNITY PARKS

- Multi-Use Community Parks:**
 - North Community Park
 - Central Community Park
 - South Community Park
- Special Use Parks:**
 - Lakeside Space (Optional)
 - Delta College Sports Park
 - Business Park Plaza
- Linear Parks:**
 - Old River Park
 - Creek Park
 - Greenway Loop Park

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

- Village Park - Existing
- Village Park - Proposed
- Mini Park (MP) - Existing
- Mini Park (MP) - Proposed

OTHER TRAILS & OPEN SPACE

Trail Corridors:

- Utility Corridor Trail
- Pipeline Corridor Trail

Open Space:

- Natural Open Space

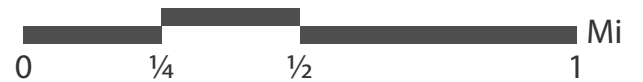
Context

- School (Existing)
- School (Planned)
- Water Feature
- Street
- Neighborhood Boundary
- District Boundary
- County Boundary



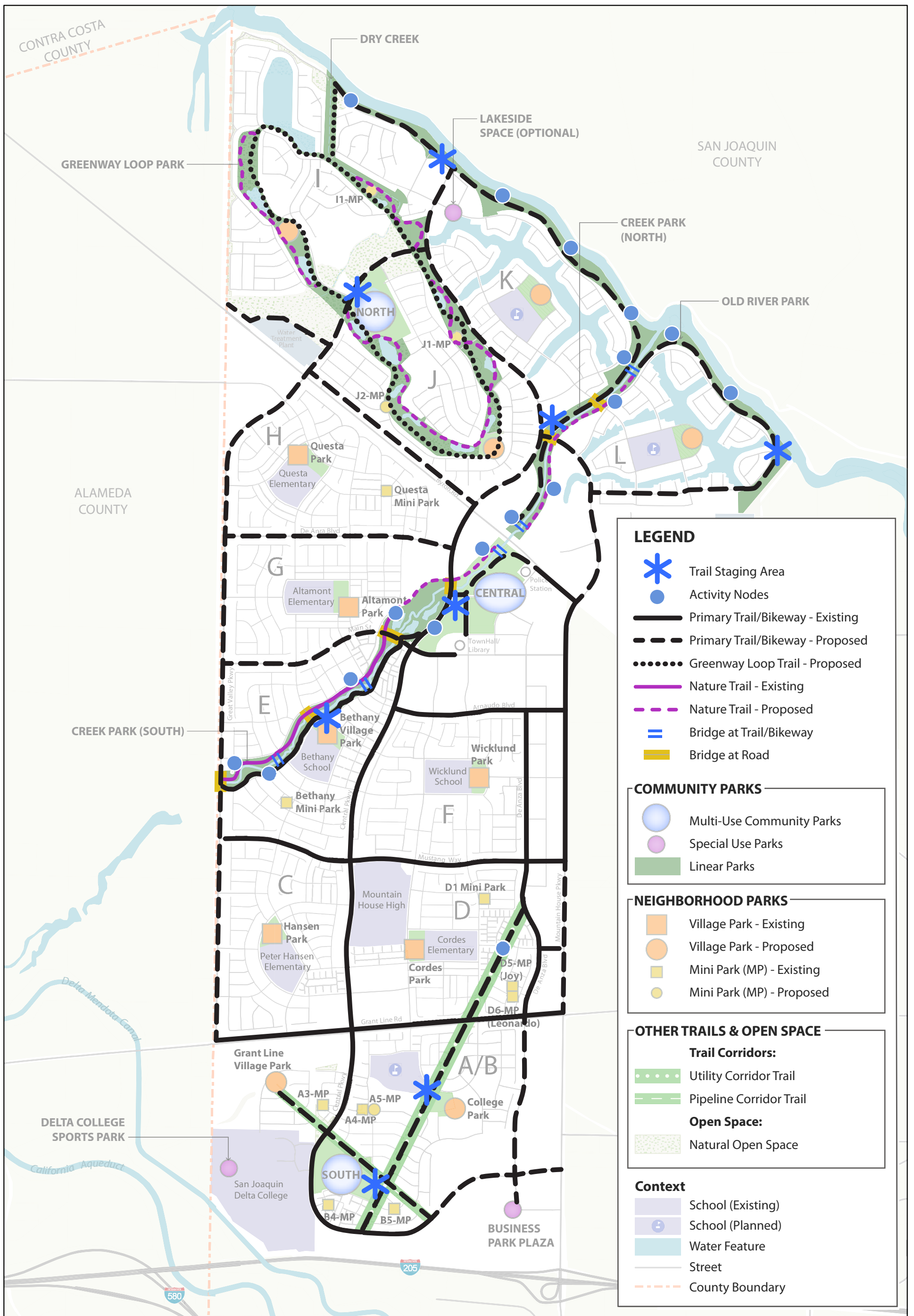
Mountain House CSD
Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Plan

Figure 1: Parks, Trails and Open Space Concept



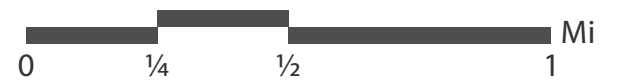
Source: San Joaquin County, Alameda County
Date: 04.22.2021





Mountain House CSD
Parks, Recreation, and Leisure Plan

Figure 2: Park Access and Trail Connectivity



Source: San Joaquin County, Alameda County
Date: 04.22.2021



Table 3.1: Park Type and Vision by Classification

COMMUNITY PARKS	
MULTI-USE COMMUNITY PARKS	
<i>Large parks that provide sports fields and courts, community gathering space, and specialized or unique facilities such as amphitheaters, swimming pools, and recreation centers to support programming and attract people from across the community. These parks include on-site parking, restrooms, trail access, and similar support amenities for longer site visits.</i>	
North Community Park , 20.0 ac	Vision: Nature-based leisure and recreation space intended to serve the entire community.
Central Community Park , 56.1 ac	Vision: Community hub, event and gathering space intended to provide indoor and outdoor recreation, aquatics, sports, community events and programs in a centralized location.
South Community Park , 20.2 ac	Vision: Active, family and student-oriented sports and play space that serves as a sports hub and supports a greater variety of recreation activities.
SPECIAL USE PARKS	
<i>Parks that support a single function or specialized use to serve residents, employees, and visitors. These parks vary in size and include urban plazas, lake access, and sports parks.</i>	
Lakeside Space (Optional) , 2.0 ac	Vision: An optional lakeside public area with water access and small gathering space provided through a public/private partnership.
Delta College Sports Park , 7.0 ac	Vision: A sports field complex for student and community use.
Business Plaza Park , 0.5 ac	Vision: An urban plaza and gathering space with amenities to support visitors and employees at nearby businesses.
LINEAR PARKS	
<i>Elongated greenways that support trail activities, passive recreation, and ecological functions to serve the entire Mountain House community.</i>	
Old River Park , 87.0 ac	Vision: A riverfront greenway and trail corridor that supports nature-based recreation and activities such as picnicking, fishing, walking, biking, fitness, wildlife observation, interpretation, and nature play.
Creek Park , 43.6 ac	Vision: A natural linear park that serves as the central open space feature for the community, providing trails, passive recreation, nature views, interpretation, habitat, and flood control.
Greenway Loop Park , 98.5 ac	Vision: A family- and senior-friendly looped greenway and trail that supports fitness and exploration, providing residents with views to open space and connections to nature.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS		
VILLAGE PARKS <i>Medium parks, typically five (5) acres in size, that support play, picnicking, sports, and leisure activities for nearby neighbors who live within approximately one-half mile.</i>		
Hansen Park, 5.5 ac Cordes Park, 5.0 ac Bethany Village Park, 5.5 ac Wicklund Park, 5.2 ac Altamont Park 5.7 ac Questa Park, 5.6 ac	Village Park I, 5.0 ac Village Park J, 5.0 ac Village Park, 5.0 ac Village Park L, 5.0 ac Costa Park, 9.0 ac Grant Line Park, 2.5 ac	Vision: Close-to-home recreation and gathering space for residents of all ages that support community health and wellness and contribute to village character and identity.
MINI PARKS <i>Small parks, less than two (2) acres in size, that provide greenspace, informal play and gathering space for residents within a short walking distance (one-quarter mile).</i>		
Bethany Mini Park, 0.3 ac Questa Mini Park, 0.6 ac A3 Mini Park, 0.1 ac A4 Mini Park, 0.1 ac A5 Mini Park, 0.3 ac B4 Mini Park, 0.4 ac B5 Mini Park, 0.2 ac	D1 Mini Park, 0.1 ac D5 Mini Park, 0.2 ac D6 Mini Park, 0.2 ac I1 Mini Park, 0.5 ac I2 Mini Park, 0.5 ac J1 Mini Park, 0.5 ac J2 Mini Park, 0.5 ac	Vision: Small recreation and gathering spots that support fitness and play near homes or along trails.

Table 3.2: Trails and Open Space Vision by Classification

OTHER TRAILS & OPEN SPACE	
TRAIL CORRIDORS <i>Class I bikeways in landscaped utility or pipeline corridors designed to enhance the trail experience.</i>	
Utility Corridor Trail , 7.9 acres	Vision: An active transportation corridor that provides connections to other bikeways and space for informal play.
Pipeline Corridor Trail , 4.0 acres	Vision: An active transportation corridor that provides connections to other bikeways and local parks.
OPEN SPACE <i>Green parcels that are protected, restored or maintained to provide local greenspace. Sites may include gateways, remnant parcels, viewsheds, beautification areas, wetlands, grasslands, or other natural areas.</i>	
Landscaped Areas , 3.0 acres	Vision: Undeveloped or lightly developed greenspace that is landscaped to support community aesthetics.
Natural Areas , 62.0 acres	Vision: Protected or restored open space areas that protect habitat, sustain natural resources and enhance ecological function.

LEVEL OF SERVICE

Mountain House will provide 478 acres of parks, trail corridors and open space when fully developed. This represents approximately two-thirds of the acreage planned in 2011, which will help right-size the system for maintenance and operations. The 478 acres of parks, when subtracting the 299-acre golf course recommended in the previous plan, actually end up increasing the amount of usable parkland for the community.

To ensure this is the right amount of park land for Mountain House and meets San Joaquin County standards, acreage is calculated as a Level of Service (LOS) ratio, expressed in terms of acres per 1,000 residents. Table 3.3 shows that “parks” account for 10.3 acres of recreation space for every 1,000 residents anticipated to live in Mountain House at build out. The remaining trails and open space, while serving important functions, are not counted towards the County’s park land requirements.

Table 3.3: Mountain House Acreage and LOS by Classification

CLASSIFICATION	2011 PLANNED ACRES	2021 EXISTING & PROPOSED ACRES	2021 LOS (ACRES/1,000)
Parks			
Community Parks			
Multiuse Community Parks	134.2	96.3	2.5
Special Use Parks	3.0	8.0	0.2
Linear Parks	173.8	229.1	5.9
Golf Course	299.0	--	--
<i>Community Parks Subtotal</i>	610.0	333.4	8.6
Neighborhood Parks			
Village Parks	60.0	66.5	1.6
Mini Parks	(not counted)	5.1	0.1
<i>Neighborhood Parks Subtotal</i>	60.0	71.6	1.7
Total Parks	670.0	405.0	10.3
Trails and Open Space			
Trail Corridors	(not counted)	11.8	0.3
Natural Areas	54.5	62.0	1.6
Landscaped Areas	3.0	3.0	0.1
<i>Trails and Open Space Subtotal</i>	57.5	76.8	2.0
Total All Lands	727.5	481.8	12.3

2021 service levels are based on a build-out population of 39,000.

Table 3.4 compares the District’s level of service to the County’s park standard, the LOS proposed in 2011, and the acreage provided by similar sized communities across the nation as defined through Park Metrics tabulated by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). If Mountain House builds neighborhood and community parks as planned, the District would exceed the County’s required standard. However, it would provide a level of service only slightly higher than other park agencies serving populations 20,000 to 49,999, according to NRPA’s Park Metrics. In addition, the District would increase its level of service for Trail Corridor and Open Space, by increasing the numbers of bikeways.

Table 3.4: Park Level of Service Benchmarks

	LOS (ACRES/1,000)
Parks	
2021 Proposed Park LOS	10.3
2011 Planned Park LOS (includes golf course)	16.0
San Joaquin County Required LOS	5.0
NRPA Median LOS for Similar-Size Communities (Park Metrics)	9.6
Trails and Open Space	
2021 Proposed LOS for Trails and Open Space	2.0
2011 Proposed LOS for Trails and Open Space	1.4

*2011 service levels are based on a build-out population of 42,000. Mini parks were not counted.
 2021 service levels are based on a build-out population of 39,000.*



PARK GUIDELINES BY CLASSIFICATION

The ideal park system for Mountain House will provide an array of park sites that collectively meet the needs of residents, employees, and villages across the district. While individual parks may be unique, all parks will adhere to guidelines that ensure park quality, safety, usability, maintenance efficiencies, sustainability, and accessibility. Park siting, design, development, and landscaping choices should support each individual park's function, the success of the system, as well as the overarching goals and funding realities of the District.

Park guidelines are presented below. Along with other State and federal mandates, the guidelines provide direction for park design, development and renovation. Systemwide guidelines are presented first, followed by specific guidelines broken down by park classification, type, and site.

SYSTEMWIDE PARK GUIDELINES

- All park elements, facilities, materials, and equipment shall be in compliance with all current safety, accessibility, and design standards, laws, regulations, and any other mandated requirements.
- Design of park facilities and materials shall comply with the MHCS Design Manual standards for parks.
- Site amenities and facilities shall be designed with inclusivity in mind to support the needs of the entire community, including families, singles, seniors, adults, teens, children, and people with disabilities.
- Park vegetation and irrigation shall be guided by general site standards noted here, as well as the new Landscaping and Plant Palette Guidelines.
- A comprehensive wayfinding and signage program shall be implemented across the network of parks, trails, bikeways, and open space. The program shall include signage, pavement markings, and markers related to site identification, regulatory signage, allowable uses, directions and distance, wayfinding, and interpretive elements.
- Maintenance impacts/costs should be balanced with creative park design to ensure that parks are efficient, sustainable, and affordable to maintain in the long-term. Greater customization may be approved in community parks, while elements in neighborhood parks should be designed for greater maintenance efficiencies.
- The District should standardize and preapprove design choices for amenities such as trash receptacles, bike racks, drinking fountains, restrooms, benches, etc., in village parks, mini parks, and linear parks for maintenance ease and cost effectiveness. Customized amenities should be reserved for high-use multi-use community parks and special use parks.
- Where consistent with guidelines, design themes may be highlighted through the use of colors, materials, furnishings, equipment, and plant selections consistent with park maintenance requirements.
- Natural features, items of cultural significance, public art, and historic and environmental interpretive elements should be included in parks to contribute to park identity and individual character.
- Park safety and security shall be addressed by incorporating Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) principles into the design, development, and operations of parks and facilities. Guidelines include the appropriate use or exclusion of lights to deter crime, landscaping to allow unobstructed views of surrounding areas, and the location of

play equipment and other recreation facilities in areas that are highly visible from the street.

- Park, facility and trail lighting shall be provided to support safety and recreation, while minimizing light pollution in nearby residential areas. Lighting shall conform to the District’s Design Manual, with exact locations and styles to be determined based on factors such as site conditions, the presence of adjacent street or facility lighting, the presence of nearby residences, and wildlife habitat needs.
- Sustainable practices shall be incorporated into park management, design/development, maintenance to ensure the wise use of resources. (See Chapter 5.)
- The District may amend these guidelines and standards based on new information including community input, funding availability, and updated development plans.

PARK CLASSIFICATION AND TYPE

Mountain House parks are classified as community parks and neighborhood parks. Each classification is divided into park types that are described by their *Definition, Intent, Benefits, and Policies*.

Additional guidelines for park sites are summarized in tables that specify:

- **Vision:** Overall intent and vision for the park.
- **Site Character:** Description of park character and primary recreation features.
- **Size and Configuration:** Park size, shape, location, adjacencies, access.
- **Desired Recreation Elements:** Facilities desired to support the site vision. Final elements will be determined in the specific design documents.
- **Additional Recreation Elements to Consider:** Amenities and facilities that are suitable for this park and may be considered during the site-specific design process to provide more diverse recreation experiences. (Note: This list is not exhaustive and other types of appropriate amenities and facilities may be considered.)
- **Required Support Amenities:** Amenities required to support park functionality and use.
- **Landscaping and Vegetation:** General character of planting and irrigation.
- **Additional Considerations:** Additional notes about items to consider, provide, or purposely avoid.

While policies for each park type will define minimum requirements for development, the site guidelines are intentionally flexible to encourage a diverse mix of amenities and facilities to support the intended vision for the park. Images are provided to illustrate typical park features, not at the exact size, scale or type intended to be developed.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Mountain House provides community parks to support a variety of active and passive recreation opportunities, while providing greenspace, enhancing connectivity, and protecting natural resources. The District offers three types of community parks:

Community Parks provide unique parks, facilities, and natural areas that serve the entire district.

- 1 **Multi-Use Community Parks:** North, Central and South Community Parks
- 2 **Special Use Parks:** Lakeside Space (Optional), Delta College Sports Park, and Business Park Plaza
- 3 **Linear Parks:** Old River Park, Creek Park, and Greenway Loop

MULTI-USE COMMUNITY PARKS

Large parks that provide sports fields and courts, community gathering space, and specialized or unique facilities such as amphitheaters, swimming pools, and recreation centers to support programming and attract people from across the community. These parks include on-site parking, restrooms, trail access, and similar support amenities for longer site visits.

INTENT

The District will have three multi-use community parks geographically dispersed in north, central and south Mountain House. As the District's largest parks, these sites are intended to be the hub of community activities to support recreation, community gatherings, and play. Each park is designed to meet the recreation needs of several neighborhoods, while also providing unique facilities that attract people from across the district.

BENEFITS

- Provide a variety of accessible recreation opportunities for all ages and diverse recreation interests.
- Provide opportunities for large group gatherings, organized programs, and community events.
- Support organized sports, fostering a sense of belonging and sportsmanship.
- Support individual and community health and wellness.
- Contribute to community character and identity.
- Foster a sense of community and civic pride.
- Provide greenspace and enhances environmental and ecological functions.
- May protect and restore natural areas and habitat.
- Typically support revenue-generating facilities, events, and programs.

POLICIES

- North, Central, and South Mountain House shall each be served by a multi-use community park. Each site should be centrally located and include a mix of facilities to serve surrounding villages and attract park visitors from throughout the District.
- Each community park shall have its own identity and character, with distinct facilities, landscaping, play elements, art, color palettes, and other design features that contribute to unique park experiences.
- Community parks shall be easily accessible for pedestrians, bicyclists, cars, and transit.
- Sites shall be located along arterial streets, with vehicle entries from Arterial or Collector streets.
- On-site parking is required to meet County Code and serve the mix of facilities. Whenever possible, parking shall be shared with other nearby public facilities such as transit stations, libraries, and civic centers.
- Multi-use community parks shall be connected via Class I trails to the City's bike and pedestrian network.
- Additional pedestrian and bicycle entries shall be located to provide park access from adjacent areas, allowing neighbors and employees to have easy pedestrian and bicycle access.
- Sites shall be designed for day and evening use, as well as after-dark use for selected facilities, with appropriate lighting provided.
- Multi-use community parks shall be designed for group use; sites are intended to be activated through events, sports, programs, and activities.
- Multi-use community parks shall include sufficient comfort amenities (permanent restrooms, drinking fountains, shade, etc.) to support regular visitation, group activities, and longer uses. Additional portable amenities may be brought in for temporary events.
- Multi-use community parks shall include both active and passive uses.
- The mix and types of recreation facilities will vary by park. All multi-use community parks are required to provide trail staging areas, loop trails, destination/thematic play areas, sports fields, sports courts, medium and large-group picnic shelters, and additional activity areas that diversify recreation opportunities based on the character of the site.
- Multi-use parks shall serve District residents and business employees; they shall not be designed to draw visitors from outside Mountain House. Regional-scale facilities such as marinas and regional sports stadiums are discouraged.

Table 3.5: North Community Park Standards

NORTH COMMUNITY PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	Nature-based leisure and recreation space intended to serve the entire community.
Site Character	<p>North Community Park includes landscaping and features that provide a more relaxed, contemplative, playful environment where people can connect to the outdoors in a low-impact way.</p> <p>The site features amenities and facilities that serve families, older adults and seniors. While the park includes active-use features such as cricket, soccer fields and a variety of sports courts, these are separated from quieter uses through the use of landscaping to create nodes for specific recreation activities and leisure.</p> <p>Designs should highlight greenspace, water features, and enhanced views of waterways/bioretenion areas to connect residents to nature. The site is connected to both the meandering Greenway Loop Park and the Old River Linear Park via trails to encourage exploration, walking and biking.</p>
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 acres • Centrally located north of Byron Road • Contiguous, non-linear usable shape • Connected to Class-I multi-use trails and the Greenway Loop Trail • Pedestrian and bicycle access from trails and from adjacent neighborhoods on all four sides • Good vehicle access and parking to serve major facilities • Located on arterial with public street frontage
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium and large group picnic shelters • Dispersed picnic areas • Destination nature play area (with water hand-pump) • Grass rectangular multi-use sports fields (youth and adult; lighted) • Cricket fields (youth and adult; lighted) • Pickleball complex (tournament caliber; lighted) • Outdoor fitness equipment • Badminton, volleyball, basketball and/or other sports courts • Tai chi court or plaza • Off-leash dog area • Loop trail • Trail staging area near bikeway (restroom, bike repair station, bike rest area, signage) • Natural, historical, or cultural interpretation elements • Art (integrated or stand-alone)
Additional Recreation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indoor/outdoor nature center and reservable event venue (lighted) • Seating/social plaza (around a fire ring)

<p>Elements to Consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Outdoor nature classroom • Outdoor chess • Little library (outdoor book share) • Contemplative garden or community garden • Climbing feature • Bike pump track • Shuffleboard/bocce • Labyrinth • Viewpoints
<p>Required Support Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Varied seating • Shade (e.g., trees, canopies, sails, structures, umbrellas) • Permanent restrooms • Water and power hookups at picnic shelters and areas • Individual barbecues or group barbecue area • On-site parking • Pedestrian-scale lighting throughout, plus facility lighting noted above • Signage • Maintenance/storage facilities • Drinking fountain with bottle filler • Bike racks and bike repair stations • Trash/recycling receptacles • Dog waste stations • Removable bollards for maintenance • Fencing for safety and to discourage access to sensitive natural areas
<p>Landscaping & Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of landscaping, native plantings, and natural areas, with maximum of 20% natural/unirrigated. • Trees for shade, habitat, and seasonal interest. Greater tree canopy desired at this site. • Native and drought-tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). Incorporate pollinator species for improved habitat. • Manicured lawn areas for informal play and sports • Bioswales for stormwater filtration
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid highly-manicured landscaping and regional facilities. • Avoid a stand-alone senior center, instead combining uses in a larger, multigenerational recreation center at Central Park.



Destination nature play area



Cricket fields



Pickleball complex



Outdoor fitness



Tai chi court or plaza

Table 3.6: Central Community Park Standards

CENTRAL COMMUNITY PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	Community hub, event and gathering space intended to provide indoor and outdoor recreation, aquatics, sports, community events and programs in a centralized location.
Site Character	Central Community Park is a vibrant, urban park that draws people from across Mountain House for daytime and after-dark sports and special events. It serves as “the place to go” for exciting community programs, fairs and festivals, indoor recreation, aquatics, outdoor cultural arts performances, and community-wide picnics. This centralized, welcoming park is part of Mountain House’s civic center, connected via bike and pedestrian trails to Creek Park and other surrounding parks and destinations. Its inclusive design includes wide paths, varied seating options, and highly accessible elements for all ages and abilities. The District’s recreation center, aquatic facility, sport field complex, and amphitheater will be located here, creating synergies for programming for all ages. This site will have strong connections to adjacent civic amenities, such as the Library, Town Hall, and the nearby business district.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 56.1 acres (includes 9.1 acres along the creek) • Centralized in Mountain House, between Creek Park, the Civic Center, Transit Station and Library • Contiguous, non-linear usable shape • Connected to three converging Class-I multi-use bike paths along Main Street, Central Parkway, and Creek Park for pedestrian and bicycle access • Designed to maximize connections to adjacent civic buildings • Good vehicle access and parking to serve major facilities • Located on arterial for access with public street frontage on two sides
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multiuse, multigenerational recreation and community center • Aquatic facility • Urban plaza with movable tables and chairs • Amphitheater, with stage/performance area with power for large events • Spray feature • Large group pavilion, plus medium and large-group picnic areas • Larger all-inclusive, universal play area • Urban-style skateboard plaza • Dog park (fenced areas for large and small dogs) • Activity stations (e.g., outdoor ping pong, giant Jenga, cornhole) • Softball pinwheel complex (lighted) • Baseball field (lighted) • Soccer and cricket fields (overlays, lighted)

<p>Desired Recreation Elements (continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-court tennis complex (lighted) • Volleyball, badminton, and basketball courts (lighted) Concessions building • Loop trail • Trail staging area located near bikeway (restroom, bike repair station, bike rest area, and signage)
<p>Additional Recreation Elements to Consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpretive, heritage or historical element • Art (integrated or stand-alone) • Natural areas for enhanced ecological function
<p>Required Support Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Varied seating • Shade (e.g., trees, canopies, sails, structures, umbrellas; with water and power hookups) • Permanent restrooms • Water and power hookups at several locations for large events • On-site and/or shared parking (with civic buildings) suitable for high-use sports and indoor facilities • Pedestrian-scale lighting throughout, plus facility lighting • Signage • Maintenance/storage facilities • Drinking fountain with bottle filler • Bike racks • Bike repair stations • Trash/recycling receptacles • Dog waste stations • Removable bollards for maintenance • Fencing for safety and to protect sensitive natural areas
<p>Landscaping & Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A more urban, manicured maintenance landscape with a more detailed planting palette to showcase this park as the heart of the community • Manicured sports field grass or synthetic turf • Manicured lawn areas for events and informal play • Trees for shade, habitat, and seasonal interest • Drought-tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • Bioswales for stormwater filtration • Natural areas, with maximum of 5% of the site natural/unirrigated
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Orient facilities for synergies with nearby uses, such as the library. • Share parking with nearby facilities. • Develop larger major facilities, co-located to support indoor/outdoor programming, operational and staffing efficiencies. (See Chapter 4)



Rec center and aquatic facility



Activity stations



Urban-style skateboard plaza



Urban plaza with movable chairs



Amphitheater



Lighted tennis complex



Multiple sports fields



Larger all-inclusive play area

Table 3.7: South Community Park Standards

SOUTH COMMUNITY PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	Active, family- and student-oriented sports and play space that serves as a sports hub and supports a greater variety of recreation activities.
Site Character	<p>South Community Park is the District’s active, high-energy park, supporting lighted sports fields, cheering crowds, noisy events, challenge elements, competitive activities, and student and family gatherings for fun-filled day at the park. Given the park’s proximity to the college and high school, this site includes special elements to appeal to teens and young adults—encouraging recreation and wellness and providing an outdoor study and gathering space.</p> <p>Bright colors and bold design features characterize the site. Located at the intersection of three bike trails, plus a special marked crossing between the park and the college, this site is designed for maximum access.</p>
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20.2 acres (includes 1.2 acres of adjacent PG&E Utility easement; does not include pipeline corridor or college contribution, which are counted separately) • Located south of Grant Line Road, adjacent to San Joaquin Delta College • Located at the intersection of three Class-I multi-use bike paths along Central Parkway, the utility corridor and pipeline corridor • Pedestrian and bicycle access provided from adjacent housing on the north and south sides • Contiguous, non-linear usable shape • Good vehicle access and parking to serve major facilities • Located on arterial for access with public street frontage via an arterial or collector street on a minimum of two sides • Connections/access to San Joaquin Delta College and the Sports Park.
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ballfields with rectangular field overlays for tournament play (lighted, bleachers or other seating) • Concessions/coffee kiosk • Pavilion (outdoor covered large group space for rentals, events, programs, and student activities) • Medium and large-group picnic shelters and areas • Destination adventure play • Basketball court complex and volleyball courts (lighted) • Climbing wall or spire, zipline and challenge elements • Skatepark/bike park (lighted) • Loop path • Trail staging area located near bikeway (restroom, bike repair station, bike rest area, and signage) • Outdoor fitness equipment

<p>Additional Recreation Elements to Consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Artificial turf fields (lighted; bleachers or hillside seating) • Hill slide • Dog park and/or agility course • Pump track or BMX track • Par course • Outdoor classrooms/study areas
<p>Required Support Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Varied seating • Shade (e.g., trees, canopies, sails, structures, umbrellas) • Permanent restrooms • Water and power hookups at several locations for events and vendors • On-site and/or shared parking (with college) suitable for high-use sports • Signage • Maintenance/storage facilities • Drinking fountain with bottle filler • Bike racks • Bike repair stations • Trash/recycling receptacles • Dog waste stations • Removable bollards for maintenance • Fencing for safety and to discourage access to sensitive natural areas
<p>Landscaping & Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-to-medium maintenance, functional landscaping for most of the site, blocking winds from the west and keeping the park shaded and green even with high-impact uses by large crowds. • Manicured sports field grass or synthetic turf • Manicured lawn areas for informal play • Trees for shade, habitat, and seasonal interest • Drought-tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • Bioswales for stormwater filtration
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid unmanicured, unirrigated open space and regional facilities. • Avoid a stand-alone gymnasium, instead combining uses in a larger, multigenerational recreation center at Central Park. • Share parking with San Joaquin Delta College.



Multiple ballfields



Group Picnic Shelter



Destination Adventure Play



Hill slide



Pump track or BMX track



Dog Park

SPECIAL USE PARKS

Parks that support a single function or specialized use to serve residents, employees, and visitors. These parks vary in size and include urban plazas, lake access, and sports parks.

INTENT

The District will provide two special use parks, one in the north and one in south, to serve patrons of Mountain House business parks and commercial areas and support unique leisure opportunities.

BENEFITS

- Support unique recreation experiences attracting residents districtwide.
- Ensure water access to small lakes in North Mountain House.
- Attract businesses and visitors to commercial/office areas to support the District's economic vitality.
- Provide leisure space for residents and employees.
- Meet sports facility needs for the college and community.
- Support concessionaire-based leisure activities.

POLICIES

- Special use parks shall have distinct elements to create a unique recreation atmosphere not found elsewhere in the community.
- Site size must be sufficient to support intended recreation and leisure uses, as well as support functions.
- Sites may be developed or operated through public/private or public/public partnerships, with nearby businesses or another operator coordinating with the District to providing events and programs or manage concessions.
- Parking may be provided or shared with adjacent commercial uses to meet County requirements. However, sites may require special access and parking (e.g., event staging, loading/unloading zones, food truck parking) to support site programming and uses.
- The mix and types of recreation facilities will vary by park. All special use parks are required to provide appropriate seating, tables and amenities to support small group gatherings and use.
- Revenue-generating activities and concessions may be provided at special use parks.
- Multi-use parks shall serve District residents and business employees; they shall not be designed to draw visitors from outside Mountain House. Regional-scale facilities and high-impact uses such as a motorized boat launch, full-service dock, swimming beach, and large spraygrounds/water play areas are prohibited.

Table 3.8: Lakeside Space (Optional) Standards

LAKESIDE SPACE (OPTIONAL) STANDARDS	
Vision	An optional lakeside public area with water access and small gathering space provided through a public/private partnership.
Site Character	Lakeside space provides public access to the small lakes located in north Mountain House. While it is an optional site, water access is highly desired. The site would be managed through a public/private partnership with nearby businesses. It may include a small gathering space with water views, picnic facilities, and non-motorized boat launch/rental area. The site is intended to have a family-friendly social vibe, providing a place to grab a bite to eat, sit under an umbrella and watch or join the canoes or kayaks circling the lake.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 acres • May be located on private commercial property.
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small seating/eating area with movable tables and chairs • Shade (e.g., canopy, umbrellas, etc.) • Viewpoint • Unique seating (e.g., Adirondack chairs, seatwalls) • Thematic art (integrated or stand-alone)
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small non-motorized boat launch • Canoe/kayak rental facility, with possible boat storage • Boat lockers, rinsing shower
Required Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Parking (may be shared with commercial uses) • Permanent restrooms • Pedestrian-scale lighting throughout • Signage, including water/boating safety signage • Bike racks • Trash/recycling receptacles
Landscaping & Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimal landscaping; shade trees and accent planting • Drought-tolerant plants with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance)
Additional Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid facilities that support incompatible uses, such as fishing, swimming, sports, and large group gatherings. • Site development and operations will be negotiated when commercial uses are identified.



Lakeside viewpoint



Shared commercial lakefront park space and seating



Canoe, kayak, stand-up paddleboard launch and rentals

Table 3.9: Delta College Sports Park Standards

DELTA COLLEGE SPORTS PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	A sports field complex for student and community use.
Site Character	<p>Delta College Sports Park is intended to supplement the activities and facilities at South Community Park by providing full regulation size, competitive quality sports facilities and amenities in a complex. While intended to support college sports, the site should remain accessible for scheduled and drop-in community access and use.</p> <p>Sports facilities may vary depending on team and individual sports supported at the college grows.</p>
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 acres • Located at San Joaquin Delta College • Pedestrian/bike access and connections to the trail system and South Community Park should be maximized.
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-purpose synthetic or turf sports field, lighted and lined for multiple sports uses • Walking/jogging track (or optional track and field venue) • Bleachers/stadium seating • Shaded pavilion or outdoor seating/study area
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Competitive track and field facilities and space • Lighted sports courts • Concessions and food plaza • Training facility or fieldhouse • Baseball stadium or ballfields • Additional sports and social elements, TBD
Required Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Parking (shared with other college uses) • Permanent restrooms • Drinking fountain with bottle filler • Pedestrian-scale lighting throughout and facility lighting as noted above • Varied seating and tables • Signage • Bike racks • Trash/recycling receptacles • Maintenance/storage facilities • Fencing for safety

<p>Landscaping & Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-to-medium maintenance, functional landscaping for most of the site, blocking winds from the west and withstanding high-impact uses by large crowds • Manicured sports field grass or synthetic turf • Trees for shade, habitat, and seasonal interest • Drought-tolerant plants with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance)
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site needs may evolve depending on college decisions about sports



Multi-use sports field and track



Shaded seating/study area



Lighted sports courts

Table 3.10: Business Park Plaza Standards

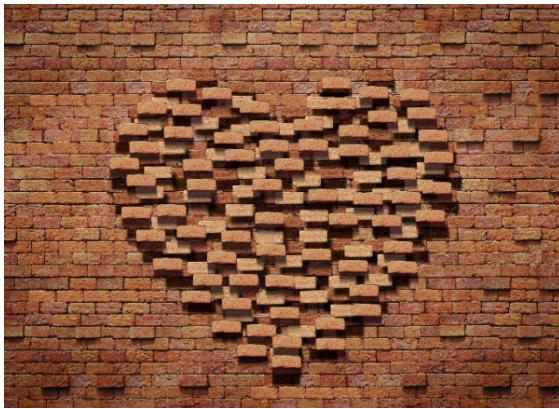
BUSINESS PARK PLAZA STANDARDS	
Vision	An urban plaza and gathering space with amenities to support visitors and employees at nearby businesses.
Site Character	This Business Plaza provides a mix of hardscape, greenscape, seating, and small event space to support small social gatherings and outdoor work. The site is intended to provide a local place for lunches, work breaks, coffee, and activities to serve the employees and customers of nearby businesses. Serving the immediate area, site visitors are intended to walk or bike to the plaza, from their home, work, or business destination.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 0.5 acres
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardscape plaza • Green landscaped areas • Small amphitheater/event space with seatwalls • Outdoor work infrastructure, including long tables and chairs, electrical hookups, Wi-Fi, and shade
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coffee cart (operated by a concessionaire or vendor) • Small water feature, potentially with play/spray/mist options that can be turned on and off • Art (integrated or stand-alone)
Required Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Varied seating and tables • Shade (e.g., trees, canopies, sails, structures, umbrellas) • Pedestrian-scale lighting • Signage • Bike racks • Trash/recycling receptacles
Landscaping & Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More urban, vibrant landscape with med-high maintenance due to the small size and high visitor use. • Trees for shade and seasonal interest • Drought-tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance).
Additional Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid active use facilities.



Hardscape plaza



Small circular amphitheater with built-in seating



Art elements



Movable seating



Outdoor work space



Small waterplay/art element

LINEAR PARKS

Elongated greenways that support trail activities, passive recreation, and ecological functions to serve the entire Mountain House community.

INTENT

Protect and provide access to natural riparian and greenway corridors to support trail connections, nature access and views, wildlife habitat, and flood control.

BENEFITS

- Connect residents via bike and pedestrian trails to parks and community destinations.
- Provide passive recreational opportunities and access to greenspace.
- Foster a connection between people and the natural environment.
- Protect/restore natural areas with native species.
- Create viable wildlife corridors.
- Provide flood control.

POLICIES

- Linear Park design and management shall support trail connectivity, flood control, wildlife habitat, and recreation.
- Linear Parks shall count towards park land level of service and support recreation activities such as walking, biking, dog walking, picnicking, fishing, nature interpretation, wildlife observation, and play.
- Installation of recreational facilities shall be provided in coordination with habitat restoration and drainage requirements.
- Recreational uses shall be designed to minimize trespass into sensitive natural areas.
- All trails shall include signage as per a consistent, comprehensive, District-wide wayfinding and signage program that includes branded identification, regulatory, directional, and interpretive signage, mileage markers, and pavement markings.
- Flood protection of adjacent land and infrastructure shall be provided, in alignment with hydrology studies, while minimizing damage to the river and creek.
- Linear Parks shall provide bioswales or other green infrastructure to filter urban stormwater draining into the creek, river, ponds, or wetlands.
- Water access shall be provided at designated points that minimize habitat disturbance. Other trails and recreation amenities shall, to the extent feasible, provide views of the creek/river/ponds without encroaching on the water channel.
- Trails shall meander for a natural aesthetic and link to adjacent sidewalks at appropriate intersections.
- The mix and types of recreation facilities will vary by park. All linear parks are required to provide a primary trail, connector paths to nearby neighborhoods and parks, and activity nodes that support gathering/recreation. Trail staging areas, either within the linear park or in adjacent neighborhood and multi-use community parks, must be provided as noted to support trail use and access.
- Linear Park vegetation and irrigation, including natural vegetation, natural plantings, and non-native landscaping, shall be guided by general site standards (see following pages) and the new Landscaping and Plant Palette Guidelines.

Table 3.11: Old River Park Standards

OLD RIVER PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	A riverfront greenway and trail corridor that supports nature-based recreation and activities such as picnicking, fishing, walking, biking, fitness, wildlife observation, interpretation, and nature play.
Site Character	A mostly natural, linear park that supports ecological functions, with an existing levee near the river edge, a designated flood control zone with a wide sloped bank, and native plantings to enhance habitat. The primary recreational feature is a multi-use trail with a wide, paved bicycle and walking path, and adjacent soft-surfaced jogging path. In addition, the park contains trailheads, recreation spaces, and pedestrian amenities appropriate to the natural environment. Recreation features support picnicking, boating, fishing, walking, jogging, biking, wildlife observation, interpretation, lawn play and nature play.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The riverfront park stretches along Old River and includes the mouth of Mountain House Creek • 200' minimum width; width varies up to 500' • Corridor width should take into account wetland and flood control needs
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Trail: Class I trail along the upper edge of the flood control zone for the park's entire length. • Minor Paths: 5' minimum width, accessible decomposed granite paths connecting to activity nodes off the Primary Trail. • Connector Paths: 8' wide paved paths, that connect the Primary Trail to sidewalks, pedestrian street crossings, neighborhoods and public spaces adjacent to the corridor. • Staging Areas: Minimum two recreation access points and trailheads near the east and west ends of Old River Park that provide parking, restrooms, signage, group picnic shelter (with barbecue, power outlets and water), and open turf play area. • Activity nodes at approximately 1,500-foot intervals along the waterfront, considering where natural opportunities exist. These may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Fishing platforms or informal water access points - Habitat observation and viewpoints (platform, bench, interpretive feature; may include bird blind, ear trumpets, viewers, etc.) - Nature play features - Seating (Individual or grouped benches, seatwalls, Adirondack chairs, family-style plop benches, table and chairs, etc., with accessible space for wheelchair companion seating at all locations.)
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • River Trail: 5' minimum width, meandering hard-packed surface along the existing levee adjacent to Old River to support river views and fishing access • Non-motorized boat launch or informal canoe/kayak put-in/take-out point • Par Course • Art or additional interpretive elements

<p>Required Support Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Trail identification markers, mileage markers and directional signage as part of comprehensive wayfinding system • Varied seating • Permanent restrooms • On-site parking • Drinking fountain with pet fountain and bottle filler • Bike racks • Bike repair stations • Trash/recycling receptacles • Bollards, removable where required, to slow bikes at intersections, prevent car access and provide maintenance access. • Fencing for safety and to discourage access to sensitive natural areas
<p>Landscaping, Vegetation & Natural Features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To the extent possible, wildlife habitats and wetlands shall be buffered and protected from recreational activities. These may be vegetative buffers, composed of native plant materials, which allow views but discourage public access. Man-made materials shall be avoided. • The Landscape design shall incorporate planting zones appropriate to the riparian corridor’s natural ecology: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The river edge zone shall utilize riparian species and augment the existing vegetation adjacent to Old River. It shall be dedicated primarily to natural habitat, excepting the access points described above and other minor uses such as fishing platforms. - The upper, more inland zone shall be planted with mixed oak woodland and riparian tree and shrub species, with localized areas of lawn where recreation is invited. - The plant palette shall be appropriate to the specific ecotype at each area (Oak woodland, riparian, wetland, etc.) • Shade trees at pedestrian areas for comfort
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Per the <i>Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan</i>, the Primary Trail will be a 20’ wide multi- use trail that consists of a 10’ paved bikeway, 5’ paved walking path, and 5’ soft-surfaced jogging path. • Access to staging areas will be from the nearest road, and the staging area will be set back from the edge of road right-of-way a minimum of 30 feet to allow for natural screen plantings. • Seating shall be provided at regular intervals of approximately 500-1,000 feet, most appropriately at specific locations that provide views towards the river and at water access points. • Fencing may be provided in the river corridor for safety and where needed to minimize access to sensitive natural areas. • Avoid regional-serving or community amenities, formal recreation/sports facilities, and large-scale boat ramps, docks, and marinas that would damage the riparian environment.



Habitat observation area and overlook



Casual gathering opportunities



Accessible fishing platform



Simple fishing/lake access point



Appropriate fencing for a natural corridor



Artistic Identity signage

Table 3.12: Creek Park Standards

CREEK PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	A natural linear park that serves as the central open space feature for the community, providing trails, passive recreation, nature views, interpretation, habitat, and flood control.
Site Character	The primary recreational features of this nature-oriented open space are a multi-use biking/walking trail with pedestrian amenities and a secondary nature trail providing access, interpretive opportunities, and connections to the natural environment. The existing creek and wetlands make up a natural landscape, with native plants to support ecological functions.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Length: The park extends for over two miles, alongside an existing creek and related wetlands, between Great Valley Parkway and Old River. The majority of the park is south of Byron Road, where there is a break in the park due to grade/crossing considerations. The northern segment runs from the north side of Byron Road, heading north to its outfall into Old River. • Width: The creek corridor is a minimum of 200 feet in width, and wider than the flood channel to allow recreation/trail uses. The creek meanders from side to side for greater aesthetic and wildlife value, reaching as close as 50 feet from the corridor edge. Refer to previously designed and approved creek geometry, and hydrological study for additional information. • Final Plans will clarify minimum and maximum corridor width based on wetland and drainage considerations in the hydrological study.
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Trail: A continuous Class I trail parallel to one side of the creek, with a break where it deviates to cross Byron Road and the railroad tracks (must be outside of 100-year flood channel) (See Additional Considerations for width.) • Primary Trail Spur and End Loops: A spur in the Primary Trail continuing along the creek towards Byron Road on both the north and south sides. Where the trail approaches Byron Road, provide a turn-around loop that allows bicyclists to make a 180-degree turn without dismounting (and allow them exit to an adjacent neighborhood access path or bridge across the creek). • Nature Trail: 10' minimum width decomposed granite path, running along the opposite side of the creek from the Primary Trail. • Minor Paths: 5' minimum width decomposed granite paths connecting to destinations and activity nodes off the Primary Trail or Nature Trail. • Connector Paths: 8' wide paved paths, that connect the Primary Trail to sidewalks, pedestrian street crossings, neighborhoods and public spaces adjacent to the corridor.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian-Bike Bridges: A minimum of three, including one near the Creek confluence to connect the Old River Path; one each just north and south of Byron Road, (where the path ends) to connect to the trail on the opposite side of the creek. • Staging Areas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Minimum one staging area/trailhead shall be provided in the North creek segment near the intersection of Central Parkway and Mountain House Parkway, to include parking, restroom, bike repair station, bike rest area, and signage. This location allows access to the Creek Trail and both sides of Old River. - Access to additional staging areas provided in adjacent parks. See <i>Additional Considerations</i> below and the <i>Park Access and Trail Connectivity Map</i> for locations. • Activity Nodes (10), to be evenly divided between the two sides of the creek: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Approximately (5) walk-in or bike-in small group picnic areas - Approximately (5) habitat observation points or art/interpretive elements - Seating (individual or grouped benches, seatwalls, or family-style plop benches, with accessible space for wheelchair companion seating, oriented to provide creek views.)
<p>Additional Recreation Elements to Consider</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nature play • Additional art/interpretive elements • Pedestrian-Bike Bridges: One or two additional bridges across the creek in the southern portion of Creek park.
<p>Required Support Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Trail identification markers, mileage markers and directional signage as part of comprehensive wayfinding system • Varied seating • On-site parking, permanent restroom, drinking fountain with pet fountain and bottle filler at one trail staging area only • Bike racks • Bike repair stations • Trash/recycling receptacles • Bollards, removable where required, to slow bikes at intersections, prevent car access and provide maintenance access • Fencing for safety and to discourage access to sensitive natural areas
<p>Landscaping, Vegetation & Natural Features</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The existing Mountain House Creek channel and adjacent marshes shall be retained, and a diverse riparian system dominated by native species shall be created to the maximum extent practicable.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The plant palette shall be appropriate to the specific ecotype at each area (Oak woodland, riparian, wetland, etc.) • Between the primary path and adjacent streets or houses, provide native or drought tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • Shade trees shall be planted at pedestrian areas for comfort.
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Primary Trail will provide a continuous paved path of travel for maintenance crews and emergency vehicles. Per the Mountain House <i>Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan</i>, trail width varies between existing built conditions and new 14-foot or 20-foot wide sections, where possible. Refer to the Bike Plan for further details and road crossings. • Central Park and Bethany Village Park/School will include trail staging areas for Creek Park, creating access opportunities that take advantage of park infrastructure, such as restrooms and parking. • Along the primary multi-use trail, seating shall be provided at regular intervals of approximately 500 feet. Along nature trails, seating should be situated at habitat observation points and locations to maximize creek views. • The impact of infrastructure crossings of the creek shall be minimized where feasible. Where practicable, openings in the deck of the roadway crossings shall be provided to create more light under the crossing for improved habitat. • Numerous openings shall be provided throughout the park’s length to prevent the park from being closed off either visually or physically. • Refer to the MH Design Manual for fencing guidelines where lots back onto the creek corridor. • Avoid larger community amenities, formal recreation/sports fields, barbecues, buildings/storage facilities.



Creek Overlook and Amenities



Creekside path with nature views



Directional Signage



Staging Area with Parking and Restroom



Table 3.13: Greenway Loop Park Standards

GREENWAY LOOP PARK STANDARDS	
Vision	A family- and senior-friendly looped greenway and trail that supports fitness and exploration, providing residents with views to open space and connections to nature.
Site Character	A continuous linear park loop provides a tree-lined promenade and path for strolling and slower-speed biking, connecting users to parks and recreation features along the loop, including North Community Park and several Village Parks and Mini Parks. Where space allows, the path opens into a wider corridor with informal play lawn, benches/ picnic tables, a series of ponds, accent plantings, as well as a meandering path to explore. Beyond these areas, the landscape is less manicured and blends into the open space.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approximately a 3.5-mile loop of varied widths • Minimum corridor width is 30' to include the primary trail and landscape buffer on each side. Average width is presumed to be 250' to include water bodies. • A spur extends from the north end along Dry Creek to connect the Green way Loop to the Old River Trail. • The trail may connect to and through a proposed school site on the northwest end of the loop (providing a continuous loop).
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Trail: Meandering 10' wide un-striped concrete bicycle/walking path running through the entire loop. • Nature Trail and Promenade: Meandering, minimum 5' wide decomposed granite path system intended to encourage relaxed exploration by leading to various resting spots, viewpoints, or activity stations along the trail; trail may widen in places to into a tree-lined promenade for variety and visibility. • Connector Paths: 8' wide paved pedestrian paths, that connect the Primary Trail to adjacent mini parks, village parks, North Community Park, as well as neighborhoods and public spaces adjacent to the corridor. • Two additional nearby bikeways, one intersecting the Greenway Loop Trail and the other running along the northeast edge, adjacent to the street. (See the <i>Bicycle and Pedestrian Master Plan</i>). • Activity stations, with elements such as par course/fitness elements, nature play elements, musical play instruments, and other interactive interpretive/discovery stations along the trail • Resting spots, with varied seating/tables • Open space viewpoints • Lawn areas for informal play and gatherings
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other stand-alone play elements (e.g., swings, hill slide, spinners) • Climbable rocks or sculptures • Fort-building or designated adventure play area • Pond overlooks

<p>Required Support Amenities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facility access paths • Trail identification markers, mileage markers and directional signage as part of comprehensive wayfinding system • Varied seating and tables • Fencing • Trash/recycling receptacles • Drinking fountain with bottle filler at staging areas or a minimum of every mile. • Bike racks • Bollards, removable where required, to slow bikes at intersections, prevent car access and provide maintenance access
<p>Landscaping & Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shade trees • Plantings to create exploration nooks and buffered resting spots • Multi-purpose turf spaces for free play • Native or drought tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • Trees and plantings, integrating pollinator species, to support and improve habitat • Appropriate plant palette for the specific ecotype at each area (Oak woodland, riparian, wetland, etc.) • At natural areas within the greenway, non-irrigated hydroseed, with a locally-appropriate mix of native California grasses/wildflowers. • Initial site work will include weed suppression and temporary irrigation means until tree/plant establishment.
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Primary Trail shall form a continuous loop. • The Primary Trail and Nature Trail may cross and interconnect at access points, but these are designed to serve different purposes should not be continuously side-by-side. • North Community Park shall include a trail staging areas for the Greenway Loop, creating access opportunities that take advantage of park infrastructure, such as restrooms and parking. Village Park I and Village Park J shall provide partial staging areas with restrooms, benches, drinking fountains/bottle fillers, on on-street or angle-in parking. • Restrooms shall be provided at Community and Village Parks connected to the loop, but not within the greenway. • Three mini parks will be located adjacent to the trail corridor (but not within the corridor) to provide access from the trail and to nearby neighbors. (See Mini Parks.) • Where the Greenway Loop trails cross roads or intersect bikeways, signage shall be provided to indicate that loop users should yield to bikeway and roadway traffic. Traffic crossings should be demarcated for safety. • Additional adjacent open spaces areas (counted separately) may abut the Greenway Loop Park. (See Open Space) • Avoid larger community amenities, formal recreation/sports fields, major lighting, barbecues, buildings and storage facilities.



Primary Trail where widens to a promenade with shade trees, lawn, and drought-tolerant accent plantings



Safe biking opportunities for beginners



Loop where adjacent to bioretention area



Secondary trail with decomposed granite and resting spot in natural landscape



Fitness feature

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks in Mountain House provide greenspace and support recreation, leisure, and social space in each village, within walking distance of all residents. The District offers two types of community parks:

- 4** Village Parks
- 5** Mini Parks

Neighborhood Parks provide small and medium-sized recreation and social space to serve nearby neighbors.

VILLAGE PARKS

Medium parks, typically 5 acres in size, that support play, picnicking, sports, and leisure activities for nearby neighbors who live within approximately one-half mile.

INTENT

Village parks provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for residents who live within walking and bicycling distance (one-half mile) of the park. Centralized or easily accessible within each Mountain House village, these sites provide greenspace and gathering space for residents of all ages to support community health and wellness and contribute to village character, aesthetics, and identity.

BENEFITS

- Provide close-to-home recreation opportunities for residents of all ages.
- Contribute to neighborhood character and identity.
- Provide an easily-accessible or centralized gathering space in each village.
- Serve the recreation needs of children and families.
- Support individual health and wellness by providing nearby active recreation opportunities.
- Protect greenspace in each village.

POLICIES

- One five-acre village park shall be provided at or near the center of each of the 12 residential neighborhoods. Exceptions may be granted in exchange for a greater investment in a nearby park, as long as park access continues to be provided within a half mile of every resident.
- A village park shall function as a central element within each residential neighborhood, with easy access by bicycle, sidewalk, and the local street system for every part of the neighborhood. Where feasible, the park should connect the pedestrian and bikeway system.
- Sites should be located adjacent to a K-8 school to increase the extent and usability of park space and reduce overall operation and maintenance costs. Synergies and connections between the two sites should be enhanced and supported through co-located features, access paths and gateways.

- Village parks should be located on a collector street with public street frontage around the site except where they are adjacent to another public facility, body of water, or trail corridor.
- Village parks shall be situated so that crossing of major arterial streets shall be minimized if walking or biking from any part of a neighborhood.
- Village parks shall be designed and maintained to support active and passive recreation uses, as well as neighborhood and family gatherings.
- The mix and types of recreation facilities will vary by park. All neighborhood parks are required to provide a play area, open lawn area for play, minimum of one sports field and two sports courts of different types, family/small group picnic shelter or shaded picnic area, and at least one other recreation feature that diversifies recreation opportunities based on the character of the site.
- Village parks shall be designed to be consistent with the design theme of neighborhood streets, schools, and other public open spaces, as detailed in Specific Plans, Special Purpose Plans, and/or MHCS Design Manuals.
- For new and renovated village parks, the District will solicit neighborhood input to determine which facilities and improvements are most needed and desired. A survey or other outreach activity shall be completed by the District prior to preparation of Final Plans for the neighborhood park.

Table 3.14: All Village Park Site Standards

Village Park Standards	
Vision	Close-to-home recreation and gathering space for residents of all ages that support community health and wellness and contribute to village character and identity.
Site Character	Each individual park's design shall reflect the local village's identity and character. Recreation options should be prioritized that advance play, provide sports courts/fields/multi-use spaces, and enhance community gathering.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 acres (unless otherwise noted in Appendix A) • One per neighborhood; within ½ mile of most residences • Contiguous, non-linear usable shape • User should not be required to cross any arterial or industrial roads • Should be co-located adjacent to school open space/play fields • Public street frontage around the site except where it is adjacent to another public facility • Minimum dimension of the shortest street side is 250 feet • Good visual access from the street
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play area (equipment or play elements suitable for ages 2-12) • Open lawn area • Family/small group picnic area with shade shelter, shade trees, or gazebo, and barbecues

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sports field (rectangular, multiuse, diamond or other youth or regulation-size field) • Sports courts (basketball, volleyball, tennis, badminton, futsal, or other court) • Other small-scale recreation resource or activity station (e.g., chess tables, skate spot, shuffleboard, horseshoe pits, or similar scale resource)
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play elements for ages 13+, including challenge elements and climbers • Universal, all-inclusive swings and play features • Outdoor fitness equipment • Neighborhood-scale programming and event space (with utilities) • Looped path • Trail staging area near bikeway (restroom, bike repair station, bike rest area, signage) • Community garden • Outdoor classroom/shelter (for sites adjacent to schools) • Natural areas • Play mounds or hills • Dog run • Storage • Permanent restrooms
Required Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible park paths • Perimeter path or sidewalks • Drinking water fountain with bottle filler • Restrooms • Varied seating • Shade (e.g., trees, canopies, sails, structures, umbrellas) • On-street or angle-in parking • Signage • Bike racks • Trash/recycling receptacles • Dog waste stations • Removable bollards for maintenance access
Landscaping & Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trees for shade, habitat, and seasonal interest • Drought-tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • Manicured sports fields and lawn areas for informal play
Additional Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid community-scale facilities and lighted sports fields • High-noise uses (e.g., basketball courts) should be situated away from nearby housing. • For parks co-located with schools, provide easy access between sites and synergies in the placement of amenities and facilities.



Play area



Open lawn area and shade trees



Family picnic area and restroom



Sports Fields



Small-scale recreation and court activities

MINI PARKS

Small parks, less than 2.0 acres in size, that provide greenspace, informal play and gathering space for residents within a short walking distance (one-quarter mile).

INTENT

Mini parks are small, stand-alone sites that serve nearby neighbors with recreation and greenspace. Sites may be located to address two needs: 1) provide close-to-home park space for neighbors who live greater than one-half mile from a village park; or 2) provide activity hubs located along trails.

BENEFITS

- Support nearby recreation and greenspace in underserved areas.
- Provide recreation pockets along trails for fitness and play.
- Support neighborhood aesthetics.

POLICIES

- New mini parks should be a minimum of 0.5 acres in size to support intended recreation uses.
- Mini parks that are less than 0.5 acres in size shall not count as credit for developers towards neighborhood park standards.
- Existing mini parks that are less than 0.5 acres in size shall be evaluated at the end of facility lifecycles to determine if the site should be transitioned to a landscaped area, where another park is located within ½ mile.
- Landscaped Areas, such as gateways, remnant parcels, viewsheds or beautification areas, shall not count as mini parks.
- Mini parks shall be designed, developed, and landscaped to reduce maintenance costs.
- The mix and types of recreation facilities will vary by park. All mini parks are required to provide small open lawn areas and a minimum of one play feature, one activity station, and two gathering/resting elements.

Table 3.15: All Mini Park Site Standards

Mini Park Standards	
Vision	Small recreation and gathering spots that support fitness and play near homes or along trails.
Site Character	Mini parks prioritize recreation play space and amenities for local family meet-ups. They are large enough to provide flexible, multi-use spaces, but are designed to be less maintenance intensive.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically 0.5 to 2 acres in size • Contiguous, non-linear usable shape
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small open lawn area • Play elements (for ages 2-5 and 5-12) • One activity station • Gathering/leisure spaces (benches, tables, seating)
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger play area (ages 2-5 and 5-12) • Small shelter, shade structure, or gazebo • Additional small-scale recreation resource (ping pong table, chess tables, climbing structure, swings, slide, etc.) • Viewpoint • Interpretive signage
Required Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible park paths • Benches and seatwalls • Signage • Bike racks
Landscaping & Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low-maintenance landscaping (e.g., no-mow grass) • Trees for shade and seasonal interest • Drought-tolerant landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California's Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • Smaller, multi-use lawn for informal play
Additional Considerations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid restrooms, drinking fountains, trash receptacles community-scale facilities, lighting, buildings/storage, barbecues, and high-maintenance elements or landscaping (e.g., art, ornamental plantings).



Play elements



Climbing boulders



Small-scale gathering/leisure spaces



Small open lawn area

OTHER TRAILS AND OPEN SPACE GUIDELINES

In addition to park land, the District also provides other trails and open space. As part of the non-motorized transportation system, trails are located in non-park corridors, including utility corridors and pipeline corridors. Additional Off-Street Bikeways are part of the District's active transportation system. Guidelines for these are found in the *Mountain House Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan*.

The District provides open space, including wetlands, natural areas, and manicured landscape areas, to support community greening, beautification, and ecological functions. These elements do not count as park land and are not included in the District's level-of-service standards.

This section includes guidelines for the following:

- 6** **Trail Corridors** include trails within the Utility Corridor and Pipeline Corridor.
- 7** **Open Space** includes undeveloped or lightly developed Landscaped Areas and Natural Areas.

TRAIL CORRIDORS

Class I bikeways in landscaped utility or pipeline corridors designed to enhance the trail experience.

INTENT

As part of the active transportation system, provide off-street trail corridors that connect the community to parks, schools and community destinations, while maintaining the required access needs for utilities.

BENEFITS

- Provide non-motorized community connections between destinations
- Support walking, biking and other trail-related uses
- Provide safe, off-street bicycle routes for casual bikers and children learning to bike
- Maintain safe, clear area for future utility access
- Support casual free play, where appropriate
- Support resting and casual leisure activities, where appropriate

POLICIES

- The bikeway/trail shall conform to guidelines in the *Mountain House Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan*.
- For safety, the Class I bikeway shall have a direct route to street crossings and not be located to travel through a pedestrian amenity, such as a picnic or seating area.
- For specific guidelines on required safety elements, markings and signage at street crossings, refer to the Bike Plan.
- All landscaping and infrastructure shall comply with PG&E and utility regulations, including height restrictions, horizontal clearances, and planting types.
- Grant Line Village Park acreage shall be entirely outside the Pipeline Corridor footprint.
- College Park acreage may overlap the Utility Corridor and count towards parkland.

Table 3.16: Utility Corridor Standards

Utility Corridor Standards	
Vision	An active transportation corridor that provides connections to community destinations and may support informal play.
Site Character	<p>The primary and consistent feature is a wide, multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path. The corridor’s diagonal alignment overlaid on the street network creates significant additional usable space along street frontages (defined here as Open Areas). At all Open Areas and at street crossings, the corridor is enhanced with drought-tolerant and lower-maintenance irrigated landscape, informal lawn areas for free play, and minor amenities such as benches.</p> <p>The remainder of the corridor, where housing borders both sides, is simplified, consisting of the primary trail and natural landscaping.</p>
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Typically 75’ wide as determined by PG&E, with varied increased width due to street layouts. • The corridor runs from Central Parkway in south Mountain House northeast to De Anza Boulevard, as shown on the <i>Parks, Trails and Open Space Concept Map</i>.
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Trail: Per the <i>Mountain House Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan</i>, a 20’ wide multi-use trail that consists of a 10’ paved bikeway (5’ each direction), 5’ paved walking path, and 5’ soft-surfaced jogging path. Refer to the plan for further details. • Connector Paths: 8’ wide paved pedestrian paths, that connect the trail to sidewalks, pedestrian street crossings, neighborhoods and public spaces adjacent to the corridor. • Multipurpose, irrigated turf space for informal play at Open Areas • Activity Node located between Grant Line Rd. and De Anza Blvd. as shown on the <i>Park Access and Trail Connectivity</i> map, with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A bike rest area and small gathering space with optional shade structure (with benches or tables for up to 8 people) outside of easement where allowed - Bike repair station - Drinking fountain with water bottle filler - Small activity station, e.g., outdoor fitness equipment
Additional Recreation Elements to Consider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Art elements at Open Areas • Plaque or interpretive signage recognizing Lincoln Highway (at Grant Line Road)
Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail identification markers, mileage markers and directional signage as part of comprehensive wayfinding system • Removable bollards, to slow bikes at intersections, prevent car access and provide for PG&E access and MH maintenance • At Open Areas:

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Individual benches, seating or seatwalls, at 500’ minimum spacing. - Bike racks (located near street crossings or benches) - Optional tables - Optional trash/recycling receptacles—only located near small gathering spaces at street crossings, where it will be convenient for pickup
<p>Landscaping & Vegetation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lower-maintenance landscape with informal lawn in designated open spaces. The corridor’s diagonal alignment creates additional areas outside the easement with opportunities for taller trees. • Throughout the corridor, provide landscaping and trees for shade, habitat and seasonal interest in compliance with PG&E rules, including height restrictions, horizontal clearances from lines, and species. • At Open Areas, provide a mix of lawn areas and native or drought tolerant, low-maintenance landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • At the remainder of the corridor (where fenced on both sides): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - At Street Crossings: 10’ minimum offset from the curb (or back of sidewalk where exists) with native or drought tolerant, low-maintenance landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO. - At 10’-plus from Street Crossings: Non-irrigated hydroseed, is allowed—a locally-appropriate mix of native California grasses/wildflowers. Initial site work to include weed suppression and temporary irrigation means until plant/tree establishment.
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designated corridor areas will be developed in conjunction with College Park Village Park and South Community Park. • Avoid plazas, formal recreation facilities, sports fields, major lighting, large group picnic areas, barbecues, buildings/storage facilities, restrooms, and fenced play areas. These should be located in parks, which are better suited to community gathering. • Avoid drinking fountains except at the activity node. • Minimize trash receptacles placed in the trail corridor. These are better suited at trail staging areas. • South Community Park and College Park Village Park/School shall provide trail staging areas for the Utility Corridor, creating access opportunities that take advantage of park and school infrastructure, such as restrooms and parking. • Provide fencing, where residences are adjacent, that complies with heights and allowable materials in the MHCS Design Manual. Enhance the corridor side of the fence to bring a consistent sense of identity—using color, art elements, materials and/or greenery.



Directional signage



Trail with low-maintenance, irrigated landscape



Bike rest & repair station

Table 3.17: Pipeline Corridor Standards

Pipeline Corridor Standards	
Vision	An active transportation corridor that provides connections to other bikeways and local parks.
Site Character	A low maintenance corridor with a wide, multi-use bicycle/pedestrian path. Development is restricted. While the site includes minor support amenities to enhance the trail experience, no other site uses are supported. The majority of the corridor is non-irrigated and natural, planted primarily with native California grasses and wildflowers. The corridor’s diagonal alignment overlaid on the street network creates additional visible space along street frontages (defined here as Open Areas). A limited buffer of irrigated planting occurs at Open Areas and at street crossings to serve as a transition to the natural aesthetic.
Size & Configuration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum 50’ easement, as determined by Chevron, with varied increased width due to street layouts. • The corridor runs from Central Parkway in south Mountain House northwest to Neighborhood Park A, as shown on the <i>Parks, Trails and Open Space Concept Map</i>.
Desired Recreation Elements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Primary Trail: Per the <i>Mountain House Bicycle & Pedestrian Master Plan</i>, the 20’ wide multi- use trail consists of a 10’ paved bikeway (5’ each direction), 5’ paved walking path, and 5’ soft-surfaced jogging path. Refer to the plan for further details. • Connector Paths: 8’ wide paved pedestrian connection paths to sidewalks, pedestrian street crossings, neighborhoods and public spaces adjacent to the corridor.
Support Amenities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trail identification markers, mileage markers and directional signage as part of comprehensive wayfinding system • Removable bollards, where required for safety, PGE access and MH maintenance
Landscaping & Vegetation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A very low maintenance natural landscape with compatibly planted irrigated buffer zones at <i>Open Areas</i>. The corridor’s diagonal alignment creates additional areas outside the easement for more landscaping options, including trees and shrubs. • Throughout the corridor: • Groundcover within the easement zone • Shrubs and trees (for shade, habitat and seasonal interest), where allowed, outside the easement. • All plantings to comply with Chevron and county regulations and aerial inspection requirements for visibility, including placement, horizontal clearances, and species. • Integrate pollinator species to improve habitat.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At <i>Open Areas</i> and Street Crossings: 10’ minimum offset from the curb (or back of sidewalk where exists) with native or drought tolerant, low-maintenance landscaping with drip irrigation, in accordance with WELO (California’s Water Efficient Landscape Ordinance). • At the remainder of the corridor (where fenced on both sides): non-irrigated hydroseed is allowed—a locally-appropriate mix of native California grasses/wildflowers. Initial site work to include weed suppression and temporary irrigation means until tree/plant establishment. • Coordinate the planting aesthetic for irrigated areas with the adjacent hydroseeded area for a smooth transition of compatible species.
<p>Additional Considerations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Avoid developed facilities and non-trail uses. • Recreational and community amenities should be located in parks, which are better suited to community gathering. • Provide fencing, where residences are adjacent, that complies with heights and allowable materials in the <i>MHCSD Design Manual</i>. Enhance the corridor side of the fence to bring a consistent sense of identity—using color, art elements, materials and/or greenery.



Similar Class I bicycle corridor



Non-irrigated native landscape

OPEN SPACE

Green parcels of various sizes restored, maintained, or set aside to provide local greenspace. Sites may include gateways, remnant parcels, viewsheds, beautification areas, wetlands, grasslands, or other natural greenspace intended primarily to support wildlife habitat, natural resource protection, and ecological functions.

INTENT

As part of the park and open space system, provide low-maintenance landscaped areas and natural areas:

Landscaped Areas are undeveloped or lightly developed greenspace that is landscaped to support community aesthetics. Landscaped Areas may include gateways, remnant parcels, viewsheds or beautification areas. These areas will include a combination of irrigated native/ornamental planting yet be designed to be on the lower end of the maintenance scale.

Natural Areas are protected or restored open space areas that provide habitat, sustain natural resources, and enhance ecological function.

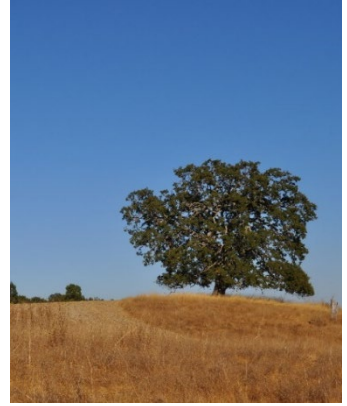
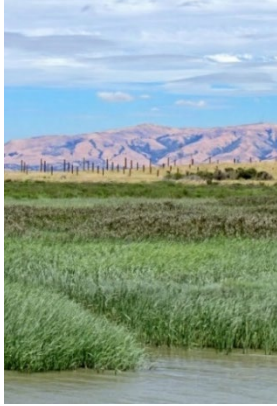
These undeveloped areas are set aside and managed for their environmental and ecological benefits. Some may be thoughtfully located to create viewsheds that support community aesthetics and greenspace. Natural areas should be managed to strengthen habitat opportunities, integrating native species and pollinator plants. They may require short term irrigation until native plants are established but no long-term irrigation. Systems should support improved water quality and filtration in riparian corridors, wetlands and bioretention areas.

BENEFITS

- Support community aesthetics.
- Provide green buffers between other land uses.
- Protect natural areas and wetlands.
- Create wildlife habitat.
- Provide ecological benefits, including flood control.

POLICIES

- Refer to the Mountain House Master Plan sections noted below for open space policies, standards and guidelines:
 - Chapter 4: Development and Design - Buffers and Edges, Street Landscaping
 - Chapter 6: Public Health and Safety - Transmission/Pipeline Easements
 - Chapter 7: Recreation and Open Space - 7.2.12 Other Open Space, 7.3 Biological Resources Management, 7.3.6 Wetlands
 - Chapter 9: Transportation and Circulation - Figures
 - Chapter 15: Storm Drainage and Flood Protection - Storm Drainage Easements



Natural Areas



Landscaped Areas

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CHAPTER 4

RECREATION FACILITIES

CHAPTER 4: RECREATION FACILITIES

The park guidelines in the last chapter provide directions to centralize major facilities and diversify recreation amenities and facilities in parks. While choices around the specific numbers, types, and sizes of facilities will be identified through the design process, this chapter clarifies expectations for key facilities. Trends, standards, and recommended features are provided to guide the design and development the following recreation buildings:

- Recreation center
- Aquatic center
- Nature Center/Event Venue
- Non-motorized boat launch and boathouse

Additional guidance is provided for the development or renovation of these recreation facilities:

- Play areas
- Activity nodes
- Sports fields and courts

SCALE OF SERVICE

The park system in Mountain House will include both community-serving and neighborhood-serving indoor and outdoor facilities.

Community-serving facilities serve multiple neighborhoods or even the entire community of Mountain House. These facilities are developed at a size and configuration that will draw people from across the community because of the quality/quantity of the facility.

Neighborhood-serving facilities are intended to serve the everyday needs of nearby residents for recreation and active living. These facilities support casual or social pursuit of recreation rather than competitive or high-level activities and are therefore typically fewer in number or smaller and not scheduled for organized programs.

While the design and development of neighborhood-serving facilities will be guided mainly through design guidelines (Chapter 3), community-serving facilities must also consider best practices for design, programming, operations, and cost-recovery. Facility trends and guidelines are described here to supplement design decisions for providing community-serving facilities.

RECREATION AND COMMUNITY CENTER

DEFINITION

A multi-purpose indoor facility that can be used for a wide range of recreation, fitness and social activities including multi-generational programs and care, meetings and events.

TRENDS AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- *Multipurpose:* Today's community/recreation centers are multipurpose facilities that incorporate recreation, health and wellness, youth development, community meetings/gatherings, and social engagement opportunities. Many also support the arts and skill development or learning.
- *Multi-Generational:* Nationally, recreation centers have grown larger to incorporate more multi-generational, multi-purpose space for all ages and diverse interests. This allows families the opportunity to engage in different recreation activities simultaneously.
- *Inclusive and Accessible:* Special attention is given to accessibility and design and programmatic features that create more inclusive spaces. These include but are not limited to providing wide hallways, more family-style restrooms, universal elements and equipment, and inclusive activities.
- *Larger Facilities:* Modern recreation centers are generally at least 25,000 to 45,000 square feet (sf) in size and can be much larger (e.g., 65,000+ sf, though this size facility typically includes an indoor aquatic center). Most cities are moving away from age-specific and smaller facilities, such as teen centers, senior centers and stand-alone gymnasiums or neighborhood centers.
- *Consolidated Operations:* Larger flexible-use buildings with various types of activity and social spaces can more easily accommodate changing recreation and social preferences. More programming and activities can be provided at a single site, making for greater staffing efficiency and operational cost-effectiveness.
- *Programmed and Drop-in Uses:* Facilities accommodate busy lifestyles by offering both scheduled programs and events, as well as walk-in or drop-in options for use, such as open gym time.
- *Reservable Uses:* Many facilities include attractive multipurpose activity/party rooms with catering kitchens or full kitchens, as well as technology-enabled meeting rooms to support rentals.
- *Memberships and Packaged Rates:* Most centers include a health and fitness component and offer memberships or packaged drop-in rates (with discounts for greater use) as part of their operating model. These facilities are designed to attract higher income residents, which means that the operational model may need to build in free or subsidized memberships or special indoor events and activities for lower-income residents to ensure inclusion.
- *Specialized Uses:* Some facilities incorporate specialized uses, such as childcare facilities, maker space, innovation/technology labs, dance/music rooms, small cafes/concessions, teen rooms, senior space, etc. However, these types of spaces increase costs and can limit programming options.
- *Indoor-Outdoor Spaces:* Most recreation centers are planned in conjunction with adjacent park and outdoor facilities that support indoor/outdoor programming. Some centers include large doors that open to outdoor patios so that indoor activities can spill outdoors.
- *Market-based Development and Operations:* Through market studies and/or business and operations planning conducted in advance of facility development, multipurpose

community/recreation centers are typically custom-tailored to the needs of its constituents or target market. This helps ensure that the facility supports revenue-generating activities and programs that will help off-set operations costs. An operating pro forma will also identify operational costs, revenue streams, and fee-based programs.

STANDARDS

- One (1) consolidated recreation and community center per 40,000 residents.
- The facility should be 30,000 -40,000 sf in size, as determined through a facility business plan and market study. The facility should not be broken into smaller, separate buildings. It will consolidate the separate uses noted in the 2011 Plan.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- Gymnasium programming and sports
- Fitness and wellness (e.g., yoga, Zumba, weightlifting, cardio)
- Specialized programming for youth, teens, seniors, parent/child, and people with disabilities
- Enrichment, skill-development, or lifelong learning
- Fine, visual and performing arts (introductory level programs)
- Drop-in and programmed uses
- Indoor events and socials
- Community group meetings
- Reserved uses and parties

REQUIRED FEATURES

- Social gathering/lobby space located with a reception desk/entry checkpoint for members.
- Large multi-use event room, able to accommodate 200 to 300 people. (Room preferably opens up to the outdoors and an adjacent outdoor space.)
- Gymnasium, three full-size basketball courts (and smaller cross-courts), designed to accommodate other sports, with spectator space (retractable bleachers), gym equipment storage, and movable wall/divider or drop-curtain between courts to separate into different activity areas.
- Fitness space (minimum of 2), including dance/exercise/fitness studio and fitness equipment and weight room.
- Classrooms/meeting rooms suitable for community group activities, recreation classes, and youth and adult activities. Room should have Wi-Fi and integrated presentation technology.
- Locker rooms and restrooms.
- Single occupancy or family restroom/shower/changing rooms.
- Catering kitchen or full-service kitchen.
- Storage space, amply sized and in multiple locations to allow flexibility in programming.
- Office space located near the building entry and social space.
- Small informal seating and gathering spaces along the circulation spaces throughout the building.
- Outdoor patio or courtyard space for informal seating as well as gatherings and events.

- Covered entry and drop-off zone; nearby accessible parking and bike parking. Vehicle parking is needed but may be shared with other adjacent public parking.

Additional features to consider:

- Stage, which may be part of the event room.
- Arts and crafts room (may include separate kiln space).
- Maker space, especially multimedia maker space.
- Childcare center, potentially with a separate entry.
- Dedicated space for senior programs, potentially with a separate entry.
- Café space, which could be operated by a concessionaire.
- Computer lab or computer area.
- Indoor track or walking loop.
- Climbing wall or bouldering area.



AQUATIC CENTER

DEFINITION

Outdoor aquatics complex and poolside amenities to support year-round or seasonal swimming, water fitness, and pool events.

TRENDS AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- *Leisure and recreation:* Swimming for recreation accounts for most swimming participation. Pools should be designed for fun and play and for different skill levels to maximize the potential customer base. Warmer water temperature, a zero-depth entry, float channels, and interactive play features encourage recreation.
- *Health and fitness:* Swimming for fitness and water-based exercise programs are also areas of strong participation. To capture this market, pools should also be designed, operated, and programmed to allow for aquatics exercise, including water-based fitness classes.
- *Water safety:* The World Health Organization recommends learn-to-swim programs as one of the top actions to prevent drownings. Drowning is second most common reason for accidental death for young children, and it is estimated there are five water immersion-related hospital visits for every drowning death.
- *Programming diversity:* A full range of aquatics programming provides the most opportunity for users and increases revenue potential. Programs that focus on recreation, while supporting competition, will draw a higher number of users than a single type of programming.
- *Maximized revenues:* Aquatics facilities are costly to operate. Revenue to offset the operational cost is maximized by high use of the pool or pool complex, which is achieved through programming diversity and a facility design that supports it. Leisure/recreational pools typically attract more users, generating more revenue. These facilities typically incorporate party rooms, cabanas, and other revenue-generating features.
- *Minimized Costs:* Operational costs can be minimized through facility design decisions. Lower-cost pools should avoid features such as wave pools that require significantly more lifeguards, and 50-meter pools the require high volumes of water but are focused on the more limited niche of competitive swimming.
- *Accessibility:* The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) regulations require new or rebuilt pools and aquatics facilities to comply with accessible design standards, most recently updated in 2010. ADA standards require accessible pool entrances and exits, deck space, accessible lifts, and other design elements that should be factored into the design of a new facility.

STANDARDS

- One (1) aquatic facility per 40,000 residents.
- The facility should be co-located with the multi-purpose recreation and community center. The size range is anticipated to be approximately 30,000 – 35,000 sf in size. An additional 50-meter competition pool, identified in the 2011 Plan, should not be provided.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- Learn-to-swim programs for different ages and skill levels
- Lap swimming

- Water fitness
- Recreation or open swim
- Pool events, such as dive-in movies and socials
- Pool recreation competitions, such as triathlons, fitness competitions
- Water safety classes
- Potentially, water sports such as water polo
- Potentially, introductory canoe/kayak classes
- Parties and reservable uses
- Note: The High School will meet competitive swimming needs

REQUIRED FEATURES

- 25yd or 25m lap and swimming pool with at least 6 lanes, potentially designed with a shallow end to accommodate swimming lessons and a deep end for diving.
- Additional leisure or recreation pool designed for water play, with zero-depth entry, slides and water play features. This pool typically has a more free-form design and is maintained at a higher temperature than the lap pool. Popular elements of leisure pools include splash or spray areas, slides, or other water play features.
- Generous poolside deck space for lounging and socializing.
- Entry point and reception desk. These may be co-located with the recreation center to support efficient staffing and operations.
- Office space for lifeguards and aquatics staff.
- Storage space for supplies and equipment.
- Locker rooms with showers, restrooms, changing rooms and locker areas. Current trends favor single occupancy changing rooms, which are more flexible and offer more privacy than traditional gender-separated locker rooms. These may be co-located with the recreation center to support efficient sharing of facilities.
- Reservable party/training room or pavilion.
- Rental cabanas.

Additional features to consider:

- Reservable equipment/amenities, such as water toys, flippers, floaters, etc.
- Hot tub or spas.
- Temporary enclosure of main tank for year-round use.





NATURE CENTER AND EVENT VENUE (DESIRED)

An attractive building or enclosed pavilion within a landscaped park setting/garden intended to support nature programs, indoor/outdoor events, weddings, parties, etc.

TRENDS AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- *Connections to Nature:* Given the demonstrated health benefits of being in nature, many park agencies are providing reservable indoor/outdoor venues in garden-like settings to provide desirable and relaxing social spaces suited to a variety of uses.
- *Indoor/Outdoor Facilities:* Facilities may be designed as enclosable pavilions to encourage indoor/outdoor use. The nature/event center is typically co-sited with adjacent patios, open space areas, trails, outdoor classrooms, nature play, community or demonstration gardens, etc., to support programs and reservable uses.
- *Operational Efficiencies and Revenues:* To reduce operating costs, many small, stand-alone centers are only open when programmed or reserved. Facilities are frequently designed as multi-purpose, flexible use spaces, with ample storage for nature classroom materials, so that the buildings may be reserved or programmed for other uses.
- *Sustainable Facilities:* Many nature centers are built based on sustainable principles, with on-site power, water and wastewater systems designed to educate the public about renewable energy, pollution and greenhouse gas reduction, wastewater treatment, sustainable building materials, rainwater harvesting, and the green economy.
- *Nature Programs:* Many cities recognize that environmental education and nature programs are key to creating future stewards of our natural environment. Typical programming includes providing indoor/outdoor learning experiences to engage residents in understanding the local environment as well as the socio-ecological issues of climate resilience and community health.
- *School and Youth Partnerships:* Nature centers are ripe for partnerships with schools and colleges, youth and community development organizations. Access and unloading zones for group use is typically considered.

STANDARDS

- Optional: one (1) nature center per 40,000 residents.
- The facility may range from approximately 2,000 sf to 4,500 sf in size. It is anticipated to be closed unless programmed or reserved.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- Nature interpretation and environmental education programs
- Other specialized programs that can be conducted in the same space
- Reservable indoor/outdoor uses, including parties, weddings, social events, etc.

REQUIRED FEATURES

This facility may be an enclosable pavilion (that can be open for indoor/outdoor programs) or a building.

- Large multi-purpose room
- Two single-occupancy restrooms
- Ample storage
- Outdoor patio and garden
- Parking, unloading area for school bus or carpools, bike parking

Additional features to consider:

- Additional classrooms and collection spaces, lab facilities, exhibit areas
- Adjacent outdoor amenities and facilities



NON-MOTORIZED BOAT LAUNCH AND BOATHOUSE (OPTIONAL)

Small private concessionaire pavilion/building with non-motorized boat storage and launch to support public recreation uses.

TRENDS AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- *Activating Water Features:* In the past, many new developments included water features with fountains (without public access) to support community aesthetics. With more of an emphasis on water conservation, health, outdoor recreation, and connections between people and nature, cities are providing water features that support public access.
- *Public-Private Partnerships:* Many park agencies are exploring options to develop public spaces in conjunction with private businesses to create synergies in uses. For example, an urban plaza or lakefront park adjacent to restaurants provides opportunities for picnicking. A boat rental shop adjacent to other commercial enterprises may attract more boaters and/or provide opportunities for commercial management of the boat shop as well.
- *Concessions and Equipment Rentals.* Trends nowadays favor recreation equipment “share” programs, including boat share, bike share, scooter share, and even play equipment check-out programs. While some involve concessionaire or staff-operated rentals, others are on timer and lock system.

STANDARDS

- Non-motorized boat launch: One (1) or two (2) per 40,000 residents.
- Consider one boat launch at the Lakeside Public Space and one at Old River Park.

POTENTIAL ACTIVITIES

- Canoeing
- Kayaking
- Stand-up paddleboarding
- Other suitable activity as determined by private partner or operator

RECOMMENDED FEATURES

- Non-motorized boat launch. Launch may be a small dock or water’s edge developed intentionally as a non-motorized boat put-in and take out spot. Note: the boat launch at Old River Park is anticipated to be more rustic and include less infrastructure to adhere to environmental regulations.

Additional feature to consider:

- Boathouse with storage and rental counter (developed in conjunction with and/or attached to another private commercial venue).



PLAY AREAS

DEFINITION

Play structures, elements or features at various scales that provide children the opportunity to explore, engage and enjoy the world around them.

TRENDS AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- *Child and Youth Development:* Well-designed, well-managed play environments provide children with developmental opportunities for physical activity and motor skill development, decision making, learning, dramatic play, social development, and fun. Play areas should provide a mix of features and equipment to achieve this.
- *Play for All Ages:* While play equipment typically is designed for age groups 2-5 and 5-12, research shows that play provides benefits for all ages. Trends favor integrating multi-generational play places with parent-child opportunities, challenge options for teens and young adults, and elements that support playful interactions for all ages.
- *Universal, All-Inclusive Play:* Universal, accessible play areas are important for providing play options for children of all abilities, including those with special needs. Trends favor mixing accessible play elements with challenge features to provide an all-inclusive play space in community parks for children of mixed ages and differing abilities. Smaller accessible play elements can also be integrated into smaller playgrounds with traditional play features.
- *Various Scales:* Different types of play experiences can be integrated on various scales throughout the park system to create more diversity in play options. These can range from single play elements (spinners, climbers, hill slides) appropriate for mini parks to expansive destination play areas suitable for large community and regional parks.
- *Themed elements:* Thematic equipment can be integrated to create unique play opportunities. However, these themes must closely match developmental stages to be interesting to children of various ages, and over time, children may tire of these play settings. For most ages, the more abstract the theme representation, the more imagination that comes into play activities. Ideally a theme is built on the site's features and surroundings, creating a sense of place and unique park identity. For example, a play area surrounded by evergreen trees may inspire a treehouse theme, or one adjacent to farmland could have an agricultural theme.
- *Special Features/Non-Manufactured Equipment:* Play areas may integrate specialized features that are unique to the site. Examples include customized play features, special art or sculptural elements, landmarks, interpretive elements, or natural features such as rocks and climbable trees. These elements create more imaginative play opportunities and help create play areas that reflect neighborhood character, local culture and natural history. However, some specialized and customized features may be high-cost for both development and ongoing operations. These high-cost specialized features work well in destination parks, but these should be avoided in low-maintenance areas.
- *Play Props and Manipulative Settings:* Manipulating and interchanging parts in the environment is a fundamental aspect of normal child development. Props are essential tools for this type of play. Examples of manipulative settings include added toys in play areas, sand and water play areas, "diggers" that allow children to dig up sand or pea gravel, leaves and sticks for fort building, and more extensive adventure play areas where children continually construct and alter their environment using building supplies and tools. Play props and manipulative settings are most appropriate near recreation centers or other play areas that can be monitored.

- *Water Play Features:* Water is a powerful play area attractor, as children, who value its multi-sensory character, seldom miss a chance to play with and in water. Water adds to maintenance requirements for play areas. Instead of running water, best practices in water play include providing hand pumps and water channels, or participant-activated water features that operate on a short timer.
- *Trees, Plants and Nature Play Elements:* Trees and plants in play areas provide shade, sensory variety, soft-edged spaces, seasonal change, and a welcoming and attractive environment. Research shows it is important that children have daily experiences with trees and plants, so they grow up with an intuitive appreciation of the natural world. Plants and trees stimulate exploration and discovery, improving play areas by providing a wide variety of play props and open-ended play opportunities. Play areas should not contain plants on the toxicity list and should minimize the use of high-allergen tree species.
- *Shade:* Shade structures, shade sails, and/or shade trees minimize play elements that are hot to touch, prevent sunburn and support cooling of play participants, and may add visual interest to play areas. Shade trees are more practical and require lower maintenance than sails or similar covers in windy areas.
- *Landforms, Topography, Landmarks:* Landforms can provide important play opportunities and should be retained, incorporated and/or added into play settings for visual interest. These can also buffer play areas from surrounding uses. Using tall features or equipment in a play area adds an element of thrill and height into the design so that the play area also functions as a landmark.
- *Nooks and semi-enclosed spaces:* Small spaces are important to support dramatic play, hiding and chasing games as well as social exchanges and other less physical aspects of children’s development. They may also provide a comfortable space for some children on the autism spectrum who may wish to take a break or survey the active play space before jumping in.
- *Asset Management and Replacement:* Extreme weather may degrade play equipment and safety surfaces, decreasing impact attenuation and accessibility. Since the component elements for play areas are generally guaranteed for five years, play areas should be re-evaluated every five years and renovated as needed, typically no more than every 10-15 years.

STANDARDS

- Destination Play Areas: One per 13,000 residents (one in each community park)
- Village Play Areas: One per 3,250 residents (one in each village park)
- Individual Play Elements and Park Activity Stations (combined): Integrated based on site design guidelines. These elements should be offered at 13 mini parks and other locations within linear parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks as designed. (See Park Activity Stations)
- All play areas at a minimum should include elements for ages 2-5 and 5-12. Uses for additional ages may be accommodated.

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- Climbing
- Jumping
- Swinging
- Sliding
- Twirling or spinning

- Balancing
- Hiding and exploring
- Imaginative and dramatic play
- Self-challenge and risk-taking
- Cooperative play

REQUIRED FEATURES

The following describes three levels of play area typologies to better understand how creative, engaging play can be integrated into Mountain House parks and public spaces.

LEVEL 3: DESTINATION PLAY AREAS

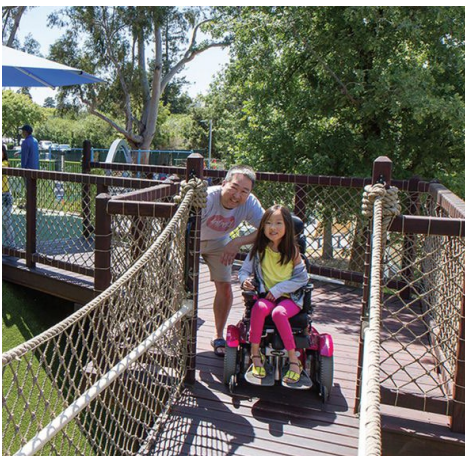
Suitable for Multi-Use Community Parks

A destination play area is a large playground with unique features designed to attract people from across the community. It provides multiple play settings that support imaginative, creative and active play. It may include playable art or customized play elements and be designed to align with each site's vision.

North Community Park's vision and nearby surroundings are in alignment with destination nature play, which may include a more natural theme and play features such as boulder climbing, a log climbing structure, and stump steppers.

At Central Community Park, a central all-inclusive play area can provide even more universal design elements than typical to offer opportunities for all to play together, such as a wheel-on merry-go-round or sand/water play with a raised series of tables. It is also important to offer a variety of options, so that kids of all abilities have opportunities to participate, play *and* grow. For example, offering multiple types of swings, including accessible molded seats for support, belt swings, and friendship/basket swings, will offer children with a range of abilities the swinging experience.

South Community Park's site vision is geared towards adventure/challenge play. This may be implemented through elements such as an American Ninja style course, challenging play structure, an outdoor climbing wall, and a large hillside double slide for children to race down.





LEVEL 2: VILLAGE PLAY AREAS

Suitable for Village Parks

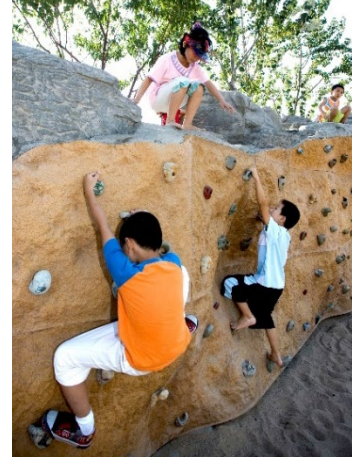
This neighborhood-scale play area may include a thematic play area, nature play or other unique play elements to provide a well-rounded group of play experiences. Rather than repeating the same type of equipment and features at every Village Park, a thematic play area offers play features unique to that park, often building on its sense of place. For example, a play area in a Village park along a creek corridor may emphasize nature play/interpretive elements while another park located at a Class I bikeway may play up biking elements and offer an associated tricycle/big wheel track. Even where visibility or budgets are not as extensive, choosing diverse play elements is important for more engaging play experiences. Prioritize elements that cater to cooperative play, offer new challenges as children develop, and have a unique character.



LEVEL 1: INDIVIDUAL PLAY ELEMENTS OR FEATURES

Suitable for Linear Parks and Mini Parks

For smaller settings, specific play elements may stand alone or be one of a series of experiences linked by the trail system. Examples include a small-scale nature play feature, singular spinner, climber or swing, play fort, a slide, playful public art piece, music element, etc. Mini parks with adequate space should offer several of these small features to serve the function of a mini-Village park. For example, a mini park may offer a small climbing element and a basket or tot swings, surrounded by a trike path and lawn area.



WATER FEATURES

Suitable for Multi-Use Community Parks and Special Use Sites

For high-use settings, water play features may be added to a destination nature play area or as a stand-alone element in a special use park. These interactive water play features are smaller in scale than a sprayground and are designed so that water does not run continuously. Examples include hand pumps or push-button spray features.



PARK ACTIVITY STATIONS

Small-footprint games and facilities integrated in parks intended to support play for all ages.

TRENDS AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT CONSIDERATIONS

- *Play for All Ages:* As an outgrowth of play features in parks for children, activity stations are intended for all ages and encourage multi-generational play.
- *Mental and Physical Wellbeing:* As a way to diversify recreation opportunities, park agencies are integrating lower-cost individual elements in parks that support outdoor learning and fitness.
- *Landscaped Activity Nodes:* Activity stations may be landscaped with surrounding plantings to create the feeling of activity nodes or “rooms” along a trail corridor or within a larger park.
- *Permanent or Temporary:* While standards may call for the integration of permanent activity stations developed in parks, many agencies add temporary “pop-up” elements in parks and across cities to encourage residents to explore and find new, engaging opportunities for play. Pop-up elements may include toys or equipment left in parks (e.g., hula hoops, balls, trucks, colored chalk), temporary games (putt golf, cornhole, giant chess, hopscotch), or play able art/features (e.g., foam building blocks).

STANDARDS

Individual Play Elements and Park Activity Stations (combined): Integrated based on site design guidelines. These elements should be offered at 13 mini parks and other locations within linear parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks as designed. (See Play Areas)

RECOMMENDED ACTIVITIES

- Mental and physical play for all ages
- Outdoor fitness

RECOMMENDED FEATURES

- Outdoor games (e.g., outdoor ping pong, giant-size Jenga or chess, cornhole, game tables, putting green)
- Par course elements or outdoor fitness equipment
- Musical play instruments
- Interactive interpretive/discovery stations or “thinkscape” features (puzzle walls, interactive signs)
- Lawn areas for informal play and gatherings
- Climbable rocks or sculptures
- Sidewalk and trail paintings (e.g., hopscotch)
- Nature viewpoints (platform, interpretive feature, bird blind, ear trumpets, viewers, etc.)



OTHER FACILITY GUIDELINES AND DIRECTIONS

The 2004 and 2011 *Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plans* presented numerical guidelines that allowed little flexibility in design decisions. The updated Plan encourages designs that emphasize:

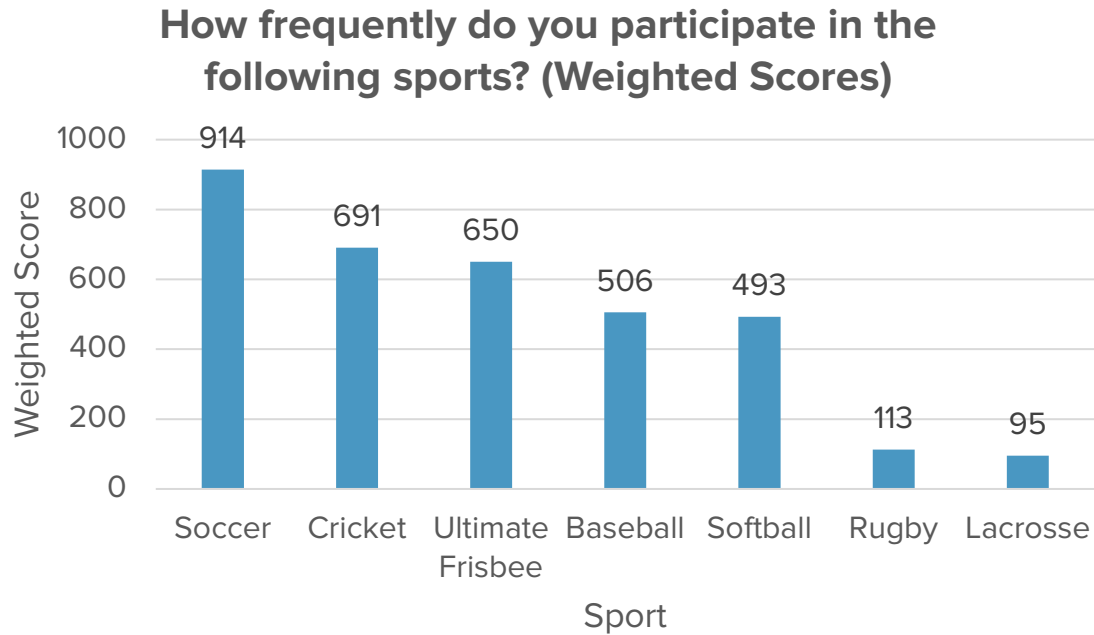
- Site identity and character;
- Diversity in recreation experiences;
- Opportunities for all ages;
- Bike and pedestrian access; and
- A balance of traditional and trending facilities, active and passive options, and developed and natural park features

While the Plan provides numerical direction on major facilities, such as recreation and aquatic facilities, to avoid the development of multiple small facilities with limited recreation value, it also provides policy direction and design and development guidelines for other types of facilities. Additional directions for sports and picnic facilities are offered below.

SPORTS FIELDS AND COURTS

- Reduce the numbers of sports fields across the system to allow sufficient park space to diversify park uses.
- Address needs for sports that are in demand in Mountain House and increasing in participation, as per trends in recreation. (Table 4.1 notes current participation results from the Park Preferences Survey.)
- Continue to work with schools to maximize the numbers of sports fields provided at school sites, such as Costa School.
- Focus on game-quality fields that may also be used as practice space or for neighborhood use. Create a more detailed sports field needs assessment to determine if additional practice space is needed.
- Limit the numbers of multi-use fields and fields with overlays, ensuring at least one high-quality, designated field for baseball, soccer, cricket, and softball in Mountain House.
- Consider the numbers in Table 4.1 as general guidelines for sports fields to be refined through the design process. Provide the following:
 - Reservable, game-quality, high-use lighted fields at Central Community Park as the District's centralized, premier sports event complex.
 - Unlighted, cricket and rectangular fields at North Community Park, buffered from surrounding uses by landscaping to minimize noise.
 - A mix of lighted and unlighted game-quality fields at South Community Park to support league and drop-in play for families and all ages. (This site likely cannot support a pinwheel ballfield complex).
 - One or two unlighted practice fields or recreation-quality game fields in neighborhood parks to support youth play and use by nearby neighbors.

Figure 4.1: Sports Field Use – Watching or Playing (Park Preferences Survey)



Responses are weighted: Never = 0; I Watch a Family Member Play = 1; Occasionally = 2; Regularly = 3

Table 4.1: Sports Field Definitions and Estimated Needs in Parks

FACILITY CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	FIELDS NEEDED AT BUILDOUT ¹
BALLFIELDS	Youth and adult baseball, softball , and T-ball fields, with backstop, dugouts, and grass or dirt (skinned) infield. Outfield fence is desired. Fields include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth-60’ diamond, 200’ Adult-60’ diamond, 300’ Adult-lighted, 90’ diamond 	7-12
RECTANGULAR FIELDS	Youth and adult soccer or multi-use rectangular fields striped for soccer, football and lacrosse, with portable goals and a minimum size of 75 yards x 120 yards. Assumes that one full-size adult field can be divided into two youth fields.	12-18
CRICKET FIELDS	Youth and adult recreation-size cricket pitch and field.	4-5

¹ Guidelines are based on game-caliber facilities in parks, not including schools, neighborhood ballfields, or open turf playfields.

SPORTS COURTS

- Diversify sports courts, introducing a variety of courts across the park system.
- Address needs for sports that are in demand in Mountain House and increasing in participation, as per trends in recreation.
- Continue to work with schools to maximize the numbers of sports fields provided at school sites, such as Costa School.
- Consider the numbers in Table 4.2 as general guidelines for outdoor sports courts to be refined through the design process. Provide the following:
 - A reservable, lighted tennis complex at Central Community Park and other traditional courts.
 - Lower-noise, lower-impact courts at North Community Park, such as pickleball, badminton and shuffleboard, buffered from surrounding uses by landscaping to minimize noise.
 - High-impact sports courts such as basketball, volleyball, and sepak takraw in South Community Park to support league and drop-in play.
 - Multi-use courts or overlays in neighborhood parks to support recreation for nearby neighbors.

Table 4.2: Sports Court Definitions and Estimated Needs in Parks

FACILITY CLASSIFICATION	DEFINITION	COURTS NEEDED AT BUILDOUT ¹	MAY BE SUITABLE FOR OVERLAYS
BASKETBALL COURTS	Full-size outdoor courts (or two half courts), including regulation hoops and lines. May be overlaid with multi-use court striping.	10-12	50% <i>(Suitable in neighborhood parks)</i>
TENNIS	Regulation size tennis courts with fencing, a net, and color-coated surface. Courts may be striped with overlays for QuickStart (10 and under) tennis, pickleball or futsal.	10-14	75% <i>(Multi-use overlays suitable in neighborhood parks)</i>
PICKLEBALL COURTS	Regulation-size, designated outdoor pickleball courts (not overlays)	6-8	50%
VOLLEYBALL COURTS	Outdoor regulation volleyball courts (60 feet x 30 feet), with variable net height. Surfaces may include turf, surfacing or sand. Mountain House should have both soft and hard-surfaced courts.	6-8	0%
OTHER COURTS ²	Badminton, sepak takraw, futsal, shuffleboard, bocce and others.	4-6	<i>May be considered where appropriate</i>

¹ Guidelines are based on outdoor facilities, not including schools. Gymnasiums will provide additional indoor court space.

² Does not include martial arts or fitness courts, such as tai chi and outdoor yoga.

PICNIC AREAS AND SHELTERS

- Diversify picnic areas. Rather than providing individual/small area and group areas as noted in guidelines in the 2004 and 2011 Plans, consider the following needs:
 - Picnic Pavilion—At least one covered pavilion, suitable for 150-200 people with movable tables for use for outdoor recreation programs.
 - Large Group—Covered and uncovered areas for 50-75 people (10-12 tables) at all community parks.
 - Medium—Covered and uncovered areas for 20-30 people (4-5 tables)
 - Small—Covered and uncovered areas for 10-12 people (2 tables or a long table)
 - Individual tables/nodes: Dispersed tables and paired or small groups of tables as noted in guidelines for neighborhood, community and linear parks.
- Diversify tables and seating styles.
- Ensure at least half of all small, medium, and large picnic areas with shelters, sails, umbrellas or shade trees.
- Provide trash receptacles at medium and larger shelters or areas. Avoid trash receptacles adjacent to individual tables or small picnic areas.





CHAPTER 5

RECREATION, OPERATIONS, AND LEISURE FACILITIES

CHAPTER 5: RECREATION, OPERATIONS, AND LEISURE SERVICES

As the community has developed and grown, MHCS D has grown its internal capacities to manage the park and recreation system. In 2021, three departments play a role in the current provision of parks, recreation and leisure services:

- The **Public Works Department** is responsible for operations, maintenance and capital projects.
- The **Community Development Department** reviews development proposals, including developer-provided parks.
- The **Administrative Services Department** houses the District’s Recreation and Communications Coordinator who coordinates park information, reservations, and events held in parks.

RECREATION OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE INVESTMENT

MHCS D currently spends \$94.69 per capita on parks, recreation and leisure services today , 80% of which (\$77 per capita) is spent on parks maintenance. This investment will grow as new programs and facilities are added to the park system.

As MHCS D expands its physical assets and adds major facilities such as the planned recreation and aquatics centers, it will need to increase spending to account for significantly expanded recreation and maintenance services. Simultaneously, the District’s staffing levels and organizational structure for managing parks, recreation and leisure services must also evolve to keep pace with best practices and industry norms. This chapter discusses this new organizational structure and identifies recommendations for managing Mountain House’s parks, recreation and leisure services.¹

ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPT

MHCS D is the primary provider of parks and recreation opportunities for those residing within its boundary. As new parks and facilities are added, MHCS D will become a full-service recreation provider as well. This includes maintaining, managing, and activating the park and recreation system, operating and maintaining parks and major facilities such as the recreation and aquatics facilities, while providing a full suite of recreation programs and community events.

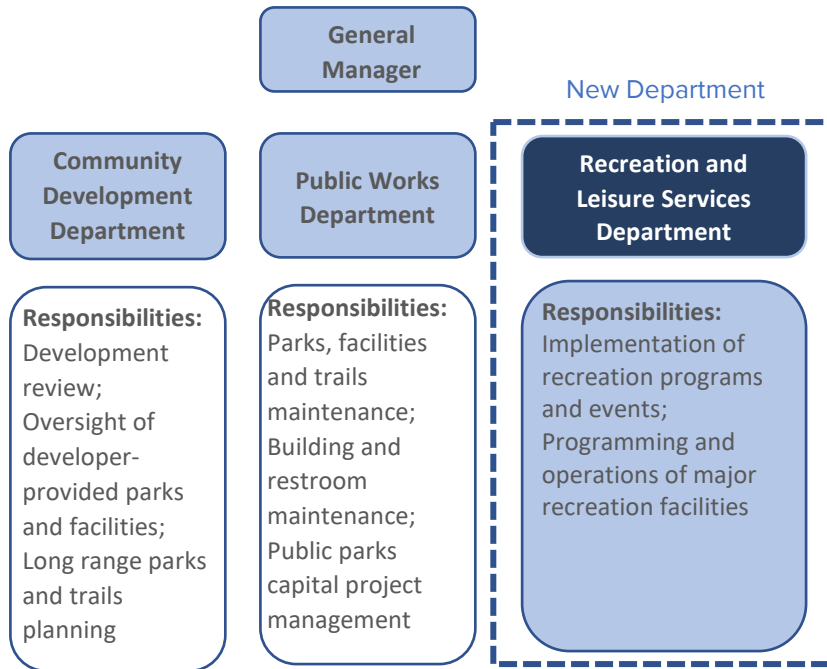
Agencies serving populations of 20,000 or more generally provide core park and recreation services by one-department or two-department models, often with assistance from other departments or divisions for support functions such as procurement, planning, or fleet management. MHCS D has an established parks maintenance and operations team within the

¹ Functions such as Finance, IT, Human Resources, Legal, etc. are assumed to be provided districtwide and are not addressed in this chapter.

Public Works Department, and the Community Development Department has an integral role in park system development as the community continues to build out. Consequently, a three-department model leverages existing capabilities and infrastructure to administer the park and recreation system in the future.

As shown in Figure 5.1, the organizational concept for Mountain House in the future adds the new Recreation and Leisure Services Department and retains the existing Public Works and Community Development Departments in their respective roles.

Figure 5.1: Organizational Concept



The **Community Development Department** will retain its park-related land use functions, including development review, developer-provided parks review and oversight, design and construction management of community facilities, and long-range parks and trails planning. Over time, the workload related to developer review and oversight will be reduced, but the need for long-range planning may increase in the future to address the long-range stewardship and management of the park, recreation and trail system. However, no changes are anticipated in terms of staffing levels or responsibilities for the Community Development Department related to parks and recreation.

With the growth of the parks and recreation system, the **Public Works Department** will see an increase in maintenance responsibilities, a need for additional skills and expertise, and a bigger workload. Recommendations for growing the parks and recreation functions within the Public Works Department are discussed later in this chapter.

The new **Recreation and Leisure Services Department** will be phased in over the next five years as new facilities come online. Recommendations for creating this new Department are discussed on the following pages.



GROWING A FULL-SERVICE RECREATION AND LEISURE SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Currently, MHCS D provides a limited set of recreation and leisure services through the Recreation and Communications Coordinator, housed within the Administrative Services Department. As facilities increase, especially with the addition of the recreation and aquatics facilities, there will be the need for more staffing and programming to operate the facilities. Agencies serving populations of 20,000 to 50,000 typically offer more programming types and a wider range of services, meaning that MHCS D’s evolution into a full-service recreation service provider is in line with other agencies regionally and across the country.

Over the next five years, MHCS D should establish and grow the Recreation and Leisure Services (RLS) Department to prepare for the planned recreation facilities that will be online or underway by 2028. Table 5.1 identifies core and supporting functions for RLS, based on best practices in recreation programming and the recreation facilities planned for Mountain House. Core functions are those that are required to support the main “business,” purpose or mission of a Department. Support functions are necessary to fulfill the core functions but are not the primary reason for the Department’s existence.

Table 5.1: Core and Supporting Functions for the Recreation and Leisure Services Department

Core Functions	Description
Facility Rentals and Scheduling	Managing rentals and reservations of indoor and outdoor spaces, including sports fields, picnic shelters, meeting rooms and event spaces.
Event Permits and Event Management	Developing event permitting procedures, coordinating with external event producers (races, festivals, etc.), coordinating with MH departments and divisions as required by procedures.
Special Events Planning and Production	Planning and producing MH special events, e.g., concerts or movies, dances, holiday events, festivals.
Recreation Programs in Core Program Areas	Developing and implementing recreation programs in core program areas with full-time, part-time, seasonal and contract staff: Aquatics Fitness, Health and Wellness Enrichment Youth (Out of School) Programs Arts and Culture Sports (in coordination with local leagues)
Recreation Center Management	Operating the recreation center, including developing center-based programs
Aquatic Center Management	Operating the aquatics center, including developing aquatics programming
Volunteer Recruitment and Management	Developing a one-stop volunteer program for MHCS D, recruiting and managing volunteers; developing volunteer opportunities and community involvement as leisure activities
Accessibility and Inclusion Services	Providing accommodations and removing program barriers for residents with special needs; ensuring Americans with Disability Act requirements are met
Supporting Functions	Description
Communications and Marketing	Communicating and marketing MHCS D’s parks, trails, recreation facilities, recreation programs and events. Managing social media presence and parks and recreation-related webpage(s)
Registration Software Management	Managing registration and reservation software and data, creating reports on financial performance, recreation participation and other performance metrics.
Contract Management	Managing contracts with program leaders, coaches and contract providers
Advisory Committee or Commission Support	Providing staff support to a newly established parks and recreation advisory committee or parks and recreation commission, in coordination with MHCS D administration; coordinating with the Youth Action Committee

Based on current projections, the major recreation facilities will be online or underway by the year 2028. In order to prepare for the increased responsibilities, MHCS D should begin moving forward with development of the RLS Department.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Budget for new positions in the FY 21/22 budget.** Budget for Recreation and Leisure Services Director and Department Administrative Assistant positions in the FY 21/22 budget, assuming that the positions would not be filled until the first quarter of 2022.
- **Hire a Recreation and Leisure Services Director.** Mountain House should develop a job description and proceed with recruitment in FY 21/22. This position could be written to focus on the Recreation Center Manager skillset, identifying Department Director skillsets as an area for growth. The job description should include recreation and aquatic center management experience as a requirement, with experience opening a center desirable. MHCS D should market this position for its opportunity to build a department from the ground up.
- **Launch the new RLS Department.** Onboard the new Recreation and Leisure Services Director. Once the Director is onboard, MHCS D will launch the new Department and moved the Recreation and Communications Coordinator into the Department. Among the first duties of the Director is to participate in the hiring process for the Administrative Assistant, developing a department mission and creating a programming plan, including a staffing approach and budget request for FY 22/23.
- **Establish a pricing policy for recreation programs, facility use fees, and services.** Recreation programs and rental spaces offer a revenue generating opportunity that can offset the cost of providing services. A pricing policy should guide MHCS D's fee structures for programs, recreation center memberships, event permits and rentals. It should be focused on the program level (not based entirely on a program service area, demographic category or type) and consider MHCS D's role as a public agency.

The pricing policy should consider a combination of the following factors:

- *Who is the program intended to benefit and who will have access to the program or facility?* Facility use fees may be categorized so that individuals and private entities pay a higher price than non-profits and schools. The RLS Department may also track demographics to identify where programs target participation by children, youth, seniors, people with disabilities, minorities/undeserved groups, etc. However, non-profit status or demographics alone should not dictate program prices. For example, the Department may choose to subsidize youth development programs, but a youth water safety program (greater subsidy) should be priced differently from a youth competitive dance program (lesser or no subsidy) because of other factors as noted below.
- *Does the program or service provide a social good?* Some recreation programs also provide social service benefits, such as supporting vulnerable populations, promoting public safety, or reducing juvenile delinquency. Food programs, bike safety programs, teen "after dark" socials, and programming for people with disabilities might fall in this category. These types of programs may be supported primarily by tax revenues, with limited or low revenue-generation expectations.
- *Does the program or service primarily benefit individuals or serve the community more broadly?* If the District offered a jewelry-making class or an elite youth gymnastics training program with specialized equipment and coaches, these would tend to benefit individuals. Programs in this category would generally have higher revenue generation expectations, including potentially generating a profit. On the other hand, if the District offered

community events such as movies-in-the-park or a kite festival, these would benefit the community more broadly and may be provided at low or no cost.²

- *Is the program or service a beginning level activity or advanced/competitive in nature?* With the goal of promoting healthy lifestyle choices and lifelong recreation, many recreation agencies will reduce costs for introductory level activities but charge higher prices for advanced programs. For example, a pickleball tournament for seniors would have higher revenue expectations than an introductory pickleball class.
- *Are there varying price points available to ensure access?* There should be free and low cost options to ensure access, in addition to premium offerings. If the District offers a premium rental space that commands a high price, it should also offer lower cost options so that every resident of Mountain House has the opportunity to hold a family event at a price point that they can afford.
- *How will program costs and cost recovery rates be determined?* Some communities carefully account for internal costs through interdepartmental service charges to fully account for all direct and indirect program costs. Not all agencies do so. If MHCS D intends to benchmark against other communities or national data, it should have a clear methodology in place to ensure comparisons are meaningful.
- *How will a scholarship or fee reduction/waiver program be structured to ensure access?* A scholarship or fee reduction/waiver program will allow income-qualified individuals to participate in higher cost programs, or offer fee reductions based on specific criteria, such as free or reduced event or space rental costs for non-profit organizations or community partners.

SETTING COST RECOVERY RATES

The *2011 Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* recommended that the District fund 90% of recreation services through user fees. According to NRPA metrics, the upper quartile of agencies serving 20,000-50,000 residents recover approximately 45% of all operating expenditures (direct and indirect costs) through program and facility revenues. The median rate is 26.6% for full service agencies of this size. Typically, park agencies must subsidize programs and events at a higher rate until they are fully operational.

A small additional facility-use fee or asset management fee (such as \$1 or a percentage) should be included in all program fees and rental charges to support long-term facility repair, renovation, replacement.

- **Plan for the opening of the recreation and aquatics center.** The opening of the recreation and aquatics center will greatly expand the programming capacity of MHCS D. The Director will be responsible for coordinating with other departments and District leadership about the design and components in the facility as well as the timing of construction. The Director will be responsible for developing a budget, fee structure, programming plan and staffing plan for the facility, obtaining budget approval to hire and train staff so that the facility can open as soon as it is complete.

² While community events may be provided to participants at low or no cost as part of the pricing policy, this does not necessarily mean that all community events should be funded entirely through tax revenues. The District may recruit sponsors to offset costs or incentivize and facilitate programs that are provided by non-profits and community groups by permitting use of a park or facility for low or no cost.

- **Increase per capita spending on recreation from about \$18 currently to about \$60 per capita by 2028.** While the Director will be responsible for developing specific budget requests and projects, a comparison to industry benchmarks indicates that MHCS D should be prepared to incrementally ramp up its investment in recreation over the next five to eight years. This increase will translate to a Department operating budget of approximately \$1.9M when the recreation and aquatic facility opens. This is a significant increase from the current annual budget of \$375K today. The specific staffing plan will be developed by the Director and will be somewhat dependent on the final facility designs. However, the future staffing of the RLS Department will likely include a mix of full time permanent, part-time and seasonal staff, and will total approximately 20 to 22 Full Time Equivalents (FTE) by 2028 or when facilities are online.

MAINTAINING AN EXPANDED PARK SYSTEM

The Public Works Department is responsible for infrastructure maintenance and operations, along with engineering and public capital projects. The Operation & Maintenance Division is responsible for fleet, water, sewer, storm drainage, landscape, parks and streets maintenance, funded from special taxes and, in the case of the water and wastewater systems, by rates. The Operations & Maintenance Superintendent oversees the Division, which includes five FTEs (Superintendent, Landscape Manager, and three Maintenance Workers – Senior, I and II). The Division has grown from two FTEs in the FY 2016-17 budget, adding staff as MHCS D’s maintenance responsibilities have increased. The Landscape Manager position was added in the FY 2016-17 budget. Currently, there are no seasonal positions within the Division.

In addition to its full-time permanent staff, MHCS D uses contracts to accomplish some of its routine parks and grounds maintenance duties, including multi-year contracts for landscaping maintenance and tree pruning.

Table 5.2 identifies core and supporting functions for maintaining parks and public grounds, based on the planned park system.



Table 5.2: Core and Supporting Functions for Maintenance

Core Functions	Description
Parks Maintenance	Regular maintenance of developed parks.
Landscape and Grounds Maintenance	Regular maintenance of landscaped areas and landscapes around public buildings.
Irrigation System Management	Maintenance and management of irrigation systems and water use throughout the park system and landscaped areas.
Sports Facility Maintenance	Maintenance and care of sports fields, requiring more specialized turf management activities than standard parks maintenance. Care of sports facilities (e.g., backstops, dugouts, diamonds, etc.) and sports courts surfacing, nets, and equipment of all types.
Playground Maintenance	Regular maintenance and inspection of playgrounds and safety surfacing (daily or weekly routine inspections and periodic CPSI inspections).
Outdoor Recreation Facilities Maintenance	Maintenance and care of recreation facilities in parks, such as sports courts, dog parks, picnic shelters, and other facilities in parks. Each may have its own protocol.
Trails Maintenance	Regular sweeping of paved trails, including maintenance/repair of surfaces.
Natural Areas Management	Management of natural areas and greenways, including invasive species management, vegetation and riparian corridor management, restoration, etc.
Urban Forestry: Park Trees	Tree care and replacement of trees in parks and on public lands.
Urban Forestry: Street Trees	Oversight of or tree care of trees in the public R.O.W. and landscaped areas.
Buildings Maintenance	Janitorial care of buildings and building upkeep.
Restrooms (freestanding) Maintenance	Regular cleaning of freestanding restrooms in parks, including minor plumbing repairs.
Aquatics Facility Operation	Operation of the swimming pool and filtration systems, including monitoring water chemistry and ensuring that disinfection and mechanical systems are maintaining a healthy and safe swimming pool in compliance with standards. Interactive fountains and spraygrounds, such as the one at Central Park, also require specialized maintenance.
Supporting Functions	
Fleet and Equipment Maintenance	Maintaining vehicles and equipment for parks maintenance.
Maintenance Management Planning	Developing and updating the maintenance management plan, including tasks, maintenance levels or tiers and frequencies.
Asset Management	Managing asset inventories, condition assessments and replacement schedules, linked to GIS.
Resource and Open Space Management	Tracking environmental quality, natural resource inventories, and the effectiveness of flood control measures.
Contract Management	Managing maintenance contracts and monitoring for performance.
Parks and Recreation Facility Design and Construction Documents	Overseeing consultants to design public parks and facilities or renovations.
Parks CIP Project Management	Managing public capital improvement projects. May include oversight of consultants and management of bidding processes.

MHCSD currently provides or contracts for some of these functions. As new parks, facilities and trails are added to the system, maintenance needs will grow, and new skillsets will be needed for specialized features and systems. The District's assessment structure to fund parks maintenance should continue to increase funding as the system grows.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Establish a Parks and Public Landscapes group within Public Works.** This group could be overseen by the Landscape Manager, whose title should be adjusted to reflect the workgroup.
- **Continue to contract out selected services, ensuring adequate staffing for contract oversight.** Contracting out mowing/landscape maintenance and tree care, the approach currently used, can be a cost-efficient approach, as long as the desired quality is attained through strong performance standards and adequate staffing for contract oversight and monitoring. The District may also engage outside professional services as needed to ensure sustainable and cost-effective management for specialized maintenance needs.
- **Increase staffing as the park system expands.** Even with continued maintenance contracts, Mountain House should expand its in-house staff as the park system grows and more specialized facilities and features are added. By build-out of the park system, Mountain House should have approximately 7 to 9 FTE, based on the expected acreage and facility types, even taking into consideration continued contracting. These figures do not include Fleet or Buildings staffing.
- **Train for or write job descriptions to bring in needed specialized expertise.** Additional skillsets that will be needed include aquatics facility operations (potentially an AFO certified individual), playground maintenance (at minimum playground maintenance technician training, possibly a Certified Playground Safety Inspector) and irrigation system management expertise (various irrigation certifications exist). Train staff in sports field turf management. Consider sending park maintenance supervisors or workers to NRPA's Parks Maintenance Management School. In addition, Mountain House may decide in the future that its urban forestry needs warrant an Urban Forester position in-house even if tree care contracts continue.
- **Develop a District-wide parks maintenance management plan.** MHCSD will create a District-wide maintenance management plan to guide the tasks, frequencies, staffing and resources needed for each maintenance tier of parks and open space in conjunction with the maintenance of street rights-of-way, gateways, landscaped areas around District buildings, etc. It should include performance standards for maintenance activities. The maintenance management plan should be based on a tiered maintenance approach to ensure quality, sustainable maintenance of all parks and facilities and focused attention in target locations.
 - Provide an **enhanced level of maintenance** at highly-visible and heavily-used parks as well as sites that include specialized assets, large group gatherings and events, and revenue-generating programs. These sites, including multi-use community parks and specialized sites, should be maintained at the highest level and receive priority during peak use times.
 - Provide a **standard level of maintenance** at regularly-used sites that have a mix of outdoor recreation facilities to support public health and safety, social gatherings, and community aesthetics. These sites, including village parks and linear parks, will need more frequent tasks such as restroom cleaning, trash removal and litter pickup, mowing and facility maintenance.

- Provide a **basic level of maintenance** at lesser developed, less frequently used sites, including routine monitoring, inspection and care of amenities and landscaping for asset management and public safety. Mini parks and the pipeline trail corridor will need this level of maintenance.
- **Steward natural resources.** In addition to the tiered maintenance of park facilities and landscaping, the District shall steward its natural resources to protect wetlands and sensitive natural areas, maintain the District’s tree canopy, and support the ecological function of parks and open space.
- **Enhance services for major facilities.** The District shall provide a higher level of custodial/janitorial care, routine maintenance, and asset management for major facilities such as the aquatic facility and recreation center to offset increasing operations costs and support revenue-generating programs and activities.
- **Explore cost efficiencies in maintenance.** The District should consider joint maintenance strategies with the School District and other departments and division within the MHCSO to increase efficiencies and minimize duplication of equipment, storage, and maintenance investment.
- **Allocate sufficient funding for maintenance.** The District shall ensure maintenance and operations dollars are available and staffing is in place before opening new parks and recreation facilities.



RECREATION PROGRAMMING

Park and recreation programming is essential to community health, identity, and park usage. It's also critical for generating revenues to offset the costs of maintaining and operating specialized facilities. To support programs and activities across seven core areas, District staff will maximize their impact by managing programs in a few different capacities:

- **Direct Program/Event Provider:** MHCS D will identify program needs, plan programs, provide facilities, and hire and train staff to implement programs.
- **Contract Provider:** MHCS D will contract with other providers to implement programs in District facilities, such as contracting with a tai chi instructor. Revenues for classes typically would be split proportionately. For example, 70% may go to the instructor and 30% to the District (as determined through pricing and cost recovery policies) to cover the District's direct and indirect costs for hosting, marketing, and coordinating registration.
- **Contract Manager:** MHCS D may contract out operations for an entire facility to another entity or concessionaire. While this is not recommended for the recreation center or aquatic center, it could be considered for the Boathouse or considered for Business Plaza programs in conjunction with the consortium of businesses there.
- **Partner:** MHCS D may coordinate with another entity to share costs and responsibilities for providing programs and events in District parks. For example, the District may offer use of its facilities without charge to an event provider, taking on the costs associated with marketing, site utilities, event set-up and clean-up as part of its contribution, while the other provider coordinates the activity or event.
- **Facilitator:** MHCS D will manage and maintain facilities that may be reserved (for a fee) on an ongoing or one-time basis by sports leagues, non-profits, or other public or private community groups.
- **Promoter:** MHCS D may market and promote recreation activities held in parks or other locations (such as at District schools and San Joaquin Delta College) through existing communications channels including traditional and social media, activity guides, District newsletters or mailing lists, etc.

CORE PROGRAM AREAS


- Special Events and Activities
- Aquatics
- Fitness, Health and Wellness
- Enrichment
- Youth (Out of School) Programs
- Arts and Culture
- Sports

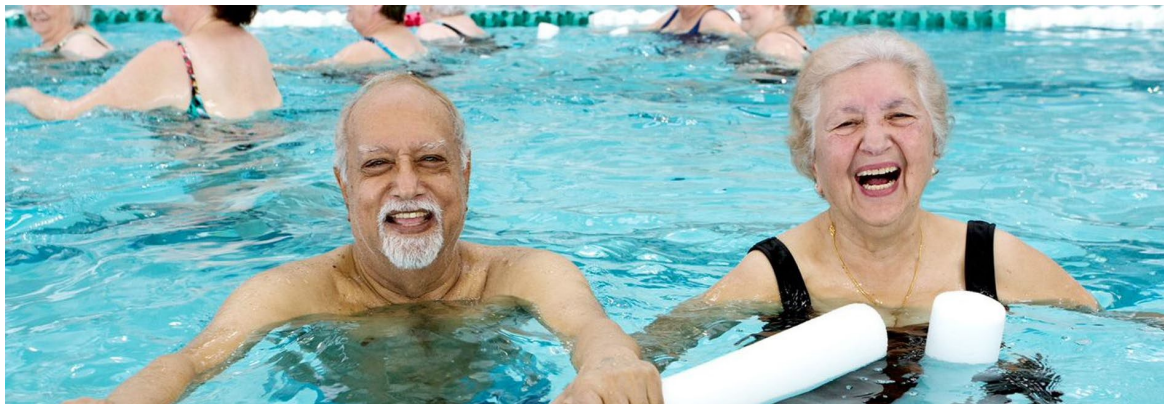
Fees for each of these services and roles should adhere to the District's pricing policies.

Each core program area is defined on the following pages, including the District's anticipated role, typical locations where programs and services may be offered, and examples of the types of classes, camps and activities that may be offered.

<p>Special Events and Activities</p> <p><i>Community and neighborhood-scale events, fairs, festivals, markets, and social activities.</i></p> 	<p>MHCSD Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Provider • Contract Manager • Partner • Facilitator <p>Potential Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use community parks • Special use parks • Linear parks • Village parks <p>Key Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programs appropriately scaled to size of park and facility • Events facilitated through District’s permitting system • Events that reflect residents’ cultures and values • Indoor and outdoor events • Multi-generational activities 	<p>Potential Programs and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Movies in the park • Holiday festivals • Holiday lightings • Art festivals • Food and culture celebrations • National Night Out • Safety Town • Community safety festival • Farmer’s markets • Bingo or bunco • Senior lunch programs • Neighborhood ice cream socials • Teen dances • Parent-child socials • Parents night out • Community bike rides • Bike-to-school day • Park treasure hunts • Swap meets
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<h2 style="margin: 0;">Aquatics</h2> <p style="margin: 0;"><i>All pool and aquatic facility programs, events and services.</i></p> 	<p>MHCSD Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Provider • Contract Provider • Facilitator <p>Potential Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use community parks <p>Key Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • American Red Cross Lifeguard certification • Private, semi-private, and group swim lessons targeting specific age groups • Free swim and lap swim targeting families, teens, and adults • Swim clinics serving intermediate to advanced swimmers for activities such as water polo and swim conditioning 	<p>Potential Programs and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure swimming • Lap swimming • Swimming lessons • Diving lessons • Stroke training and swim clinics • Lifeguard training • Water fitness (e.g., water aerobics, water jogging, aqua spinning, interval training, and aqua yoga) • Water polo • Lap swimming (lanes with different speeds) • Kayak/canoe lessons • Aquatic day camps • Swim team • Water games/contests • Dive-in movies and concerts • Theme pool parties • Pool rentals • Doggie swims
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<p>Fitness, Health and Wellness</p> <p><i>Fitness and wellness classes, activities, and open gyms/courts</i></p> 	<p>MHCS Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Provider • Contract Provider • Partner • Facilitator <p>Potential Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use community parks • Special use parks • Linear parks • Village parks <p>Key Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation center programmed as a hub for fitness, health and wellness programming, including group exercise classes, and gym activities • Activities offered indoors and outdoors 	<p>Potential Programs and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yoga • Tai chi • Zumba • Silver Sneakers • Strength and cardiovascular conditioning • Weight training • Spin cycle classes • Outdoor boot camps • 1,000 stairs programs • 10,000 steps programs • Community gardening • Master gardener • Nutrition & cooking classes • Stroller fitness programs • Senior walking groups • Healthy aging • Smoking cessation • Organized active leisure games such as bocce, shuffleboard, croquet, and disc golf
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<p>Enrichment</p> <p><i>Opportunities for introductory skill development, lifelong learning and personal enrichment for recreation and leisure</i></p>	<p>MHCSD Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Provider • Contract Provider <p>Potential Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use community parks • Special use parks • Linear parks 	<p>Potential Programs and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parenting classes • Babysitter classes • Preschool/reading readiness • Book groups and clubs • Genealogy • Computer/web design • Speaker series • Foreign languages • Career/leadership skills • Cooking/food tastings • Field trips • Metal detecting • Dog obedience/agility • Guided hikes • Fishing • Starlight gazing • Learn-to-camp programs • Butterfly, bird and plant identification • Coach training • Various volunteer options
	<p>Key Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus on socialization and skill development, not skill mastery • Program such as senior programs, STEM programs, nature interpretation and environmental education, introduction to diverse cultures • Volunteerism targeting families and various ages 	



Youth (Out of School) Programs

Programs for school age-youth that support child development and child care when school is not in session, including holidays, breaks, and summer.



MHCSD Role

- Direct Provider
- Contract Provider

Potential Locations

- Multi-use community parks

Key Opportunities

- Drop-in, weekly, monthly, or school-year programs
- Programs for elementary and middle-school youth, with additional offerings for teens and young adults
- Locations with indoor/outdoor programming opportunities
- Long-term partnership for after-school programs in selected schools

Potential Programs and Events

- Before-school programs
- After-school programs
- Holiday/non-school day programs
- Specialized after-school activities, such as Lego maniacs, robotics, spelling/geography bee, crafts, and makerspace programs)
- Tutoring & homework help
- Summer day camps, including themed camps, art camps, sports camps, aquatics day camps, etc.
- Teen adventure camps
- Teen leadership and civic programs
- Summer Free Lunch



<h2 style="background-color: #1a3d54; color: white; padding: 5px;">Arts and Culture</h2> <p style="color: #1a3d54; font-style: italic;">Classes, camps, programs, and performances relating to fine, visual, performing and cultural arts.</p> 	<p>MHCSD Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Provider • Contract Provider • Partner • Facilitator <p>Potential Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use community parks <p>Key Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amphitheater programs • Recreation center programs • Programs emphasizing Indian and Asian cultures 	<p>Potential Programs and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concert series • Art walks • Theater group performances • Photo contests • Arts & crafts classes, (e.g., jewelry-making, knitting, painting, calligraphy) • Floral arranging • Photography • Introductory music, voice and dance lessons • Cultural traditions and programs (Taiko drumming, mariachi) • Literary arts (e.g., poetry, storytelling) • More cartooning • Public art displays • Community mural painting • Art appreciation
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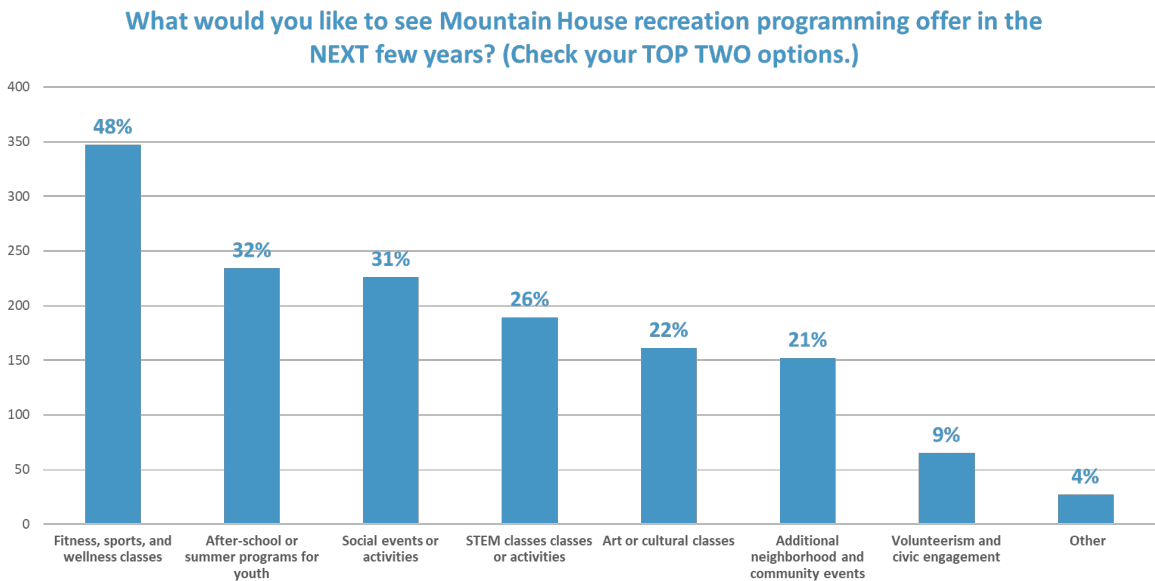
<p>Sports</p> <p><i>Recreational and competitive athletic leagues, camps, classes, and tournaments for individual and team sports.</i></p> 	<p>MHCSD Role</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direct Provider • Contract Provider • Facilitator <p>Potential Locations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Multi-use community parks • Special use sports park • Village parks <p>Key Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordination with college and local sports leagues • Programs for all ages, including active adults and seniors • Youth programs that emphasize fundamental skills and sportsmanship • Options for organized and drop-in play 	<p>Potential Programs and Events</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open gym time • Drop-in programs, classes, camps, and league play for variety of sports, such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Cricket - Soccer - Baseball - Softball - Kickball - Football - Lacrosse - Pickleball - Tennis - Volleyball - Badminton - Basketball - Non-traditional sports (e.g., dodgeball, rugby, ultimate frisbee) • Multi-sports camps • Gym rentals
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RECOMMENDATIONS

- Integrate recreation program management tools.** The District will need registration software that facilitates program registration and facility reservations, while also helping the District to track data to help ensure the best customer service possible. The software should also collect contact information to create a program mailing list that may be used for future outreach.
- Ramp up programming in areas prioritized by community members.** Once the Director and Coordinator are hired, begin expanding programming in the areas prioritized by community members while major facilities are still being developed. Figure 5.2 shows priorities identified by community members in summer 2020 for programming expansion areas. The District can use available outdoor facilities to establish and test pilot programs, focusing on outdoor fitness and wellness as COVID gathering restrictions are eased and social events and activities when group gatherings resume. The Director should determine the staffing approach for expanded programs, which could include contract teachers or part-time or seasonal staff.

Figure 5.2: 2020 Community Feedback on Programming Priorities



- Define Sports Field and Facility Allocation Policies:** As the District increases activities and programs over time, it will eventually encounter competing demands. Given the District’s anticipated role in both providing programs itself and facilitating programs provided by other sports organizations and community groups, staff should develop a policy and transparent process for facility allocation. Scheduling priorities could be identified as follows:

 - First scheduling priority is given to District-provided programs.
 - Second scheduling priority is for District-coordinated programs (contracted providers), plus any recreation providers or sports leagues with existing facility use agreements.
 - Third scheduling priority is given to non-profits, schools, and public entities and/or that offer programs and events with 1) broad community benefit and/or 2) in line with the District’s core program areas.

- Fourth scheduling priority is given to private entities that provide public program and services in District parks for a fee.
- Fifth scheduling priority is given to private entities, individuals, and groups interested in reserving parks or facilities for restricted events or private events, parties, or activities. For this tier of users, the Recreation and Leisure Services Department may offer times where facilities may be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Promote community programs and events.** As new program, events and activities are added, staff should review and potentially expand communications channels to recruit program participants. Programs may be promoted across several forums, including a new Recreation and Leisure Services webpage, social media, the District’s calendar of events, activity guides (digital or potentially in print), and newsletters.
- **Track program participation and metrics to gauge program success.** Good program data will be essential as the District brings programs online to determine what works and does not work well in offering programs and services to the community. Program data should be tracked in the seven core program areas to measure and evaluate program quality and effectiveness, including:
 - The quantity and variety of programs, events, activities and services offered;
 - The time, location, and price at which programs are offered, along with community benefit received.
 - Participation rates, looking at the numbers and demographics of participants involved;
 - The cost recovery rate, which should be measured in conjunction with the District’s pricing policies;
 - Equipment needs if assets are re-usable and not counted as direct costs; and
 - Factors such as cancellation rates, number of new programs introduced each year, etc.
- **Create and implement a program evaluation and forecasting tool/process.** The new Director will establish a decision-making process to help staff identify what types of programs to provide, which classes to cancel, and when to introduce new or trending activities. The process should allow community members and/or potential contract providers to request and offer different types of programs within the core program areas. A checklist tool can be created to help evaluate program suggestions to ensure these will be financially feasible for the District and in line with desired community benefits.
- **Periodically re-evaluate community priorities for programs.** Conduct a periodic program review and analysis to help maintain program quality, responsiveness and relevance. The community’s evolving program needs can be determined through combination of post-program satisfaction surveys, District-wide surveys, and national trends, and changing demographic and market data.





AFTERWORD USING THIS PLAN

AFTERWORD: USING THIS PLAN

The *2021 Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* establishes refreshed guidance for the park and recreation system, growing from the strong foundation in place today. Mountain House parks are a living system, and this long-range plan is intended to be a living document that helps the District make decisions.

This plan addresses not only planned parks and facilities, but also will guide necessary updates, renovations and retrofits of existing facilities that will occur in the coming years.

As time passes, new opportunities may arise, and new trends may emerge. The key directions in this Plan will serve as a touchstone, also serving as criteria to help the District make decisions when unforeseen opportunities or situations arise.

KEY DIRECTIONS FOR PARKS AND RECREATION

- Respond to community demographics.
- Diversify the park experience.
- Create a walkable, bikeable community.
- Connect residents to nature and water.
- Centralize specialized facilities.
- Increase events and programs.
- Right-size the system.

IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS

To better understand how to use this plan, decision-making strategies are discussed for the following:

- Park renovation
- New community requests
- Priorities for new development

PARK RENOVATION

This 2021 Plan recognizes that the District's existing parks were built according to expectations for site selection, design and development that are now obsolete. Following previous guidelines, current village parks lacked diversity and support amenities such as restrooms. Because mini parks were required in the 2004 and 2011 plans, but not counted or guided by design criteria, several existing mini parks are too small, not well located, and not sufficiently developed to meet needs in unserved residential areas.

Implementing this plan involves evaluating existing parks to see what adjustments are needed. Some adjustments may be provided now, such as the addition of restrooms, while others should wait until the end of facility lifecycles or when parks are renovated. Table 5.1 provides examples of the types of adjustments that could be considered.

Table 5.1: Considerations for Existing Park Renovation

PARK TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION CONSIDERATIONS
Multi-Use Community Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of its lifecycle, replace the play area at Central Community Park with a larger all-inclusive, universal play area.
Linear Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At Creek Park, evaluate trail widths and connector paths to the park. Evaluate existing activity nodes to see if others should be added.
Village Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate needs in all village parks for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A drinking water fountain with bottle filler - Restrooms - Shade (e.g., trees, canopies, sails, structures, umbrellas) • Where applicable, improve connections between village parks and adjacent schools, considering access paths and gateways. • Consolidate trash receptacles and re-evaluate plantings for maintenance ease and cost-effectiveness.
Mini Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-assess the recreation value of all mini parks. Add facilities to sites that do not have a park within a ½ mile to improve the recreation value of these parks. • Determine if some small sites less than 0.5 acres in size—especially those near other parks-- should be transitioned to a landscaped area by removing facilities at end of lifecycles. • Transition landscaping to a basic level of maintenance.

NEW COMMUNITY REQUEST

Park and recreation trends change over time. As time passes and Mountain House attracts new residents, the District may receive requests for amenities, facilities, and programs not specifically noted in this Plan. Evaluating these proposals against a set of Evaluation Criteria will help determine if these new opportunities align with the objectives, directions and guidelines in this Plan. Criteria and questions to consider may include:

- What is requested? (e.g., an amenity to support user comfort, health, or safety; a new recreation facility; new or expanded programs or services)
- Who is making the request? (a resident, non-resident, sports/recreation non-profit, commercial entity, developer)
- Does the amenity, facility or program support at least one of the Key Directions noted in this Plan? More than one?
- Would the amenity, facility or program require more (or potentially reduce) needs for maintenance and operational resources?
- Would the amenity, facility or program:
 - Improve park access?
 - Increase the safety, usability, or functionality of an existing or planned park or facility?
 - Serve an underserved area?

- Respond to a new trend or community demand identified through subsequent outreach?
 - If the change replaces something else, does the new amenity, facility or program provide a similar type of activity or use? (for example, replacing a sports court with another type of sports, fitness or active recreation facility)
 - Is the individual or group willing to partner, donate, or otherwise share in costs to make this change?

NEW DEVELOPMENT

In Mountain House, implementing the *Parks, Recreation and Leisure Plan* will require negotiating with developers to build quality parks. The guidelines in this Plan allow some flexibility with the intent of creating more diverse parks. Many details around numbers and types of amenities and facilities will be determined during the design process. Developers not only should meet the minimum park requirements noted here, but they also should respond to the intent of the development guidelines. This means placing more focus on recreation value, operational efficiencies, and park identity rather than focusing on community aesthetics. This represents a significant shift from the previous approach.

This document does not provide specific requirements in the number, size, style and quality of each element in every park—since these decisions are determined during the design process. However, it provides guidelines, policy direction, and clarity on the vision and character of each site. Developers are expected identify the mix of amenities, facilities, and landscaping choices to implement this vision.

For instance, one of the Plan’s Key Directions is to ensure access to nature and water. The feasibility of some water-based facilities and activities—such as a boat launch on Old River—may face environmental restrictions or other challenges. Knowing this, the Plan presents several ways to support this Key Direction:

- Provide a non-motorized boat ramp/launch or an informal canoe and kayak put in/take out point in Old River Park (if feasible).
- Provide other activity nodes in Old River Park to encourage connections to the river.
- Consider an optional public/private non-motorized boat launch, rental facility, and boat house at the Lakeside Space to support lake access and paddling.
- Locate Village Park L adjacent to the lake to provide a public waterfront park.
- Include ponds within a wider Greenway Loop Park.
- Protect and provide activity nodes along the creek in Creek Park.

As the District and developers evaluate site design options to support water access, one of the elements listed above may not be achievable. If so, the others become more important to achieving the vision for the park system. For example, if a non-motorized boat launch on Old River is not permissible based on environmental constraints, the optional Lakeside Space should be implemented to provide public non-motorized boating opportunities. This is one of the many tradeoffs and options that may be negotiated during the design process.

PROJECT PHASING

In 2015, MHCS D began investigating the feasibility of incorporating as a city to expand its control over local services and to increase revenues to improve services. The District has identified an implementation plan for parks, open space, and trails that considers project phasing in conjunction with its progress towards incorporation as a city. The five-year plan includes completion of Cordes Village Park, development of a portion of the Utility Corridor, and construction of the next two phases of Central Community Park, including the amphitheater, recreation center, and aquatic center. These will trigger major shifts in staffing, maintenance, and management needs, as guided by the recommendations in Chapter 5.

Mountain House is well on its way to be premier community in which residents and others choose to live, work, and play. Park and recreation are integral to the community's vision for the future.

