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Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan

Summary Fact Sheet

Key Recommendations

- ▶ Strive to locate a developed park within walking distance of most residential areas.
- ▶ Promote and facilitate the development of a Regional trail and bikeway system.
- ▶ Obtain land and develop parks at a ratio of 10 acres of improved parkland per one thousand residents.
- ▶ Wherever possible, new neighborhood parks should have a useable size of not less than 5 acres.
- ▶ Seek opportunities to partner with schools, developers, and other organizations.
- ▶ Accept only parkland dedications that are consistent with the updated park development standards.
- ▶ Design and construct park sites that will provide quality recreation facilities for all segments of the population.
- ▶ Preserve and protect significant habitats, plants, and wildlife in the planning area.
- ▶ Adopt an open, consistent, and objective decision-making process for acquisition of open spaces.
- ▶ Increase park development funding.

Park, Recreation Facility, and Trail Inventory

	EXISTING 2003		PROJECTED 2010		PROPOSED 2020	
City Population	85,601		96,769		113,319	
Park Sites	Developed Sites	64	Developed Sites	75	Developed Sites	106
Park Acres	Developed Acres	580	Developed Acres	967	Developed Acres	1,133
Level of Service	Acres / 1,000 pop.	6.78	Acres / 1,000 pop.	10	Acres / 1,000 pop.	10
Inventoried Recreation Facilities	Ballfields	23	Ballfields	44	Ballfields	52
	Soccer Fields	10	Soccer Fields	19	Soccer Fields	23
	Football Fields	1	Football Fields	3	Football Fields	4
	Tennis Courts	19	Tennis Courts	25	Tennis Courts	30
	Swimming Pools	6	Swimming Pools	7	Swimming Pools	8
	Gymnasiums	7	Gymnasiums	10	Gymnasiums	11
Trails and Bikeways	Trail Miles	31.57	Trail Miles	42.68	Trail Miles	101.86
	Bikeway Miles	73.12	Bikeway Miles	101.12	Bikeway Miles	126.06

Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan

Guiding Principles

The following principles, derived from elements in the City's General Plan, guided the development of the goals, standards, and recommendations found in the *Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan*.

Essential Service

Redding's parks, trails, open space areas, recreation facilities, and programs are essential public services that help create a livable, dynamic, and economically strong city.

Connected System

Trails will connect residents to parks, schools, major destination points, and natural open spaces.

Neighborhood Focus

The public landscape is enhanced and neighborhood identities are strengthened through conveniently located and well-maintained parks.

Partnerships

The City values partnerships and cooperative opportunities with school districts, governmental agencies, the business and development community, local service clubs, nonprofit groups, and private citizens.

Unique Setting

The Sacramento River provides a unique setting not found in other urban areas, and is central to future park development.

Accessible and Safe

Recreation areas must be safe and accessible to everyone, regardless of physical limitations or economic status.

Economic Development

High level recreational amenities positively influence economic development.

Recreational Experiences

Beautiful public spaces and creative park designs provide a full spectrum of recreational experiences, ranging from quiet relaxation to active recreation.

Future Needs

The park system will meet the recreational needs of Redding residents.

Document Summary

Introduction

Redding's park and recreation system is one with great potential. More so than many places of comparable size, the City and its partners have preserved and developed a variety of unique settings for public benefit. Caldwell Park and Enterprise Park are two notable sites that demonstrate the foresight community leaders and civic-minded organizations have shown over the years in providing parkland for sports and leisure activities.

We are also fortunate in having many trails that encourage walkers and bicyclists to enjoy Redding's distinctive geography. The on-going investment in our trail system has earned us national recognition. In 2002, the Sacramento River Trail and the River Rail Trail were both designated as "National Recreation Trails" by the United States Department of the Interior.

The Sacramento River and the corridors along our creeks endow this area with a natural, open quality not always found in urban settings. Access to these open spaces is still possible in many parts of the community where wooded slopes and streams have been protected.

The existence of these special areas — parks, trails, and open spaces — set aside and maintained for recreation and natural resource preservation, demonstrate that our City has the capacity to think big and to attract broad support from citizens, state legislators, philanthropic foundations, and from national organizations. We have much to be proud of.

However, as our population grows and as we build more houses, offices, and stores, a clear and coordinated park and open space plan must accompany development if we are to enjoy a high quality of life and preserve areas for recreation.

Purpose and Scope

The *Parks, Trails, and Open Space Master Plan* is the result of a two-year effort by the City and its citizens to create such a long-range plan for recreational sites and community open spaces. It looks at every aspect of the current system and offers strategies to continue the successes, remedy our mistakes, and anticipate future needs.

In scope, the Plan examines a planning area of 83-square miles, equal to one and a half times the size of the City of San Francisco. This encompasses Redding's city limits and the secondary planning boundary where urbanization may occur over the next twenty years. It seeks to address the needs of all ages and abilities, and to also accommodate the many ways people spend their leisure time, whether in recreational pursuits or in athletic competition.

Document Structure

The Master Plan document contains three chapters, or Strategies, that examine individually the parks, the trails and bikeways, and the natural open space areas in Redding. Each Strategy inventories existing conditions and goes on to recommend city-wide goals and policies, revised standards, and new service levels. A fourth section, the Implementation Strategy, discusses current funding mechanisms, proposes additional funding methods, and outlines a master park project list.

The broad recommendations found in the strategies are then pulled together and applied to smaller geographic areas with the Quadrant Plans. These four sections examine site-by-site park acquisition and development needs, specific recreation facility developments, proposed trails, and also potential open space interest areas for each quadrant of the city.

Three terms are used throughout the Master Plan that deserve clear definitions. "Specification" is used to describe a specific requirement. For example, bikeways and trails are classified by their construction materials, width and/or signage. The term "standard" is used in several sections, e.g. Park Development and Design Standards, Service Area Standards, and Facility Standards. "Standard" is intended to be synonymous with guideline. The Plan sets a strong preference for the amenities and/or level of service described, but it should not be construed as the establishment of an inalterable requirement. Finally, a "goal" is a broad objective that is supported by the Plan's policies.

Implementing the General Plan

First and foremost, the Master Plan is an implementation tool of Redding's *2000-2020 General Plan*. Four policies from that document create the springboard for the Plan's major components:

1. Recreation Policy R4A directs the City to develop and implement a *Citywide Parks and Recreation Master Plan* so that suitable sites for public parks and other recreational features can be identified and acquired well in advance of their actual need.
2. Recreation Policy R11A calls for a *Citywide Trails Master Plan* that links neighborhoods to other land uses and significant destination points, separates bicyclists and pedestrians from vehicular traffic, and provides continuous trail connections and a looped system around the City.
3. Policy T8A in the Transportation Element provides for the development and maintenance of a *Comprehensive Bikeway Plan* geared to establishing an integrated bicycle transportation system.
4. Finally, a *Comprehensive Open Space Plan* is required in Natural Resources Policy NR11A, which must develop a framework for open space lands, define the role of public

and private open spaces, address agricultural land preservation, identify important ecological areas, and address the acquisition and management of public open space opportunities.

By combining these related subjects into one integrated planning effort, the Master Plan creates a comprehensive vision and action plan for those areas held in common by the City for public recreation and preservation.

Parks — Recognizing Our Achievements

The first section of the Master Plan is the Park Strategy. Here we recognize that there have been many achievements over the years. The recently updated inventory shows an impressive number of sites where Redding residents can recreate, compete, and celebrate.

We have over 20 playgrounds, many ballfields, a skate park, horseshoe pits, a roller hockey rink, a riverfront fish viewing area, natural area parks, 3 boat ramps, 2 water playgrounds, a state-of-the-art swimming pool, and a new sport park under construction.

Major Park and Recreation Issues

With these accomplishments, however, several significant issues also challenge us:

- *Recreation Facilities.* At the top of the list is the need for sufficient recreation facilities. Public and community-based sports providers indicate that there is an unmet demand for more athletic and sports fields. Space to carry out many types of recreation programs is inadequate. Special game areas are also needed for bocce ball, BMX, disc golf, and other sports.
- *Land Availability.* Increased development activity throughout the planning area is impacting the availability of future park sites. If we are to provide parks where they are needed, we should obtain park sites ahead of their need.

- *Existing Parkland.* Over the years, the City has secured park sites, but not always in the location or size needed.
- *Parkland Service Levels.* At present, the City does not meet the level-of-service goal adopted with the General Plan, which is 10 acres of improved parkland per 1,000 people. Our current service level is 6.78 acres per 1,000 people, with significant areas of the city experiencing lower levels.
- *Lack of Neighborhood Parks.* While the current park system has an enviable variety of special purpose sites and two large regional parks with unique attractions, notably lacking are sufficient parks that serve the everyday needs of our residential neighborhoods.
- *Park Size.* Too many parks are less than one acre in size, and therefore lack the space to include the typical range of park amenities necessary to serve residents of different ages and interests.
- *Park Proximity.* The current park system has an uneven distribution of park sites, with some areas abundantly supplied with playgrounds, ball fields, and pools, and other places lacking even a tot lot.
- *Maintenance.* There is a substantial amount of needed improvements at our sites and facilities, amounting to approximately \$1.8 million. This includes playground and restroom replacements to meet access and disability requirements, and improvements to recreation buildings, park landscapes, and parking lots.
- *Park Locations.* Over the next eighteen years, 29 more parks are proposed for acquisition. These include 22 new city parks and 7 school-park sites. With these additional parks and the build-out of our existing inventory, we can achieve by 2020 the goal of 10 acres of developed parkland per 1,000 people that was set out in the General Plan.
- *Neighborhood Parks.* Large neighborhood parks (minimum size: 5 acres) are recognized as the standard unit of the park system. Distributed equitably throughout the city, they will allow most Redding residents, especially children, to be within a reasonable walking distance of a park.
- *Project Prioritization.* To achieve a geographically balanced park system, priority for park acquisition and development will be directed to:
 - ▶ areas lacking major recreation facilities
 - ▶ existing undeveloped park sites
 - ▶ areas with the lowest level-of-service (park acres per 1,000 people)
 - ▶ park-deficient areas where there are no parks available within ½ mile of existing residential neighborhoods
 - ▶ high density residential areas, which typically have fewer private outdoor play areas
- *Recreation Facilities.* New service level goals for seven major recreation facilities are proposed, based upon an extensive review of our inventory and through user surveys. Area-specific studies have delineated where we need to build more athletic sports fields, tennis courts, swimming pools, and gyms so that we may meet these new goals.
- *The Sacramento River.* The Sacramento River and its major tributary streams will continue to be the focus and the organizing principal of the park, trail, and open space system.

Key Park and Recreation Goals and Policies

Redding residents will need additional parks in many areas of the City if we are to provide a balance of park types, extend services to park-deficient areas, and provide space for needed recreation facilities. Of the many recommendations contained in the Park Strategy, the following summarizes the key goals and policies:

- *Special Purpose Facilities.* Additional facilities for senior activities, special games such as bocce ball, disc golf, dog parks, and skating and bicycle activities will also be considered with assistance from interested citizen groups and organizations regarding site location and maintenance.
- *Cooperative Efforts.* Partnerships are a cost-effective way to use public resources, and help make our park system unique. The City will continue to seek opportunities with educational entities, developers, public utilities, other agencies, the Redding Redevelopment Agency, and private or nonprofit organizations.
- *Park Friends.* The participation of the public in the development and maintenance of our parks is strongly encouraged if we are to meet the expectations of residents within the limitations of city resources. “Adopt-a-Park” efforts have a long and successful history in many cities, and should be considered in Redding, too. In addition, a citizen-initiated, long-range park advocacy group, such as a “Friends of the Parks” organization, would be a welcome and easily identified avenue for citizens to make a sustained contribution to their city’s parks.
- *Undeveloped Park Sites.* Our inventory of undeveloped parkland should be decreased by placing a priority on the development of existing sites, through the disposition of unessential sites, and by tightening acquisition standards so that only high quality parcels are acquired in the future.
- *Park Design Standards.* The updated design standards will ensure that parks can be the setting for activities or recreational experiences that will be of interest to the widest range of ages and physical abilities, including families, seniors, teens, and youngsters. Our parks and public spaces should include adventurous playgrounds, shaded picnic areas, art, and water features.

Celebrating Our Trails

The national reputation of our trail system gives us cause to celebrate the hard work and partnerships forged during its making. As a result of efforts over the last twelve years, the trail inventory now includes more than 30 miles of publicly accessible trails. These include paved paths, walking loops within existing parks, and challenging dirt trails for mountain bike enthusiasts and equestrians.

At the center of this network is the Sacramento River Trail, accessed by residents and visitors from a growing number of connector trails and entry points found in residential areas, parks, and open space areas.

In coming years, over 100 miles of additional trails are planned that will continue to allow residents and visitors to enjoy the obvious recreational aspects of the trail network. At the same time, they can take the opportunity to get out of their cars and use non-motorized methods to commute to school or work, reach major retail and recreation destinations like Mount Shasta Mall and downtown, or ride to the nearby Whiskeytown or Shasta Lake Recreation Areas.

Bikeways

Bike travel is also included in this Plan. The proposed bikeway system has been coordinated with the off-road trails, and with the bikeway plans of adjacent jurisdictions, which in turn connect to larger statewide and national bike and trail systems.

Over the next eighteen years, 154 miles of trails and bikeways are proposed within the park planning area, including off-road trails, on-street bike lanes, and posted bike routes.

Key Trail & Bikeway Goals and Policies

- *Trail Design and Improvements.* Develop a looped system of trails and bikeways with continuous connections that will provide maximum recreational opportunities for all segments of Redding’s population.

- *Trail Corridors.* Locate trails in open space areas whenever public access is compatible with natural resource management goals, and integrate trail corridors into development proposals to link neighborhoods with schools, parks, and other major destinations.
- *Partnerships.* Continue partnerships with other interest groups, governmental agencies, and landowners to acquire and develop the proposed trail and bikeway improvements.
- *Close-By Biking and Walking Opportunities.* With the help of interested citizens, designate family “bike and hike” loops where residents can safely exercise close to their own neighborhoods.
- *Bike Facilities.* Investigate the possibility of creating a Bicycle Motocross (BMX) - Mountain Bike Circuit within a regional park or special purpose area.
- *Citizen Action.* Create an Adopt-A-Trail Program to organize volunteer efforts that benefit trails.
- *Connectivity.* Further encourage pedestrian travel by improving sidewalk continuity, especially in school walk zones where children who live close to school sites are not bussed.
- *Bikeway Coordinator.* Designate a bikeway planner/coordinator to work with bike advocacy groups, race organizations, and other agencies to plan for bikeway system improvements.

Embracing Our Open Space

Redding’s location at the north end of California’s central valley gives our city a natural quality that sets it apart from many others. Snow-capped mountains and volcanic peaks, blue lakes and rushing water—this is the backdrop we experience every time we venture out of our homes. It is there as we ride to work, or play ball, or take the dog for a walk.

This regional setting extends down into Redding’s urban landscape via the open space areas along the Sacramento River and its streams, and along the trails into our parks. These natural components of the park system create unique opportunities for hiking scenic paths, fishing in clear running water, and observing wildlife like otters and eagles.

Since the Sacramento River is the focal point of our recreation and park system, open spaces, parks, and trails are all planned to relate to this significant natural feature. Our park environments celebrate its beauty, the trail system links it to residential areas, and our open space efforts help protect habitats for the fish and other creatures that live along its banks. The preservation of lands along the Sacramento River and its major tributary streams means that we and our children can experience the beauty of nature right here in our neighborhoods.

Starting a community open space program for Redding will undoubtedly be an exciting and a challenging undertaking. With City leadership and public support, we can ensure that the coming years of population expansion and increased development in our region will not cause further environmental degradation, but will instead restore and maintain those qualities of our natural environment that the community now cherishes.

Key Open Space Goals and Policies

- *Land Types.* The open space program will focus on six types of land consistent with General Plan goals and policies. These lands include steep slopes, floodplains, natural resource areas that support sensitive species habitat, agricultural grazing lands, urban buffers, and sites next to existing parks or which contain scenic, historical, cultural, or archaeological value.
- *Land Selection.* Open space activities will be primarily concentrated in eleven “open space interest areas.” Identified through a geographic suitability analysis, these interest areas delineate lands with high open space

values based on a set of criteria developed by the City and its advisory group. Further research will be directed in these areas to identify specific opportunities for preservation.

- *Open Space Acquisition.* The intent of the open space program is to work with cooperative owners and willing sellers. The City will use a variety of methods to build a community open space network, including:
 - ▶ the acceptance of land donations
 - ▶ partnerships in acquisition and restoration
 - ▶ conservation and trail easements
 - ▶ leases
 - ▶ land trades and transfers
 - ▶ land acquisition
- *Management.* Open spaces will be planned and managed in a comprehensive manner. Open space lands are meant to be an asset to the community. Therefore, all parcels and easements for which the City has or will expend public resources will have management plans to direct activities and improvements on them.
- *Citizen Participation.* The formation of a technical advisory group to assist the existing Community Services Advisory Commission is deemed necessary for the successful implementation of an open space program.

The expertise and perspective offered by local citizens and volunteer-professionals will help the City to accurately evaluate the complex issues associated with open space activities, and also help set realistic goals for the program. The relationships fostered through such a group will contribute to building the strong network of partners needed to successfully seek grant funds.

Implementing the Vision

The challenges to funding this vision are significant. While resources have been scarce in years past, more recently the people of Redding and their City Council have come to understand

the substantial benefits to communities that invest in the “green infrastructure” of their park system.

The City, through its own investment and supported by substantial grant funds, has embarked upon a capital improvement program to build a handful of important and long-needed recreation and trail projects:

- The renovation of the municipal pool from a leaking 50-year-old liability into a first-class Olympic-sized competitive and recreation Aquatic Center has many positive community impacts.
- The Redding Sports Park with its athletic fields and indoor sports amenities will significantly increase recreation opportunities.
- Our trail system is also benefitting from a five-year grant-funded capital improvement plan that will add to an already impressive inventory of trails.

However, as with any viable business strategy, inputs and resources must come from a variety of places. While the grants, special legislative actions, and state bonds that have played such a significant role in recent years will continue to be sought for future capital improvement projects, we cannot depend upon them for the full development of our park system.

In addition, funds will be necessary for ongoing operating and maintenance costs, which will require a different funding approach since they are not eligible under most grant programs.

Funding Recommendations

The General Plan called out for new approaches to fund our park system. In response to that directive, the Implementation Strategy of the Master Plan sets out for consideration several funding options, some of which, while new to Redding, are successfully employed in other jurisdictions. These proposals can help us address the large funding gap that now exists between our goals and the City’s current funding mechanisms.

- *Partnerships.* Continue to seek partnerships with national, regional, and local organizations, as well as educational entities, the development community, and individuals, to create unique projects within the park, trail, and open space system.
- *Grants.* Continue to pursue grant opportunities from federal, state, and local sources to plan and develop the proposed improvements.
- *Park Impact Fee.* Increase park development impact fee so that it may reach the maximum amount provided for by state law.
- *Improvement Fee.* Add an “off-site improvement fee,” equal to 20 percent of the in-lieu park fee, to cover the cost of utility line extensions, curb, gutter, pavement, street lights, and other necessary public improvements already required from subdividers who dedicate parkland.
- *Park and Open Space Tax.* Consider an increase to the local sales tax to fund acquisition, development, and maintenance of parks, trails, and open spaces.

OR

Consider utilization of a benefit assessment district to acquire, develop, and maintain parks, trails, and open space areas through the levying of a city-wide parcel tax.

- *Maintenance Districts.* Consider maintenance districts for new residential developments to fund park development and/or maintenance costs.

Relation to Other Plans

The Master Plan has taken into consideration various plans already completed so that redundancy is reduced and coordination with potential partners is maximized.

Staff reviewed several plans generated by the City, including the 1998 Redding Bikeways Plan and the Downtown Specific Plan. The bicycle

plans of Shasta County, Anderson, Shasta Lake, and CalTrans were considered. Discussions were held with several school districts regarding their capital improvement plans.

Finally, we consulted various governmental agencies and nonprofit groups with activities relevant to parks, trails, and open space regarding their own strategies and management plans.

Because a small portion of the planning area is presently within Shasta County’s jurisdiction, continued coordination is also desirable with that entity. Should the County choose through its development review process to reserve or otherwise set aside land for park, trails, and/or open space purposes, the City would consider cooperating in acquisition or otherwise obtaining rights for public use. (Development and maintenance costs of such lands by the County would be at the County's sole discretion.)

Master Plan Advisory Committee

As with other significant City planning efforts, public participation and involvement has been sought from the outset.

Early in 2001, the City Council appointed a special nine-member citizen’s advisory group whose members possessed diverse interests and expertise, including education, transportation, recreation, real estate, development, urban design, and law. Three members of this Master Plan Advisory Committee were drawn from the Community Services Advisory Commission, a standing citizens group that advises the Council on issues related to parks, recreation, open space, and tourism issues. The others were selected specifically for this task from the public at large.

In 26 public meetings over almost 2 years, the committee members reviewed inventories of sites and facilities, scrutinized analyses, assisted in survey questionnaire development, advised staff on updated service standards, and helped with the geographic distribution of proposed facilities. The City is indebted to their perseverance and vision in helping to create this document.

Public Outreach Activities

- **Cable Access Call-in Show** to inform the public of the master planning effort (June 2001).
- **Local Sports Organizations** were given questionnaires and interviewed to gather information on their recreation facility needs.
- **High School Recreation Survey** given to 400 students to better understand the points of view of Redding teens.
- **Comprehensive Household Survey** completed by 1,352 Redding residents to solicit information on participation levels, spending priorities, and ideas for improving services. The survey was made possible through a LEGACI grant from the Great Valley Center, which the City applied for in partnership with Shasta Land Trust.
- **Open Space “Summit”** attended by forty representatives from natural resource agencies, adjacent governmental jurisdictions, nonprofit organizations, and interested citizens who discussed the direction for a Redding open space program.
- **Public Information Meetings** to present the public with the completed draft Plan and to solicit feedback and opinions.
- **Community Services Advisory Commission** held 5 public meetings and took testimony on the draft Plan. On September 10, 2003, the Commission unanimously recommended approval of the Plan to the City Council.
- **Redding Planning Commission Workshop** with the Community Services Advisory Commission to discuss the draft Plan.
- **Redding Planning Commission** held two public hearings to discuss and take testimony on the draft Plan, resulting in their recommendation to Council for approval on October 28, 2003.
- **Special Group Meetings** were conducted with service clubs, sports organizations and local business organizations to solicit input and explain the draft Plan’s major points.
- **Media Coverage** in the form of seven articles and editorials in 2003 have informed a broad, local audience.
- **Master Plan Web Site** launched June 2003 to keep the public up-to-date on scheduled public meetings and hearings, and to allow access online of the entire document for review or download.

Go To:

<http://ci.redding.ca.us/comsrv/pmp/index.htm>

Acknowledgments

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