

**Madera General Plan Update
Parks and Recreation Master Plan
Draft Goals and Policies
7-22-08**

The Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Element and Parks and Recreation Master Plan work together to identify existing facilities and programs, assess how they are used, identify where additional park facilities or recreation programs are needed, and recommend how to best meet these needs. Both documents serve as a framework of goals and policies to assure efficient stewardship of the City's parks and public spaces, recreation facilities, and natural resources.

The key recommendations of the documents are to:

- Address deficits in recreational facilities through improvements to existing facilities, and acquisition of additional facilities
- Increase connectivity between local trails, parks, neighborhoods, and schools
- Acquire additional parklands and open spaces
- Increase cooperation and joint use of school facilities with the Madera Unified School District
- Design and maintain parks to support the expansion of the parks system and to meet community demand
- Increase and/or diversify funding sources

ISSUE: DEVELOPED PARKLAND

Goal 1: To provide a park and open space system that maintains a balance between active and passive uses (including casual, informal, or individual leisure activities), both citywide and within individual parks, to meet the recreation and open space demands of residents.

Policy PROS 1.1 – Provide adequate Developed Parkland. The City shall acquire new parklands, expand existing parks, or otherwise make available local parkland and open spaces in sufficient quantity to meet the community demand for facilities and programs identified in the Park and Recreation Master Plan.

PROS Action Item – Develop Master Plans for new parks. The City shall prepare a master plan for each new parkland acquisition that includes a site development plan, phasing for development, estimated cost for each phase, long-term operation and maintenance, estimated revenue generation, and funding sources for development.

Policy PROS 1.2 – Concurrent growth and expansion. The City shall ensure that growth and expansion in the City's planning area is accompanied by commensurate growth and expansion in parkland, recreation facility, programming capacity, and natural open space capacity.

PROS Action Item – Require new development projects to meet their demand. The City shall require new residential development projects, including mixed-used projects with residential components, to provide adequate parkland, recreation facilities, and open spaces consistent with the classifications, guidelines, and standards provided in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

PROS Action Item – Pursue partnerships for a regional park. The City shall collaborate with public and private agencies to jointly plan, develop, and manage a regional park within the City's planning area. Future regional parks should include facilities that meet one or more of the following criteria:

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1. Serve a unique sport or activity that has none or very few other facilities in the entire region (i.e. BMX/Mountain Bike Park, nature preserve, environmental education center, aquatic center, etc.).
2. Provide facilities and/or amenities that are not available at local facilities.
3. Contain features and infrastructure of such a significant scope, size, or number that they host major regional and/or national tournaments or other events.
4. Provide universal access.

Policy PROS 1.3 – Ensure the equitable distribution of parks. The City shall allocate needed parkland to areas that are currently underserved.

Action Items/Program(s) will address opportunity areas, gaps, or deficiencies as identified in the Parks Master Plan process consistent with Vision 2025. (Vision 2025 Strategy 414.1)

Policy PROS 1.4 – Co-location of parks and recreation facilities. The City shall co-locate parks and recreation facilities with schools, libraries, and other public facilities where possible.

PROS Action Item: Joint Development with School District. The City shall establish a joint facility development agreement with the Madera Unified School District that includes opportunities to build new parks adjacent or near school sites. (Vision 2025 Strategy 324.3, Vision 2025 Strategy 414.7)

Policy PROS 1.5 – Urban Parks and Open Spaces. The City shall encourage the provision of publicly accessible urban open spaces, including parks, courtyards, water features, gardens, passageways and plazas, trails, linear parks and greenways, roof top open space, and other amenities, into public improvements and private projects.

PROS Action Item – Restore Degraded Urban Open Space. The City shall continue to reclaim and restore degraded urban open spaces for potential use as parks or other green space types.

Policy PROS 1.6 – Neighborhood Centers. The City shall encourage the use of public open spaces or recreation facilities such as neighborhood and pocket parks, community centers, public schools, community gardens, or “tot lots” as neighborhood centers.

PROS Action Item – New Community Gathering Places. The City shall identify and acquire land for the establishment of community gathering places in strategic locations within the City. The spaces may be available for all types of uses, depending on the unique qualities of the space, the neighborhood location, and the desires of surrounding residents. (Vision 2025 Strategy 202)

ISSUE: OPEN SPACE

Goal PROS 2 – To protect and promote the stewardship of Madera’s open spaces.

Policy PROS 2.1 – Protect Open Spaces. The City shall protect natural open areas, watersheds, and environmentally sensitive areas such as creeks and riparian areas, and other open spaces.

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PROS Action Item – Open Space Corridors. The City shall support the designation of open space areas and corridors through dedication, easement, and acquisition programs.

PROS Action Item – Open Space Preservation priorities. The City shall identify and prioritize preservation in areas that provide habitat for listed species, support key features of a local or regional ecosystem, or provide greenbelts or urban buffers.

PROS Action Item – Restore Historic Native Plant Communities. The City shall support the restoration, enhancement, and re-establishment of the historical native plant communities within park and open space areas to better support native wildlife habitat where feasible.

Policy PROS 2.2 – Protect and Enhance Urban Forest. The City shall continue to maintain and protect the urban forest as a vital local resource.

PROS Action Item – Tree Master Plan. The City shall develop and implement a Tree Master Plan. The plan shall include the City's existing tree inventory (including tree type, condition, and size) and approved tree list. (Vision 2025 Strategy 401.2, also in CON Element)

ISSUE: CONNECTIVITY AND ACCESS

Goal PROS 3: To create a citywide trail network that encourages alternative transportation modes; increases recreation opportunities; connects neighborhoods, parks and schools; and improves the overall quality of life.

Policy PROS 3.1 – Connect parks with communities. The City shall improve access to parks through provision of sidewalks, bike paths, bike lanes, and bridges where appropriate. (Vision 2025 Strategy 132)

Policy PROS 3.2 – Expand the paved multi-use path system. The City shall expand its system of multi-use paths and trails available for transportation and recreation uses, including addition of mileage and amenities to existing trails, such as the Vern McCullough Fresno River Trail and the Cottonwood Creek Trail, and development of new trail corridors. (Vision 2025 Strategy 121)

PROS Action Item – Identify new trail opportunities. The City shall explore the feasibility of establishing additional trails in conjunction with public utilities, irrigation districts, and mass transit right-of-ways and along future abandoned railroad corridors.

PROS Action Item – Joint Use Agreements for Trails. The City shall identify joint use opportunities and seek joint use agreements with the Madera Irrigation District, and other agencies as appropriate, to expand the City's trail network.

PROS Action Item – Provide Trail Amenities. The City shall provide recreational amenities along the trail corridors, such as benches, water fountains, and call boxes.

Policy PROS 3.3 – Establish Regional Trail Connections. The City shall pursue connections of local trails to regional trail systems in Madera County.

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Policy PROS 3.4 – Encourage alternative transportation. The City shall facilitate use of alternative transportation to parks and recreation facilities through expansion of facilities, removal of barriers, and provision of incentives.

PROS Action Item – Improve Pedestrian and Bicycle Connectivity. The City shall provide access to parks by pedestrians and bicyclists from public sidewalks, trails, and bike routes. (Vision 2025 Strategy 132)

PROS Action Item – Provide Pedestrian and Bicycle Amenities. The City shall provide benches, drinking fountains, and bicycle racks at all park and recreation facilities.

PROS Action Item – Facilitate transit access. The City should partner with transit agencies to ensure that bus stops are within reasonable walking distance of all parks. Buses routed to parks and open space areas should be equipped with bike racks. (Vision 2025 Strategy 121)

Policy PROS 3.7 – Provide Onsite Parking. The City shall ensure that new parks provide adequate onsite parking when offsite parking is not available or sufficient to meet the anticipated demand.

Policy PROS 3.8 – Offsite parking. The City shall identify and provide safe access routes to parks from offsite parking areas.

Policy PROS 3.9 – Meet Special Group Needs. The City shall ensure that parks are designed to meet the needs of youth, seniors, and people with disabilities, and review special programs targeting those groups annually and revise them as appropriate.

PROS Action Item – Access for All. The City shall upgrade bathrooms, stairways, and parking areas to improve accessibility of park facilities, specifically in compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act.

ISSUE: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK DISTRIBUTION AND PLANNING

Goal PROS 4: To preserve, enhance, and acquire parks in residential areas within reasonable walking distance of all neighborhoods.

Policy PROS 4.1 – Emphasize neighborhood parks. The City shall preserve, enhance, and acquire parks in residential areas, with emphasis on planning for and locating parks within a reasonable walking distance of established and new neighborhoods. (Vision 2025 Strategy 414) Reasonable walking distance is considered a 1-mile walk, taking into consideration natural and manmade barriers.

Policy PROS 4.3 – Ensure Neighborhood Parks have Adequate Facilities, Service, and Size. Through the regular updates to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and/or a Community Needs Assessment, the City shall evaluate neighborhood parks for consistency with the City's park classifications and standards and for adequacy in meeting residents' demand.

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Policy PROS 4.4 – Encourage Resident Participation in Neighborhood Parks. The City shall support activities that foster stewardship of neighborhood parks, including neighborhood park committees, neighborhood park clean-up or improvement days, and participation in park planning, maintenance, development, and enhancement projects as opportunities arise.

Policy PROS 4.5 – Encourage Public Schools as Neighborhood Parks. Promote the shared use of public school recreational land and facilities for City recreational uses and/or as community centers on weekends and periods when school is not in session.

ISSUE: RECREATION FACILITY USES AND DISTRIBUTION

Goal 5: To maintain a balance between passive and active recreation facilities and amenities in the City's parks and open space system that meet the recreation demands of residents.

The following recreation facility-related policies and associated actions will be revised/enhanced after the acceptance of the needs assessment and recommendations.

Policy PROS 5.1 – Recreation Needs. The City shall provide sports fields, recreation facilities, walking, jogging and hiking areas, and recreations programs in quantities and types that generally address the demands of Madera residents. (Vision 2025 Strategy 411)

Policy PROS 5.2 – Multi-Use Fields and Facilities. The City shall continue to promote participation in a wide range of sports and recreation programs by utilizing fields and facilities for multiple-uses. (Vision 2025 Strategy 333)

Policy PROS 5.3 – Promote Intergenerational Recreation. The City shall collaborate with senior and youth organizations to develop recreation facilities and opportunities that foster intergenerational learning and connections. (Vision 2025 Strategy 337)

PROS Action Item – The Department of Parks and Community Services shall develop a "Park Ranger" youth and community interaction program. (Vision 2025 Strategy 414.6)

ISSUE: RECREATION PROGRAM TYPES AND DISTRIBUTION

Goal PROS 6: To offer recreation programs and community services that respond to resident needs, promote community, strengthen neighborhoods, and encourage healthy lifestyles.

Policy PROS 6.1 – Provide diverse recreation programs and community services. The City shall provide services to all ages and abilities at multi-service community centers, including the following core programs:

- Preschool and elementary programs;
- Teen programs;
- Senior programs;
- Indoor and outdoor sports and fitness;
- Community education and recreation;
- Therapeutic recreation;
- Civic Engagement;

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- o Arts and cultural activities;
- o Drop-in activities, such as: computer lab, social lounge, and game room
- o Neighborhood development center;
- o Community rentals;
- o Information and referral; and
- o Access to City departments and services.

Policy PROS 6.2 – Community Service Distribution. The City shall promote the location of public and private community service facilities and programs throughout the City, as a function of population distribution and need. (Vision 2025 Strategy 411)

Policy PROS 6.3 – Recreation Programming. The City shall provide a range of recreation programs and activities to promote health and fitness among all Maderans.

The following action items/programs will be revised/enhanced after the acceptance of the needs assessment and recommendations. The intent will be to provide policies that reflect Madera's specific program needs.

***PROS Action Item – Youth After-School Activities.** The City shall continue to sponsor and improve after school activities and programs for youth. Coordinate services with the Madera Unified School District and the Madera County Office of Education to maximize the participation and potential of these programs.*

***PROS Action Item – Sports and Athletics for Youth and Adults.** The City shall continue to provide a wide range of programmed outdoor and indoor activities for Madera residents.*

***PROS Action Item – Adult Sports Leagues and Programs.** The City shall continue a commitment to providing recreation program options to adults.*

***PROS Action Item – Activities and Programs for Seniors.** The City shall continue to provide recreation options through citywide facilities to enhance the quality of life of senior residents.*

***PROS Action Item – Environmental Education Programs and Facilities.** The City shall provide opportunities for environmental education programs (e.g. flora and fauna, watershed processes, water quality) for youth and families.*

Policy PROS 6.4 – Fitness Awareness. The City shall provide programs and information at community centers and throughout City facilities to encourage healthy lifestyles and fitness.

Policy PROS 6.5 – Nutrition. The City shall provide programs and information at community centers and City facilities to encourage nutrition and healthy eating habits.

Policy PROS 6.6 – Community Gardens. The City shall continue private and public partnerships to provide and maintain community gardens as areas where residents can plant and grow fruit and vegetables or plant ornamental gardens that can be a source of pride and beauty in a neighborhood.

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Policy PROS 6.7 – Active Living. The City shall ensure that the design and location of public facilities, especially parks and pedestrian routes, should reflect the vision that active living and walkability are important aspects of Madera.

ISSUE: PARK AND GREEN SPACE DESIGN

Goal PROS 7: To plan, operate and maintain parks, facilities, and open spaces in an efficient and sustainable manner while honoring Madera’s character, heritage, and neighborhoods.

Policy PROS 7.1 – Park and Recreation Facility Design and Amenities. The City shall require new (public and privately sponsored or developed) park and recreation facility projects to adhere to the park classifications, levels of service standards, and recreation facility guidelines adopted in the Park and Recreation Master Plan. *(Refer to Figures X, Y, Z) Project proponents may seek modifications for individual parks through community participation and approval by the Park Advisory Board and/or the City Council.*

Policy PROS 7.2 – Sustainable Practices. The City will be a leader in the implementation of innovative best management practices to achieve long-term energy, water, and resource conservation.

PROS Action Item – Sustainable Landscape Practices. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall develop a manual of sustainable best management practices for landscaping (including pest management and weed control), maintenance, and day-to-day operations at the parks, recreation centers, City landscaped areas, corporation yards, and other park and recreation support facilities.

PROS Action Item – Renewable energy sources. The City shall evaluate the use solar or renewable energy sources to power park facilities and vehicles.

PROS Action Item – Water Conservation. The City shall develop and implement innovative landscape and irrigation standards, including programs such as xeriscape landscaping, mulching, "Smart clocks," check valves, micro-spray systems in parks and open spaces. (Vision 2025 Strategy 434.2)

PROS Action Item – Provide Recycling Options. The City shall ensure that adequate waste disposal and recycling options are available in public parks and open spaces.

Policy PROS 7.3 – Safer By Design. The City shall design new parks and recreation facilities to ensure optimum safety and to reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behavior.

PROS Action Item – Graffiti and Vandalism Abatement. The Department of Parks and Community Services, the Police Department and the Redevelopment Agency shall continue ongoing activities to identify, remove, and eliminate graffiti, vandalism, and gang-related activities in parks, recreation centers, and other public areas.

Policy PROS 7.3 – Protect Community Character. Madera’s parks, trail, and open space should have a quality appearance that instills pride in the surrounding neighborhood and the City at large.

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Policy PROS 7.4 – Appropriate Neighborhood Scale. The City shall ensure that improvements within parks or recreation facilities are scaled to their location and relate to the surrounding neighborhood.

Policy PROS 7.5 – Madera’s Heritage. The City should incorporate appropriate elements that reflect Madera’s character and heritage into the design and appearance of parks, trails, and open spaces.

ISSUE: PARK MAINTENANCE

Goal 8: To maintain city parks and recreational facilities in good condition.

Policy PROS 8.1 – Effective Maintenance. The City shall continue to improve maintenance of parkland and recreation facilities throughout Madera.

Policy PROS 8.2 – Adequate Resource Allocation. The City shall provide the resources (personnel and funding) necessary for the appropriate level of maintenance required for the success of all parks, recreational facilities, and natural open space areas.

PROS Action Item – Park Maintenance Level of Service. The City shall define levels of service for park maintenance and associated costs and resource needs.

Policy PROS 8.3 – Operation and Maintenance Costs. The City shall consider operation and maintenance costs in the design of all park improvements and recreation facilities. These costs should be considered prior to acquisition of new facilities.

Policy PROS 8.4 – Creative funding of operations and maintenance. The City shall consider creative solutions to the ongoing costs of maintaining parks and recreation facilities, including sponsorship by business and civic groups as well as internships, apprenticeships, and community service.

PROS Action Item – Expand the volunteer opportunities. The City shall implement an Adopt-a-park (or similar) program to assist with ongoing maintenance as a means to promote park stewardship.

PROS Action Item – City Nursery. The City should evaluate the feasibility of maintaining a plant, tree, and flower nursery for annual, perennial, and shrub production to reduce the cost of park maintenance.

ISSUE: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE & ONGOING COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Goal PROS 9: To manage parks, recreational areas, community centers, and open space an effective, efficient, and proactive manner.

Policy PROS 9.1 – City Organizational Structure. The administration of parks, recreation facilities (including community centers), recreation programs, and senior services are the primary responsibility of the Department of Parks and Community Services.

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PROS Action Item: – Department Vision. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall develop and update, as appropriate, its vision, mission, organization structure, and standards to strengthen the consistency in which programs and facility uses are determined, developed, and delivered.

Policy PROS 9.2 – Solicit Community Input and Feedback. The City shall facilitate ongoing community dialogue to meet residents' open space, parkland, and recreation needs.

PROS Action Item: The Department of Parks and Community Services shall solicit and collect comments and ideas from park and facility users and program participants on a periodic basis to inform park and recreation programming, planning, and development decisions. Appropriate methods shall include targeted surveys, questionnaires, website forms, workshops, and user group forums.

Policy PROS 9.3 – Park and Recreation Master Plan. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan shall be used in the City's decision-making process, including review and approval of discretionary land use project, to ensure that the community's needs and goals for parks, recreation facilities, trails, and open spaces are met.

PROS Action Item – Update Master Plan. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall update the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, including update of a community parks and recreation needs assessment, periodically.

Policy PROS 9.4 – Marketing. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall provide clear, understandable information through printed and electronic means to educate Madera residents of the many programs and services available and to encourage increased involvement in available recreation facilities and programs.

PROS Action Item – Reservation System. The Department shall implement a computerized parks and recreation program reservation system that can be accessed via the internet to improve customer service.

PROS Action Item – Comprehensive Signage. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall design and implement a consistent sign program for all City parks and recreation facilities. Park and facility signage shall identify park name, park use rules, interpretive information, and other information as appropriate in universally accessible formats.

PROS Action Item – Website. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall update the Department's website for individual parks to provide description and photographs of each park and community center, including information on park amenities, activities, rental opportunities, and other park information and links to other related organizations as appropriate, to encourage and facilitate park use.

Policy PROS 9.5 – Staff Development. The Department of Parks and Community Services shall provide resources necessary to support ongoing professional development, certifications, and training necessary to provide optimum service delivery.

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ISSUE: PARTNERSHIPS

Goal PROS 10: To develop and maintain partnerships to assist with funding, planning, operations, maintenance, or management of the City's parks, recreation facilities, or programs.

Policy PROS 10.1 – Employ Joint Use to Meet Community Needs. The City and the Madera Unified School District shall evaluate how public school facilities or private facilities could be utilized in a shared manner to meet specific community needs for open space, recreation programs, or developed facilities such as sports fields. (Vision 2025 Strategy 415)

PROS Action Item – Employ Joint Use to Fill Service Gaps. The City shall explore specific facilities owned by the School District or private parties to fill gaps identified in the Recreation & Park Master Plan. Schools or private facilities may provide sports fields, indoor facilities, or program facilities.

Policy PROS 10.2 – Partnerships. The City shall continue to foster alliances with and stewardship by neighborhood groups, non-profit organizations, educational entities, governmental agencies, and others to identify new opportunities and to create, maintain and enhance the City's parks, recreation, and open space system for current and future generations.

Policy PROS 10.3 – Pursue funding partners. The City shall pursue assistance in formulating funding packages and obtaining funding, and negotiate with school districts, developers, or other potential recreation providers for recreational opportunities.

Policy PROS 10.4 – Prepare Sponsorship Guidelines. The City shall evaluate the feasibility of amending the City's Naming Policy to include guidelines and criteria for the acceptance of funding in exchange for naming rights and sponsorship arrangements at the City's parks and recreational facilities.

Policy PROS 10.5 – Partner for special-use facilities. The City shall continue partnerships to plan, fund, and manage special use facilities such as skate parks, community gardens, sports fields, dog parks, and similar facilities.

Policy PROS 10.6 – Improve Volunteer Opportunities for Community Service. The City shall identify and support volunteer opportunities to help maintain and enhance community spaces. (Vision 2025 Strategy 413)

PROS Action Item – The Department of Parks and Community Services shall establish regularly scheduled, volunteer "Clean-up Days" at parks. (Vision 2025 Strategy 413.1)

Policy PROS 10.7 – Assistance to Local Agencies. The City shall support park and recreation planning efforts by the County, Madera Unified School District, Redevelopment Agency, nearby cities, special districts, and other public agencies.

Partnership and funding strategies will be revised/enhanced after the acceptance of the funding and finance recommendations.