

**RESOLUTION NO. 2016-36**

**A RESOLUTION OF THE CITY COUNCIL OF THE CITY OF ROHNERT  
PARK AMENDING THE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES  
MASTER PLAN**

**WHEREAS**, the City of Rohnert Park ("City") adopted the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan ("Plan") in 2008; and

**WHEREAS**, the City has an interest in continuing to improve and expand parks and recreation facilities; and

**WHEREAS**, the community's parks and recreation facilities have experienced changes over the past eight years that impact the information presented in the 2008 Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, it is part of the City Council's strategic plan to update the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan; and

**WHEREAS**, the Parks and Recreation Commission did a comprehensive review of the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan and made its annual report to the City Council recommending amendments.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the City Council of the City of Rohnert Park hereby adopts the amended Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan attached hereto as (Exhibit A) and incorporated herein by this reference.

**DULY AND REGULARLY ADOPTED** this 26th day of April, 2016.

**CITY OF ROHNERT PARK**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Gina Belforte, Mayor

**ATTEST:**

  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Caitlin Saldanha, Deputy City Clerk

Attachment: Exhibit A

AHANOTU: Aye CALLINAN: Aye STAFFORD: Aye MACKENZIE: Aye BELFORTE: Aye  
AYES: ( 5 ) NOES: ( 0 ) ABSENT: ( 0 ) ABSTAIN: ( 0 )

Exhibit A to Resolution

**Rohnert Park  
Revised Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan**

**Manuscript Version  
(Not graphically designed)**

**March 2008  
With April 2016 Revisions**

**Prepared By:**



## **ROHNERT PARK PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES MASTER PLAN**

### **FOREWORD**

Parks and recreation facilities are the touchstone of Rohnert Park's neighborhoods, contributing to a sense of place and playing a key role in the health and wellness of all residents. As one of the region's first planned communities, Rohnert Park was designed around a visionary framework for parks, schools and neighborhoods. As the community grew, the City made sure to integrate parks, pathways and open spaces into new development. As a result of that foresight, residents today enjoy one of the premier community parks and recreation systems in the North Bay.

Parks and recreation remain a central component of Rohnert Park's identity. At playgrounds, in parks, and at facilities across the City, children and youth engage in healthy, active play. Older residents take advantage of diverse recreation and health programs. The entire community enjoys a wide range of sports programs, cultural events, and arts and educational opportunities. As a result, the community retains a unique identity and stays healthy and connected.

This Parks and Recreation Master Plan will build upon the excellent tradition established by the City of Rohnert Park. The culmination of two years of effort, the Master Plan is grounded in an extensive public involvement process guided by the citizen-led Parks, Recreation and Open Space Committee. The Plan provides updated guidelines and recommendations to further enhance the existing parks and recreational facilities within the framework provided by the original community plan. It will help guide the development of new recreational programs and services for residents of all ages and abilities, and will serve as an overarching plan to reconfigure the community's parks and facilities to support current and future community interests.

The following amendments were formulated by City staff in conjunction with the Parks and Recreation Commission in an effort to update portions of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan that was written in 2008. The Parks and Facilities Master Plan is eight years old and there have been notable changes in the community that impact the Plan as well as progress made on the plan that need to be taken into consideration as the City develops future parks and positions resources for a growing community.

The changes are formatted as to preserve the 2008 Plan information to create a bridge between what has been accomplished, what has changed and new needs that have surfaced. All the text changes will be in a box for easy identification and viewing. Other changes will show in red text in relevant charts and other information.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## 2016 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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# **ROHNERT PARK PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES MASTER PLAN**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **Introduction**

The Park and Recreation Facilities Master Plan for Rohnert Park serves as a guiding document for preserving and enhancing the City's high quality park and recreation system to meet current and future recreation needs. The Plan presents strategies for creating a well managed parks and recreation program, and serves as an annual work plan for the Parks and Recreation Commission. It also includes specific goals and policies to improve decision making, and it details the costs associated with implementing capital projects.

Drawing from extensive public input gathered over two years by the Parks Recreation and Open Space Committee (PROS), the Master Plan confirms the high level of satisfaction residents have for their parks and recreation facilities. Rohnert Park residents place great value on their parks, and they want to improve and maintain the existing parks and facilities.

PROS committed numerous hours meeting with community organizations and active sports groups to learn about participation trends, use patterns and future needs. Rohnert Park is an active community with a high participation in sports, arts and culture. Popular outdoor activities such as walking and gardening will continue to be an important part of life in Rohnert Park. At the same time, residents are interested in new activities that may require new or updated facilities, such as skate parks, lacrosse fields, all weather fields, and bocce ball courts.

Compared to other Northern California cities, Rohnert Park has a large amount of acreage dedicated to parks, as well as many special purpose facilities. The city's abundant parks and recreation facilities contribute to the connectivity, character, health and culture of the community. Neighborhoods, parks and schools are connected through a network of pathways, and parks help to define the nature of many neighborhoods. Rohnert Park is also a leader in promoting health and wellness. When the Callinan Sports Center opened in Rohnert Park it was one of the first public health and fitness facilities in California. Other recreational and cultural amenities include golf courses, a lake and the popular Spreckels Performing Arts Center.

As future development occurs, the City can enhance the existing park system by implementing a greater variety of park types, including greenbelts and larger community parks, to serve multiple needs.

## **Goals**

The Master Plan recommends three overarching goals to aid in the development of new parks, as well as the renovation and care of existing parks and facilities:

- Provide safe, clean and well-maintained parks and facilities to meet the diverse needs of a changing and growing community
- Create and enhance a positive community image to strengthen livability and sense of place
- Ensure the financial health and funding feasibility for Rohnert Park's comprehensive recreation, parks and open space system, including special purpose facilities

## **Capital Improvement Project (CIP) Program**

The Master Plan recommends a number of capital projects, categorized as short or long term. The recommendations for these projects are based on extensive community feedback gathered throughout the planning process. Short-term projects are on a six-year planning cycle and incorporate renovation projects annually. The six-year planning timeframe means that the community's needs can be met swiftly, resulting in improved safety and enhanced maintenance and operations for the park system. Key projects include a skate park, updated children's play areas, and year-round sports turf for athletic fields.

The City will establish a financing strategy to implement a Capital Improvement Project (CIP) program. Funding alternatives, such as grant programs and redevelopment funds, can aid in upgrading current parks and facilities, while new development can contribute towards the construction of new parks and amenities.

## **Conclusion**

This Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan is a resource that can be adjusted annually in response to changing interests and community needs. Through the leadership of PROS, community involvement will grow and foster increased support for parks and recreation in Rohnert Park. As the community evolves, parks and recreation facilities will remain a prominent and vibrant feature of Rohnert Park neighborhoods, just as they are today.

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## **I. WORKING FOR PLAY: CREATING THE MASTER PLAN**

### **A. INTRODUCTION**

Rohnert Park is a friendly community known for its attractive neighborhoods, abundant outdoor parks and open spaces, and healthy lifestyle. Residents of all ages enjoy neighborhood parks, pathways that promote pedestrian travel, and state-of-the-art facilities supporting arts, recreation and sports.

Incorporated in 1962, the City of Rohnert Park covers six square miles and is home to 43,000 people. Located halfway between Petaluma and Santa Rosa, Rohnert Park contributes greatly to the cultural and economic vitality of Sonoma County with a robust business climate and the well-known Sonoma State University. Parks and recreation have been integral to Rohnert Park's identity since its inception, when neighborhoods were designed around parks and schools.

Rohnert Park's civic leaders are committed to enhancing parks and recreational opportunities for all residents as new growth continues into the next century. To determine what types of enhancements the community needs, in January 2005 the City Council created PROS, the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Committee, charging it to prepare a parks, recreation and open space master plan. This citizen committee worked steadily over two years to assess community needs, identify trends in recreation activity, and appraise the current parks and recreation system. PROS is committed to strengthening the sense of place and community image that parks and recreation help shape.

To take the work of the PROS Committee further, the City of Rohnert Park hired Moore Iacofano Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) to complete a technical review of the parks and recreation program, incorporate public input and citizen comments, and create a comprehensive Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan for the future.

### **B. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION: METHODS AND KEY FINDINGS**

The nine members of the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Committee met regularly to plan and coordinate public participation opportunities and document all feedback received from residents. PROS worked side by side with City staff to make sure all segments of the community provided information about recreation activities, community needs and emerging interests. The PROS committee met nearly 40 times over the last two years, with the purpose of improving parks and recreation facilities for current and future Rohnert Park residents. This Master Plan is a record of their legacy and will serve as a guiding document for years to come.

The committee engaged the public through a variety of methods, including focus groups, surveys, community forums and public reports. The findings from each of these outreach methods are described below.

#### **Focus Groups**

Rohnert Park

Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan



In 2006, PROS conducted 19 focus groups to learn about current trends in recreation, understand how the community uses its facilities, and gauge the public's desire for future parks and programs. Attendees at the focus groups included representatives from sports and fitness organizations serving over 4,000 children and adults annually, as well as service groups assisting more than 1,000 residents. Stakeholder groups represented a wide variety of interests, from members of the community band to lacrosse players to youth and community development advocates. Many of the key findings from the focus groups pertained to sports facilities.

- The majority of groups interviewed expect to see moderate increases in program participation over the next several years.
- Many outdoor sports organizations are interested in expanding active sports fields in Rohnert Park, as they are limited by field access.
- The community expressed interest in having all-weather turf fields added to the park system to improve drainage and decrease field damage to better accommodate year-round play of baseball and softball, soccer and other sports.
- Several sports organizations expressed interest in expanding restroom and concession facilities due to the growing popularity of tournament play.
- Many sports groups also use other facilities such as schools, partner with other providers to leverage resources, and contribute volunteers when assistance is needed for small projects.
- Most groups are willing to share costs for field maintenance or contribute towards expanding facilities to maintain the quality park system residents have today.

### **Community Wide Online Survey**

PROS members also surveyed the community online to solicit feedback on the current parks system, identify preferences for parks and facilities, and determine the level of willingness to pay for parks and facilities improvements and maintenance. The survey was available online for over four months in the winter and spring of 2006 and advertised through a variety of media, including a notice in the Recreation Department's Activity Guide, direct mailers to every Rohnert Park household, letters to the editor in local publications, flyers, banners and website links. More than 1,200 residents participated in the survey, representing a 3 % rate of participation for Rohnert Park's 42,000 residents. The results of this survey show that generally, Rohnert Park residents are satisfied with current parks and facilities and strongly agree that parks and recreation are a valuable resource for all residents. Additional key findings are highlighted below.

- More than 40 percent of residents visit City parks, pools or recreation facilities three times a week or more.
- Residents listed walking as the most popular activity, followed by visiting playgrounds, swimming, relaxing and picnicking.
- Biking, fitness classes and tennis rounded out the most popular recreation activities for residents.
- Rohnert Park residents want to improve both the quality and safety of the City parks, pools and recreation buildings.

- Nearly 70 percent of respondents gave the parks a ‘B’ grade or higher (rating the current overall physical condition of City parks, pools and recreation buildings)
- 55 percent of survey respondents gave the City a ‘B’ or higher when asked about the current level of security and public safety for facility or program users.
- 45 percent graded security and safety a ‘C’ or lower.
- Residents are willing to pay for safe, clean and green parks.
  - Over 70 percent of respondents would support a new tax or assessment to provide funds for the operation and maintenance of parks and recreation facilities.
  - More than 69 percent would support a tax or assessment to provide funds for making capital improvements to existing City parks and recreation facilities.
- The highest priorities mentioned included: trails, places for after school programs, youth sports, and adding trees to parks and streets.
- Respondents voiced support for: a venue for community-wide events and outdoor concerts; programs for aging adults and special populations; indoor swimming opportunities; and children’s playgrounds.

### **Community Forum**

PROS members hosted a community forum in the spring of 2007 that attracted 20 residents to discuss issues related to the future of parks and recreation in Rohnert Park. At this forum, meeting participants cited similar interests and needs as those identified through the online survey and in the focus groups. Many people attending the forum also encouraged Rohnert Park to expand partnership agreements, and several supported a skate park for youth and teens.

### **User Group Reports**

Parks and recreation enthusiasts answered the call from the City and PROS to provide information and ideas for improving the parks and recreation system through a series of strategic reports. The key findings from these reports are detailed below.

- A Skate Parks Subcommittee outlined recommendations for developing a skate park, including ideal parameters for locating such a facility, proposed size, cost estimates, and use patterns.
- The Rohnert Park Tennis Club offered suggestions for enhancing current tennis facilities.
- Residents active in aquatics provided input for a detailed aquatic report on the City’s five swimming facilities, completed in 1999. The report addressed planning for Rohnert Park’s aquatic operations to optimize the water experience, use, revenue generation, facility maintenance, and overall community support for the facilities. Aquatic enthusiasts desire to build upon the report and add new features to swimming pools.
- A Park and Recreation Facility Audit was completed by an ad-hoc committee established by the Parks and Recreation commission. The report recommended

an organizational structure that maximizes communication between the Recreation and Public Works departments to help prioritize maintenance, repair and replacement of park amenities and infrastructure within existing budget constraints. Community members also noted the potential for miscommunication between the City and community. Park maintenance and facility repair services are provided by the Public Works Department, while scheduling, use and community interface services are coordinated by the Recreation staff. Other findings included:

- Most of Rohnert Park's recreational facilities and parks are showing signs of natural aging and are in need of repair.
- Children's play structures do not have adequate access for persons with limited mobility and would benefit from a transition plan to meet the requirements of the Americans with Disability Act (ADA).

## II. HOW WE PLAY TODAY: ANALYSIS OF EXISTING CONDITIONS & TRENDS

The following section describes the current state of the park system and details the physical, social and organizational trends that will impact the future of parks and recreation in Rohnert Park. A benchmarking section compares the parks and recreation facilities in Rohnert Park with other California communities and identifies the key findings of those comparisons.

### A. EXISTING CONDITIONS

#### **Park and Recreation Services**

Rohnert Park's recreational facilities, trails, and neighborhood parks provide an abundance of opportunities for individual health and fitness, as well as organized sports. City programs and services are coordinated for all ages in several community buildings (including one of the premier pottery studios in the region). In addition to neighborhood-based facilities, Rohnert Park residents benefit from two golf courses, a lake with an overlook, and a state of the art performing arts center. In Fiscal Year 2006-2007 the programs and facilities operated by the Recreation Department hosted 378,000 people, not including attendance at activities at parks, tennis courts and sports fields.

#### **Organizational Structure**

Several departments within the City deliver parks and recreation services. The Recreation Department manages the recreation facilities, swimming pools, and Callinan Sports Center. Recreation staff plans and coordinates recreation activities and programs, and schedules parks and fields. The Public Works Department provides park maintenance, including repairs. Additionally, the Spreckels Performing Arts Center is managed by another department and offers high quality visual and performing arts programs.

Since the completion of the Plan in 2008, the former Recreation Department now called Community Services has been incorporated with Public Works to form the Public Works and Community Services Department. This change includes integrating parks operations and recreation services in one department was suggested in the original version of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan.

## Recreation Resources

### *Park Land*

According to the 2000 General Plan, Rohnert Park currently provides its 43,207 residents with 473.5 acres (Gold Ridge added) of neighborhood and community parks, golf courses and other recreational facilities. This translates to 10.9 acres per 1,000 residents, surpassing the General Plan’s goal of 5 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. Based on this analysis, the challenge for the City is not in providing ample parkland acreage, but in offering Rohnert Park residents with a *balance of recreational facility and programming opportunities*.

Existing Park and Recreation Facilities acreages from the 2000 General Plan are listed in Table 1.

<b>Parks, Recreation Facilities and Open Space acreage</b>	<b>ACRES</b>	<b>Total per 1,000</b>
Neighborhood, Community and Mini-Parks	116	2.9
Golf Courses	310	7.8
Other Recreational Facilities	47.5	1.1
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>-473.5</b>	<b>10.9</b>

**Table 1. 2000 General Plan Park Acreages**

In addition to Park and Recreation acreage, there are other significant Community Open Space resources such as Creekside Open Space, Open Space along Street Rights of Way and School lands. These other Community Open Space acreages are shown in Table 2 below.

<b>Other Community Open Space Resources</b>	<b>ACRES</b>
Creekside Open Space	96
Open Space along Street Rights of Way	26
Schools	126
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>248</b>

**Table 2. Open Space Resources**

### ***Outdoor Recreation Facilities***

Recreational facilities are plentiful in Rohnert Park. Residents have access to numerous indoor and outdoor recreation facilities as shown in the following tables and text. In addition, four community centers of varying sizes provide programs and services for residents of all ages.

<b>Facility Type</b>	<b>#</b>
Tennis Courts	23
Multi Use Courts	3
Baseball Fields	5
Softball Fields	5
Dog Parks	3
Soccer fields	11
Basketball Courts	7
Swimming Pools	3
Restrooms	11

**Table 3. Outdoor Recreation Facilities**

### ***Indoor Recreation Facilities***

The Recreation Department manages a number of indoor facilities that provide residents with a variety of rental space opportunities. These facilities are a strategic asset to the department and the community.

#### ***Community Center Complexes***

Rohnert Park facilities offer residents a variety of social and recreational opportunities. The Community Center has numerous recreational classes. The Callinan Sports and Fitness Center offers a traditional health club experience, providing residents with ample opportunities to participate in health and fitness programming. The Spreckels Performing Arts facility is an impressive community asset that features regular theater and musical performances and hosts other community events.

- 20,000 square foot Community Center Building
- 33,000 square foot Sports Center
- 37,000 square foot Performing Arts Facility

#### ***Neighborhood Recreation Centers***

Neighborhood recreation centers provide space for an assortment of recreational and community programming activities. These smaller scale buildings are incorporated into parks, can be reserved for community events, and provide some programming as well.

- 3,024 square foot Benicia Park Recreation Center  
- Home of the Boys and Girls Club
- 6,700 square foot Burton Avenue Recreation Center
- 7,600 square foot Gold Ridge Multi Use Building
- 1,145 square foot Ladybug Park Recreation Center
-

### ***Other Facilities***

The City's facilities include other centers, such as Scout Hut and the Senior Citizen Center, that provide age-specific recreation programming opportunities.

- 10,000 square foot Senior Citizen Center
- 1,328 square foot Scout Hut
- 4,000 square foot Gold Ridge Portable Buildings
  - 2,000- Home of the Four C's preschool program

## **B. BENCHMARKING AND COMPARISONS**

One way communities measure their level of service in parks and recreation is to compare the number and type of parks and facilities with those in similar cities. The PROS Committee and MIG project team selected the Cities of Campbell and Lodi for comparison. Campbell was selected based on its comparable area with Rohnert Park (approximately 6.4 square miles) and Lodi was selected because of its proximity to Stockton, which bears a similar relationship to that between Rohnert Park and Santa Rosa. These communities also represent sub-regions within northern California.

### **Park Classifications**

Parkland classifications help the City plan for a community's recreation needs and reflect policies that guide decision-making. A park system is composed of a hierarchy of various park types, each offering different recreation opportunities. Viewed separately, each park type may serve only one function, but collectively the system serves the entire range of community needs. By classifying park land by function, a community can evaluate its needs and plan more easily, providing a more efficient, cost-effective, and usable park system that minimizes conflicts between park users and neighbors.

Both Campbell and Lodi classify parks with a greater level of detail than Rohnert Park.

Campbell has four park types:

- Neighborhood
- Community
- Regional
- Special Use

Lodi has five park types:

- Mini
- Neighborhood
- Community
- Regional
- Special Use
-

## Level of Service

When Level of Service comparisons were made among all three communities, the strength of Rohnert Park's park system is evident when Level of Service comparisons are made between all three communities. The comparison exercise separates parks from special purpose facilities for a more consistent review, and it highlights the diversity in park definitions used by municipalities. The comparisons are highlighted in Table 4 below and in Appendix A.

Level of Service per 1,000 Residents	
Rohnert Park (excluding Golf Course)	2.82
Campbell	2.17
Lodi	4.40
<b>RP (Including Golf Course)</b>	<b>10.36</b>

**Table 4. Level of Service**

When the Golf Course acreage is included in the same calculation, Rohnert Park provides residents with a Level of Service of 10.35 acres per 1,000 residents.

## Park Acreage

Rohnert Park has more park acreage than Campbell and is second to Lodi. However, Lodi's acreage includes a 100-acre regional park. Similarly, while Campbell demonstrates a healthy amount of park acreage, 85% of that total acreage is made up by one community park. Parkland acreage comparisons are included in Appendix A

## Cultural Centers

The three communities each have a main performing arts center. As a group, these three cities include a selection of special purpose facilities that are integral to community character.

## Other Findings

- Newer California communities such as Folsom and Brentwood in northern California are able to develop abundant park and recreation facilities because of updated fee ordinances, developer agreements and exactions placed on new development.
- Communities such as Rohnert Park that developed during previous decades are faced with a reduced amount of funding from the development community to provide new amenities for changing interests and needs.

- Other communities employ a CIP list to guide parkland and amenity development. Without such a document, parkland development and maintenance tends to follow a reactive, instead of proactive, process.

### C. KEY TRENDS

To ensure the ongoing satisfaction and support of all residents, the Parks and Recreation Department needs to consider trends in the parks and recreation industry. Recent shifts in recreation interests and activity patterns at the local, state and national level may affect the Rohnert Park community, and should be considered in future decision-making. The burgeoning interest in youth-centered activities such as skate parks, and the desire for health and fitness programs for the older population are two examples of trends that can influence decision-making.

#### **Demographic Trends**

Like many California communities, Rohnert Park experienced growth during the 1990's and increased its overall population by nearly thirty percent. The number of children under age eighteen remained fairly steady during this time period, but the number of adults over age 45 jumped significantly, including those aged 65 and older. This local trend of an "aging population" mirrors that at the state and national level. Today's active lifestyle and healthy living of older adults, combined with the premier setting of Rohnert Park, may influence the types of recreational experiences residents are seeking in the future.

The Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District is an important community partner for Rohnert Park. A recently completed enrollment analysis indicated that enrollment is in decline, with the greatest drop in enrollment at the high school age. Over the next six years the District anticipates enrollment declining another 1,000 students.

Although it was true that in 2008 enrollment was declining, current trends appear to indicate a possible increase in student enrollment. The Cotati-Rohnert Park Unified School District has implemented innovated learning schedules, programs and grade groupings at schools that has increased overall attendance in the District. Some of the elementary schools have gone to year round school which can impact summer recreational program planning and offerings. Another significant demographic trend is the significant portion of residents that are Hispanic many of whom English is their second language. This is per the 2010 census information indicated that 22.1 percent of Rohnert Park residents are Hispanic. Facility and program materials should be written in both English and Spanish.



Although the youth population may not be increasing as a percentage of the overall population, the interests and recreational pursuits of today's youth are different from those for whom the park system was originally designed. Today's elementary-aged school children have access to more technology and seek thrilling adventures; however, an alarming number of children lead sedentary lives and follow unhealthy lifestyles. If these trends continue, such lifestyle patterns will impact the attitudes and interests of tomorrow's teens, which will significantly affect the quality of life and health of Rohnert Park residents and neighborhoods. These changes will challenge the City's ability to provide meaningful opportunities for children and teens during after school hours or summer breaks.

### **Development Trends**

While Rohnert Park was built as a planned community, a number of pending developments will significantly increase the population of the community and the resultant demand on the parks system. Specific plans for the University District, Southeast, Northeast and Northwest areas call for 4,105 dwelling units to be built. These new developments account for most of the 2000 General Plan projected buildout of 4,450 units. These new units are projected to have an estimated population of 2.62 persons per household, and therefore would require an additional 60 acres of parkland to be developed to maintain the existing standard of 5 acres per 1,000 residents.

### **Funding**

Municipal funding levels have decreased in Rohnert Park over the past two decades, requiring programs and activities to increase their cost recovery through fees and charges. Programs for older adults and aquatic services continue to receive a high level of support, and the greatest share of the Department budget is dedicated to facility operations and scheduling. Also, staffing levels in the Recreation Department have declined steadily since 2004.

Staffing levels are beginning to be restored as the City's financial picture improves. A Community Services Supervisor was added as part of the 2015/16 Budget process. As the City continues to grow its facilities and programs the City will need to evaluate the need to add and re-organize staff positions.

### **Customer Experience**

Because people have many alternate choices for recreation, service standards in the park system need to be elevated to maintain a high level of support in all areas of operation. The customer experience should be considered from a broad perspective, from the first point of customer interaction to the time of completion.

### **Aging Population**

As the Boomer generation prepares for retirement, they have made it clear that they are not interested in the community activities previous generations enjoyed. Older adults will remain more active, and to keep them engaged in the community, plans should be made to address "aging well" in Rohnert Park.

### **Community Gathering and Socializing Areas**

As residential lots become smaller, parks increasingly serve as key spaces for neighborhood and family gatherings. Pet owners also utilize parks for socialization, prompting the need for more pet areas. Community centers, libraries and other public facilities receive greater attendance from residents when they are designed for socialization, integrating such features as a coffee corners, lounges and fireplaces.

### **Field Maintenance**

The popularity of parks, the frequency of organized sports events, and the value that parks hold in the neighborhoods necessitates a high level of maintenance services. Recognizing that municipal resources for parks and recreation have remained the same or decreased, maintaining existing park and recreation facilities in a safe and attractive manner will be challenging. Existing sports groups are willing to increase the amount they contribute towards maintenance, especially if this increased fee is attached to specific maintenance programs that ensure a high level of service.

### **Youth Sports**

Youth are becoming involved in more intense outdoor sports at an earlier age. Activities such as skateboarding that may have been looked upon as a fad at one time are now an integral part of youth activity. To respond to this trend, communities are developing skate parks for older youth to gather as well as placing skate features in neighborhood parks for younger children.

### **Year-Round Sports Turf**

Organized sports for youth and adults are evolving from seasonal play to year round activities. Tournaments take place more frequently, and teams now practice several times a week throughout the year. To meet the increasing demand for sports, many communities are installing year-round sports turf to reduce the overall cost of field maintenance. Lacrosse, rugby, ultimate Frisbee, and cricket are a few of the field sports increasing in popularity that may affect the use and availability of existing turf areas.

### **Golf**

Nationally, participation in golf is still popular, but the golfing experience is changing. Individuals are looking for a better golf experience in a shorter amount of time.

### **Tennis**

Tennis is surging in popularity again. Programs for youth focus on participation for all and emphasize healthy play and enjoyment of the sport over intense competition. Tennis leagues and teams offer social play and casual events, which has increased overall participation.

### **Aquatics**

The trend of building swimming pools with flat surfaces and deep water is fading. Today, children and families are attracted by more dynamic aquatic environments, with water play structures, moving water, slides, and lounge spaces adjacent to water entry. Warm water fitness is also on the rise due to increased health needs among older adults.

Aquatic facilities should be designed to include the appropriate balance of traditional designs and new attractions, and should consider sources of revenue to reduce costs. The City of Santa Rosa recently renovated a traditional, aging swimming pool into a water park with slides and play features and has experienced a significant increase in visitation and revenue.

A comprehensive analysis of aquatic facilities and programming needs to be completed as pool facilities in the community are being incorporated more and more in fitness facilities, home developments and apartment complexes. Included in the analysis should be the long term liabilities associated with operation aquatic facilities and the City's capacity to fund those costs into the future.

### III. KEY FINDINGS & POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

This section begins with an analysis of the benefits offered by a healthy park system. It then outlines the recommended actions for improving Rohnert Park’s park and recreation facilities based on needs determined by the Parks, Recreation and Open Space Committee. These policies will aid in sound decision making as this plan is implemented.

#### A. BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Parks and open spaces, recreational programs and services, and community facilities all provide many benefits to residents, and express the essence of a community. The mission of the Recreation Department is to enhance Rohnert Park’s high quality of life and nurture the health and well being of people, the community and the economy. Parks and recreation fosters human development, facilitates community problem-solving, protects natural resources, and supports economic development. Table 5 highlights additional benefits of parks and recreation.

<b>Personal</b>	<b>Environmental</b>
Recreation programs develop skills in art, crafts, sports and other positive leisure activities	Parks and recreation services significantly contribute to the quality of life
Parks and recreation facilities bring people together	Trees remove carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, filter out pollution and conserve energy
Parks provide a multitude of recreational experiences	Natural and open space areas and interpretive information educate on environmental values and resources
Community centers offer wellness programs promoting personal health and fitness	Essential green infrastructure preserved through enhancement and protection of biodiversity and natural resources
Access to natural beauty reduces stress	
<b>Social</b>	<b>Economic</b>
After-school programs provide positive social experiences for children and teens	Well maintained parks, open space and recreation amenities enhance livability and increase property values
Community buildings are gathering places and sources of civic information	Green infrastructure is marketable and attracts both businesses and residents
Cultural programs celebrate diversity	Multitude of programs and facilities keeps people of all ages in the City
Schools, businesses, community-based organizations and other public organizations become collaborative partners	People take advantage of work and volunteer opportunities
Civic involvement possible through community meetings, volunteer opportunities, and neighborhood activities and events	People visit throughout the region and spend money here

Volunteers, neighbors and participants provide "eyes on" to enhance safety	Workers use outdoor spaces and recreation facilities for self renewal and enhancing productivity
	Employment opportunities provided for youth
	Recreation programs provide physical activity which reduces health care costs.

**Table 5. Benefits of a healthy park system**

## B. GOALS & POLICY FRAMEWORK

### Goal One:

*Provide safe, clean and well-maintained parks and facilities to meet the diverse needs of a changing and growing community.*

### Goal One Policies

#### Policy 1.1 Adopt the following park classification and definition system:

- **Mini-parks, Plazas and Greenways**  
Smaller public spaces that connect neighborhoods, parks and neighborhood centers
- **Neighborhood Parks**  
Parks integrated into neighborhoods with informal green spaces, walking paths, play areas, and picnic amenities. One active recreation feature is highlighted in parks that are typically one to six acres.
- **Community Parks**  
Parks designed to serve the greater community with features for active recreation and organized events. Structures, parking areas, and lighting are included as well as many neighborhood park type amenities. These parks can be larger in size, as much as 25 acres.
- **Open Space**  
Park lands that preserve habitats, provide buffers for development, and offer sweeping vistas of natural landscapes.
- **Special Purpose Parks and Facilities**  
Parks with a single purpose that serve the community such as golf courses and sports complexes.

This plan recommends reclassifying parks as described in table 6.

Park Name	Acreage	Park Type
Alicia Park	5	Community
Benicia Park	6	Community
Eagle Park	10	Community

Gold Ridge	4.5	Community
Golis	14	Community
Honeybee	10.5	Community
Magnolia	19	Community
Sunrise	9	Community
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Park Type</b>
Caterpillar Park	3	Neighborhood
Colegio Vista Park	5	Neighborhood
Dorotea Park	6	Neighborhood
Ladybug Park	5	Neighborhood
Rainbow	2.68	Neighborhood
*Twin Creeks	6.83	Neighborhood
*Vast Oak	6.83	Neighborhood
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>Acreage</b>	<b>Park Type</b>
Burton Ave	0.18	Mini
Carlita Circle	0.15	Mini
Cielo	0.37	Mini
Civic Center Drive	0.26	Mini
Country Club Drive	2.1	Mini
Hinebaugh Creek Park	0.18	Mini
Jasmine Circle	1.04	Mini
LaCrosse	0.67	Mini
Lilac Way Tot Lot	0.13	Mini
Lydia Court	1.71	Mini
Meadow Pines (San Simeon)	0.41	Mini

**Table 6. Park classification**

*\*Anticipated completion 2016/17*

- Policy 1.2** Maintain the parkland development standard of 5 acres/1,000 for active, multi-use recreation needs of the community, typically found in neighborhood and community parks.
- Policy 1.3** Ensure new development meets the 5 acres/1,000 parkland dedication standards for active recreation needs
- 1.3.1 Encourage “turn-key” park development in lieu of accepting fees
  - 1.3.2 Expand the development of park lands to increase the variety of park types
  - 1.3.3 Include Parks and Recreation staff in park development and design review
  - 1.3.4 Develop formula for in lieu developer fees that are used to improve the park land; Limit the amount of in-lieu fees for park development based on what improvements are eligible and/or not eligible for in-lieu fee credit

and to limit the amount of land that can be used as in-lieu credit to improve the park.

**Policy 1.4 Renovate existing parks to improve safety and security, enhance park use, and increase sense of place**

- 1.4.1 Develop criteria for renovation, such as age of facility, safety conditions, access, multi-age use, and community need
- 1.4.2 Enhance safety and security in all parks by upgrading lighting, access, and surveillance methodology in partnership with enforcement
- 1.4.3 Develop a transition plan for all parks to meet access needs and Americans with Disability Act (ADA) guidelines
- 1.4.4 Incorporate new features and amenities into the design of parks to respond to trends and changing community preferences, and consider revising the specific plan process to support this integration
- 1.4.5 Include unique play elements that reflect community values and history; a themed park.

**Policy 1.5 Develop park maintenance standards and resource management plans consistent with professional best practices**

- 1.5.1 Create Levels of Service (LOS) for park maintenance tasks that are compatible with park functions, use, and visibility in the community
- 1.5.2 Create a dedicated funding source for park maintenance services  
(Completed)

**Goal Two:**

*Create and enhance a positive community image to strengthen livability and sense of place*

***Goal Two Policies***

**Policy 2.1 Provide recreation experiences to meet a diverse and changing community**

- 2.1.1 Support aging well in Rohnert Park by recognizing interests and needs of various older adult populations
- 2.1.2 Maximize community connection to the outdoor environment; serve as environmental stewards of green space
- 2.1.3 Continue serving youth and families; track regional, state and national trends related to this demographic
- 2.1.4 Partner with other service providers to enhance community activities such as arts and culture, gardening, and special events

- 2.1.5 Collaborate with schools and public agencies like the Open Space District to create partnerships, leverage resources and link green spaces
- 2.1.6 Collaborate with community organizations to leverage park and recreation resources, improve operations and enhance maintenance of parks and facilities

**Policy 2.2 Provide health and wellness opportunities for residents of all ages**

- 2.2.1 Expand the Callinan Sports Center to provide additional opportunities for health and fitness activities
- 2.2.2 Partner with health care organizations to develop new programs
- 2.2.3 Connect and expand trails and pathways to promote walking, bicycling, and alternative transportation

**Policy 2.3 Support opportunities for neighborhood-based social gathering**

- 2.3.1 Partner with community organizations and neighborhood groups to provide programs and events in neighborhood parks
- 2.3.2 Increase after-school activities for youth
- 2.3.3 Increase volunteer opportunities for individuals and groups
- 2.3.4 Develop multi-generational programs; encourage older adults to participate and volunteer in neighborhood activities and city events

**Policy 2.4 Create a unified identity for parks and programs**

- 2.4.1 Enhance park and facility signage to improve sense of place and visibility
- 2.4.2 Develop a citywide vision and mission for parks, recreation, arts and culture
- 2.4.3 Develop design and placement standards for parks park signage to create uniformity and ensure level of quality and branding of parks

**Goal Three:**

*Ensure the financial health of Rohnert Park's comprehensive recreation, parks, and open space system, including special purpose facilities.*

***Goal Three Policies***

**Policy 3.1 Develop a comprehensive funding approach**

- 3.1.1 Establish cost recovery goals for each major facility or line of business.
- 3.1.2 Develop business plans for facilities and special purpose features
- 3.1.3 Prioritize revenue-generating potential when identifying renovation projects



- 3.1.4 Set and adjust fees annually
- 3.1.5 Incorporate performance based on cost recovery goals into program evaluation and future planning

**Policy 3.2      Develop new sources of revenue for development, renovation, maintenance and operations of parks and facilities**

- 3.2.1 Consider a ballot measure to support renovations and improve park maintenance; explore alternatives such as Landscape and Lighting Assessment Districts, sales tax or parcel tax
- 3.2.2 Create a dedicated funding source to provide for future repairs and renovations of the Community Center and Callinan Sports Center
- 3.2.3 Seek Council approval to allow revenue generated through parks and recreation to be dedicated to parks and recreation operations or improvements
- 3.2.4 Dedicate staff time to support revenue generating initiatives
- 3.2.5 Evaluate the level of community support for revenue generation methods such as locating cell towers in parks, instituting banner programs, and selling advertisements
- 3.2.6 Develop a city-wide policy and planning effort to incorporate naming rights with special use and state of the art facilities
- 3.2.7 Create an ordinance that allows for collection of fees without park development to be used on impacted community amenities for renovation and expansion within the parameters of the Quimby Act.

**Policy 3.3      Develop funding policies for future development**

- 3.3.1 Create park development ordinances to meet the standards for specific plans and infill development

**Policy 3.4      Review regional, state and national grant funding programs regularly to identify potential funding sources**

- 3.4.1 Identify guidelines for selecting grant opportunities; focus on funding programs for youth facilities, integrating conservation practices into park projects, environmental stewardship and open space preservation, watersheds and greenways
- 3.4.2 Develop partnerships to strengthen community involvement and leverage resources for grant applications

**Policy 3.5      Provide for the donation of land, facilities, equipment, services and monies to support parks and programs**

- 3.5.1 Accept only land and facilities that meet the goals of this plan
- 3.5.2 Dedicate staff time to seeking donations and in-kind support

- 3.5.3 Consider establishing a foundation or partnership with other 501(c)(3) organizations to encourage donations to the park and recreation system

**Policy 3.6 Adopt a Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) to identify short and long term park development projects**

- 3.6.1 Develop guidelines for ranking and prioritizing capital projects
- 3.6.2 Incorporate CIP planning into annual budget reviews
- 3.6.3 Approve short term projects within a six-year timeframe; long term projects six years and longer
- 3.6.4 Create a schedule of replacement and/or renovation for park amenities that includes estimated costs
- 3.6.5 Develop and review annually a list of desire amenities in the community include the latest version as part of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan for consideration by developers.

#### IV. PARK IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

Rohnert Park's inventory of abundant parkland enables the community to focus its park improvement plan on adding new features to the existing parks, and developing future parks. When new development occurs in the specific planning areas, the City is in a better position to ensure the balance of new park types rather than settling for "one size fits all" neighborhood parks. This development approach allows for enhanced stewardship of natural resources and will result in highly valued neighborhoods.

The recommendations outlined in this chapter are a result of the public involvement led by PROS, a review of existing conditions, and trends within the industry. There are two areas of park improvements: specific recommendations for the existing park system and new construction summarized as a Capital Improvement Program (CIP). Upgrading the park system in Rohnert Park will require a combination of annual maintenance and repairs and physical implementation of the CIP.

The improvements shown in the Plan have been updated in 2016 and are to be reviewed City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission annually and updated every two years. The updating process includes a park tour by the City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission. The CIP portion of the plan is reviewed as part of the annual budget CIP process.

##### A. SYSTEM-WIDE IMPROVEMENTS

These are wide-ranging improvements to enhance the appeal, safety and use of parks, as well as improve organizational efficiency. Several system-wide improvements are shown below with notes regarding the rationale for implementation.

- 1 Develop the Community Center Complex and Sunrise Park into a central park to complement the civic center and other gathering areas. (Meets the need for a signature city-wide park facility.)
- 2 Combine parks and recreation services into one department to help meet the growing demand on existing parks and adapt to changing interests and trends. (Cities in California typically organize parks and recreational services into one department.)
  - 2.3 Remove tree stumps from planters scattered throughout the park system. (Meets safety standards.)
  - 2.4 Develop an inventory of bench assets throughout the system to aid in strategic maintenance. (Meets safety standards and enhances stewardship.)
- 3 Add new amenities such as skate features, bocce courts and climbing structures to satisfy evolving interests and trends. (Current features represent previous generations and outdated interests.)
- 4 Budget annually for fitness equipment replacement. (Meets safety guidelines.)
- 5 Invest in park signage and wayfinding to promote greater awareness and support for the park system as a whole. (Strengthens community image and sense of place.)

- 6 Repair and maintain children's play structures to prevent unsafe conditions and injury. (Meets safety guidelines and ADA requirements.)
- 7 Replace or remove under-used and isolated play structures. (Addresses park user safety and eliminates under-used structures subject to vandalism.)
- 8 Make sure all play structures meet ADA access requirements. (Start with an ADA Transition Plan.)
- 9 Integrate play areas with picnic and family gathering areas. (Increases park use.)
- 10 Create play areas for multi-age use. (Parks are currently deficient providing for multi-generational uses.)
- 11 Add play features, water slides, and new programs into the aquatics program; consider establishing a water play feature at Ladybug Park. (Increases park use.)
- 12 Adopt a strategic planning effort specific to aquatics to aid the Department in decision making through the next decade. (Incorporating new features will increase use and community support.)

The following list is a summary of the 2015/16 Park Audit performed by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

- Enclose garbage dumpsters with a locking mechanism
- Upgrade garbage cans to commercial grade, include a recycling container and make uniform throughout the parks
- Create a schedule to replace picnic areas throughout the parks with vandalism and graffiti proof picnic tables, tables that also allow for ADA accommodation
- Repair or install paths of travel that are relatively flat and easily navigable
- Resurfacing Sports Courts Tennis and Basketball

These recommendations are intended to strengthen the delivery of parks and recreation services in Rohnert Park. For example, combining parks and recreation into one department, as is typically organized in other cities, increases efficiency in budgeting, supervision, scheduling and communication, and planning.

Examining trends in aquatics, and studying successful neighborhood aquatic programs, will serve as a road map for increasing facility use and overall community support for these valuable assets. The swimming pools in Rohnert Park support the character of the neighborhoods and should be the primary tool for keeping children safe and residents healthy, as well as offer opportunities for family recreation. A strategic planning effort could begin by selecting one pool to renovate with updated water features such as fountains, slides and splash elements. Criteria for facility selection would include location, age of facility, and impact on the neighborhood.

Residents have access to a full array of fields and courts, and believe these amenities should be well maintained and preserved. The system wide improvements support the comments heard from the community, and will enable the City to focus on its core services and improve existing programs. Adding new fields and/or a sports complex would be an additional strain on the City. The limited organizational capacity that currently exists, along with the new park land required, make this type of improvement infeasible. Renovating existing fields for year round use and improved safety better serves the community.

Integrating play areas with spaces for small gatherings will improve the use of neighborhood parks and enhance safety and stewardship of the community's green infrastructure. Meeting safety and ADA standards is a high priority and should be recognized annually through planning efforts and budgeting. A systematic plan will include criteria for prioritizing play structures and park features including but not limited to amount and type of use, city-wide needs in community parks, age of the structure, surface material, and pathway access.

Community interests such as dog parks and skate parks can also be met through system wide improvements within existing parks. These amenities have broad appeal to families and a wide range of youth. Other interests such as developing community gardens and planting additional street trees should be coordinated by other departments, given the limited capacity of parks and recreation. **B. PARK-SPECIFIC IMPROVEMENTS**

Observations from the extensive park tour completed by MIG staff, suggest the following specific improvements which can be incorporated into annual maintenance plans and long term capital improvement plans.

Park Name	Opportunities and Recommended Actions
Alicia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve pool facility entrance to be more inviting.</li> <li>• Improve signage on southern end of park.</li> <li>• Consider moving picnic area closer to parking lot, to discourage loitering. If picnic area is moved, swimming pool area could be expanded and complemented with swim park features such as splash pads or slides</li> </ul>
Benicia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase family gathering areas at the park.</li> <li>• Increase coordination with Burton Recreation center to emphasize a connection between the facilities</li> </ul>
Colegio Vista	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand northern picnic area, improve access.</li> <li>• Evaluate play equipment on north end of park and consolidate if possible.</li> <li>• Consider renovation of restroom that currently in poor condition and inaccessible to wheelchairs.</li> </ul>
Caterpillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove older playground equipment.</li> <li>• Create picnicking/ socialization area with plantings for shade.</li> </ul>

Ladybug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve picnic area by softball field.</li> <li>• Work with existing features to develop a coordinated pool, tennis court, playground, picnic area complex or splash pad play area.</li> </ul>
Dorotea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine if there is sufficient interest to maintain the basketball court or reuse/ renovate with state of the art play. Court has the potential to serve as a unique gathering space and already appears to function like that to an extent.</li> </ul>
Eagle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace child play equipment areas.</li> <li>• Plantings obscuring tennis courts should be renovated to improve visibility into park.</li> <li>• Consider the development of multi-generational activity and socializing area in SW corner meadow such as bocce, or a group picnic facility.</li> </ul>
Sunrise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop integrated child play and picnic area.</li> <li>• Explore park renovation to compliment sports complex and center.</li> </ul>
Honeybee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove child playground in north end of park and consolidate with playground near pool or decommission both and build a new playground</li> </ul>
Golis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evaluate potential for bocce ball court next to tennis court</li> <li>• Develop age appropriate play areas and family gathering place at southern playground</li> <li>• Consider removal of basketball court</li> <li>• Develop Skate/ Water feature in southern meadow</li> <li>• Increase trail and park signage</li> <li>• Develop an off leash dog area</li> </ul>
Rainbow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect and renovate play equipment.</li> <li>• Resurface tennis and basketball courts.</li> </ul>
Magnolia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve park signage</li> <li>• Develop social gathering and tennis viewing area</li> <li>• Expand tennis courts</li> <li>• Improve tennis court gateway</li> <li>• Renovate gathering area between softball fields</li> </ul>

**Table 7. Suggested park improvements**

This table below includes observations made as a result of the 2015 Park Tour by City staff and the Parks and Recreation Commission. This chart has also been edited to remove improvements.

Park Name	Opportunities and Recommended Actions
Alicia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve signage on southern end of park.</li> <li>• Consider moving picnic area closer to parking lot, to discourage loitering Move into decommissioned Pool area</li> <li>• Add group picnic area with gazebo that include movable tables</li> <li>• Convert tennis court to other uses</li> <li>• Convert decommissioned pool to another use</li> </ul>
Benicia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase family gathering areas at the park</li> <li>• Slurry and restripe parking lot</li> <li>• Improve dog park signage, add drinking fountain remove excess vegetation</li> </ul>
Colegio Vista	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand northern picnic area, improve access.</li> <li>• Consider renovation of restroom that currently in poor condition and inaccessible to wheelchairs.</li> <li>• Consider adding more recycling amenities</li> <li>• Relocate western most picnic table nearest the entrance to east side near baseball field</li> <li>• Consider adding amenities on west side</li> </ul>
Caterpillar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remove older playground equipment.</li> <li>• Create picnicking/ socialization area with plantings for shade</li> <li>• Replace swing equipment</li> <li>• Add water fountain</li> <li>• Add trees</li> </ul>
Ladybug	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Relocate picnic area to other side of the park near the play equipment</li> <li>• Update park sign at the font of the park to include just the name of the park and remove “pool” from the wording</li> <li>• Convert decommissioned pool area to another use (splash pad).</li> </ul>
Dorotea	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Replace parts on tot lot or replace structure</li> <li>• New Park Name Sign</li> </ul>
Eagle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plantings obscuring tennis courts should be renovated to improve visibility into park.</li> <li>• Consider the development of multi-generational activity and socializing area in SW corner meadow such as bocce, or a group picnic facility</li> <li>• New path lighting and sports field lighting</li> <li>• Repair irrigation and renovate softball and soccer field</li> </ul>
Sunrise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore park renovation to compliment sports complex and center.</li> <li>• Upgrade picnic tables and barbecue pits</li> <li>• ADA assessment of park paths and amenities</li> <li>• Improve landscaping with fill and watering</li> </ul>

Park Name	Opportunities and Recommended Actions
Honeybee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Barbecue near pool picnic tables</li> <li>• Consider developing a skate area</li> <li>• Enhance picnic area: new tables and barbecue pits</li> <li>• Replace old wooden benches</li> </ul>
Golis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop age appropriate play areas and family gathering place at southern playground</li> <li>• Consider removal of basketball court</li> <li>• Develop Skate/ Water feature in southern meadow</li> <li>• Increase trail and park signage</li> <li>• Develop an off leash dog area</li> <li>• Renovate Baseball field</li> <li>• Add barriers to the area around the soccer field to prevent vehicles driving up on the turf</li> </ul>
Rainbow	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inspect and renovate play equipment.</li> <li>• Resurface tennis and basketball courts.</li> </ul>
Magnolia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve park signage</li> <li>• Develop social gathering and tennis viewing area</li> <li>• Improve tennis court gateway</li> <li>• Renovate gathering area between softball fields</li> <li>• Sports field turf improvement</li> </ul>
Roberts Lake	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Renovate or move brick memorial area</li> <li>• Erosion control on lake banks</li> <li>• Improve dog park signage, repair holes in fence and level out ground area</li> </ul>
Gold Ridge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide signage for area identification</li> <li>• Master plan area recreational area to meet needs in the community</li> </ul>

### C. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Rohnert Park’s abundant inventory of parkland enables the community to focus its capital improvement plan on adding new features to existing parks and providing for cutting-edge future parks. Tables 8 and 9 provide cost estimates for the proposed projects, followed by a more thorough description of the facilities and projects.

The six year project list identifies projects that can be completed in the reasonable time period for planning park improvements. The long-term list of projects signifies more substantial improvements or a continuation of needed renovations. Each individual project cost estimate includes a 20% markup for the Administrative and Engineering costs associated with the project.



6 Year Project List	Project Description	Cost Estimates
Citywide Skate Park	12,000 square foot facility including periphery improvements such as lighting, fencing and irrigation.	\$600,000
Skate Features	Skate features begin at approximately \$15,000 and can run up to \$100,000 depending on the size, amount and variety of features such as grind rails, benches and ramps.	Range \$15,000 to \$120,000
Annual playground replacement program (\$150,000 annually)	The Playground Replacement Program funds should also be directed towards completing the existing playground sand replacement program.	\$1,080,000
Year round sports turf	The 2.5-acre facility will support one championship soccer field and one combination baseball/softball field. Annual maintenance for Year-Round Sports turf costs approximately \$2,500.	\$1,728,000
Informal passive turf area	A 250' by 500' field provides ample space for city wide special events, festivals, multiple sports and adjacent areas for passive recreation, picnicking and socializing. Depending on amenities and scale, the price of a field renovation ranges from \$500,000 to \$700,000.	Range \$500,000 to \$840,000
Dog Park	The cost estimate provided in the CIP list would support the development of up to a 2- acre dog park with the following features: turf dog run (separate areas for small and large dogs); agility course for dogs; drinking fountains; bench seating; public art. A one-third acre dog park (14,500 square feet) including landscaping, a picnic table, a bench, a drinking fountain, and a trash can, would cost approximately \$80,000	Range \$80,000 to \$600,000
Bocce Court	Two 90-foot, side-by-side courts with a 6-foot wide path in between them, 6 benches and a 6-foot perimeter walk around path. The perimeter path cost is \$25,000. While not required, it is highly recommended.	Range \$96,000 to \$121,000
Equipment Replacement Fund (\$50,000 annually)	Replace and restore equipment in the Callinan Sports Center and various parks.	\$360,000
Annual Park and Wayfinding Signage (\$1,000 per park)		\$7,200
Group Picnic Areas	Larger areas would feature benches, a grill, sink and serving table and would seat 60. The smaller areas would include components of the larger area.	Large: \$168,000 Small: \$84,000
<b>Grand Total</b>		Range \$4,634,200 to \$5,791,200

**Table 8. Six Year Capital Improvement Plan projects**

<b>Long Term Project List</b>	<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Cost Estimates</b>
Sports Center Renovation: Indoor Swimming Facility	The CIP identifies a sports center renovation that includes an indoor swimming facility. The facility concept is for a 75' x 30' recreational lap pool with four shallow lanes.	\$6,000,000
Year round sports turf 10 year maintenance and renovation		\$1,080,000
Additional turf field		\$1,728,000
Equipment replacement fund (\$50,000 annually)		\$600,000
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>\$9,558,000</b>

**Table 9. Long Term Capital Improvement Plan projects**

The following is a short list of other park amenities not shown in the original Parks and Facilities Master Plan is being submitted for inclusion in future park development plans.

- Skate Park features
- Bocce Ball Courts
- Theme Based Parks (such as dinosaur theme or ocean theme)
- Community Gardens
- Interactive environmentally focused amenities
- Community or Neighborhood park development on the west side of town
- Signature Play Area that is ADA accessible
- Pump Course, designed for bikes
- Indoor Heated Pool
- Group picnic and event area

Tables 8 and 9 shown in the original Parks and Facilities Master Plan costs require updating. Cost estimates are over 7 years old.

**Description of Parks and Project Types**

These descriptions are intended to assist in shaping specific improvements each year. For example, the playground replacement program would be allocated to the priority needs outlined in the following description.

#### ***Bocce Court***

Residents are interested in new passive recreation features in the park system. Bocce ball is a popular social activity and there are numerous areas within the existing Rohnert Park system that can accommodate the development of a bocce ball court. Sites at Golis and Magnolia parks were identified during a park system tour and evaluation as having potential to support the addition of a side by side bocce ball court.

#### ***Citywide Skate Park or Skate Features***

A citywide skate park can serve as the center for skateboarding activity in Rohnert Park and serve the community. Skate features are a low-cost alternative to a dedicated skate park and offer a skate experience for youth while conserving available parkland and resources. Skate features, such as grind rails, benches or modular ramps can be specifically designed for a client. Prefabricated models can also be purchased. Sites at Golis and Colegio Vista were identified as having potential to support skate parks and or skate features.

#### ***Dog Parks***

The Rohnert Park system currently supports a basic network of dog parks that make good use of underutilized park areas. Current dog park developments are being built to provide play experiences for dogs of all size and age, and future dog parks may be separate facilities or integrated into overall park design.

#### ***Accessibility/ADA Planning Report***

Park tours and evaluation revealed significant accessibility barriers and ADA violations throughout the park system. A self-evaluation and transition plan will address barrier removal and provide a strategy for system-wide ADA compliance. Completion of a self-evaluation and transition plan costs \$75,000.

#### ***Annual Accessibility/ ADA Implementation***

The self-evaluation and transition plan described in short term project list will identify specific projects that should be budgeted for on an ongoing basis. Potential recommended improvements will include park access and point of travel. Potential child play areas improvements include access ramps and wood fiber surfacing. Approximately \$50,000 should be budgeted for annual implementation costs.

#### ***Year-Round Sports Turf Field Installation***

Year-round sports turf fields are quickly becoming a standard park feature that provide increased opportunities for active recreation while requiring less ongoing maintenance.

### ***Year-Round Sports Turf Ten Year Maintenance and Renovation***

Industry trends indicate that year-round sports turf fields require a major renovation every 10 years. Financial planning to support the renovation is required.

### ***Informal Passive Turf Area***

Upgrading the existing park system requires the renovation of existing turf that can support both active and passive recreational activities. These multi-use spaces support spontaneous, informal play, special events and festivals, as well as more organized activities such as team sports. The fields at Magnolia Park require upgrading.

### ***Sports Center Renovation: Indoor Swimming Facility***

The Callinan Sports Center is surrounded by available land. A renovation and/or expansion to the center has long been discussed as a potential project. The renovation would increase fitness and recreational swimming opportunities and will be geared specifically for water exercise class and family activities.

### ***Equipment Replacement Fund***

An equipment replacement fund will provide a dedicated funding stream to replace and restore equipment in the Callinan Sports Center and various parks. Identified equipment needs in parks include BBQ and picnic bench replacement, and tennis court and basketball court resurfacing, while the Sports Center will need to replace gym equipment.

### ***Group Picnic Area***

The Rohnert Park system includes numerous small picnic areas that can support a family-scale event, but not any areas that can support larger groups. The development of group picnic areas will afford residents and visitors the opportunity to gather and utilize the Rohnert Park system.

### ***Annual Playground Replacement Program***

The children's playground equipment in the Rohnert Park system is in need of new, state-of-the-art play equipment such as climbing rocks and walls. Playground equipment replacement should be prioritized at Honeybee, Eagle, Colegio Vista and Benicia Parks.

## **V. FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES**

Full service parks and recreation departments in California typically receive between 9%–12% of General Fund expenditures. This allocation provides for resources such as park maintenance, recreational programs and services, arts and culture programs, facility operations and citywide events. In addition, alternative funding sources support parks and recreation operations in many ways. According to the 2006 – 2007 Budget, Rohnert Park allocates 12% of General Fund expenditures to support all park and facility maintenance and operations, as well as recreation.

Recreation programs generate revenue to recover costs; grants and donations support projects and programs; dedicated funding sources provide funding for specific items; and capital projects receive funding from new development. Other public service entities such as redevelopment agencies and special districts also support parkland development projects.

In Rohnert Park, General Fund municipal support for parks and recreation operations has steadily declined in recent years. Also, a slow down in development has resulted in a decrease of funds for park and facility development. The challenge facing the community today is how best to provide for the preservation of existing parks and facilities.

Rohnert Park residents have indicated they are willing to provide additional support to maintain the high quality of the park and recreation system. To be successful, the City should team with community leaders and individual residents to develop a plan for funding over the long term. In northern California, many cities have been successful in creating city-wide Lighting and Landscaping Assessment Districts or approving ballot measures to fund improvements and renovations.

When new development takes off, adding new parks and facilities will be supported by the development project itself. However, there may be a gap between what the development provides and what is needed by the community. Alternative funding sources are available to close the gap.

## **A. LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES**

### **Grants**

Grants are provided to tax-exempt nonprofit organizations or local government agencies by foundations, corporations, governments, small business and individuals. Most grants are made to fund a specific project and require some level of reporting. The process involves an applicant submitting a proposal to a potential funder, either on the applicant's own initiative or in response to a Request for Proposals from the funder.

### **General Obligation Bonds**

These municipal bonds are secured by a state or local government's pledge to use legally available resources, including tax revenues, to repay bond holders. Most general obligation pledges at the local government level include a pledge to levy a property tax to meet debt service requirements.

### **Revenue Bonds**

Revenue bonds are a special type of municipal bond distinguished by its guarantee of repayment solely from revenues generated by a specified revenue-generating entity associated with the purpose of the bonds.

### **Impact Fees**

An impact fee is a one-time charge that private entrepreneurs, often developers, must pay to the local government in order to undertake their projects. In turn, the revenue from the impact fee finances public goods and services associated with the project.

### **Special Assessment District**

These are separate units of government that manage specific resources within defined boundaries. Districts vary in size, encompassing single cities or several counties. They can be established by local governments or by voter initiative, depending on state laws and regulations. As self-financing legal entities they have the ability to raise a predictable stream of money, such as taxes, user fees or bonds, directly from the people who benefit from the services— often parks and recreation.

### **Benefit Assessment**

A benefit assessment district assesses a defined constituency and provides benefits to those residents. Benefits include roads, water, parks and recreational facilities.

### **User Fees**

These individual fees are paid by people for the voluntary use of public services and facilities. Local governments collect the bulk of user fees. Anyone who has visited a state or national park is familiar with park-based user fees. Some states allow local governments to establish separate park and recreation “accounts: with user fee revenues. These funds are then used to pay for park maintenance and operations.

### **Tax Increment Financing (TIF)**

TIF is a tool to use future gains in taxes to finance the current improvements that will create those gains. When a public project such as a road, school, or hazardous waste cleanup is carried out, there is an increase in the value of surrounding real estate and often new investment (new or rehabilitated buildings, for example).

### **Dedication of Land for Recreation**

A city may require developers to dedicate a portion of their new development to open space or park/recreation space. Developers also have the option of paying fees in lieu of dedicating their land.

### **A Sub-Fund under the Sales Tax Fund**

Funds earmarked specifically for parks and recreation use.

### **Public-Private Partnerships**

A local park and recreation agency can gain access to new fiscal resources to serve the community by collaborating with like-minded organizations. Cooperative opportunities may exist with other public agencies, non-profit community-based organizations, and for-profit firms.

### **Outsourcing**

Private service providers may have the opportunity to carry out services more efficiently and could be considered as an alternative service provider at the appropriate time.

### **Establishment of a Non-Profit Organization**

A non-profit may be able to raise additional funds and apply for more grant opportunities, and may have more appeal for individual donors. Parks and recreation departments are often involved in creating a nonprofit to support youth programs, older adult services, and community improvements.

### **Partner with Local Universities**

Parks and recreation departments are able to accomplish special projects or programs with students and/or classes.

## **B. STATE FUNDING SOURCES**

The State of California administers numerous grant programs. The most notable are managed through the California Department of Parks and Recreation. Cities such as Rohnert Park are well positioned for grant programs specific to watersheds, rivers and greenways, youth education and health. Voter-approved bond measures are sporadic but today are increasing in frequency. Five bond measures passed in the 1970s and 1980s. No bond measures passed in the 1990s. Proposition 12 passed in 2000, followed by Proposition 40 in 2002. In addition to the funds provided based on population (per capita), these bond programs had more than ten different grant programs for projects related to trails, youth, and soccer and baseball to name a few. Other bond programs such as Proposition 84 – Safe Drinking Water Bond Act include grant opportunities for parks and recreation.

Currently SB 317 Safe Neighborhood Parks, Rivers, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2016 is being brought forward for a vote in November 2016 which if approved, would provide competitive and per capita funding for cities and special districts to fund development and renovation of parks, open space and recreational facilities.

### **Per Capita Grant Program Grants and Local Services:**

Rohnert Park can expect to receive a minimum of \$220,000 from per capita programs administered through the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Competitive grant programs vary in specific purposes and should be monitored annually. These funding sources are ideally suited for development of new parks and facilities and adding updated features to existing parks.

### **Other Possible State Funding Resources:**

- Historic Preservation/Restoration Funds
- Parks/Recreation/Trails/Open Space/Greenspace Funds
- Site Remediation Funds
- Revitalization Funds
- Site Assessment Funds
- Library Funds
- Revolving Loan Funds

## **C. FEDERAL FUNDING SOURCES**

- **National Park Service**  
Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF); Rivers, Trails and Conservation Assistance; Urban Park and Recreation Recovery; Federal Lands-to-Parks Program US Fish and Wildlife (technical consultation and assistance regarding habitat restoration or protection and ecosystem conservation); Land and Water Conservation Fund grants
- **U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA)**
- **U.S. Department of Commerce**
- **U.S. Department of Defense**
- **U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)**
- **U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD):** Community Development Block Grants (CDBG); Section 108; Brownfields Economic
- **U.S. Department of the Interior**
- **U.S. Department of Transportation (DOT):** Transportation Outreach Program; funds for recreational trails, bicycle and pedestrian projects; funds for ADA compliance; Intermodal Grant Program (parking garage facility, waterfront district); ISTEA/Tea-21
- **Coast Guard:** Boating Improvement Program (community boat ramp, canoe launch)
- **Federal Highway Administration (FHWA)**
- **Federal Railroad Administration (FRA):** Funding and technical assistance to programs encouraging development or rehabilitation of rail infrastructure and technologies.
- **Federal Transit Administration (FTA):** Funding and technical assistance to local and regional transit initiatives.
- **Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA):** Flood Management Programs; Emergency Shelters; Mitigation/ Emergency Planning; Assistance to locate outside of floodplain

## Appendix A: Benchmarking Data

The data in the benchmarking tables was collected during the fall of 2007 through research of existing parkland documentation and through conversations with park and recreations department staff.

	<i>Park Acreage</i>		
	<b>Rohnert Park</b>	<b>Campbell</b>	<b>Lodi</b>
<b>Mini Park</b>			3.45
<b>Passive Park</b>		1.3	
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	116	4.5	83.89
<b>Community Park</b>		69.7	58
<b>Regional Park</b>			101
<b>Open space</b>			
<b>Linear Park</b>			
<b>Special Use Area</b>		6.1	29
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>81.6</b>	<b>275.34</b>



	<i>Existing Park type Definition or Policy</i>		
	<b>Rohnert Park</b>	<b>Campbell</b>	<b>Lodi</b>
<b>Mini Parks</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Passive Park</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Community Park</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Regional Park</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Open space</b>			
<b>Linear Park</b>			
<b>Special Use Area</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
	<i>Special Purpose Facilities</i>		
	<b>Rohnert Park</b>	<b>Campbell</b>	<b>Lodi</b>
<b>Single-Use Sports complex (Up to 4 baseball diamonds)</b>			<b>X</b>
<b>Multi-Use Sports Complex (A mix of sports fields such as baseball and soccer)</b>			
<b>Aquatics Center</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>Neighborhood Pools</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Water Feature Play</b>		<b>X</b>	
<b>Community Center</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	
<b>Fitness Center</b>	<b>X</b>		
<b>Performing Arts Center</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Senior Center</b>	<b>X</b>		<b>X</b>
<b>Teen Center</b>			
<b>Skate Park</b>		<b>X</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>Golf Courses</b>	<b>X</b>		

City	Land area (sq mi)	2006 Population	2000 Population	1990 Population	Median Income (2005)	% White
Rohnert Park	6.4	41,083	42,236	36,236	\$57,100	74%
Campbell	6.4	37,520	38,138	36,048	\$69,500	66%
Lodi	12.3	62,451	56,999	51,874	\$47,300	63.5%

City	Park Maintenance	Recreational Services	2007-2008 Proposed Parks Department Budget
Rohnert Park	\$1,484,183	\$2,071,100	\$3,555,283
Campbell	\$2,058,485 (Public Works, Approx \$1 million recovered by Lighting and Landscaping Fees)		\$5,960,547 (Parks and Community Services)
Lodi	\$2,371,414	\$1,420,284	\$3,791,698

**OTHER COMMUNITIES**

	Park Numbers				
	Folsom	Manteca	Lathrop	Woodland	Rohnert Park
Mini Park	29		7		
Neighborhood Park	12	33	4		21
Community Park	8	7	3		
<b>Total # of Parks</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>18*</b>	<b>21</b>

	Park Acreage				
	Folsom	Manteca	Lathrop	Woodland	Rohnert Park
Mini Park	38.33		7.17		
Neighborhood Park	154.91	150.84	26.3		116
Community Park	269.96	84.29	32		
<b>Total Park Acreage</b>	<b>463.21</b>	<b>235.13(Ex. G Course)</b>	<b>65.47</b>	<b>160*</b>	<b>116</b>

\*Woodland does not utilize park definitions.

<i>City</i>	<i>2006 Population</i>	<i>2000 Population</i>	<i>1990 Population</i>	<i>Other Notes</i>
<b>Folsom</b>	66,123	51,884	29,802	
<b>Manteca</b>	63,709	49,258	40,773	Operations include overseeing 275 acres of Neighborhood and Community Parks, Tidewater Bike Way, Skate Park the Senior Center and operations of the 18 Hole Municipal Golf Course.
<b>Lathrop</b>	14,924	10,445	6,841	Facilities include Community Center, Senior Center and Skate Park
<b>Woodland</b>	51,144	49,151	39,802	Operations include overseeing 160 acres of parks and recreation areas and two swimming pools. Special facilities include a 22-acre full service historical cemetery (Woodland Cemetery).
<b>Rohnert Park</b>	41,083	42,236	36,236	

## **Appendix B: Park Planning Glossary**

### ***Active Recreation***

A structured individual or team activity that requires the use of special facilities, courses, fields, or equipment. Examples of active recreational activities include organized sports such as baseball, football, and soccer; golf, tennis, and skateboarding (in skateparks).

### ***ADA Transition Plan***

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA) dictates that a public entity must evaluate its services, programs, policies, and accommodations to determine if they are in compliance with the non-discrimination regulations of the ADA. Problems or physical barriers that limit accessibility by the disabled must be identified and potential compliance solutions described. The public entity must prepare a transition plan to identify any structural or physical changes required to make programs and facilities accessible.

### ***Community Parks***

Community parks provide visitors with access to a wider range of recreation opportunities to accommodate large group activities, recreation programs, and major recreation facilities, such as sport facilities. Community parks should be designed to enhance neighborhood and community identity, preserve open space and enhance the quality of life of community residents. Community parks are larger parks, typically 5 – 15 acres, and include parking areas to service the multiple amenities.

### ***Golf Course***

A publically-owned, 18 hole course that accounts for a significant portion of Rohnert Park's parkland acreage.

### ***Neighborhood Parks***

Neighborhood parks provide nearby residents with access to basic recreation opportunities. Generally 1-3 acres in size, neighborhood parks are a combination of playground and park designed primarily for spontaneous, non-organized recreation activities or small family gatherings. Neighborhood parks should be designed to enhance neighborhood identity, preserve neighborhood open space, and improve the quality of life of nearby residents.

### ***Passive Recreation***

Recreational activities that do not require dedicated specialized facilities such as sports fields or courts. Examples of passive recreational activities include small group visits, reading, wildlife viewing, picnicking, bird-watching, fishing, and trail-related activities such as walking, hiking, bicycling, running,

### ***Special Use Areas***

Special use areas are single purpose sites or areas occupied by specialized facilities, such as stand-alone recreation centers, skate parks, swimming pools, or community gardens.

**School Parks**

An innovative approach to involving the joint design and development of parks at new school sites to accommodate the community's growing recreational and educational needs. These parks have their own design characters based on the different opportunities for joint use offered at the school sites.

**Level of Service**

Level of service (LOS) describes the type, amount and location of parks, facilities and services that Rohnert Park offers to the community. LOS guidelines help the City determine whether current facilities and services (such as maintenance) are adequate in meeting community needs.

**Spray Park/Sprayground**

These facilities are safe and unique play areas where water is sprayed from structures or ground sprays and then drained away before it can accumulate. These playgrounds with water features are sometimes referred to as aquatic playgrounds, splash pads, water playgrounds, or water play areas.

**Civic Plaza/ Square**

Local gathering areas centrally located within communities such as downtown districts or city hall complexes. Civic plazas host city-wide functions such as concerts, farmer's markets, or fairs and festivals.

**Turn-Key Park**

A park built by development and/or home builders prior to dedicating it to a municipality. The local parks and recreation department receives a fully completed park ready to be used by the public.

**Skate Park**

A minimum 8,000 square foot area dedicated to skateboarding usually featuring a bowl and other skate elements. Skate parks can feature dedicated lighting and fencing.

**Skate Feature**

Fixed skate features added to neighborhood or community parks like grind rails and benches. Skate features are included in parks in-lieu of play structures for older elementary ages.