



PARKS, RECREATION, AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION

Regular Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 2024, 7:00 P.M.
Frances Albrier Community Center - auditorium
2800 Park Street, Berkeley, CA 94702

Parks and Waterfront Commission

Agenda

The Commissions may discuss any items listed on the agenda, but may take action only on items identified as Action.

1. **Call to Order** (Chair).
2. **Roll Call** (Secretary).
3. **Land Acknowledgement:** The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochoyeno (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.
4. **Action: Approval of Agenda** (Chair).
5. **Action: Approval of Minutes** for April 10, 2024 (Chair).*
6. **Public Comment.**
7. **Chair's Report.**
8. **Director's Report** (Erickson): PRW Divisions (Recreation; Parks; Waterfront; Capital; Budget; Grants).
9. **Discussion/Action: Update on FY25-26 PRW Capital Projects submittals and commission recommendations to Council** (Erickson).*
10. **Discussion: Update on Sports Field Permit Fee Increases in FY2025** (Erickson).
11. **Discussion/Action: Recommendation to Council to allocate funding for a Nexus Study for a Future Development Impact Fee for Parks** (Abshez/Wozniak).*
12. **Discussion: Update on Cal Sailing Club's 6 berth slips on J-dock** (Kawczynska).
13. **Discussion: Update on Cesar Chavez Park Landfill** (Kawczynska).
14. **Information: Recent Council Reports.***
15. **Future Agenda Items:** Public Art in Aquatic Park (Lavvorn); PRW Commission Workplan 2024; Citywide Accessibility Plan; Locations for Dog Parks.
16. **Communications.*** a) Cliff Pred email, 2024-04-10; b) EAFC Ltr, 2024-04-15; c) Commercial Dog Walkers in Cesar Chavez Park (Kawczynska); d) Berkeley to plant new trees at Indian Rock, Berkeleyside, 05-02-2024.
17. **Next PRW Commission meeting:** Wednesday, June 12, 2024.
18. **Adjournment.**

* document is attached to agenda packet and on the commission website.

** document will be provided at the meeting.

ADA Disclaimer: This meeting is being held in a wheelchair accessible location. To request disability-related accommodations to participate in the meeting, including auxiliary aids or services, please contact the Disability Services specialist at 981-6418 (V) or 981-6347 (TDD) at least three business days before the meeting date. Please refrain from wearing scented products to this meeting.

SB343 Disclaimer: Any writings or documents provided to a majority of the Commission regarding any item on this agenda will be made available for public inspection at Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department Office at 2180 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA.

Communications Disclaimer: Communications to Berkeley boards, commissions or committees are public record and will become part of the City’s electronic records, which are accessible through the City’s website. **Please note: e-mail addresses, names, addresses, and other contact information are not required, but if included in any communication to a City board, commission or committee, will become part of the public record.** All communications to the Commission should be received at least 10 days before the meeting date. If you do not want your e-mail address or any other contact information to be made public, you may deliver communications via U.S. Postal Service or in person to the secretary of the relevant board, commission or committee. If you do not want your contact information included in the public record, please do not include that information in your communication. Please contact the secretary to the commission or committee for further information.

Commission Information: The agenda packets for the Parks and Recreation Commission and the Waterfront Commission are available for review at www.cityofberkeley.info/commissions; the Berkeley Main Library and the Parks Recreation & Waterfront Department Office at 2180 Milvia Street –3rd Floor, during their normal business hours. If you have questions, call Commission Secretary, Roger Miller at 981-6704 at 2180 Milvia Street, Berkeley, CA 94704 or by email at rmiller@cityofberkeley.info.

MISSION STATEMENT – PARKS AND WATERFRONT: Reviews and advises the City Council on issues related to all City/public parks, open space, greenery, pools, programs, recreation centers, the Waterfront, and resident camps: their physical conditions, policies, projects, programs, planning efforts, activities, and funding; early childhood education programs; and animal care issues in parks.

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mayor- Gordon Wozniak	District 3 - Gianna Ranuzzi	District 6 -
District 1 - Reichi Lee	District 4 - Erin Diehm	District 7 - Alyssa Hurtado
District 2 - Claudia Kawczynska	District 5 - Brennan Cox	District 8 - Allan Abshez

Current assignments

Subcomm on Marina Fund (12-14-2022)
Subcomm on dogs and parks (02-08-2023)

Liaison - Civic Center Planning – Erin Diehm
Liaison - Civic Arts in Parks – Brennan Cox

2024 Commission Meeting Dates

Name of Commission: Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission

Commission Secretary: Roger Miller

Location: Frances Albrier Community Center, 2800 Park St

Month	Meeting Day and Date (2 nd Wednesday per month)	Time	Notes
2024			
January	Wednesday, January 10	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
February	Thursday, February 15	5:30 p.m.	Regular Mtg/Corp Yard Rm
March	Wednesday, March 13	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
April	Wednesday, April 10	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
May	Wednesday, May 8	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
June	Wednesday, June 12	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
July	Wednesday, July 10	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
August	No meeting		
September	Wednesday, September 11	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
October	Wednesday, October 9	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
November	Wednesday, November 13	7:00 p.m.	Regular Mtg
December	No Meeting		
2025			
January	<i>Wednesday, January 8</i>	<i>7:00 p.m.</i>	<i>Regular Mtg</i>

**PARKS AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION
Regular Meeting**

Wednesday, April 10, 2024, 7:00 P.M., Live Oak Community Ctr, Fireside Room

Minutes – Draft

The Commissions may discuss any items listed on the agenda, but may take action only on items identified as Action.

1. **Call to Order** (Chair). 7pm.
2. **Roll Call** (Secretary). Present: Present: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Hurtado; Kawczynska; Lee; Ranuzzi; Wozniak; Absent: None.
3. **Land Acknowledgement:** The City of Berkeley recognizes that the community we live in was built on the territory of xučyun (Huchiun (Hooch-yoon)), the ancestral and unceded land of the Chochenyo (Cho-chen-yo)-speaking Ohlone (Oh-low-nee) people, the ancestors and descendants of the sovereign Verona Band of Alameda County. This land was and continues to be of great importance to all of the Ohlone Tribes and descendants of the Verona Band. As we begin our meeting tonight, we acknowledge and honor the original inhabitants of Berkeley, the documented 5,000-year history of a vibrant community at the West Berkeley Shellmound, and the Ohlone people who continue to reside in the East Bay. We recognize that Berkeley's residents have and continue to benefit from the use and occupation of this unceded stolen land since the City of Berkeley's incorporation in 1878. As stewards of the laws regulating the City of Berkeley, it is not only vital that we recognize the history of this land, but also recognize that the Ohlone people are present members of Berkeley and other East Bay communities today. The City of Berkeley will continue to build relationships with the Lisjan Tribe and to create meaningful actions that uphold the intention of this land acknowledgement.
4. **Action: Approval of Agenda** (Chair). (M/S/C: Wozniak/Abshez/U): Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Kawczynska; Lee; Wozniak; Noes: None; Absent: Hurtado; Ranuzzi.
5. **Action: Approval of Minutes** for March 13, 2024 (Chair).* (M/S/C: Wozniak/Abshez/U): Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Kawczynska; Lee; Wozniak; Noes: None; Absent: Hurtado; Ranuzzi.
6. **Public Comment.** a) Ryan Mykida, sports field allocation; b) Susan Schwartz, Aquatic Park; c) Kelly Hammargren, non-agenda; d) Martin Nicolaus, Cesar Chavez Park; e) Jim McGrath, Aquatic Park.
7. **Chair's Report.** 25th anniversary of Off Leash Dog Area at Cesar Chavez Park (Kawczynska); Berkeley Project Day on April 6, 2024 had many students from UC Berkeley; Cesar Chavez Park landfill issue (Kawczynska); PRW Comm ltr to ZAB re 2316 San Pablo Ave (Kawczynska).
8. **Presentation: Proposed project at 600 Bancroft St** (Woodstock Inc., C. Erickson). Presentation was provided. Public comment: a) Susan Schwartz; b) Laura Riggs; c) Kelly Hammargren.
9. **Director's Report** (Erickson): PRW Divisions (Recreation; Parks; Waterfront; Capital; Budget; Grants). Update was provided.
10. **Discussion/Action: Proposed updates to Berth Fee Waiver Resolution** (66,544-N.S.) (Kawczynska/Miller).* Item was discussed. Public Comment: a) Paul Kamen. (The commission M/S/C (Kawczynska/Abshez/U) to approve the updated resolution as edited in the agenda package. Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Kawczynska; Lee; Wozniak; Noes: None; Absent: Hurtado; Ranuzzi.
11. **Discussion/Action: Development Impact Fee for parks improvements** (Abshez).* Item was discussed. Public Comment: a) Kelly Hammargren; b) Jim McGrath; c) Paul Kamen. (The commission M/S/C (Kawczynska/Diehm) to create a subcommittee

comprised of Abshez, Cox, Kawczynska, and Wozniak. Ayes: Abshez; Cox; Diehm; Kawczynska; Lee; Wozniak; Noes: None; Absent: Hurtado; Ranuzzi.

12. Discussion/Action: Update on FY25-26 PRW Capital Projects submittals and commission recommendations to Council (Erickson).* Item was discussed and will come back to the commission.

13. Information: Recent Council Reports.*

14. Future Agenda Items: Public Art in Aquatic Park (Lavvorn); PRW Commission Workplan 2024; Citywide Accessibility Plan; Locations for Dog Parks.

15. Communications.* PRW Comm Ltr to ZAB, 3-13-2024; PRW Comm Ltr to Council, 3-13-2024; Special Events, 3-27-2024; Waterfront Scavenger Hunt, 3-30-2024.

16. Next PRW Commission meeting: Wednesday, May 8, 2024.

17. Adjournment. 9:30pm.

* document is attached to agenda packet and on the commission website.

** document will be provided at the meeting

- Commissioners in attendance: 6 of 8 appointed.
- Public in attendance: 11
- Public speakers: 12

***Note:** For any handouts distributed at the meeting, please see the Draft Minutes for April 10, 2024 on the Parks, Recreation, and Waterfront Commission webpage at the following link online:

<https://berkeleyca.gov/your-government/boards-commissions/parks-recreation-and-waterfront-commission>

PRW CIP Budget Requests - FY25 and FY26
3/29/2024

Parks Tax / CIP	FY25	FY26	FY25 REV	FY26 REV	Notes
Budget					
Parks Tax (baseline)	1,065,000	1,090,000	1,065,000	1,090,000	
Parks Tax (addl)	2,500,000	2,000,000	2,500,000	2,000,000	Taken from fund balance; included in fund forecast.
Marina Fund (baseline)	-	-	350,000	350,000	
Camps Fund	-	-	-	-	
CIP (baseline)	2,400,000	2,400,000	400,000	400,000	
Total budget	5,965,000	5,490,000	4,315,000	3,840,000	11,455,000
Project Needs					
<u>High priority projects - 1</u>					
MLK YAP	(3,600,000)		(3,600,000)		Total project is \$12.5M. \$3.6M is the gap. Applied for \$3.6M grant to cover. April 2024
Santa Fe ROW		(3,150,000)		(3,150,000)	Total project is \$8M-\$10M. We have \$5M. \$3.15M is the est gap. Applied for \$5M grant to cover. Feb/March 2024
Tom Bates	(3,900,000)			(3,900,000)	Total project is \$8M. We have \$4.1M. \$3.9M is the gap. Estimated amount. Note: also need funds in FY24 for tree removal prior to camp opening.
Echo trees	(200,000)		(200,000)		
South Cove West parking lot (gap from SCC grant)	(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)	(250,000)	
K-Dock Restroom gap		(110,000)		(110,000)	
199 Seawall beam/piling	(260,000)		(260,000)		Critical beam and piling at risk of failing. Design and study in FY25, construction in FY26 (see below, under addl emergency needs).
Additional Piling Replacements (J Dock)		(140,000)	(140,000)		
Tom Bates Turf Replacement - Annual JPA Contribution	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)	
Citywide Tree Planting	(75,000)	(75,000)	(75,000)	(75,000)	
Subtotal - High priority projects - 1	(8,300,000)	(3,740,000)	(4,540,000)	(7,500,000)	(12,040,000)
<u>High priority projects - 2</u>					
199 Seawall beam/piling		(765,672)		(765,672)	Critical beam and piling at risk of failing. Design and study in FY25, construction in FY26.
Design for seawall repair at South Cove	(500,000)		(500,000)		South Cove seawall failing. Possible grant for construction. River wall eroding camp property. Assumes 50/50 share with Caz Music Camp, total cost is \$600K.
Caz riverbed erosion	(300,000)		(300,000)		
Addl MM for Camps	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)	(100,000)	
Subtotal - High priority projects - 2	(900,000)	(865,672)	(900,000)	(865,672)	(1,765,672)
<u>High priority needs - 3</u>					
Aquatic Park Tide Tubes Planning (grant match)	(66,000)		(66,000)		FY24 grant application; will need this allocation if awarded. (Separate from \$800k match in AAO1).

University Ave SLR (grant match)	(64,000)		(64,000)		<i>FY24 grant application; will need this allocation if awarded.</i>
Convert JK Restroom to Public RR	(160,000)			(160,000)	
South Berkeley Landscaping / Here There	(400,000)			(400,000)	
Design for Codornices Play	(250,000)			(250,000)	<i>Play structure is deteriorated and needs to be replaced.</i>
Design for Shorebird Play	(175,000)			(175,000)	<i>Play structure is deteriorated and needs to be replaced.</i>
Design for Glendale LaLoma Play	(250,000)			(250,000)	<i>Play structure is deteriorated and needs to be replaced.</i>
Generator at BTC	(150,000)			(150,000)	<i>This is required; but a generator could be rented in summer 2024.</i>
Re-deck F&G dock		(500,000)		(500,000)	
Finger Dock Replacements		(300,000)		(300,000)	
Subtotal - High priority projects - 3	(1,515,000)	(800,000)	(130,000)	(2,185,000)	(2,315,000)

GRAND TOTAL - Project Needs	(10,715,000)	(5,405,672)	(5,570,000)	(10,550,672)	(16,120,672)
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	FY25	FY26	FY25	FY26
Parks Tax Funding	3,565,000	3,090,000	3,565,000	3,090,000
CIP Fund	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000
Marina Fund			350,000	350,000
Funding	3,965,000	3,490,000	4,315,000	3,840,000
Gap	(6,750,000)	(1,915,672)	(1,255,000)	(6,710,672)

Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department - Capital Projects List/ Status

Project	Type /Funded	Status
Camps		
Echo Lake ADA pathway Improvements	Funded -Construction	In Construction
Echo Lake Tree Removal Phase 3	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Phase 1 and 2 Complete
Tuolumne Camp EVC Charging Stations	Funded -Construction	In Closing
Tuolumne Camp Generator Insatlation	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not started
Cazadero Riverbed Erosion Phase 1	Funded	Complete
Cazadero Riverbed Erosion Phase 2	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not started
Waterfront		
199 Seawall Structural Evaluation	Funded	In Process
199 Seawall Structural Improvements	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
Bike Park	Funded-Conceptual Design Only	Final Design nearing comp.
Cesar Chavez Parimter Pathway	Funded - Construction	In Design
Cesar Chavez Park Restroom	Funded - Construction	In Design
D and E dock Replacement	Funded - Construction	Bidding
F and G Dock Resurfacing	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
J dock - misc Piling Improvements (3)	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
J dock - Diamond Plate Resurfacing	Funded- Construction	Starting in April
K Dock Restroom	Funded - Construction	In Design
Main Channel Dredging	Funded - Construction	Bidding
Marina/Virgina Sea Level Rise	Concepetual/ Planning only	Funding from SSC in process
Misc Piling Replacements	Funded -Construction	In Closing
Pier with Water Transportation	Funded - Design/ Plannig	In Process
South Cove Seawall Repair	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
South Cove West Parking Lot	Funded- Construction	In Design
South Sailing Basin Dredging	Funded - Conceptual Design Only	In Process
University Ave Sea Level Rise	Unfunded- Grant App Pending	Preliminary design only
Waterfront Specific Plan	Funded	In Process
Facilities/Large Buildings		
African American Holistic Resource Center	Funded - Construction	In Conceptual Design
John Hinkle Hut	Funded - Design Only	In Conceptual Design
MLK Jr. Youth Services Center	Funded - Construction	In Design
Willard Clubhouse and Restroom	Funded - Construction	In Construction
Parks		
63rd Avenue-Community Garden	Funded- Construction	In Closing
Aquatic Park - ADA Parking Lagoon Access	Funded - Constuction	In Closing
Aquatic Park - Dreamland Area Design	Funded - Design/ Planning	Not Started
Aquatic Park - West Side Tree Planting	Funded- Construction	In Construction
Aquatic Park- East Bolivar Landscape and	Funded- Constuction	In Construction
Aquatics Park Tide Tubes- Phase 2 Design	Unfunded- Grant App	Preliminary Design
Berkeley Way Mini- Community Garden	Unfunded- FY25 MM	In Design
Berkeley Way Mini- New fencing/ Picnic A	Funded- Construction	In Design

Cedar Rose Playgrounds	Funded - Construction	In Design
Civic Center Upper Plaza Improvements/T	Funded - Construction	In Design
Codornices Play Structure	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
General- Misc Sport Court Resurfacing	Funded- Construction	In Construction
Glendale Laloma Play Structures	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
Greg Brown Park- Community Garden	Unfunded- FY25 MM	In Closing
Grove Park- Play Structures	Funded - Construction	In Construction
Grove Park- Sports Field Improvements	Funded - Construction	In Construction
Harrison Park Restroom Remodel	Funded - Construction	In Design
James Kenney Restroom	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Not Started
James Kenney Skate Spot	Conceptual Design Only	In Closing
Live Oak Park Tennis Lights	Unfunded FY25 MM	Not Started
Ohlone Park Lighting	Funded- Construction	In Design
Ohlone Park Restroom	Funded - Construction	Bidding
Shorebird Park Play Structure Replacemer	Unfunded-Potential FY25 Request	Unfunded
Solano- Peralta Phase 1- Play Structures	Funded - Construction	In Closing
Solan0- Peralta Phase 2 -Upper Plaza	Partially Funded	In Design
Tom Bates ADA,Restroom and Community	Funded- Construction	In Design
Tom Bates- Gillman Street Sewer Line	Funded - Construction	In Closing
Tom Bates Pickle Ball and Soccer field	Funded- Construction	In Design

Pools

West Campus Pool PTC, Pool Filters, Floor	Funded- Construction	In Closing
King Pool PTC, Mechanical, Electrical, Floo	Funded - Construction	In Closing
King and West Interior Painting	Funded- Construction	Bidding



Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission

May 2, 2024

To: Honorable Mayor and Members of the City Council

From: Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission

Submitted by: Claudia Kawczynska, Chairperson

Subject: Proposal to fund a Nexus Study, to establish the basis for a Parks Impact Fee that would be charged on new development, and used to mitigate the park and recreation needs generated by projected population growth.

RECOMMENDATION

To provide for the foreseeable new park and recreation needs generated by the City's assigned (RHNA) population growth, the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission recommends that the City Council allocate \$100,000 to fund a Nexus Study, in the FY24/25 Budget, as a first step toward adopting a Parks Impact Fee.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Most Californian cities charge Parks Impact Fees on new development, which generate millions of dollars to mitigate the park needs created by population growth. While a Parks Impact Fee can be established by legislative action, an Impact Study (Nexus) is required.

For example, a modest impact fee of \$5,000 per unit would generate \$0.5M/per new 100 units. If such a fee had been in place in 2022 when the City approved plans for nearly 900 homes, a Parks Impact Fee would have generated \$4.5 million in single year. Thus, any delay is making this upfront investment of \$100,000 to fund a Nexus Study will result in the loss of millions in future funding for our parks!

CURRENT SITUATION AND ITS EFFECTS

A. Berkeley's Parks Service Standards Are Below Average

The City of Berkeley currently maintains a parks service standard of 2 acres of parks per 1,000 residents. This standard was adopted in the 1977 "Master Plan" and has been incorporated in the City's General Plan guidance ever since; most recently in the City's 2002 Open Space Plan, which is significantly out of date. Furthermore, Berkeley's 2 acres/1,000 residents fails to meet the Quimby Act's base standard of 3 acres/1,000 residents.

The City of Berkeley’s 2 acres/1000 park service standard is below average in comparison to comparable municipalities. The below table shows that Berkeley’s standard is significantly lower than Fremont, Sacramento, Los Angeles, and Fresno..

City	Parks Acres/1000 residents
Fremont	5
Sacramento	5
Los Angeles	4.2
Fresno	3
Berkeley	2

B. Population Growth’s Impact on Parks

Berkeley’s current population is 122,580. Based on the Regional Housing Needs Assessment (RHNA) assigned to Berkeley by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG), Berkeley must accommodate the addition of 8,934 new residential units between 2023-2031. This new growth will bring Berkeley’s population to 140,935 by 2040. To meet Berkeley’s policy goal of 2 acres/1,000 residents would require 52 acres of new parkland by 2040.

C. Berkeley’s Current Parks Taxes Insufficient is to Meet Future Needs

The existing City Parks tax of \$0.213/ft2 is needed primarily for maintenance of existing park facilities and is insufficient to cover major capital improvements or property acquisition for new parks. Thus, the City’s current parks taxes are not intended or expected to address the impacts of residential and employee population growth.

D. Parks Impact Fees Mitigates Growth Impacts on Parks

Each of the Cities in Table 1 has a parks impact fee, which is charged to new development to mitigate the impact of new growth (residents and employees) on parks infrastructure. Park impact fees may be used to pay for park land, park improvements, community centers, recreation facilities, trails, open space, and etc.

Santa Monica, a city to which Berkeley often compares itself, currently charges the following park impact fees:

- Single Family Residential – \$9,092 per unit
- Multi-Family Residential – Studio/1 Bedroom - \$4,927 per unit
- Multi-Family Residential – 2+ Bedrooms - \$7,936 per unit
- Retail \$1.78 per square foot
- Office \$2.75 per square foot
- Medical Office \$1.51 per square foot
- Lodging \$3.71 per square foot
- Industrial \$1.55 per square foot

In FY 2021-22, the City of Santa Monica collected \$1,952,613 in parks impact fees and expended \$944,782 from its improvement fund.

The City of Berkeley does not have a parks impact fee. By way of information, Berkeley does have a “Percent for Art Policy” that assesses a fee [BMC 23.316], which applies to multi-family residential development and commercial developments and requires on-site artwork values at 1.75% of construction costs: or an in-lieu valued at 0.8% of the construction costs: or combination of the two.

D. Procedure for Adopting a Parks Impact Fee

Adopting a Parks Impact Fee does not require a vote of the people, and it can be approved by City Council action after complying with the Mitigation Fee Act and conducting requisite public hearings. A Parks Impact Fee would be charged only on new development. Accordingly, it would provide a way for new growth to contribute a “fair share” to address the parks infrastructure need created by that growth.

The process for adopting impact fees is well-established. The principal requirement is the preparation of a “Nexus study.” Nexus studies are typically prepared by well-established professional consulting firms with expertise in municipal finance and real estate issues. After completing the nexus study, the final step is to determine and adopt a fee for each land use through the legislative process, after evaluating local policy and financial considerations, and deciding how the impact fee program will be implemented. This step includes an evaluation regarding whether fees should be charged at or below the maximum nexus fee amount and how the impact fee program will be implemented, including how fees may be annually adjusted.

E. Summary

Berkeley is not keeping up with its *modest* park service standard. As the City’s residential and employee population grows—as it must grow as the City responds to its Regional Housing Needs Allocation—Berkeley’s parks infrastructure will foreseeably fall further behind. Berkeley is an outlier in terms of its being a densely urbanized area that has not adopted a Parks Impact Fee.

Adopting a Parks Impact Fee will require a meaningful allocation of resources (i.e., funding of a nexus study) as well as a commitment of staff time from PRW, Planning and Economic Development and resources to support the preparation of the nexus study. However, it is well established that new development may be asked to pay for its “fair share” of the cost attributable to the increased demand for public facilities: the City Council has the legal authority to adopt a Parks Impact Fee (and has adopted other impact fees); and that—considering Berkeley’s projected growth—meaningful funding to meet the needs of that growth would be generated by a Parks Impact Fee.

Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission – recommendation for a Nexus Study

Commission

At a regular meeting on May 8, 2024, the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission M/S/C. Ayes: Noes: None; Absent::; Leave of Absence: None.

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY

No negative environmental impacts were identified as a result of this recommendation.

RATIONAL FOR RECOMMENDATION

See body of report.

ALTERNATIVE ACTIONS CONSIDERED

None

CONTACT PERSON

Roger Miller, Secretary, Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission, 510-981-6704
Claudia Kawczynska, Chairperson, Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission

Agenda Item 14. Recent Council Reports**PARKS AND WATERFRONT COMMISSION****RECENT COUNCIL REPORTS**

The following recent PRW council reports can be accessed from the City Council Website by using the following URL's:

May 7, 2024 (regular)

3.-Contract Amendments: As-needed Trees Services with Bay Area Tree, Hamilton Tree, Professional Tree, and West Coast Arborist

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2003%20Contract%20Amendments%20As-needed.pdf>

4.-Contract: School Foodies for Summer Food Service Program

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2004%20Contract%20%20School%20Foodies.pdf>

5.-Construction Contract: THE DUTRA GROUP for the Docks D & E Replacement Project at the Berkeley Marina

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2005%20Construction%20Contract%20%20THE%20DUTRA%20GROUP.pdf>

6.-Contract No. 32300187 Amendment: First Serve Productions for Additional Sport Court Repair and Resurfacing

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2006%20Contract%20No.%2032300187%20Amending%20%20%20First%20Serve.pdf>

7.-Construction Contract: THE DUTRA GROUP for the Berkeley Marina Dredging Project

URL: https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2007%20Construction%20Contract%20%20THE%20DUTRA%20GROUP%20for%20the%20Berkeley%20Marina_0.pdf

30.-Contract No. 32000188 Amendment: GSI Environmental Inc. for On-Call Environmental Consulting Services

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2030%20Contract%20No.%2032000188%20Amendment%20%20GSI.pdf>

31.-Donation from the Friends of the Rose Garden/Berkeley Partners For Parks for the Berkeley Rose Garden

URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2031%20Donation%20from%20the%20Friends%20of%20the%20Rose.pdf>

32.-Contract No. 32200098 Amendment: ERA Construction, Inc. for O & K Docks
Electrical Upgrades Project
URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-05-07%20Item%2032%20Contract%20No.%2032200098%20Amendment%20%20ERA.pdf>

Communications to Council

16. Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Commission - 2136 San Pablo as a Public Park or Open Space

March 26, 2024 (regular)

15.-Contract No. 32400015 Amendment: California Consulting for on-call grant writing services
URL: <https://berkeleyca.gov/sites/default/files/documents/2024-03-26%20Item%2015%20Contract%20No.%2032400015%20Amendment%20%20California%20Consulting.pdf>

Miller, Roger

From: cafred1@juno.com
Sent: Monday, April 08, 2024 5:55 PM
To: Miller, Roger
Subject: LETTER FOR THE PARKS, RECREATION & WATERFRONT COMMISSION

WARNING: This is not a City of Berkeley email. Do not click links or attachments unless you trust the sender and know the content is safe.

4-8-2024

Hello Mr. Miller,
Please include this letter in the packet for the next meeting of the Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission.
Please confirm receipt.
thanks very much,
Clifford Fred

4-8-2024

To the Berkeley Parks, Recreation & Waterfront Commission, PLEASE RENOVATE THE TWO CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS IN CEDAR ROSE PARK ONE AT A TIME; PLEASE NOTICE & ENFORCE LEASH LAWS IN CEDAR ROSE PARK:

Hello Commission members,

PLEASE RENOVATE THE TWO CHILDREN'S PLAY AREAS IN CEDAR ROSE PARK ONE AT A TIME

The two children's play areas in Cedar Rose Park are both scheduled to be renovated in the near future. Unfortunately, I understand that the City intends to renovate both play areas at the same time.

This would result in a terrible inconvenience to the many children who use the play areas. Both play areas are heavily used, and are popular with the many nannies who have young children in their care while their parents are at work. The playgrounds are also heavily used by the children who attend after school programs at the Ala-Costa Center in Cedar Rose Park.

Why not renovate the play areas one at a time, so that at least one play area will remain open during the renovations? Berkeley home owners are paying their property taxes this week, likely at the highest rate of any city in California. In return, we expect the City to not cut corners, and instead to look out for the interests of the community.

Please direct staff and the contractors to renovate the play areas one at a time, and to not begin the renovation of the 2nd play area, until the renovations are completed in the first play area and it is open for use again.

PLEASE ENFORCE LEASH LAWS IN CEDAR ROSE PARK

Please enforce leash laws in Cedar Rose Park. Cedar Rose Park is getting more and more dangerous to be in due to the proliferation of unleashed dogs. Dog owners routinely let their dogs off leash, and then don't even pay attention to them. We aren't talking about little Fluffy, but instead pit bulls and other large, aggressive and dangerous dogs are routinely off leash in the Park.

Cedar Rose Park is not a dog park. Dogs are supposed to leashed at all times.

There needs to be clear signage at all entries to the Park that dogs must be leashed, with the relevant municipal code cited.

And there needs to be regular police patrols in the Park.

Everyone should feel safe and be safe in Berkeley's Park. It's time to vigorously enforce leash laws.
thank you,

Clifford Fred
Berkeley California

Dear [Field Representative]

The Eastshore Alliance Fútbol Club (EAFC) is a non-profit organization recently formed through the merger of Spurs FC and Mavericks SC, two clubs that have been a part of the community for over 50 years. EAFC serves over 1,000 youth ages 3-19 from families in Berkeley, El Cerrito, Albany, Richmond, San Pablo, and surrounding areas. Our mission is to "provide the optimum environment to elevate the player experience while fostering growth, development, and positive change within our community." Our programs diversity of families throughout the East Bay, including many with limited access to parks, green space and recreation. Our club supports families with needs-based financial assistance, and this year alone we were able to support over 120 players with \$160,000 of Financial Aid. For many, our program provides access to physical activity on recreational fields that their neighborhoods and school environments may lack.

Our organization's greatest challenge in successfully serving our communities is access to field space. Eastshore Alliance's Competitive, pre-competitive (Junior Allies), Grassroots, and Mini Allies programs currently serve 1,049 youth across 65+ teams. To see a complete breakdown of our club's demographic and geographic reach, [see here](#). Each of these teams have practice 2-3 per week depending on the program and age, resulting in a need for 80 - 100 field slots each week. To clarify, a field slot is access to a full-size field for a 90-minute session that is shared between a number of teams. Assuming we have access to a field from 4 - 9, we could get three field slots there. Access to that field Monday through Friday would bring us to 15 field slots. So, we need access to 5-7 full-size fields to provide the optimum field environment to elevate the player experience. Our two biggest limitations are fields not having lights so we are unable to run sessions later in the day which makes it very difficult for the high-school aged players in the club, as well as the natural grass fields that are closed due to inclement weather (between the City of Berkeley's grass fields have been closed for 4 weeks this spring 2024 and the City of El Cerrito close their grass fields for the first 3 weeks of our fall seasons for routine maintenance, that 7 weeks can add up to 25 - 33% of the season for some teams). While it is possible to overload the fields with multiple teams, these are less than ideal conditions when it comes to actually teaching the game and for player development and conditioning. You would not limit a baseball team from the batter's box to the pitcher's mound, nor would you limit a basketball team from the hoop to the free throw line, so why should soccer be treated any differently?

Options for practice and game fields are limited: there is currently only one non-school facility in the El Cerrito/Albany/Berkeley area with all-weather fields available for rent by the community, and that is the Tom Bates Sports Complex. As mentioned above, during this year's wet season EAFC needed to cancel the majority of practices for four consecutive weeks, reserving limited turf fields for more competitive teams. This year alone, there were times where fields were shared by up to ten teams at a time.

For rental of school fields, soccer clubs must go through districts to utilize the fields. There are often several charges associated with renting fields, including restroom and custodial fees that make rentals complicated and at times, unaffordable. One exception, Albany Middle School, is open on a regular basis to groups on a first come, first serve basis. School fields at El Cerrito High School, Richmond High School, and Kennedy High School are more difficult to rent and access, and are frequently locked.

Our club is interested in collaborating with other clubs in the region to share concerns and work toward an equitable, and clear process for field access and rentals.

FOR SCHOOL DISTRICTS:

Eastshore Alliance FC is interested in working toward a joint use agreement with the district. While we understand that school programming should take priority for field access, joint use agreements would allow schools to work hand-in-hand with soccer clubs to provide access to field space on weeknights for practices, as well as on weekends for games.

FOR SCHOOLS (private or charter):

Eastshore Alliance FC is interested in working toward a rental agreement with X school. While we understand that school programming should take priority for field access, we would like to meet to discuss how a recreational club such as EAFC could work directly with the school to rent field space, when available, on weeknights for practices, as well as on weekends for games.

FOR CITIES:

Eastshore Alliance FC would like to work with the City to discuss the possibility of developing or converting fields in the coming years. We understand that turf fields are more costly to develop than grass fields. However, we also understand that climate-related uncertainty will make it more difficult to predict and assume when grass fields will be available. We also know that our ever-growing programs will put additional pressure on limited turf fields in the coming years. EAFC is interested in discussing how organizations such as ours may be able to help raise funds for the development of new turf fields or the conversion of grass fields to turf, as well as funding for field maintenance and lighting.

Sincerely,

Eastshore Alliance Fútbol Club

COB

1. We fully utilize all of our space as we have grown, but ABSC and Mersey either underutilize or do not utilize their space.

For us, we have grown to 1,000+ players in our club, hosting over 60 teams and programming for all ages. However, over these past few cycles, we have continued to lose space during these field allocation processes. Here, you can see our recent Wednesday session where we have 6-8 teams sharing the space, with an empty Gilman East grass field in the background:



We already have teams who were displaced from this field and have been training on a blacktop due to the lack of field space, see our Coach-in-Training post below working with our Junior Allies on concrete instead of a soccer field:



I have previously submitted documentation revealing the field usage issues of ABSC and Mersey. As you can see from the attached pictures, Mersey had no one on the field during the Wednesday or Thursday session:



In the above photo, you can also see how ABSC is underutilizing their space on Gilman West grass, with the center of the field being left completely open.

An ABSC team moved over from the West field to the East during yesterday's training to make it appear as though the field is in use.



The field is going unused and appears that the challenge for the field space was simply to regain control over the space to ensure we (now Eastshore Alliance FC) could not have access to the space. This is an organization, at this point, which is not utilizing field space they challenged for this previous cycle, and now they are challenging for additional space without showing a need for space.

The following week, I submitted more evidence of the lack of field usage:



pictured above is the empty Gilman East grass with one of our player's parent and her other child waiting for their sibling who had training on Gilman south turf.

Pictured below, you can see ABSC's allotment on Gabe West on two separate days, again going underutilized:





ABSC do not have a field shortage issue, they have an issue with efficiently using the space they are already allocated.

2. ABSC (and Mersey) already have the most space of any of the users on the fields, and to point #1, they are not fully utilizing their current allotment.

Looking at the chart below comparing the field slots of the organizations, ABSC nearly has double the field allocations to EAFC already:

Fall 2024 Field Allotment			
	ABSC	ABSC + Mersey	EAFC
August	155	176	80
September	218	247	121
October	230	261	123
November	173	195	93

To: Parks and Waterfront Commission

From: Claudia Kawczynska, Off Leash Area Subcommittee, Chair

Subject: Establishment of Pilot Project for a Professional Dog Walker permitting program and setting a limit to the number of dogs permissible at the Cesar Chavez Park Off Leash Area. Date: September 11, 2019

RECOMMENDATION

Establishing a Pilot Project for a minimum term of one year that will set up a permit program for professional dog walkers (details below) and set the maximum number of dogs that a professional dog walker may bring to the OLA at six (6) dogs. The dog walkers will also agree to and abide with a Code of Conduct. Allowance for six dogs and the permit program will be modeled after the East Bay Regional Park District's current dog walker program. In order to ensure enforcement, the BMC code 10.04.120 will be modified to change the current four (4) allowable dogs per responsible party to six (6) for only those individuals who obtain a professional dog walker permit. This change will only affect the Off Leash Area (OLA) at Cesar Chavez Park and shall not include the dog park in Ohlone Park. New signage in the OLA (once it is installed) will need to be modified detailing this information, including the code of conduct, so the public is aware, and that enforcement can take place. The program should be re-evaluated after a year by the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront.

FISCAL IMPACTS OF RECOMMENDATION

Not known

BACKGROUND

Professional dog walkers have been bringing dogs to the OLA for the past few years, thereby conducting business on city property. This usage does not date back to the origins of the OLA in March, 1998 and therefore did not need to be addressed when it was authorized on May 9, 2000. The dog walkers bring numerous dogs, usually exceeding the maximum allowable number of dogs per household of four (4). A number of the dog walkers currently bring eight (8) or more dogs and it is not unusual to see some who have 15 or more dogs, with only one person to oversee that large number. To further exacerbate the size of these packs, some dog walkers "bunch" together with other dog walkers, creating even larger-sized packs. There never has been any signage in the park or in the OLA with the regulations about the maximum number of allowable dogs, so neither the dog walkers or the public have been aware there were limits. So even the four-dog limit has never been enforced, while at times the animal care officers have issued citations or warnings for dogs who are unlicensed. It is estimated that at the present there are fewer than 25 dog walkers conducting business in this park.

It has been noted that no matter the good intentions of the dog walker, it is almost impossible for one person to supervise the actions of so many dogs, resulting in feces being left undetected, dogs straying from their pack and not being told not to dig holes. Dog walkers also congregate at the openings of the park which makes it difficult for other OLA visitors to arrive at the OLA without encountering large number of dogs.

In January 30, 2018, the Animal Care Commission presented the city council with a recommendation to increase the allowable number of dogs for professional dog walkers to eight (8) without any provisions for any other programmatic changes, such as establishing a permit system. The city council at that time referred the item to the Parks and Waterfront Commission, the lead commission for park related matters. As a result, the PWC established a subcommittee to study this matter further.

As has been noted by the Animal Care Commission the dog walkers provide a valuable service to the residents of Berkeley and surrounding areas. But other jurisdictions, such as the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), the Golden Gate National Recreational Area (GGNRA), City and County of San Francisco and Marin County all have well-established professional dog walker licensing programs to ensure some level of oversight on businesses conducted on public property and set licensing fees to help to defray the programmatic costs. It is standard operating procedures and it is realized that professional dog walking is an important and valued business for their constituencies, but one that still requires some level of accountability from its participants.

The OLA Subcommittee held four meetings, with members of the Animal Care Commission and, at two of them, both the Marina manager and the Animal Services manager were in attendance. The subcommittee was presented with rules and regulations from other jurisdictions to base its findings on.

FINDINGS

While it is important to acknowledge the value that professional dog walkers bring to the community of dog owners, provisions need to be established to place a limit on the number of dogs any one dog walker can bring to the OLA. The following are a few reasons that limits need to be established:

1. In keeping with other jurisdictions who have placed limits based on professional standards recommended by canine behavioral experts (see attached letters).
2. To minimize the impacts that large numbers of dogs can have on the park resources including the increase in holes dug by dogs and waste matter not disposed of properly.
3. To minimize the impacts that large pack of dogs have on other OLA users. Some dogs do not react well to large packs of dogs and people have avoided coming to the OLA to avoid these packs. The OLA is for everyone.
4. To mitigate potential conflicts between other park users, those with or without dogs. Pathway and trail conflicts can arise when a large number of leashed dogs are under control of one individual.
5. To ensure humane treatment of dogs being transported to and from the park and during their time spent at the park.

Furthermore, establishing a minimized permit program, while not requiring permit fees, it will require the dog walking businesses to comply with the following:

1. Proof of a current city of Berkeley business license.
2. Proof of a \$1 million general liability insurance, with the City of Berkeley named as an additional insured on the policy.
3. Acceptance of the Dog Walker Code of Conduct agreement.

It is hoped that the city can find a way to test the efficacy of this recommendation on a pilot project basis. Numerous and creative solutions were discussed with management and the subcommittee. Conducting this as a pilot project will also allow for future modifications that could include assignment of a licensing fee and/or an online application process that would greatly improve program efficiencies. If the city decides not to act, this will be giving tacit approval to businesses to continue to bring an undetermined number of dogs and that can present the city with a future liability problem or deprive city residents of a valuable service.

See the following that include program application forms and the code of conduct agreement. Also see attached letters in support of this policy change.

APPLICATION FOR PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKER PERMIT

City of Berkeley (insert city logo)

Checklist for Completion of Application for Professional Dog Walker Permit:

- Completed and signed Application for Professional Dog Walker Permit.
- Copy of current valid Berkeley business registration certificate.
- Personal identification (1) verifying permittee's address and (2) including photo identification. Examples include a copy of a valid California driver's license.
- Evidence of professional general liability coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000 for bodily injury, property damage and personal injury liability.
- Two color photos size 2 ins. x 2 ins of the dog walker.

Definitions:

Professional Dog Walker: A person who charges a fee for walking dogs for a business, and brings dogs to the Cesar Chavez Off Leash Dog Area, and who undertakes the responsibility of caring for and controlling a dog(s) while in their company.

Professional Dog Walker Permit: A professional use permit issued to a professional dog walker or to the owner(s) of a dog-walking business. The permit limits professional dog walkers to a maximum of six or eight (?) dogs per person. Each permit is valid for one year from the date of issuance and is "non-transferrable" in the event a business is sold.

Professional dog walkers must follow these steps to obtain a permit.

1. Have a license to do business in Berkeley.
2. Have proof of \$1 million general liability insurance, plus the City of Berkeley must be named as additional insured on the policy.
3. Meet one of the three requirements:
 - a. Show evidence of having worked as a professional dog walker for the past three years.
 - b. Have a certificate of completion for a dog walker/behavior course, such as the one offered by Dog Walking Academy (dogbiz) or similar established dog walker training courses.

- c. Have a current professional dog walker permit from the East Bay Regional Park District, or other city/regional authorities.

The following sections are to be completed by the Dog Walker Applicant

Personal Information:

Legal Name of Applicant: _____

Name of Business: _____

Street Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Mailing Address (if different than above): _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone Number: _____

Cell Phone Number: _____

Email Address: _____

California Driver's License No.: _____

City of Berkeley Business License No.: _____

California License Plate No: _____

Insurer:

Insurance Policy No.: _____

Effective Date: _____

Insurance Coverage:

In addition to the information requested below, attach evidence of Commercial General Liability insurance coverage in the amount of \$1,000,000 for bodily injury, property damage and personal injury liability. If the insurance expires prior to the end of the permit period, Professional Dog Walker may be required to provide evidence of renewal or update the insurance for the term of the permit.

Revocation:

The City of Berkeley reserves the right to revoke permits based on complaints, violations, expired insurance or licenses, or other issues. Upon revocation, the permit holder will immediately surrender their permit within four days of cancellation.

Dog Walker Permit Agreement

In consideration of permission to walk up to six (or TBD) dogs at a time for professional purposes on property owned by the City of Berkeley at the Cesar Chavez Park's Off-Leash Area, the undersigned Permit Applicant agrees to the following terms and conditions:

1. The Dog Permit will consist of a laminated card, or something similar that will include Permit-holder identifying information and permit number. The dog walker should provide a color photo sized 2 ins. x 2 ins.
2. The term of the permit is for one year.
3. The permit is not transferable.
4. The applicant will comply with the Code of Conduct for Professional Dog Walkers (see following section).
5. Professional dog walkers must maintain an insurance policy that includes \$1,000,000 in liability coverage and naming the City of Berkeley as an "additional insured."

In signing this agreement, I acknowledge that I have been provided, read and understand the provisions included in the Code of Conduct for Professional Dog Walkers, and this agreement and agree to abide by all conditions.

Applicant Signature

Date

CODE OF CONDUCT FOR PROFESSIONAL DOG WALKERS

Comply with the City of Berkeley's rules of conduct for professional dog walkers, including (Uniformed Code of Conduct for Professional Dog Walkers):

- a. The limit of six (or TBD) dogs per person.
- b. Must clean up after their dogs and properly dispose of waste, and pick up more than their share of the waste.
- c. All dogs must be currently licensed in the City of Berkeley and have IDs with the dog walker's contact information, including mobile number, on them.
- d. Must keep all the dogs on leash at all times outside of the off-leash area.
- e. The current Berkeley dog walker permit must be worn to be visible at all times.
- f. Avoid other dog walkers, do not "bunch," or congregate at the OLA entrances, picnic table areas or the water fountain.
- g. Do not bring dogs who exhibit aggressive behavior.
- h. Immediately stop bothersome dog behavior (e.g., repetitive barking, any growling, fighting, mounting, etc.). Dogs should not interact with other park users, and should be recalled proactively before a request is elicited.
- i. Stop dogs from digging; damaging park resources or disturbing wildlife or other park visitors.
- j. Dogs must be under control, a dog is considered under voice control when the dog returns to the person when called within 10 seconds. Dogs must be within sight of the dog walker at all times.
- k. The use of drag lines attached to a dog collar or harness is not permitted.
- l. Minimize distractions like texting, talking on a cell phone or listening to music.
- m. Pre-screen dogs and bring only those with proper social skills.
- n. Dog walkers must show courtesy and respect for other park visitors and park property.
- o. Dog bites or other injuries must be reported to the Animal Care Services; you must know your responsibilities under California Law if a dog under your supervision bites. After hours, call Berkeley Police Department, non-emergency number.
- p. Dogs in heat are not allowed.

COMMUNITY

Berkeley to plant new trees at Indian Rock Park after removing eucalyptuses

Native saplings are coming to the east side of Indian Rock Park as Berkeley works to increase tree canopy throughout the city.

By Iris Kwok

May 2, 2024, 4:37 p.m.



Students create a berm from wood chips around newly planted trees outside the James Kenney Recreation Center in West Berkeley on March 3, 2022. Credit: Kelly Sullivan

California native trees including manzanitas, coast live oak and California buckeye are among the species likely to be planted next winter at Indian Rock Park as arborists replace seven dying blue gum eucalyptus trees, the **last of which were removed** in April, the city of Berkeley’s top tree expert said.

The city has already planted more than 20 native shrubs and small trees in the park since **removing the first batch of sickly, fire-prone eucalyptus** in January 2023, including manzanita, western redbud and California flannelbush, said Tom Dodge, Berkeley’s lead arborist.

The plantings are part of a broader effort to expand Berkeley’s tree canopy, with an emphasis on planting more native varieties in the city’s parks.

During the first four months of 2024, city workers and volunteers planted more than 700 trees in Berkeley’s parks and along its streets. Roughly 500 of them were planted with help from volunteers around Aquatic Park in West Berkeley, said Scott Ferris, director of the Parks, Recreation and Waterfront Department. Several hundred more will be planted in the coming months.

The effort, however, faces numerous challenges.

Some of the saplings have already been eaten by deer. Many of the new trees must be watered by hand amid troubles with the city’s irrigation system. And climate change means that some varieties that once thrived in the East Bay may no longer do as well here.



Deer munched on some of the saplings that were planted at Indian Rock Park in February 2023, according to city arborists. The smallest stumps were just a few inches tall when Berkeleyside visited the park in late April. Credit: Iris Kwok

“We don’t want to just shove plants in the ground to say we planted plants,” Dodge said. “We want to put the plants where they are most likely to thrive.”

But that can be complicated.

Berkeley was built on what used to be grasslands, so there aren’t many large stature native trees conducive for streetside settings, Dodge said. There are, however, many native shrubs, plants and flowers that do work well. That’s why aside from trees, the city planted an additional 500 smaller native bushes and plants at Aquatic Park in 2024. For now, the city is working to fill its parks, which offer more flexibility than streets and sidewalks, with native plants.

Most new plantings in city parks and streets are watered once a week for the first year, and once per month in the second year. As they mature, they need less active care. The city keeps a list of every tree it plants, as well as a watering and check-up schedule. It plans to install deer cages over the stumps of the ones that got eaten, in hopes that their underground root systems will produce more growth down the line.

Many factors impact tree survival, including pests, disease and animals, but in urban areas like Berkeley, the biggest challenge in caring for young trees is actually humans, who destroy, vandalize and otherwise harm trees.

The city has in recent years come under scrutiny over the plant species it selects as the public becomes increasingly aware of the **advantages of native gardening** on biodiversity. While city arborists including Dodge plant native plants “where they’re appropriate,” they are constrained by the selection of plants in Bay Area nurseries and limited to using plants deemed suitable for the existing environment they’ll need to grow in.

Climate change also complicates some aspects of the job, Dodge said. New trees, which should have a lifespan of at least 20 to 30 years, must be tough enough to handle hot **summer seasons that start earlier and last longer** than they have in the past.

A warming climate likely means new **pests and diseases**. Already, the city has stopped planting ash trees because invasive emerald ash borers, which kill ash trees, have been making their way across the U.S. The tiny but highly destructive bugs were for the first time **detected on the West Coast** in 2022.



More than 240 volunteers participated in the city's Feb. 3, 2024 tree planting at Aquatic Park. Credit: Roger Miller

Ferris, who has directed the city's Parks, Recreation and Waterfront department since 2011, said he couldn't recall a single year in which the city planted more trees than it has just in the first four months of 2024. A decade ago, in 2014, the city planted 200 trees.

This shift is partly due to the emergence of new grants intended to help cities **work to improve tree equity**, a concept popularized by the conservation group **American Forests**, which refers to the idea that people deserve fair access to trees as they are critical infrastructure and improve quality of life.

In 2021, California's Natural Resources Agency, awarded the city a \$726,000 "Urban Greening" grant to plant and maintain 600 drought-tolerant trees on public streets in "disadvantaged and low-income communities" by March 2025.

The next year, the city received a \$500,000 state Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program Grant. Last year, it received a **\$1 million grant** from the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Forest Service to plant trees in **South and West Berkeley, neighborhoods that lack sufficient tree canopy**. The city will also spend about \$75,000 to purchase trees for other parts of town.

Trees are relatively inexpensive, ranging from \$75 to a few hundred dollars. Most of the grant funds go toward the cost of installing irrigation and purchasing the large amounts of water young trees require until they are established.

The health and climate benefits of trees are well-documented. They **intercept particle pollution** and **protect communities from the effects of deadly urban heat**. **Researchers**, however, have found that areas where redlining — discriminatory housing policies that restricted where racial minorities could live — was practiced tend to have fewer trees than white neighborhoods.

Redlining was practiced for decades in Berkeley, meaning that **Black and other people of color were mostly limited to living in the South and West Berkeley neighborhoods**. Indeed, Berkeley’s parks department has found that those two neighborhoods have lower levels of tree canopy density than the rest of the city.



Then-Berkeley arborist Ian Kesterson demonstrates how to properly plant a tree to students as part of the Berkeley’s “Trees Make Life Better” program on March 3, 2022. Kesterson now head the city’s tree-planting unit. Credit: Kelly Sullivan

In an attempt to right past wrongs, Berkeley recently launched a three-person tree planting unit led by tree planting arborist Ian Kesterson, who according to Ferris started in the new supervisory role in July 2023. Kesterson oversees two full-time landscape gardeners tasked with planting between 1,000 and 1,800 trees in South and West Berkeley in 2024 as part of the city’s **“Trees Make Life Better” project.**

The new tree planting unit, which is funded through the winter of 2025, will allow the city’s other arborists to focus on maintaining and caring for the city’s other trees — a good 50,000 on streets and in parks including Indian Rock, Ferris said.

“We firmly expect the percentage of tree survival to skyrocket compared to what we’ve done before,” Ferris said.

RELATED STORIES



Berkeley has cut down all remaining eucalyptus trees in Indian Rock Park



Berkeley is cutting down most of the eucalyptus trees in Indian Rock Park



Berkeley residents can request free saplings to combat tree inequity

0 comments

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