
H. OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

P P P

The City of Berkeley contains a variety of regional, City, and joint-use open space and recreational facilities that include natural resources, parks, playgrounds, gardens, Marina facilities, and swim centers. Berkeley's park system provides traditional activities, such as sports fields, swimming pools, recreation centers, tennis and basketball courts, as well as numerous tot and school age play areas. In addition, Berkeley's parks include many unique public outdoor environments, such as the historic Rose Garden, a 1,000-berth Marina, a 3,000-foot fishing pier, off-leash dog areas, kite flying, community gardens, Adventure Playground, Nature Center, and a variety of water sports.

1. Setting

The following discussion of open space and recreation facilities within the City of Berkeley is divided into four sections: open space and recreation facilities; parks and open space standards; recreation programs; and open space and recreation policies.

a. Open Space and Recreation Facilities. Active park and recreation facilities in the City of Berkeley currently total about 243 acres, exclusive of the Aquatic Park water feature. Figure IV.H-1 and Table IV.H-1 show the name, location, and acres of parks and recreation facilities in the City. These facilities include parks, mini-parks, gardens, tot lots, dog parks, swim centers, school playgrounds, trails, paths, and Marina facilities.

The City of Berkeley and the Berkeley Unified School District (BUSD) have developed joint-use agreements for seven school playgrounds located at King, Le Conte, John Muir, Washington, Malcolm X, Thousand Oaks and Rosa Parks schools. Under the specific terms of each agreement, the maintenance and capital improvements of the particular park is proportionally divided between the two parties. In order to simplify the relationship, the City has proposed to trade off maintenance responsibilities, where the City would assume full responsibility for Thousand Oaks and King parks and the BUSD would be responsible for Le Conte, John Muir, Washington, Malcolm X and Rosa Parks parks.

Figure IV.H-1 Berkeley Parks and Recreation Facilities

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Table IV.H-1 *continued*

**Table IV.H-1
PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES**

| Number on Figure IV.H-1 | Park/Facility Name | Location | Acres |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|--|--------------|
| City of Berkeley Parks | | | |
| 1 | Aquatic Park | Bolivar Drive, foot of Bancroft Way | 32.76 |
| 2 | Bateman Mall Park | Colby and Prince Streets | 0.37 |
| 3 | Becky Temko Tot Park | 2424 Roosevelt Street | 0.15 |
| 4 | Berkeley Rose Garden | Euclid Avenue and Bayview Place | 3.64 |
| 5 | Berkeley Way Mini-Park | Berkeley Way and West Street | 0.43 |
| 6 | Cedar-Rose Park | 1300 Rose Street | 4.94 |
| 7 | Charlie Dorr Mini-Park | 2200 Block of Acton Street | 0.20 |
| 8 | City Hall | 2134 Martin Luther King, Jr. Way (old Grove Street) | 1.60 |
| 9 | Codornices Park | 1201 Euclid Avenue | 10.60 |
| 10 | Contra Costa Rock Park | Contra Costa Avenue between Los Angeles Avenue and Yosemite Road | 0.17 |
| 11 | Cragmont Rock Park | Easter Way at Regal Road | 3.00 |
| 12 | Dorothy Bolte Park | Spruce Street at Michigan Avenue | 1.19 |
| 13 | Frederick Mini-Park | Arlington Avenue and Yosemite Road | 0.24 |
| 14 | George Florence Mini-Park | Tenth Street between Allston Way and Addison Street | 0.51 |
| 15 | Great Stoneface Park | The Alameda and Yosemite Road | 0.73 |
| 16 | Greg Brown Park | 1907 Harmon Street | 0.58 |
| 17 | Grotto Rock Park | Santa Barbara Road north of Indian Rock Avenue | 0.31 |
| 18 | Grove Park | Martin Luther King Jr. Way between Russell and Oregon Streets | 3.09 |
| 19 | Halcyon Commons | Off of Prince Street | 0.58 |
| 20 | Harrison Park | Harrison and Third | 5.22 |
| 21 | Haskell-Mabel Mini-Park | Haskell and Mabel Streets | 0.13 |
| 22 | Indian Rock Park | Indian Rock Avenue at Shattuck Avenue | 1.18 |
| 23 | James Kenney Park | Eighth Street between Delaware and Virginia Streets | 4.24 |
| 24 | John Hinkel Park | Southampton Avenue between San Diego Road and Somerset Place | 4.19 |
| 25 | La Loma Park | 1339 La Loma Avenue at Glendale | 5.61 |

Table IV.H-1 *continued*

| Number on Figure IV.H-1 | Park/Facility Name | Location | Acres |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------|---|---------------|
| 26 | Live Oak Park | Avenue Berryman Street between Shattuck Avenue and Walnut Street | 5.52 |
| 27 | MLK Civic Center Park | Martin Luther King Jr. Way, between Allston Way and Center Street | 2.77 |
| 28 | Monkey Island | Claremont Boulevard at Oak Knoll Terrace | 0.30 |
| 29 | Mortar Rock Park | Indian Rock Avenue at San Diego Road | 0.39 |
| 30 | Oak Park | Domingo Avenue and El Camino Real | 0.27 |
| 31 | Ohlone Park | Hearst Avenue from Milvia to Sacramento Streets | 9.80 |
| 32 | Presentation Park | Allston Way at California | 0.17 |
| 33 | Prince Street Mini-Park | Prince Street between California and King | 0.15 |
| 34 | Remillard Park | Keeler Avenue at Poppy Lane and Miller Avenue | 5.90 |
| 35 | San Pablo Park | 2800 Park Street between Russell and Ward Streets | 12.95 |
| 36 | 63rd Street Mini-Park | 63 rd Street between King and California Streets | 0.19 |
| 37 | Solano-Peralta Plaza | Solano Avenue at Peralta and Capistrano | 0.12 |
| 38 | Strawberry Creek Park | Between Bancroft Way and Addison Street at West Street | 3.70 |
| 39 | Terrace View Park | Queens Road near Fairlawn Drive | 0.71 |
| 40 | Virginia-McGee Totland | Virginia Street near McGee Avenue | 0.37 |
| 41 | Willard Park | Derby Street between Regent Street and Hillegass Avenue | 2.72 |
| Subtotal | | | 131.69 |
| Swim Centers | | | |
| 42 | King School Swim Center | Hopkins Street and Carlotta Avenue | 0.57 |
| 43 | West Campus Swim Center | University Avenue at Curtis Street | 0.07 |
| 44 | Willard Swim Center | Telegraph Avenue at Derby Street | 0.13 |
| Subtotal | | | 0.77 |
| School Parks | | | |
| 45 | John Muir School Park | 2295 Claremont Avenue | 2.00 |
| 46 | Grizzly Peak School Park | Whitaker near Miller Street | 0.23 |

Table IV.H-1 *continued*

| Number on Figure IV.H-1 | Park/Facility Name | Location | Acres |
|--------------------------------|--|--|---------------|
| 47 | King School Park | Hopkins Street east of Colusa Avenue | 1.72 |
| 48 | Le Conte School Park | Fulton Street between Oregon and Russell Streets | 1.30 |
| 49 | Malcolm X School Park | Ashby Avenue between King and Ellis Streets | 1.80 |
| 50 | Thousand Oaks School Park | Tacoma and Ensenada Avenues | 2.60 |
| 51 | Rosa Parks School Park | 2240 9 th Street | 0.46 |
| 52 | Washington School Park | Martin Luther King Jr. Way at Bancroft Way | 0.10 |
| Subtotal | | | 10.21 |
| Marina Parks | | | |
| 53 | Horseshoe Park | Seawall Drive, Marina | 3.39 |
| 54 | Marina Mall | 201 University Avenue | 0.70 |
| 55 | Cesar E. Chavez Park (North Waterfront Park) | Spinnaker Way at Turnaround | 90.00 |
| 56 | Shorebird Park | University Avenue and Seawall Drive | 6.17 |
| Subtotal | | | 100.26 |
| Total Acreage | | | 242.93 |

Source: City of Berkeley, 2000.

Numerous University of California properties serve as popular open space resources for the Berkeley community. The University maintains a lack of any exclusionary policies with regards to public use of University open space, and maintains this philosophy by keeping the campus open at all times.¹

(1) Marina/Waterfront Area. The Berkeley Marina was deeded to the City by means of a State tidelands grant in 1913, and now includes approximately 1,000 live-aboards, yacht club, boat yard, sailing clubs, three restaurants, a hotel, three office buildings, a bait shop and a fishing pier. Many of the dock facilities are in need of repair or replacement. The 3,000-foot long fishing pier was constructed by a private company in 1926, as part of a 3-mile long pier for an auto ferry. Ferry service ended after the construction of the Bay Bridge was completed. No fishing licenses are required to use

¹ Mortimer, K., University of California, Berkeley, 1995. *Personal communication* with LSA Associates, Inc.

Table IV.H-1 *continued*

the fishing pier, and many local fishermen utilize the facility for both recreation and as a food source.

(2) Regional Open Space. Two regional open space resources operated by the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), Tilden Park and the Claremont Canyon Preserve, border the eastern Berkeley City limits and are used extensively by Berkeley residents. These parks include a variety of open space and recreational facilities, including picnic areas, bicycle trails, swim areas, and environmental education centers.

In 1998, the EBRPD purchased a 170-acre area included in the *Waterfront Plan* (see Section A, Land Use) to become part of the East Bay Shoreline Park. The East Bay Shoreline Park is part of a larger vision of overall access around the entire San Francisco Bay. The formal concept of a Bay trail to link recreation, environmental protection and transportation access on a regional basis was initiated in 1987 with the passage of Senate Bill 100, which provided state support and planning funds. The *Bay Trail Plan*, adopted by the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) in 1989, designates Berkeley's waterfront segment of the main spine trail to run along the West Frontage Road, beginning at the Emeryville border. The Berkeley segment of the Bay Trail is expected to be completed in 2001.

As part of this vision of overall Bay access, the *Bay Trail Plan* is also being coordinated with the *Bay Area Ridge Trail*. The Federal Government has funded the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council to work in conjunction with public agencies and private land owners to establish the Ridge Trail access corridor around the Bay. The East Bay reach of this trail passes through EBRPD and East Bay Municipal Utility District lands, including some areas in Berkeley.

(3) Park Maintenance and Improvements. Berkeley's Parks and Waterfront Department, maintains the City's open space and facilities. Maintenance, and some limited capital improvements, are financed through the Parks parcel tax and Marina Enterprise Fund. (Historically, most capital improvements and park expansion have been financed through grants.) The Parks tax revenues, which are based on property square footage, are set aside specifically for the routine maintenance of park structures, and other measures not involving new construction or purchase of park structures and equipment. This tax generates revenues through property tax based on approval of Berkeley voters. To increase the funding, an increase in the Park tax will have to occur, which must also be approved by the Berkeley voters. The Marina Enterprise Fund is generated from marina based user fees.

b0 Parks and Open Space Standards. Two open space indicators were established in the 1977 *Master Plan* to measure open space needs in the City of Berkeley: 1) Parks to Population Ratio of 2 acres of parks per 1,000 persons, and 2) a High Demand Index,

which analyzed existing open space sites and neighborhood characteristics by Census Tract.

(1) Parks to Population Ratio. Since 1977, Berkeley's open space has increased from a total of 110 acres to 243 acres (a 221 percent increase), while the population has dropped 5 percent from 115,000, to 109,400.² In 1977, the existing City-wide ratio was 0.96 acres per 1,000 persons, in contrast with the current ratio of 2.24 acres per 1,000 persons.³ The current City-wide ratio of 2.24 therefore meets the overall parks-to-population ratio stated in the 1977 *Master Plan*.

² ABAG, 2000. *Projections 2000*.

³ Berkeley, City of. *Workshop Fact Sheet-Open Space and Recreation*. 2000.

Despite the City-wide increase in park acres per capita, the distribution of open space remains uneven. The flatland neighborhoods have a parks-to-population ratio of 1.0 acre per 1,000 persons, and South Berkeley has a ratio of 1.1 acres per 1,000 persons. However, the most apparent lack of park facilities exists in West Berkeley where the ratio of park acres to 1,000 persons is 0.76, considerably less than the City-wide ratio of 2.24.⁴ Although West Berkeley is the closest residential district to the Aquatic Park and the Marina, both recreation areas are difficult to access, and neither is within a 3-mile walking distance of the neighborhood's residents. However, a pedestrian/bicycle overpass to create an accessible crossing over the I-80 freeway from West Berkeley to the Marina, and the new Harrison Park in West Berkeley are now under construction.

c0 Recreation Programs. The City of Berkeley Health and Human Services Department operates a wide variety of recreation programs designed to serve the entire community, including youth, adults and the disabled. Most of these programs are administered through the four recreation centers, three swim centers (which are operated in conjunction with the Berkeley Unified School District), and the Marina facilities. Activities include organized aquatic programs, Marina recreation and environmental education programs, special events, and City-wide sports programs, leagues and tournaments. The Health and Human Services Department also administers three senior centers and three summer camp programs in the Sierras.

d0 Open Space and Recreation Policies. The following section discusses open space policies in the City of Berkeley, as they are outlined in area plans within the City. Since they are part of existing area plans, these policies would be adopted as part of the General Plan Update.

(1) Downtown Plan. The 1990 *Downtown Plan* discusses the use and creation of urban open space in a predominantly office, commercial and civic context. The Plan concentrates on improving the pedestrian environment through increased cleaning and maintenance of public areas, a street tree planting program, possibly daylighting Strawberry Creek, and specific design plans to better utilize the Civic Center and BART Plaza areas.

(2) South Berkeley Area Plan. South Berkeley contains 16 percent of the City's population and 11 percent of the City's parks. Although South Berkeley is better supplied with parks relative to the other flatland neighborhoods and West Berkeley (using acres per population ratios), three of the census tracts within South Berkeley were identified as "high demand" in the 1977 *Master Plan*. The 1990 *South Berkeley Area Plan* seeks to better integrate the open space system with the residential and commercial environment, and to enhance existing parks, playgrounds, and recreation programs.

⁴ Berkeley, City of, 1993. *Conditions, Trends and Issues*.

(3) West Berkeley Plan. The 1993 *West Berkeley Plan* discusses open space requirements in terms of specific needs to provide the following: an additional neighborhood park; linkages to area parks in the bike route plan; and assurances that the *Aquatic Park Master Plan* reflects West Berkeley needs and concerns, including the provision of more structured activities at Aquatic Park.

(4) Waterfront Master Plan Amendment/Specific Plan. The 1986 *Waterfront Plan* establishes the Berkeley Waterfront primarily for recreational, open space, and environmental uses. In 1998, EBRPD purchased 170 acres of the waterfront to become part of the East Bay Regional Shoreline Park.

(5) Aquatic Park Master Plan. The *Draft Aquatic Park Master Plan*, seeks to remedy current problems at Aquatic Park related to freeway noise, limited access, poor water quality and the generally negative perception of the Park. The Plan advances eight proposals, including: noise attenuation; additional public access points at Channing and Heinz Streets; development of the south end of the lagoon as a bird refuge; an improved pedestrian and bicycle environment, including a bridge across the midpoint of the lagoon; improved public use facilities; pathway improvements; habitat restoration; and the new Dreamland Tot Lot and play field.

e0 Draft General Plan Policies. The *Draft General Plan* contains policies related to open space and recreation in four of the General Plan elements, including Land Use, Environmental Management, Open Space, and Citizenship and Governance. All 19 policies of the Open Space Element are relevant to open space and recreation. These policies appear in their entirety in Appendix B. Each relevant policy from other *Draft General Plan* elements is restated here for easy reference. In addition to the policies of the Open Space element, *Draft General Plan* policies related to open space and recreation include:

- \$ *Policy LU-15*. Ensure that neighborhoods are well served by basic goods, a diverse supply of community care, services and facilities, including park, school, child care, and church facilities; fire, police, and refuse collection services; and by existing neighborhood commercial areas.
- \$ *Policy LU-16*. Work with the Unified School District and the University of California to establish a network of community service centers including school sites, neighborhood resource centers, and City facilities that offer community services such as child care, health care, and recreational programs.
- \$ *Policy LU-25*. Ensure that new development does not adversely impact existing open space resources.
- \$ *Policy LU-45*. Prepare and adopt a plan for the maintenance and improvement of the Berkeley Marina.

\$ *Policy EM-27: Creeks.* Whenever feasible, daylight creeks by removing culverts, underground pipes, and obstructions to fish and animal migrations.

Actions:

B. Establish, where appropriate or feasible pedestrian and bicycle paths along creekside greenways to connect neighborhoods and commercial areas.

\$ *Policy EM-30: Natural Habitat.* Restore and protect valuable, significant, or unique natural habitat areas.

Action:

B. Balance increased use of open space and public lands with enhancement of natural habitat, where appropriate.

\$ *Policy EM-31: Street Trees.* Maintain, enhance, and preserve street and park trees to improve the environment and provide habitat..

\$ *Policy EM-34: Inter-jurisdictional Coordination.* Encourage efforts by neighboring jurisdictions and agencies, such as the East Bay Regional Park District, University of California, Berkeley and the Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory, to restore historic coastal grasslands in the hill area to provide natural habitat and reduce fire danger in the area.

\$ *Policy EM-35: Citizen Efforts.* Encourage citizen efforts to restore ecological resources and open space areas, such as pathways and stairways.

\$ *Policy EM-48: Traffic Noise.* Work with local and regional agencies to reduce local and regional traffic, which is the single largest source of unacceptable noise in the city.

Action:

E. Construct a noise barrier for Aquatic Park.

\$ *Policy EM-49: Noise Mitigation.* Require operational limitations and all feasible noise buffering for new commercial or industrial uses that generate significant noise impacts near residential, institutional, or recreational uses.

Action:

B. Mitigate significant noise impacts on parks and public open space, whenever feasible.

2 Impacts and Mitigation Measures

a0 Criteria of Significance. The *Draft General Plan* would have a significant impact on open space and recreation in the City of Berkeley if it would:

- \$ Substantially increase demand for neighborhood parks, regional parks or recreational facilities that would accelerate their physical deterioration, or decrease the quality of the facilities or users' experience;
- \$ Create the need for more parks and open space in neighborhoods which are already under served; or
- \$ Result in the removal of a neighborhood park or open space area.

b0 Open Space and Recreation Impacts and Mitigation Measures. In this impacts and mitigation analysis, less-than-significant open space and recreation impacts are discussed first, followed by significant impacts.

(1) Less Than Significant Open Space and Recreation Impacts. Implementation of *Policies OS-1 through OS-13, LU-15, LU-16, LU-25, LU-45, EM-27B, EM-30B, EM-31, EM-34, EM-35, EM-48E, EM-49B* relate to open space and recreation resources, but would not be expected to result in environmental impacts.

The *Draft General Plan* proposes maintenance and continued funding for existing facilities with current adequate programs, and proposes the enhancement and expansion of the local and regional open space network. None of these policies would result in the substantial increase in demand for parks or facilities, create the need for more parks in under served areas of the City, or result in the removal of a neighborhood park or open space area.

The implementation of open space and recreation plans that result in the construction of new facilities within a neighborhood or residential setting could potentially result in significant impacts in the areas of traffic, noise, or visual impacts to existing residences. However, existing City programs for project design and approval as well as the CEQA environmental review process require that such potential impacts be addressed prior to construction of new facilities. The Open Space Element also encourages community involvement in the design and construction of new open space and recreational facilities, which would further mitigate any potential community concerns regarding potential impacts resulting from these new facilities. Therefore, existing City programs and review processes would adequately mitigate any potential impacts of the *Draft General Plan* policies.

The population increase projected in the *Draft General Plan* would result in increased demand for recreational and open space facilities. Implementation of the *Draft General*

Plan would allow the City's population to reach 116,000 by the year 2020, an increase from the current population of 109,400. If the City were not able to acquire or develop additional open space or recreational facilities during this period, this population increase would result in a reduction of the parks-to-population ratio from the current City-wide ratio of 2.24 acres per 1,000 persons to a ratio of 2.11 acres per 1,000 persons. However, during this period the following park and recreational facilities will result in a net increase in the amount of park land available or accessible to the Berkeley population:

1. 170-acre East Shore State Park;
2. Harrison Park;
3. Bay Trail; and
4. I-80 overcrossing.

In addition, even without these improvements the parks to population ratio would not drop below the 2.0 acres of parks per 1,000 persons established by the 1977 *Master Plan*.

This increase in population could result in the continuation of imbalances in the spatial distribution of open space and recreational facilities across the City. Areas of the City that are already underserved by parks and open space, such as South Berkeley, could face a further shortfall with *Draft General Plan* implementation. In order for the City of Berkeley to address these localized parks and open space deficiencies, the City will need to actively pursue the implementation of *Draft General Plan Policies OS-6* through *OS-8*.

(2) Significant Open Space and Recreation Impacts. No significant open space and recreation impacts would result from the implementation of the policies of the *Draft General Plan*. As discussed above, the combination of new development envisioned by the *Draft General Plan* would be counter-balanced by a series of policies whose effect would be the retention and protection of open space and recreation resources.

