

# OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION

---

## ELEMENT OBJECTIVES

The policies and actions of the Open Space and Recreation Element are intended to achieve the following three objectives:

1. Preserve, maintain, and repair the city's existing open space and recreational resources and facilities.
2. Expand open space and recreational resources to meet the evolving open space and recreational needs of all segments of this community through land acquisitions and improvements.
3. Increase funding for parkland, recreational facilities, and open space maintenance, improvement, and expansion.

## POLICIES AND ACTIONS

### PRESERVATION, MAINTENANCE, AND REPAIR

#### **Policy OS-1 Preservation**

Existing open space and parks shall be maintained and preserved for public park and open space use.

*Measure L, passed by the Berkeley voters in 1986, requires a vote of the people to use or to develop a public open space or park for any purpose other than public park or open space, unless a State of Emergency has been declared.*

Action:

- A. Consider revisions to the Zoning Ordinance to include open space zoning districts for all designated open space areas in the city.

#### **Policy OS-2 Maintenance, Repair, and Enhancements**

Within the context of open space resource allocations, give highest priority to maintaining and improving the City's existing network of open space and recreation facilities.

*The City's extensive open space network requires ongoing maintenance. Due to funding constraints, required maintenance has often been deferred, which results in higher maintenance and replacement costs. Maintenance of existing resources consists of: ongoing maintenance (upkeep); restoration of resources (repair); and improvements to maximize or improve utilization of existing facilities (improvements).*

Actions:

- A. Repair recreation centers and swim centers.
- B. Continue to repair or replace unsafe or inaccessible play equipment.

- C. Restore the network of public paths and historic street features, such as gateways, lighting, and stairways.
- D. Improve access for the disabled to park and open space facilities.
- E. Regularly resurface basketball and tennis courts.
- F. Regularly maintain and restore park landscaping.
- G. Where appropriate, add lights to existing sports fields and improve drainage, where necessary.
- H. When available and financially feasible, acquire small amounts of property adjacent to existing public facilities to improve their utility.
- I. Improve enforcement of park use rules and regulations.
- J. Establish a plan for maintaining the existing infrastructure at the Berkeley Marina, including maintenance and replacement of docks, piers, bulkheads, dry dock storage areas, restrooms, and utility systems (water, sewage, electricity etc.), and dredging to maintain adequate marina water depth.
- K. Establish a funding plan that prioritizes repair and maintenance of existing open space and recreational facilities.

**Policy OS-3 Volunteerism**

Encourage community involvement and volunteerism in park and open space maintenance and improvement as a means to leverage local funds and improve park and open space.

*Community involvement in the creation and maintenance of our parks is an important component of this Open Space and Recreation Element. Berkeley's level of neighborhood park activism is high and continues to grow.*

Actions:

- A. Continue to encourage and support the Parks and Open Space Mini Grant Program and the Adopt a Park Program.
- B. Continue to encourage public-private partnerships to develop and maintain public playing fields and other open spaces and recreational facilities.

**Policy OS-4 Working with Other Agencies**

Work with the Berkeley Unified School District, the University of California, the East Bay Municipal Utility District, and the East Bay Regional Park District to improve, preserve, maintain, and renovate their open space and recreation facilities.

Actions:

- A. Work with the University of California to identify and pursue opportunities for active-use (playing fields and courts) recreation space serving University students, particularly those students who are Berkeley residents in densely developed neighborhoods near the UC campus.

- B. Work with the Berkeley Unified School District to:
  1. Uphold the District’s responsibilities with respect to maintaining jointly administered open space facilities such as the Measure Y parks.
  2. Identify ways to expand community use of the District’s recreational facilities.
  3. Repair or replace the warm water pool.
  4. Investigate the feasibility of developing an additional on-campus swimming pool for use by students at Berkeley High and the general public.
- C. Work with the East Bay Municipal Utility District to increase opportunities for recreational use of District facilities.

EXPANSION OF OPEN SPACE AND RECREATIONAL RESOURCES

**Policy OS-5 Community Participation**

Encourage community involvement in every aspect of park and open space acquisition, design, and construction. *(Also see the Citizen Participation Element and Land Use Policy LU-5.)*

**Policy OS-6 New Open Space and Recreational Resources**

Create new open space and recreational resources throughout Berkeley.

Actions:

- A. Identify and prioritize open space expansion opportunities in neighborhoods that are underserved or not easily accessible to existing park and recreational facilities.
- B. Convene a community planning process to determine the final use of the remaining 14 blocks of City-owned land on the Santa Fe Right-of-Way. The community planning process shall consider public open space use (i.e., neighborhood parks, community gardens, and/or bicycle and pedestrian paths) as the highest priority use for the remaining vacant land and new affordable housing development as the next highest priority use.
- C. Develop joint-use agreements with other agencies such as the University of California, the Berkeley Unified School District, the Bay Area Rapid Transit District, and regional open space agencies to increase public access to public lands.
- D. Increase the supply of playing fields for youth sports.
- E. Establish spaces for art, music, and cultural activities. *(Also see Economic Development and Employment Policy ED-11, Urban Design and Preservation Policy UD-34, and Land Use Policy LU-19.)*

**Policy OS-7 Serving Disadvantaged Populations**

Within the context of open space resource allocations for new or expanded facilities, give high priority to providing additional facilities for populations that are disadvantaged or underserved.

Actions:

- A. Ensure that park planning processes consider the needs of low-income residents and residents with limited English.

- B. Ensure that park facilities and recreational activities are available at low costs to low-income residents and accessible by public transportation.
- C. Ensure that new open space, recreational, or cultural uses are compatible with the other vital community priorities for disadvantaged populations in Berkeley.

**Policy OS-8 Community Gardens**

Encourage and support community gardens as important open space resources that build communities and provide a local food source. *(Also see Environmental Management Policy EM-34.)*

Actions:

- A. Encourage neighborhood groups to organize, design, and manage community gardens particularly where space is available that is not suitable for housing, parks, pathways, or recreation facilities. Ensure that garden plots are allocated according to a fair and equitable formula.
- B. Require all publicly subsidized community gardens to maintain regular “open to the public” hours.
- C. Include community gardens in the planning for the Santa Fe Right-of-Way.
- D. Pursue community gardens in high-density areas with little private open space suitable for gardening.
- E. Increase support for community gardens through partnerships with other government agencies, particularly the Berkeley Unified School District, neighborhood groups, businesses, and civic and gardening organizations.
- F. Support school-based gardens and the involvement of youth in growing and preparing their own food.

**Policy OS-9 Aquatic Park**

Make Aquatic Park more accessible and usable as a neighborhood park. *(Also see Environmental Management Policies EM-28 and EM-45.)*

Actions:

- A. Install an effective and attractive noise and visual freeway barrier with landscaping for Aquatic Park.
- B. Remove the I-80 Potter Street on-ramp from Aquatic Park. *(Also see Transportation Policy T-29.)*
- C. Provide new safe pedestrian and bicycle railroad crossings, particularly at the southern end of the site, for improved access and circulation from nearby neighborhoods to Aquatic Park.
- D. Improve the bicycle path around the park.
- E. Encourage lessees of City buildings in the park to serve local youth.
- F. Explore opportunities to expand the park.

**Policy OS-10 Access Improvements**

Improve transit, bicycle, disabled, and pedestrian access to and between open space and recreation facilities, including regional facilities such as the Berkeley Marina, University of California open space,

East Bay Regional Park District lands, the Eastshore State Park, and recreational facilities in other cities. *(Also see Transportation Policies T-29, T-42, T-47, and T-50.)*

Actions:

- A. Develop and maintain a citywide pedestrian and bicycle network that links open space and recreation facilities with bicycle and walking paths along tree-lined streets, publicly owned pathways, creeks, and other greenways.
- B. Maintain opportunities to eventually complete a Codornices Creek Greenway from the Bay to the hills.
- C. Increase shuttle and weekend transit service and weekend street closures to improve access to recreational and open space.
- D. Continue to improve pedestrian and bicycle access to the waterfront and Berkeley Marina.
- E. Attempt to establish a network of bicycle lanes and paths, physically separated from automobile traffic, to provide safe bicycle access especially for children to all schools, recreation sites, and city open spaces.

**Policy OS-11 Public Spaces**

Encourage innovative use of public plazas, sidewalks, and temporary street closures as open space or for recreational or cultural events. *(Also see Land Use Policy LU-20.)*

Action:

- A. Design and improve public streets, parking lots, and plazas to provide public spaces for street fairs, festivals and other gatherings.

**Policy OS-12 Adjacent Uses**

Ensure that land adjacent to parks is sensitively developed so that shade on the park is minimized, safe access is maintained, and views are not significantly reduced. *(Also see Land Use Policy LU-28 and Urban Design and Preservation Policies UD-31 and UD-32.)*

**Policy OS-13 Waterfront Open Space and Recreational Facilities**

Implement the 1986 Waterfront Plan policies to establish the waterfront as an area primarily for recreational, open space, and environmental uses, with preservation and enhancement of beaches, marshes, and other natural habitats. *(Also see Land Use Policies LU-43 and LU-44)*

Actions:

- A. Work collaboratively with the East Bay Regional Park District, Albany, Emeryville, and Oakland to plan and complete the new Eastshore State Park as part of a continuous East Bay shoreline open space and recreational area.
- B. Assure that new development along the shoreline recognizes its unique location, considers sensitive natural resources, and maintains adequate shoreline access and views.
- C. Maintain Cesar Chavez Park as a City-owned park.

- D. Complete the Berkeley portion of the Bay Trail and connections to Cesar Chavez Park and links to the Berkeley Marina.

**Policy OS-14 Regional Open Space**

Coordinate with regional open space agencies such as the East Bay Regional Park District, neighboring cities, and private sector and nonprofit institutions to maintain, improve, and expand the region's open space network.

INCREASED FUNDING

**Policy OS-15 Funding for Maintenance**

Pursue innovative sources of local funding for open space and recreational facility maintenance and capital improvements.

*Local funding for renovation and maintenance of existing facilities is limited. With the exception of the Marina, ongoing maintenance of existing parks is funded from the Parks Tax (which replaced the City's Landscape Assessment District in 1997). This tax generates revenues through a property tax based on a rate approved by Berkeley voters. These funds are used almost exclusively for ongoing maintenance of parks, street medians, and urban forest; therefore, funds for open space capital improvements or acquisition are limited.*

Actions:

- A. Pursue donated funds and local corporate contributions.
- B. Ensure that new development provides for the open space and recreational facility needs of the future users of the development.
- C. Ensure that all proposals to add new parkland or expand facilities are accompanied by a realistic funding plan for maintenance and ongoing capital improvements.
- D. Consider voter-approved special bond or tax measures for parkland acquisition and maintenance.
- E. Pursue all available sources of local funding for Marina improvements and maintenance including berthing fees, ground leases, and funds generated by local nonprofits.
- F. Consider a range of public/private financing strategies for Marina maintenance and improvements. Strategies could include studying the feasibility of new, appropriately scaled, water-related, revenue-generating uses, or a City-owned commercial venue, sited so that it will not compromise public access or environmentally sensitive areas.
- G. Review existing fees for programs and services and where appropriate, raise fees to be compatible with those of other jurisdictions.
- H. To help ensure adequate funds for capital improvements at the Marina, the City should maintain a marina capital reserve fund and whenever possible set funds aside each year for future improvements to Marina capital projects. Expenditures from the committed reserve should be made in consultation with the Waterfront Commission.

**Policy OS-16 Outside Funding Sources**

Actively pursue State and Federal funding and grant opportunities.

Action:

- A. Pursue all available sources of outside funding for Marina improvements and maintenance including Department of Boating and Waterways loans and grants, State Park Bond funds, State Water Bond funds, and grants from organizations such as the Regional Water Quality Board and the Coastal Conservancy.