

Recreation and Park Master Plan

Adopted November
2022



Rio Linda Elverta
Recreation and Park District

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Letter from General Manager

Thank you for taking the time to look through and read the Master Plan Update for the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District. We began this project in 2019 and battled through the COVID-19 pandemic to bring you this finished product. Our consultants at BluePoint Planning have worked tirelessly and hosted both in-person and remote meetings with the Public to complete this plan.

This is the first Recreation and Park Master Plan completed since 2006. The contents of this document provide the current state of our Park District and also look into the future on where we hope to be in the years to come.

As well, there are ideas and a blueprint to assist in moving the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District forward as it relates to both new parks, existing parks and amenities, and recreational programming.

Both our Board of Directors and District Staff have worked hand in hand with BluePoint Planning to discuss the current inventory of parks and programs and have done a lot of brainstorming to envision our future.

All of this would not be possible without our residents, who took the time to come to our public meetings (both remotely and in-person) as well as complete surveys and on-line questionnaires to guide us through this document.

The Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District has worked hard to bring you this document. We are looking forward to the implementation phase of this Master Plan and are excited to continue to receive your ideas. Please feel free to reach out to the Park District directly with any questions or comments at (916) 991-5929 or through our website at www.rleparks.com/contact-us.

Sincerely,



Mike Heller
General Manager

Acknowledgements

Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District Staff

Mike Heller, General Manager

Erik Hernandez, Former Recreation Supervisor

Alissia DeSalle, Recreation Supervisor

Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District Board

Charlea Moore, Board Chair

Wayne Del Nero, Board Vice Chair

Becky L. McDaniel, Secretary

Lisa Morris, Director

Jerry Huffhines, Director

Consultants

Mindy Craig, BluePoint Planning

Hayley Padden, BluePoint Planning

Gail Donaldson, Gates + Associates

Rio Linda and Elverta Residents and Stakeholders

Introduction



Introduction

Building a Thriving Community through Parks & Recreation

In Fall 2019, the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District (District) began a comprehensive update to their Recreation and Park Master Plan (Plan). The District last completed a Recreation and Park Master Plan in 2006. That Master Plan was developed to address the challenge of providing adequate park and recreation opportunities for an increasing population in a time of growing fiscal limitations. The 2006 Master Plan also anticipated the impact future developments would have on the community, some of which have been completed and some of which are still in process, highlighting the challenges of planning for an uncertain future.

This Master Plan has been developed with input from community members, key stakeholders, and partners to ensure that the District considers the wide range of needs and opportunities for parks and recreation in the area. The Plan helps to focus future decisions, guide the District in allocating resources over the upcoming years, and assist in adapting to changing conditions and community needs.

The new Plan defines community needs, assesses the function and quality of the District's parks, facilities, and programs, and provides a clear set of recommendations for the District to meet community needs over the next 20 years. The recommendations, improvements, additions, and enhancements laid out in this Plan focus on meeting the six identified goals of the District: connectivity, health and



wellness, sustainability and resilience, unique sense of place, inclusive and equitable, and partnerships.

Beyond providing recommendations for District improvement, this Plan also aims to address the challenges that the District faces. Flooding, extreme heat, limited funding, and safety concerns, among others, are all obstacles that the District must address or develop strategies to mitigate. To improve the District's resilience, Chapter 5 outlines nature-based solutions for flooding and extreme heat, and Chapter 6 provides an implementation plan that examines potential funding mechanisms to achieve the recommendations presented in this Plan.



About the District

The Sacramento County Department of Parks and Recreation created the Rio Linda Recreation and Park District as Community Services Area #3 in 1961. This District was created to provide parks and recreation services to the residents of the Rio Linda area and later expanded to include the town of Elverta. On November 8, 1994 it became an independent park district – the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District. The District duties include managing, maintaining, and programming the District’s parks and facilities, developing and monitoring the budget, carrying out the policies of the Board, and overseeing the daily operations of the District. Except for some support services provided by Sacramento County, such as accounting and tax collection, the District is an independent District. Sacramento County Parks also operates parks within the District boundaries, including the large multipurpose regional Gibson Ranch Park and the Cherry Island Sports Complex.

The District is governed by a five member Board of Directors. Board Members are elected at-large by voters that live within the

District boundaries. Board Members serve terms of 4 years each, with staggered elections every even year. The Board is tasked with establishing and supporting the structure of the District and serving as community leaders. This includes setting sound fiscal policy goals, approving the budget, and working to preserve and enhance parks and recreation opportunities.

Master Plan Organization

This Plan is organized into the following sections:

I. Introduction

Planning context, community involvement process overview, policy overview, and vision and goals

II. Master Plan Context

Planning area, demographics, parks and recreation trends

III. Parks and Recreation Needs

Needs methodology, summary inventory, general park needs, potential park sites

IV. Guidelines and Recommendations

Plan goals framework, policy guidelines, recreation recommendations, park specific recommendations

V. Building Resilience through Parks

Overview of potential solutions and approaches to increase the District’s resilience through parks

VI. Implementation

Evaluating new projects, plan priorities and phasing, and funding mechanisms

VII. Appendices

Community Engagement and Planning Process

The Plan was based upon robust public input gathered through a comprehensive community engagement process. The planning process began before COVID and the team was able to conduct the first part of the Existing Conditions and Needs Assessment with in-person activities. The second phase of the project occurred after nearly a year break when vaccines became available, and we could meet again in person. However, to support those who were not comfortable meeting in person, a series of online opportunities were offered in conjunction with in-person events.

Engagement included a range of stakeholders including community members, partner agencies, business interests, non-profits, and others. To ensure access and an efficient process for community members, there were various ways for community members to share their feedback, including workshops, surveys, social media, and other online tools. Activities included:

- Four open house workshops in December 2019, November 2021, April 2022, and September 2022 focused on learning about the Plan, and providing visioning and prioritization input. Workshops were also broadcasted on Facebook Live.
- Community-wide surveys distributed online via District social media and website, in addition to the project website. In total, 140 responses were received.
- Interactive outreach and engagement at community events including the Christmas Holiday Breakfast with Santa, and the RLE Country Faire.
- Communication materials were provided for the District to distribute information about the project, details about how to be involved, and links to various activities.





Project Website Home Page

- Mailings went out to the entire District with information about in-person workshops, as well as information on how to provide feedback if residents were unable to attend the in-person workshops.
- Social media, flyers, and banners were also used to promote events and the visioning process.
- An online tool, Padlet, allowed participants to share their ideas, photos, videos, etc. for park and recreation improvements. In total, there were over 50 comments.
- A Plan website – www.rleparksmasterplan.com was developed to provide a project-focused hub for community feedback, information, and plan documents.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IN NUMBERS

3

Project Surveys

140

Survey Responses

4

Community Workshops

2

Informational Mailers

400+

Community Members Reached

1

Project Website

Policy and Plan Context

The last District Recreation and Park Master Plan was updated in 2005-2006 and needed to be updated to reflect current conditions, trends, and community needs. Since the last plan was developed, the District has lost a small part of its territory in the southern area that would have been a future source of tax revenue for the District. In addition, several parcels have been transferred to other agencies - Linda Park was deeded back to Sacramento County and Ponderosa Farms was sold in 2019 - while other potential park locations have been offered by the School Districts.

While the District has lost land since the last Master Plan, throughout the upcoming years, there will be opportunities for the District to expand. Unlike urban parks and recreation departments that may struggle finding undeveloped land to turn into community parks, Rio Linda and Elverta have a large amount of undeveloped land that could be purchased in the future, if the funding and opportunity arises. As new developments come to fruition, the District has the flexibility to adapt to changing populations.

The County of Sacramento operates the Gibson Ranch Regional Park, the Dry Creek Parkway, and the Cherry Island Sports Complex within the District boundaries. The District has previously partnered with the County to use the fields in the Cherry Island Complex. Currently the District has an agreement in place for the use of the Cherry Island fields for up to 10 dates per year. This Park is the only one in the District boundaries with rectangular fields for soccer, rugby, or lacrosse.

In addition to maintaining and operating its own parks, the District provides programming on sites owned by other entities, such as Sacramento County's Cherry Island Sports Complex, the Rio Linda Prep Academy Gym, and the Rio Linda High School Aquatic Center. The District must financially negotiate and work with these entities to use and program their facilities.

Future Developments

Another major driver of this new Plan is the potential for the progress of a large new planned development, Grandpark, in the western portion of the District. The new development would be over 5,600 acres and is planned to include 336 acres of parks and 1,579 acres of open space. These parks will consist of neighborhood squares, greens, and parks, community parks, and special feature parks. There is concern that the infusion of new parks and facilities in one part of the District without additional investment in the rest of the District will result in inequities for existing residents. This challenge will be both in terms of maintenance, operations, programming, and diversity of amenities. The timeline of this development has not been set and will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

In addition to Grandpark, there is a planned development in Elverta, known as the Elverta Specific Plan. This Plan was approved in 2007, but has faced years of delays due to ongoing negotiations between the County and developers. If built out, this area would see an increase of over 6,000 new homes and an additional 73 acres of parks, community areas, and sports complexes. Due to the uncertainty regarding this development, the District should continue to seek new parks and recreation opportunities in Elverta.

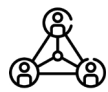
Master Plan Vision & Goals

During the planning process, community members provided input and insights into what is valuable to the community and how they envision the future of their parks and recreation programs. The vision and goals below will guide future planning and decisions about resource allocation, in concert with the implementation criteria presented in Chapter 6.

Vision

Enhance the District to offer more connected, safe, and inclusive parks and recreation facilities and programs that can bring the community together and offer every resident a place to enjoy a healthy, active lifestyle and the natural environment.

Goals



1. Connectivity

Connect people to parks and recreation through a network of safe, well maintained, and convenient paths.



2. Health and Wellness

Support and encourage an active community by offering a range of programs and parks focused on health and wellness.



3. Sustainable and Resilient

Create and manage community parks and recreation hubs that foster resilience and economic development, and support a fiscally sustainable department.



4. Unique Sense of Place

Celebrate and enhance the community's character by making parks and facilities more appealing and diverse, integrating art, culture, natural features, and history.



5. Inclusive and Equitable

Provide robust, welcoming, and quality parks and programs for the entire community, for all ages, genders, and abilities, and encouraging multi-generational use.



6. Partnerships

Build partnerships to expand collaborations, funding, services, and opportunities for the community.

Plan Context



Plan Context

Planning Area

The Rio Linda Elverta community is located in unincorporated Sacramento County, approximately 10 miles north of the City of Sacramento. The Recreation and Park District covers two distinct unincorporated areas with a rural, small-town character and a population of approximately 20,000. There are a number of residents with horses, there are few sidewalks, and lots are relatively large. There are a small number of businesses along M Street and a larger retail center with fast food and grocery stores on Elkhorn Road. The area near the Community Center acts in many ways as the center of the community, and the location for most of the area's events and celebrations.

The area is a primarily residential community within the rapidly developing Sacramento County, and adjacent to the more rural Sutter and Placer counties. Within the District are parks operated by the District and by the County, as well as school facilities serving the community. The Dry Creek Parkway, a 6-mile corridor largely maintained and operated by the County as a "developing park site," incorporates pedestrian and equestrian trails as well as several regional park facilities, including a golf course, soccer fields, a historic ranch house and picnic facilities. The County's popular bike system includes the Sacramento Northern Bike Trail which cuts through the District along the former route of the Sacramento Northern Railroad. RLERPD maintains a replica of the former Train Depot on the site.



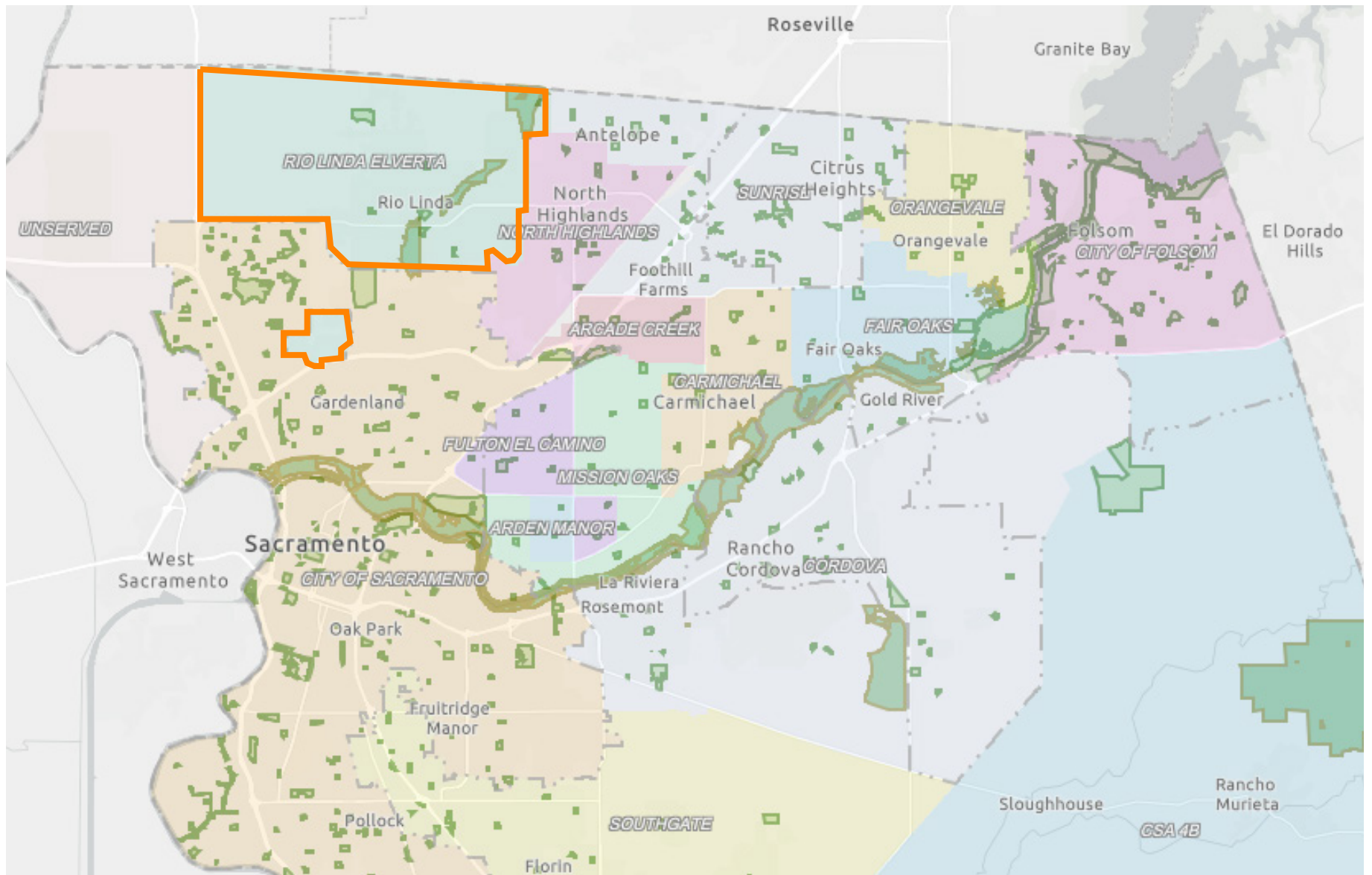


Figure 1. RLERPD and Sacramento Region Park Districts

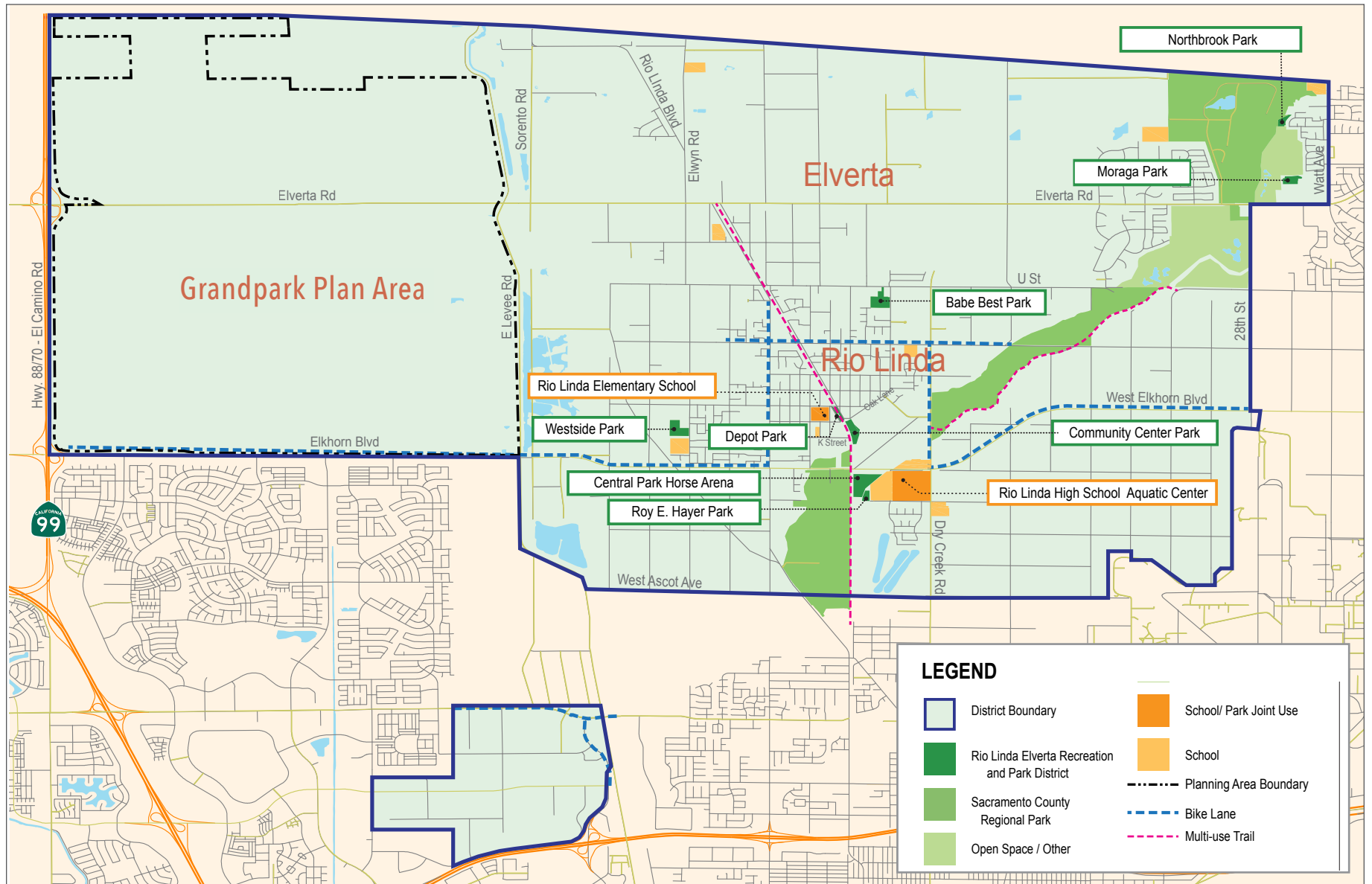


Figure 2. Map of the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District



Region

RLRPD is located in Sacramento County adjacent to the City of Sacramento. It is about an hour and half from the San Francisco Bay Area and about the same to the Sierra Nevada mountains and Tahoe ski areas. Relatively affordable housing and access to jobs makes the area attractive to a wide range of people. The County has a diverse population of over 1.5 million people (2010 Census). As the seat of California's state government, Sacramento has a large number of government agency jobs as well as supportive social and judicial services. Surrounding the City of Sacramento and near the District there are light industrial areas and retail centers.

Natural Landscape and Climate Change

The landscape is a mixture of flat grasslands and some oak woodlands. Several creeks and drainage areas have a history of periodic flooding along Dry Creek, Rio Linda Creek, and Steelhead Creek. The American River and the Sacramento River flow through

the County, providing recreational and natural resources for residents. Portions of the District are within the 100-year floodplain. Over the past years, upstream channelization of creek drainages in neighboring Placer County has exacerbated the flooding within the District. Climate change will likely increase the intensity of rains and the flooding in the area.

The area is hot and dry during the summer months (reaching over 100 degrees Fahrenheit) and cold (below freezing) in the winter months. These extremes are likely to increase in severity as the area experiences impacts from climate change. As California continues to experience periods of drought, dangers of wildfires in urban-wildland interfaces are increasing.

History and Culture

The area was shaped in part by the California Gold Rush and has a history in agriculture and railroad transportation, with some active working lands today. The District's history dates back to indigenous people who lived in the area seasonally as hunters and gatherers.

With the influx of European settlers in the mid-1800's the area became part of the 40,000-acre Rancho Del Paso Mexican land grant of 1844. In 1910, a subsidiary of the United States Farm Land Company acquired 12,000 acres (49 km²) of the grant land and in 1912 the area was subdivided as two railway towns. Renamed in 1913 as Rio Linda, it was known as 'Dry Creek Station', a flag stop for the Northern Electric Railroad and the location of the District's Depot Park. In the early 1900s the area began to grow and was marketed as an excellent location for orchards and poultry production. The unincorporated community of Elverta was named for Elverta Dike, whose husband donated property to a local church.

County of Sacramento

Rio Linda and Elverta are located in unincorporated Sacramento County. Therefore, RLERPD, along with the Rio Linda Elverta Community Water District are the only local agencies. While the two Districts can be community leaders, the communities still must rely on the County of Sacramento for most government services, including safety, health, and transportation. However, despite the County playing such a critical role, there is a disconnected relationship between the communities and the County, and many community members express concern about the County's ability to meet the communities' needs and a lack of confidence in the County.

Issues around transportation infrastructure, public safety, homelessness, and flooding, to name a few, require County leadership and partnership. RLERPD may have some ability to help the community with these areas, but lacks the funding and resources needed. During the planning process, County transportation planners discussed and shared plans for bike connections and other projects with the team. It is critical that the District continue to build a relationship with the County and help to secure additional support. As discussed in Goal 6, partnerships are critical to the success and health of the District.



Community Profile

According to the 2020 U.S. Census and the American Community Survey, the District has approximately 21,000 people with 15,944 in Rio Linda and 5,435 in Elverta. The District has grown 33% since 2000, with Rio Linda growing by 52% and Elverta population staying relatively the same. The Rio Linda Elverta community is categorized as primarily rural, however Rio Linda is denser with approximately 1,610 people per square mile, while the overall County has approximately 1,594 people per square mile and Elverta has about 617 people per square mile.

The western third of the District, and the Elverta area to the north, have major housing developments planned - Grandpark and Elverta Specific Plan. Grandpark will change the dynamics of the area in the west. Grandpark has been considered for years and is unlikely to be built within the next ten years given development and economic constraints. However, when completed, the project may add more than 20,000 dwelling units to the area. The Elverta Specific Plan was approved by the County in 2007 but has faced challenges between the developers and the County, resulting in an uncertain future for the project. These developments would drastically change the population of each community, but the timeline for either project is not yet determined.

The following are some of the key findings of a demographic analysis, compared with the State of California, with data averaged where appropriate for Rio Linda and Elverta to represent the overall District:

- The District has a majority of white residents (73%) followed by Hispanic residents (19%) and Asian (7%), and 1% each of Black and Native American residents.
- The District's median age is 39 years, which is slightly older than California's median age of 36.7.
- As with most of the country, the District has an older population with 42% of the District's population between the ages of 35-64 years old, compared to 25% under the age of 19.
- Compared to the state of California, the District has a lower level of educational attainment with just 39% of those over the age of 25 with some college.
- 76% of the District owns their own home, which is considerably higher than the state at 50%.
- Housing prices have climbed steeply over the last 10 years. According to the California Association of Realtors, the median California house is approximately \$863,000 with Sacramento County homes at approximately \$560,000. Zillow reports that the average median home value in the District is \$490,000.



21,000
Population



39
Median Age



\$74,000
Median Income



39%
College Educated

- The District median income of approximately \$74,000 is lower than California’s median household income of \$78,600.
- The Rio Linda area of the District, twice as large as Elverta, has a relatively high level of poverty with over 14% of the population living below the poverty line compared to 11.5% in California as a whole. This population typically relies more heavily on public facilities and programs than do residents with more financial resources.

For the District, these figures point to several key takeaways:

- There is a need to increase and expand programs and facilities for older adults.
- There is a younger population that will be accessing services and will also need programs.
- The District has a diversity of population that is increasing. This diversity needs to be reflected in programs and services moving forward.
- The District should continue to ensure that its fees are affordable and can be accessed by the entire community.

Community Health

Park and Recreation districts and departments throughout the region and state have a role that has been heightened in recent years, to contribute to the wellness of its community and to serve as a complementary service to the community’s public health providers. Health data from Sacramento County’s “Be Healthy Sacramento” (www.behealthysacramento.org) for the District was analyzed to inform this Plan and the needs of the community. Specifically, data for five areas were assessed: obesity, diabetes, walking, heart disease, and asthma.

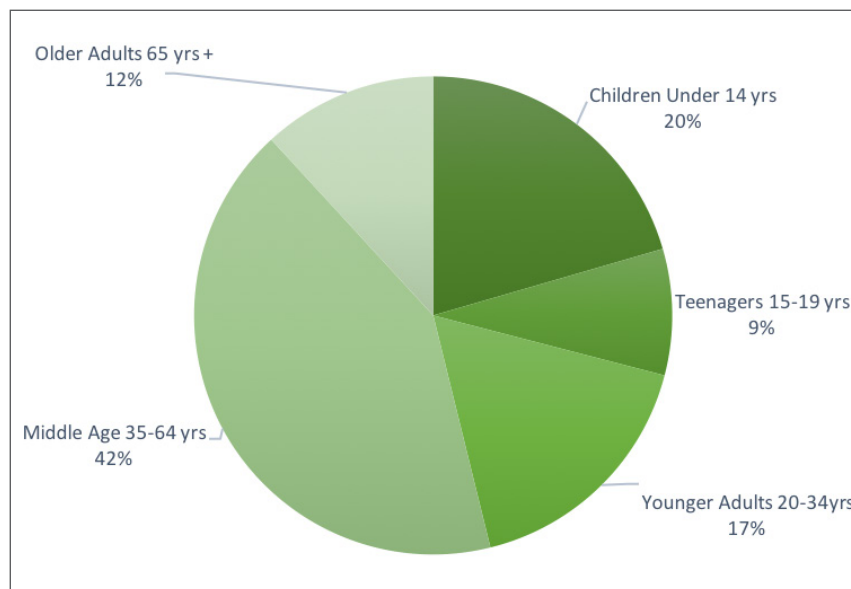


Figure 3. Ages of District Residents

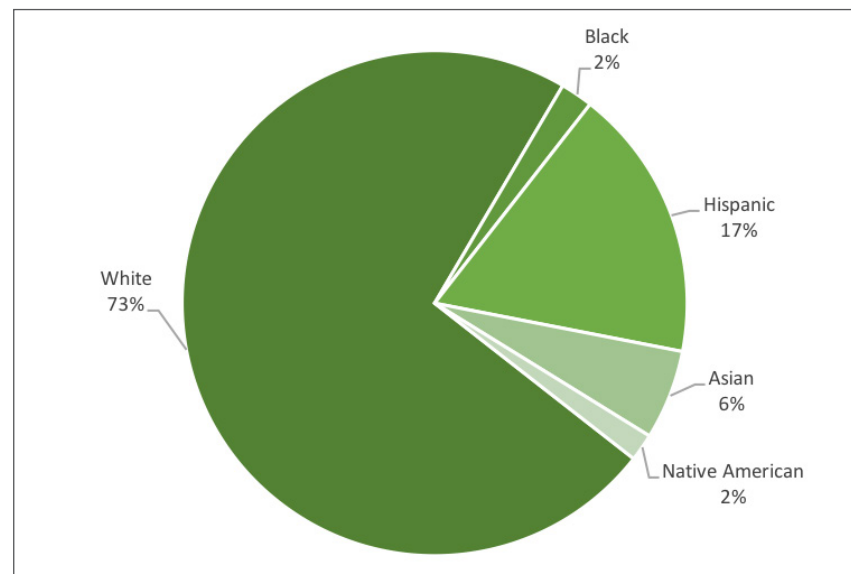


Figure 4. Racial Diversity of the District

In comparison to the rest of California, Rio Linda and Elverta communities are in either the lowest or second lowest quartile of all California communities, meaning that these communities are unhealthier than the State average. In particular, the District's rates of obesity, heart disease, and adult asthma are very high. While the number of adults with diabetes is low, the number of hospitalizations for those who do have diabetes is high. Further, the District has one of the lowest levels of adults walking regularly. On a high note, the number of children or teens with asthma is low. This indicates an opportunity for the District to provide greater attention and awareness to community health and encourage healthy behavior through its facilities and programs. The District is taking steps to proactively support healthy living. The District currently has a walking club for seniors and is looking to develop one for adults.



Comparable Districts

A component of the needs assessment was comparing the District with other Recreation and Park Districts in Sacramento County (See Figure 5 on the following page). They were chosen for their relatively similar characteristics, including population and district size. Information was gathered from online sources and does not reflect a comprehensive analysis. Overall, the districts to appear to provide a similar kind of programming, facilities, and parks. Some of the notable differences include:

- Two districts offer pre-school facilities and programs
- Three have their own pool or aquatics facility
- North Highlands, with double the population, has three gyms plus a recreation and community center.

The greatest differences are in the finances of the different districts. The analysis looked at expenses per capita and revenues per capita. The District has one of the lowest expenses per capita, but also one of the lowest revenues per capita. The revenue from fees or "charges for services" is the lowest for all of the compared districts and nearly \$300,000 less than Orangevale, \$500,000 less than Fulton El Camino, and \$700,000+ less than Carmichael. These differences do not indicate any specific best practice for the District on the surface. However, it may be useful to more deeply understand what the District can learn and take away from its neighbors, and whether there are opportunities to enhance revenues and overall services without appreciably increasing costs.

RIO LINDA ELVERTA Recreation and Park Master Plan | Plan Context

District Name	Residents served (approx.)	Parks Acreage	Number of Parks	Facilities	Types programs	Median Income 2010-2014 census	Expenses Total	Expenses Per Capita	Revenue Total	Revenue Per Capita
Rio Linda Elverta (2016-2017 audit)	20,000	48 acres	8 developed parks	Community Center Depot Meeting Space High School Pool Complex Horse Arena	Summer camp, summer aquatics, adult and youth classes, youth and adult sports	\$61,489	\$1,332,692	\$66.63	\$1,442,293	\$72.11
Arden Manor Rec & Park (2016-2017 audit)	22,700	15 acres (to be confirmed)	3-4 parks	Community Center Aquatics Complex	Summer camp, after school, aquatics, adult classes, sports leagues	\$83,467	\$547,077	\$24.10	\$725,831	\$31.97
Orangeville (2018-2019 audit)	30,000	157 acres	8 parks +natural areas	2 Community Centers Community Pool Preschool Youth Center Horse Arena	Summer camp, after school, aquatics, adult classes, sports, preschool	\$65,288	\$2,613,558	\$87.12	\$2,816,840	\$93.89
Carmichael (2017-2018 actual budget)	52,000	177 acres	13 parks	Community Center	Summer camp, after school, aquatics, adult classes, sports leagues, tiny tots	\$54,598	\$4,200,821	\$80.79	\$5,347,841	\$102.84
Fulton El Camino (2017-2018 audit)	30,000	80 acres dev. 2 undev	7 parks includes nature area	Community Center Community Pool Pre-School	Pre-school summer camp, before /after school programs, aquatics, adult classes, sports league	\$52,694	\$2,969,307	\$98.98	\$2,849,597	\$94.99
North Highlands (2018-2019)	44,899	72 acres in 2006	14 parks	Community Center Recreation Center 3 Gymnasiums	Summer camp, after school, aquatics, adult classes, sports leagues	\$40,986	\$2,634,898	\$58.69	\$2,574,700	\$57.34

Figure 5. Comparable Districts Analysis



Parks and Recreation Trends

The following section highlights trends and ideas for the District to consider to meet community needs and interests. These also offer ideas about how to expand the District's programming and diversity of facilities and parks.

The Outdoor Lifestyle

People are enjoying the outdoors more than ever and participating at a much higher level than in the last several decades. Other trends in health and wellness and the economy have made outdoor activities more attractive than ever.

The National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (Long-term National Trends in Outdoor Recreation Activity Participation – 1980 to Now, IRIS, May 2009, H. Ken Cordell, Gary T. Green and Carter J. Betz) has tracked recreation participation trends in people over 16 since the 1960s. It is reported that the most persistent activity

throughout the years is walking for pleasure. Walking as well as many outdoor activities has seen substantial increases in participation over the last several decades. Noteworthy is the increase in day hiking, sightseeing and viewing, and photography of birds. For the District, increasing participation in equestrian activities as well as challenge activities may highlight an opportunity for the Central Park arena.

Another indicator is an increase in the number of days people participate in these activities. It was reported in the survey that in 2009, 20% of the population spent 25 days or more day hiking, up 12% from the 1980s, and that 10% of the population spent over 25 days backpacking in 2009, up from 6% in the same time period. The amount of time (25 days or more) spent swimming in lakes and ponds has decreased from 19% to 14%.

According to the 2012 "The Outdoor Recreation Economy" report by the Outdoor Industry Association, 140 million Americans over the age of 16 participate in outdoor activities. Americans spend

approximately \$646 million dollars annually on outdoor recreation – twice as much as we spend on automobiles, gas, or utilities. People can experience a sense of wellness, stress release, stronger social interaction, and an increased connection to the outdoors when they participate in outdoor recreation. The need for flexibility in recreation programs, as adults have less and less free time, is critical.

For youth ages 6-24, running/jogging and bicycling have the highest participation and are favorite outdoor activities. Skateboarding is also a favorite activity for this young age group. Running is popular with adults, but fishing and bicycling also have high participation rates. Adults' favorite activities are running, bicycling, and birdwatching.

Health, Wellness, and Walkability

Although California is a relatively healthy state, with just over 76% of the population reporting they are physically active, 24% of the population is obese, diagnoses of diabetes have increased 15% in the last two years, and physical inactivity has increased for seniors (65+) by 29%. In September 2015, the US Surgeon General, Dr. Vivek H. Murthy launched a new initiative: "Step it Up! Surgeon General's Call to Action to Promote Walking and Walkable Communities." The initiative calls for walking as a daily activity and inspires professionals from health care to parks and recreation to support the development and creation of more walkable communities to encourage people to get out and walk.

Parks and recreation services, programs and facilities are being seen more often as the "prescription" for prevention, good health, and wellness for communities. The State of Oregon, Oakland, CA, and Washington D.C. have programs in place in which health professionals issue parks prescriptions to support mental and physical health. Ensuring tobacco free parks, encouraging community walking programs, and creating health focused



pedestrian and bike plans are all part of the solution that parks and recreation can serve. Further, park and recreation departments are more frequently setting up at farmers' markets and repositioning community centers to be community wellness hubs with exercise, nutrition, and more.

Public Safety

On the flip side, parks have regrettably become preferred sites for drug use, homeless encampments, and other crime. Homeless encampments are likely places for spreading diseases through shared drug paraphernalia and unsanitary conditions. In Northern California, the homeless rates are increasing, and park administrations must be ready to adapt and combat these challenges. Some of the approaches include improved lighting, reduced dense vegetation, more activities to reduce attractiveness for homeless, and unique urban-ready designs such as benches that can be used for sitting but not for sleeping, stainless steel minimal restroom fixtures, as well as increased staffing and enforcement.



New technologies such as web-based cameras and surveillance are being tested in areas but create concerns about liability and capacity to monitor activities. Further, in some communities, parks staff are being trained as front-line staff to administer naloxone to counter a drug overdose from opioids or to help homeless residents connect to social services. The District could explore partnering with the County Health and Social Services department to provide assistance to people experiencing homelessness in and around the District's parks.

Aging Population

One of the strongest trends throughout the United States, California, and in the District is the aging of the population. The District has an older, aging population and must consider and develop facilities and programs that will serve older adults with a variety of needs and interests. Segmenting seniors into a single category is not effective. With healthier lifestyles, people live longer and have more active lives than ever before. Park and recreation providers need to consider multiple stages and interests of seniors' diverse lives as well as their interest in developing new skills and learning new activities. Resources for those with some health issues and access concerns; for passive and more contemplative activities; for seniors looking for intergenerational interactions; and for those who want more quiet environments are essential. Some of the strongest trends include new facilities for pickleball, creation of adult recess games like kickball, and developing outdoor gyms.



Climate Change, Resilience, and Sustainability

Climate change mitigation, resilience planning, and sustainability efforts are some of the most critical issues that cities will be responding to now and into the future. Parks play a central role in the ability to assist and address some of the issues related to climate change. This includes: water conservation through smart irrigation



technologies; sustainable approaches for landscaping and overall maintenance practices; and limiting urban heat islands. Employing better soil management practices and composting creates “carbon sinks,” an essential element to help mitigate emissions, as well as soil that is better in drought conditions. Recreation programs and facilities that focus on walkability and bikeability are critical to reducing vehicle miles traveled, a key statewide goal to reduce greenhouse gasses. Open space and parks also can be effective buffers for potential flood zones resulting from increased severe weather patterns, particularly adjacent to riparian corridors. Energy conservation efforts and the use of solar panels for recreation facilities and lighting can help reduce the District’s carbon footprint, act as a model for businesses and residents, and save money in operations. Finally, park districts are reconsidering their maintenance practices, particularly related to pesticides such as Glyphosate (aka Roundup) and establishing approaches that can both be environmentally friendly and economically beneficial.

Children And Teens

One of the greatest challenges to communities nationwide is how to support families. This challenge includes creating a park system that addresses child development – physical, social, and cognitive – creating the opportunity to enjoy and experience nature, as well as providing safe streets and access to parks. More than the development of tot lots, considering children means looking at the entire network, from streets and plazas to trails and parks, as an interconnected support system. Each element of the system must consider children of all ages and their families.

Teenagers are perhaps the most challenging of this group. As a whole, they do not want to be categorized with children, may not want to be part of an organized group, and are often more interested in exploring a larger realm. They often indicate a desire to ‘hang out,’ and need safe places day and night to do this. Skateparks and teen playgrounds are two areas that have some success in satisfying this need. Evaluating how to provide safe and enjoyable experiences for this group is paramount to fully serving the needs of residents. Additional programs integrating technology and esports are also on the rise.

Youth Sports

The District provides facilities and programs for a number of youth sports. Understanding the trends related to youth sports, the intersection of health (and poor health), income and participation is essential as the District considers investments in future programs and facilities. The Aspen Institute’s State of Play 2018, Trends and Developments provides a background on these trends and how park and recreation professionals can enhance children’s experiences and broaden the opportunities to expand attraction and services to youth 6 to 12 and older. Key trends that the District may want to explore include how to enhance and support free play for those

uninterested in organized sports, as well as increasing the availability and diversity of recreation sports programs which focus on fun rather than competition. While about 70% of kids played at least 1 day of sports in a year, in 2017, only 23.9% of kids nationally participate in a high calorie burning activity, down 5% from 2011. 17% of kids did not participate in any kind of sport. Income levels are closely associated with participation rates. One of the largest barriers for lower-income children are the high costs of equipment and fees for participation. Connected to these trends is that most coaches have no formal training, and that while girls are increasing their participation in sports, only 22.5% of the coaches are women.

Economics and Financing

Park and recreation professionals have often had to fight for resources to build and maintain a high-quality system of parks. The need for new sources of revenue is encouraging parks and recreation professionals to become more entrepreneurial. Expanding opportunities for sponsorships, as well as looking to new potential partners for funding programs and facilities is becoming a priority. Additionally, identifying and securing long-term funding sources for maintaining and renovating existing parks is an ongoing challenge.

Arts, History, and Culture

Connecting history, art, and culture within parks is an opportunity to enhance the physical environment and interest of individual parks while providing another dimension for people not looking for active sports or recreation.

Additionally, dedicating parks can stop legislation from allowing developers the deeds to valuable public space.

Increased Usage of Technology

The District may need to consider how technology may impact parks and facilities. Technology is offering parks and recreation providers with broad new opportunities as well as new challenges. It seems that nearly all sectors of the population are becoming more comfortable with and dependent on technology, desiring higher tech and “amenity” rich experiences. Technology can simultaneously provide a mass communication tool while improving affordability and accessibility to community members.

Opportunities for tech-aided recreation are growing while a conflicting trend for techno-free parks and environments is emerging. Finding the right balance and appropriate use for technology in parks and recreation facilities and programming will be an evolving effort.

As drones become more mainstream, parks must be ready for a large desire for recreational drone flying in public areas, and for government backed drone surveillance for environmental observations and criminal recording. Drones can be used to aid rangers and volunteers in mapping areas, plants, animals, visitors, and much more.



Community Needs



Community Needs

Needs Methodology

The Master Planning process had two major information gathering components. First, a needs assessment was completed to evaluate the state of the current parks and recreation programs. After this needs assessment was completed, the community outreach stage began. Throughout several workshops, surveys, and in-person conversations, community priorities were established. The following elements informed the initial needs assessment and subsequent refinements:

Community input: Engaging and listening to the community through a variety of channels at multiple points.

Quality of existing parks and recreation programs: Assessing how well parks and recreation programs are currently meeting their intended purpose and serving community needs, including accessibility, usage, and function.

Community profile and demographics: Understanding the community and audiences for District facilities and programs, and how they may change over time.

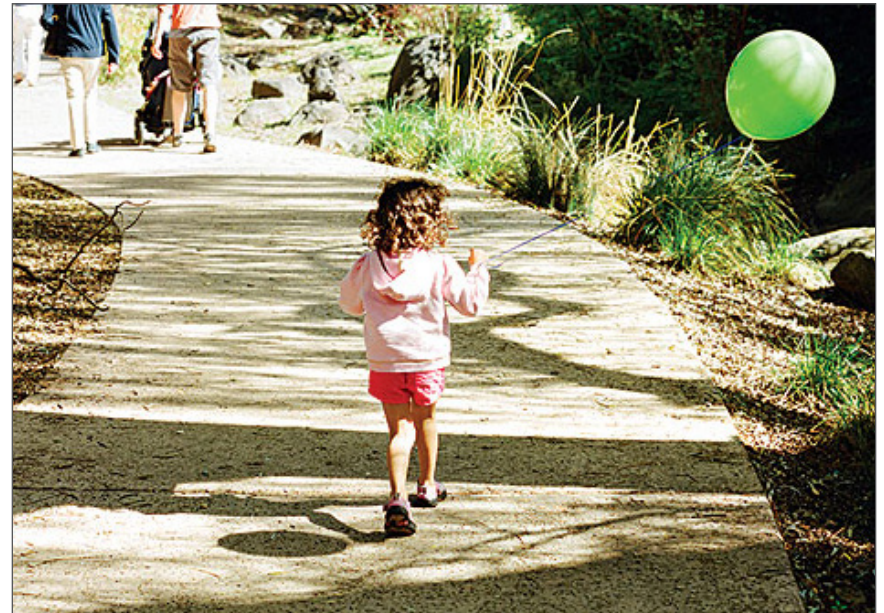
Trends analysis: Evaluating regional and national recreation and parks trends and determining what the District can learn from others.

Acres of parks per resident: Conducting an order-of-magnitude check about the gross acreage of facilities available per resident.

No single element can direct the District about the overall needs of their residents. Instead, all of these areas need to be considered as a whole and evaluated for a complete picture.

Creating a Range of Park Types

A robust parks and recreation district should offer a hierarchy of spaces ranging from small neighborhood parks to destination parks; all connected by pathways, trails, bikeways, and streets. Each element plays a distinct role in the system to enhance and reflect the small-town character of Rio Linda and Elverta. Some will serve as community gathering places and bring people together and others will offer natural, green respites. Together these elements provide a complete park system to serve residents and visitors of all ages



and abilities. Further, the District needs to carefully consider the location of any new parks and look to address locational deficiencies, particularly in Elverta.

The following is a summary of the assessment of the parks and recreation programs, derived from stakeholder engagement, needs assessment and inventory, demographics and trends, analysis, and District input.

Parks and Facilities

The District has just over 45 acres of active parks with an additional 14+ acres of opportunity and undeveloped park sites. The District's parks have a number of similarities in the way they are designed, function, and used. Most of the parks have a mix of some active sports space, a playground, and some picnic areas, often to support the fields. Among the parks classified as either neighborhood or community, none are larger than 8.5 acres nor smaller than 1.9 acres. The District has one park classified as a regional park, the Central Park & Horse Arena. While it is not used for gymkhana (horse related events) as it once was, it still draws from around the region for rodeos and BMX events.

In addition to the existing developed parks, the District uses the High School Aquatics Center extensively during the summers for a range of open swim, lessons, and other aquatics.

The District also runs and maintains two community facilities: the Community Center, which houses the District offices and the majority of the District's indoor recreation programs, and the Depot Building which has a small meeting room used for the Board meetings and other smaller events and classes.

The District currently operates slightly less than 2.25 acres of park per 1,000 residents. Including the 14+ acres of opportunity and undeveloped park sites brings the acreage to about 2.85 acres of

Park Name	Park Size
Neighborhood Parks	
Northbrook Park	2.5 Acres
Roy E. Hayer Park	2.6 Acres
Westside Park	7.28 Acres
Moraga Park	1.9 Acres
Community Parks	
Babe Best Park	8.4 Acres
Community Center Park	6.1 Acres
Depot Park	4.1 Acres
Rio Linda High School	
Regional Park	
Central Park & Horse Arena	12.5 Acres
Buildings	
Community Center	8,000 Sq Feet
Depot Building	
Opportunity	
Rio Linda Elementary School	4 Acres
Undeveloped	
320 W. Q	10 Acres
Other	
RLERPD Maintenance Yard	2 Acres

Figure 6. District Facilities and Park Size

park per 1,000 residents. According to the National Recreation and Park Association, the average park and recreation agency offers approximately 10.4 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. When one considers County parks within the District, Gibson Ranch, at 355 acres, and Cherry Island Sports Complex, at 54 acres, provide an additional 19 acres per 1,000 residents. In addition, the 6-mile long Dry Creek Parkway provides recreational opportunities. Future developments in the area, such as Grandpark and the Elverta Specific Plan Area, will include parks to serve the increasing population.

Recreation Facilities

The Community Center is the primary location for District classes and many of the District’s events, as well as the District’s offices. There have been a number of enhancements to the building over the last few years to address some deficiencies. The Community Center is currently scheduled at approximately 60-70% of its capacity depending upon the season. The Center’s main space is rented on many weekends, although there could be more rentals outside of the summer season. The Center is the only location for fitness classes or dance classes and it lacks mirrors and a high quality sound system. The Center must also serve as the location for senior lunches, art classes, and any other inside programs. The main hall is difficult to use when divided because of noise issues, limiting the space availability in prime times.

The Depot space is best suited for smaller classes or meetings. However, its surroundings and space might be able to be enhanced for some rentals and other classes. The opportunities would be substantially enhanced by a redesign of the surrounding park area to better connect and engage with the building for events and activities like the weekly Farmer’s Market.

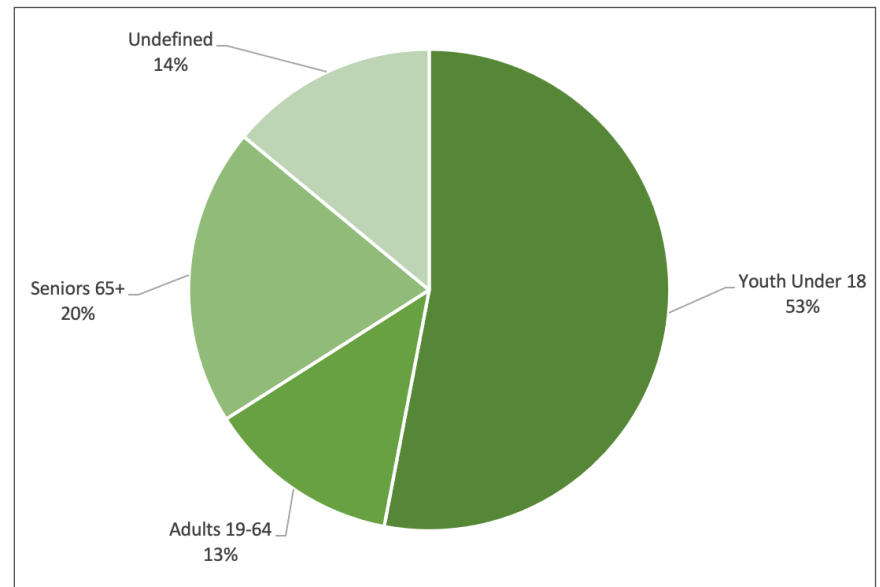


Figure 7. Recreation Program Participation

Programming and Activating Spaces

Programming is a critical element to the success of a park’s or recreation facility’s ability to serve community members. By carefully developing and operating a diverse range of programs, the District can begin to address the needs of all residents, help the parks function better, and be fully utilized. Well-designed programs can become self-sustaining and offer a welcoming user experience for residents who might not otherwise go to a park, therefore activating the park in new ways.

The District operates and manages a range of recreation programs for residents. For the fiscal year of 2019/2020 (Feb 2019 - March 2020) there were approximately 13,000 participants (some may be duplicates if people participated in more than one program) in various activities from summer camps and sports programs to fitness classes and painting classes. The majority (approximately



53%) of programs are for youth under the age of 18. Adults 19-64 only represent 13% of program participants, while those over the age of 64 equal approximately 20%, a large percentage due to the senior lunch program.

The District uses local schools, including Rio Linda Prep Academy Gym and Westside Elementary, to offer programs such as basketball and a kids sports camp. The District has a strong relationship with Rio Linda Little League, averaging approximately 400 players annually. The District also partners with Joanna's Kids R It to offer gymnastics and dance classes. The Aquatic Center at the High School is used exclusively by the District in the summer and there are discussions to expand programming in off times during other times of the year.

The District has relatively limited programs compared to other similar sized organizations who put an emphasis on programming

extensively, and has the potential to expand the breadth and depth of its offerings. They do schedule the building, but as mentioned previously the single large room is not conducive to multi-layered programming.

There are several needs to reduce the major barriers to the District's expansion of programs:

- Interior spaces that are flexible and available at key times
- Awareness and engagement by the community, especially adults
- Expansion of current successful focus on youth and sports activities to provide recreation programming for all ages
- Competition with local leagues and high school
- Availability of teachers and program leads
- Fee levels for classes

Access to Parks

While the District is large geographically, the residents live in relatively close clusters in the northeast and southern sections. A large percentage of residents are proximate to parks. However, portions of the southern section of Elverta, where there is a high level of population, are lacking in nearby parks and should be an area where the District explores potential locations for a new park in the future if land becomes available. Another critical consideration in the accessibility of the parks is the lack of bike and pedestrian infrastructure. The area lacks sidewalks and the main bike route does not connect the community as well as it could. This results in requiring a car to get to most parks, a particular challenge for young people and older individuals who do not drive.

The District includes a small geographic area to the south of the main District, surrounded by county land at West Levee and N. Freeway Blvd. The area is predominantly light industrial commercial, and the entire area is zoned as such.

Promoting Connectivity

One of the most commonly mentioned needs from the community was better connectivity between the parks and the community. This includes more connection between the parks and other community features, safe paths to access the parks, and equal access to parks across the community. Many parks are only accessible by car, with no sidewalks in the area and busy roads. While there is a bike path that connects to Depot Park, Community Center Park, Roy E. Hayer Park, and Central Park, there are safety concerns that keep many residents from using this option, and many people still need to travel some distance to reach the bike path.

The District is working with Sacramento County Regional Parks to increase connectivity of local bike paths, including adding a connection between the Dry Creek Trail and the Community Center



Park. By increasing the number of connections, the District is hoping to increase usage and therefore make the trail safer for all.

In addition, it is important to identify and develop new and expanded parks for the underserved Elverta area of the District. While there are future developments that will add parks in these areas, those developments will not be complete for an indeterminate amount of time, leaving this area lacking in access to parks and nature.

Sports and Youth

Organized youth sports play an important role in the District, especially baseball. The ballfields at Babe Best Park, which are used exclusively by the Rio Linda Little League, are maintained by the District, are overscheduled, and lack lighting that would allow for longer hours of play. When multiple games are being played, parking is insufficient. The District does not own any rectangular fields for activities such as soccer, rugby, or lacrosse, but is able to schedule some playing time at the County's Cherry Island Sports Park. It has

been difficult to secure consistent playing time at those fields. There is also a need for dedicated softball fields within the District. Overall, there is a need for more sports fields, whether owned by the District, or in consistent partnership with the County or local school districts. A school gymnasium has been used for youth basketball. While boys sports are well represented, there are few opportunities for girls in organized sports. Additional programming could encourage girls' participation.

Fostering Art and Culture

The District can better promote arts and culture in the parks, to better serve non-athletes and people of all ages, and celebrate the community's diversity. Permanent features can be added such as murals, sculptures, and amphitheater for events, or artful play areas. Alternatively, art and culture can be programmatic elements such as art classes in the park, more concerts and plays in the park, or summer camps. Some of the most popular potential additions are a small amphitheater and performing arts space, increased art in the parks, and a community garden.

Providing Community Gathering Spaces

Local parks and recreation activities are a great way to bring people together and foster a stronger sense of community. There is a desire from those who participated in community engagement events to leverage the District's parks to create a community gathering location that brings people together and acts as a physically uniting space close to the main commercial strip. Anything that brings more people out to community parks and recreation events will strengthen the Rio Linda Elverta community.

The District already holds well-loved events like Movies in the Park, Trunk or Treat, and Cookies with Santa. In addition to these events, the community showed interest in closing down W. Main Street



for community events, increasing spaces for gathering in parks by providing picnic tables, barbeques, and other amenities, and offering family events like game nights.

As the District has several parks next to the main downtown thoroughfare, the parks can be a great opportunity to increase economic development. Hosting events in these centrally located parks can bring community members together while supporting local businesses.



Additionally, to ensure that the entire community has the option of gathering in local parks, it is critical that the parks are accessible. Ensuring that there are wheelchair ramps from the parking lot to the main park features, providing all-abilities playgrounds, and offering recreation programs for children and adults of all abilities is crucial to maintaining a strong sense of community.

Prioritizing Maintenance, Amenities, and Operations

A common theme from community engagement was the need to improve the maintenance of existing parks. In general, the parks and facilities are well maintained, with a reasonable level of use. However, some parks have amenities that have been abandoned or removed, such as the volleyball court at Westside Park. Generally, the parks tend to have limited amenities and lack diversity in offerings that could contribute to a broader population using and enjoying them.

This includes the need to expand existing amenities such as restrooms, benches, picnic tables, water fountains, bike racks, dog mitt stations, and night lighting. Making the parks attractive, safe, and usable is essential. The District is working on updating some of the park's infrastructure, a practice that should be ongoing.

Offering Parks for All Ages, Abilities, and Interests

The District's higher median age indicates a need to expand its parks' and recreation programs' focus to everyone: teens, young and middle aged adults, and seniors of all activity levels. Broader inclusion is not always easy in the smaller parks but is possible by considering the addition of appropriate seating, more innovative play equipment, art, and viewing areas that can be enjoyed by everyone. Concepts like chess tables, or adding bocce, challenge courses, or other adult activities can enhance service in existing parks. Where possible, parks should also incorporate activities and programs that appeal to athletic types, as well as more contemplative activities.

Additional opportunities to expand parks and programs to different user groups and ages include:

- Creating more reservable and well-developed group picnic areas for families and groups to rent for parties and events.
- Expanding amenities for older adults, such as walking paths, outside exercise areas, fitness classes and community gardens.
- Looking for places to expand amenities for teens, especially for girls and those not involved in sports.

Ensuring Public Safety

While making improvements or additions to parks may increase the number of users, if the parks become unsafe they can quickly lose their value and benefit to the community. Ensuring that parks are a safe place for community members to gather or visit alone is critical



Dry Creek Flooding Winter 2017

and has a direct relationship to how well a park will be used. While there are unique and nuanced issues park-by-park, there are some common solutions that make parks safer.

One of the most important ways to create a safe park is to increase usage of the park. Where people use parks in a positive way and in substantial numbers, all people feel more secure. (NRPA Paper). According to the National Recreation and Park Association, a few ways to increase safety are:

- Make sure that activities in the park include a human presence from early morning to evening
- Create programming and physical design of the park to encourage use of the park during evenings
- Encourage citizen involvement to foster a sense of ownership and pride and build a constituency of users with an interest in keeping a park safe

- Locate programmed activities near the park perimeter, beside an entrance, or along a main pedestrian path
- Develop activities beyond those for organized sports facilities and playgrounds

While there are issues with homelessness and vandalism in local parks, removing amenities in anticipation of these issues will only decrease the usage in the parks, leaving them more vulnerable to these issues.

Address Persistent Flooding Issues

Flooding is a persistent issue for the District parks and the greater Rio Linda and Elverta communities. Flooding along the various stream channels and drainage courses in the area often impact the District parks, making them unusable for short or extended periods of time. The major areas of flooding are generally along the three major drainage systems; Dry Creek, Rio Linda Creek and Steelhead Creek.

However, due to several factors, the flooding in the District is worsening and causing damage to the community and the District infrastructure. Climate change is causing more intense rainstorms, followed by long periods of drought. Additionally, upstream communities that are higher in elevation and on the same watershed have culverted portions of the creeks, increasing the flooding in Rio Linda and Elverta. Chapter 5 provides several nature-based solutions that could be used to mitigate flooding in the area, including bioswales, pervious pavement, and detention ponds.

Need for Additional Parks

Currently there are areas in the District, particularly in northwest, where access to parks is limited. The following pages provide maps of the District illustrating where there are gaps in access to parks within a walking distance, and locations of parks related to population density. The District should continue to explore opportunities for potential park sites.

Underserved Areas

Currently, areas such as western Elverta have very limited access to District parks. According to ParkServe, only 26% of Elverta residents live within a 10 minute walk to a park, compared to 59% in Rio Linda. (See Figures 8 and 9 on following pages.) Therefore, when exploring opportunities for new spaces, those areas should be prioritized. Figures 8 and 9 show the areas that are most in need of parks in Rio Linda and Elverta, respectively. While there are planned developments that would service these areas, those developments have not been confirmed and the District should still examine other park sites. Figure 10 shows the density of population in the District. The District should prioritize areas with greatest density, while also ensuring that more sparsely populated areas have nearby opportunities for recreation.

Connectivity

New parks should be located in areas that are easily and safely accessible to community members. Beyond providing ample parking for those who choose to drive, there should be the ability to access new parks via walking paths, sidewalks, bike paths, or bike lanes. Ideally, children should be able to access a park from their neighborhood without having to cross busy streets or walk on unsafe roads.

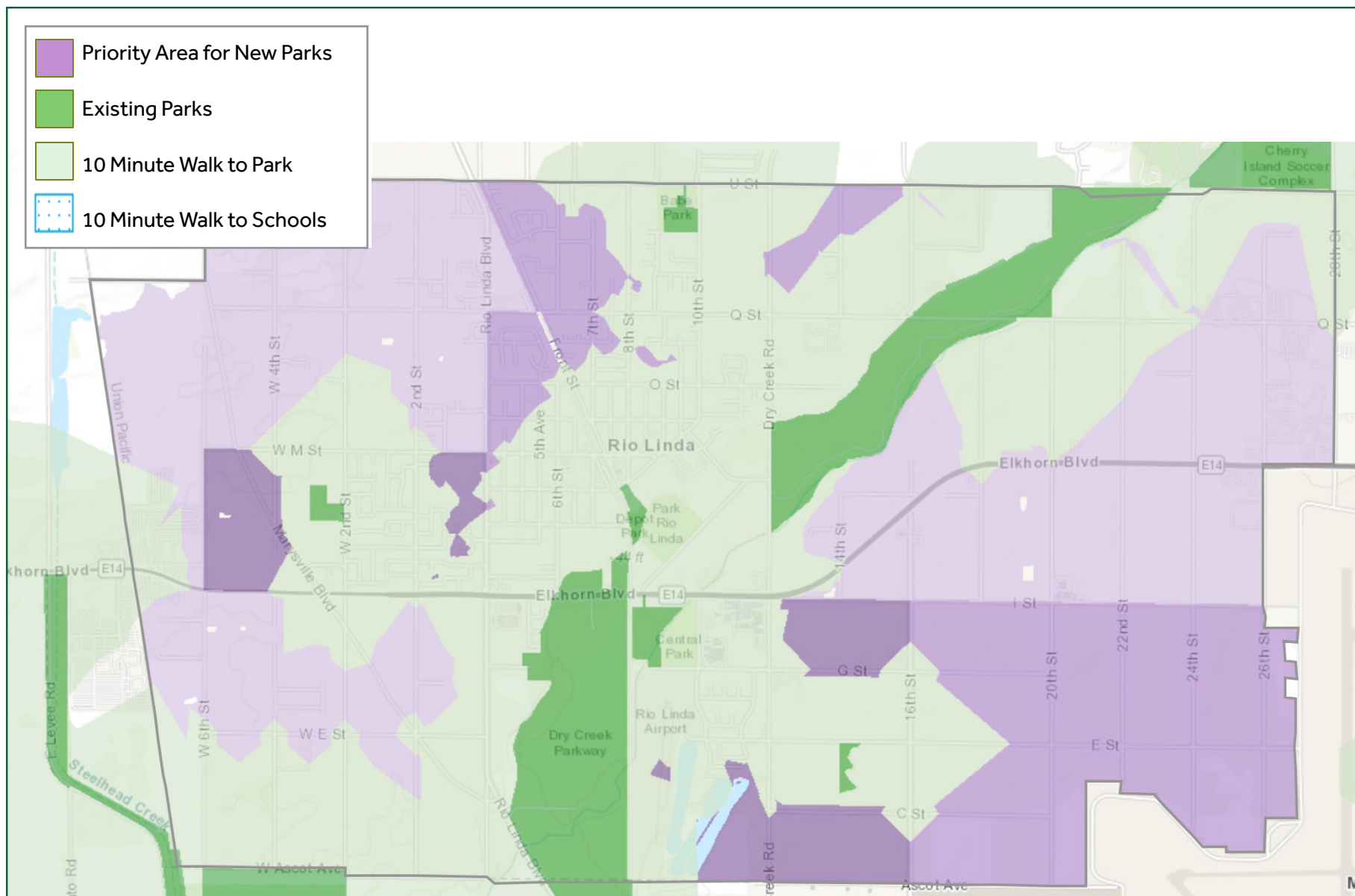


Figure 8. Priority areas for new parks and 10-minute walks in Rio Linda

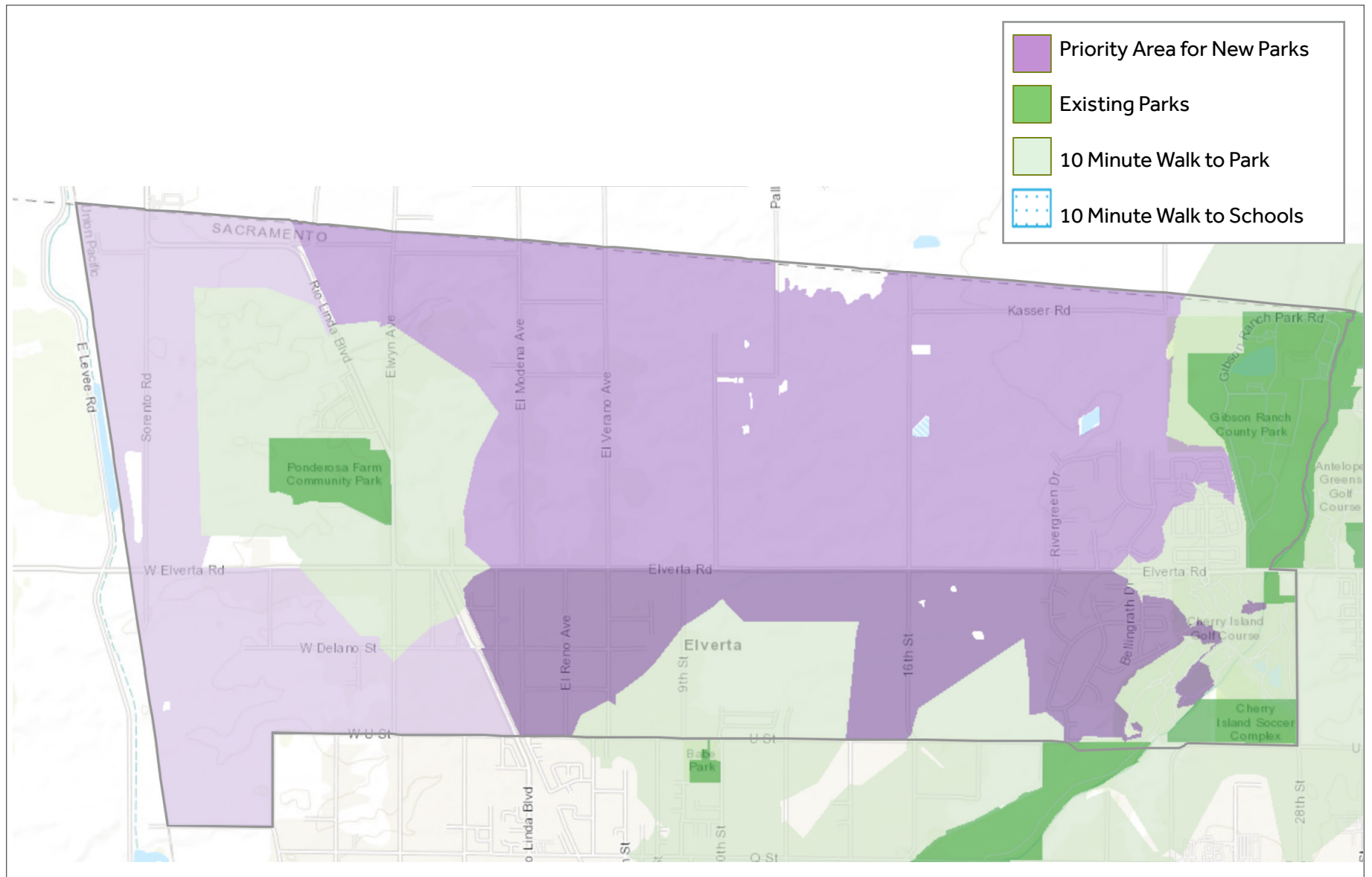


Figure 9. Priority areas for new parks and 10-minute walks in Elverta

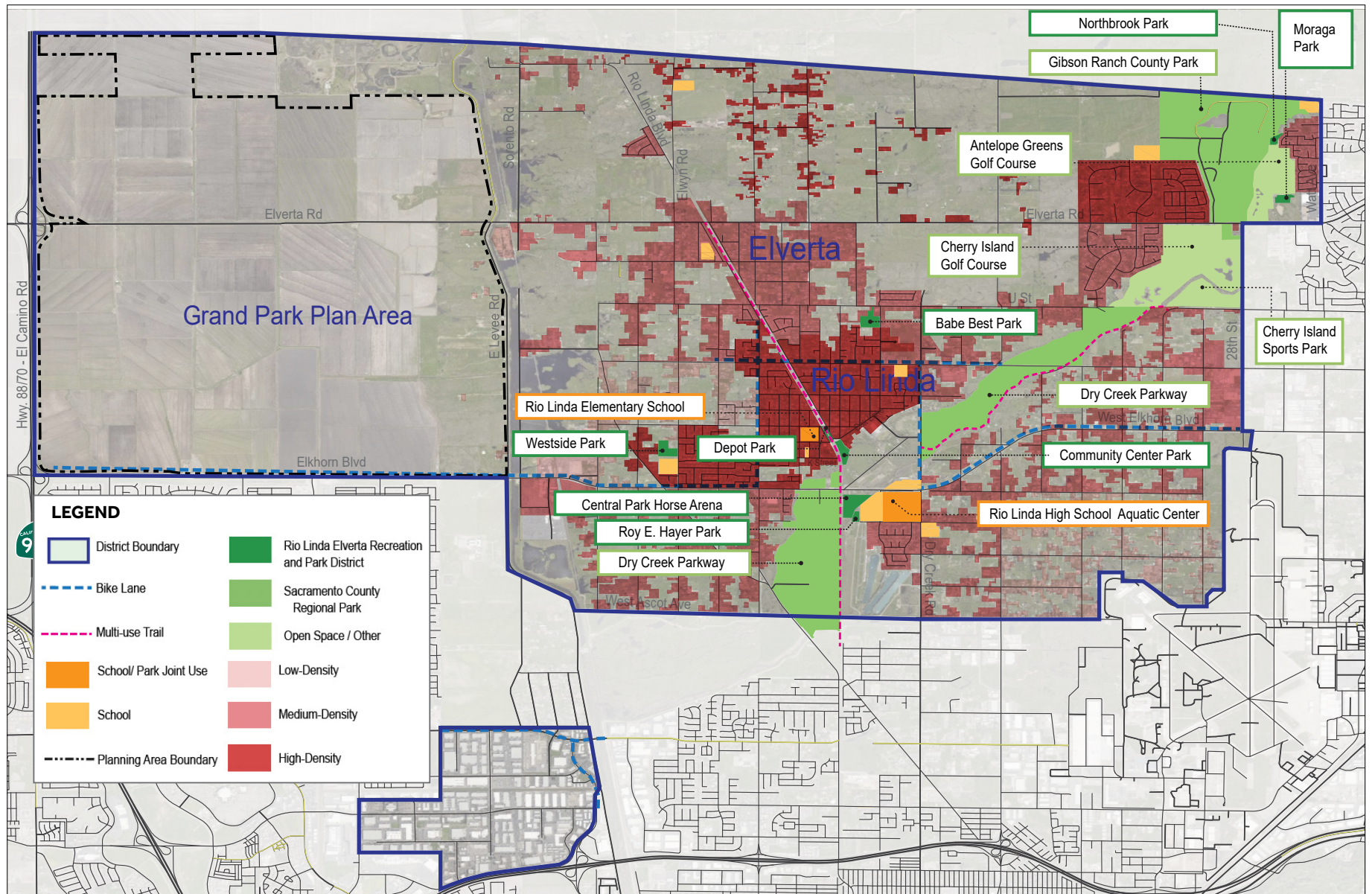


Figure 10. Density of Population within the District Boundaries

Guidelines & Recommendations



Guidelines & Recommendations

The following chapter has two main elements:

Guidelines

The guidelines section is designed to enable the District Board of Directors and staff to make informed decisions about the enhancement of existing parks, development of new parks, and to determine new opportunities. These guidelines also will assist in responding to unforeseen needs and opportunities. The Plan vision, goals, and community input inform these guidelines.

Park and Facility Recommendations

The recommendations section provides more specific direction for existing individual parks and facilities based on current conditions and needs. In addition, this section outlines the recommendations for new parks and amenities. These recommendations do not necessarily include every needed park improvement over time. Some recommendations may evolve or not be fully implemented depending on the design process, community input, neighborhood compatibility or environmental constraints. The future planning and design for each park will consider the items above as well as other foundational components consistent with the scope, effort, and planning needs.

Goals

- 1. Connectivity**
Connect people to parks and recreation through a network of safe, well maintained, and convenient paths.
- 2. Health and Wellness**
Support and encourage an active community by offering a range of programs and parks focused on health and wellness.
- 3. Sustainable and Resilient**
Create and manage community parks and recreation hubs that foster resilience and economic development, and support a fiscally sustainable department.
- 4. Unique Sense of Place**
Celebrate and enhance the community's character by making parks and facilities more appealing and diverse, integrating art, culture, natural features, and history.
- 5. Inclusive and Equitable**
Provide robust, welcoming, and quality parks and programs for the entire community, for all ages, genders, and abilities, and encouraging multi-generational use.
- 6. Partnerships**
Build partnerships to expand collaborations, funding, services, and opportunities for the community.



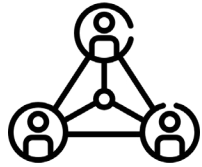
Guidelines

The following provides guidelines to support, direct, and ensure that the District maintains and continues to enhance the parks system. The guidelines are organized around the Plan's six goals and are important tools to assist in achieving the Plan's vision.

"The design of a park or recreation area can have a direct impact on people's perceptions of safety and their willingness to use a space. Designing a park for safety is based on what is generally considered to be good design: it meets the needs of its users; it is diverse and interesting; it connects people with place; and it provides people with a positive image and experience."

"Creating Safe Park Environments to Enhance Community Wellness," NRPA Issue Brief.

1. Connectivity



Connect people to parks and recreation through a network of safe, well maintained, and convenient paths. Parks and recreation facilities should be readily accessible via paths, trails, sidewalks, and bike lanes.

1.1 Safe and Welcoming

Increase the activation and therefore the safety of parks by utilizing robust programming and enhancing the physical design of the park to encourage use at all times including during the evenings and hours that they may otherwise be empty. A sense of activity and people increases safety and interest in using the park. Strive to support and enhance positive behaviors and use rather than trying to remove or eliminate undesired behaviors. The latter tends to make parks less used and less safe.

Maintain parks at a high level including managing vegetation and overall sight lines to ensure that users can feel comfortable in the park and that undesired activities cannot occur unseen.

Lighting should be at levels sufficient to enable appropriate recreational activities and enhance safety and security along paths, parks, facilities, parking, trails and other outdoor spaces. Wintertime lighting that allows for use of spaces in the early evening is particularly important. Lighting should have proper cutoffs to avoid spillover to adjacent properties and to protect the dark night sky.

1.2 Create Safe Routes to Parks

Work with relevant agencies, such as the County of Sacramento Department of Transportation, to ensure that routes maximize pedestrian and bicycle access to parks and are safe, well-maintained, and well-lit to encourage use. Advocate on behalf of the District for increased connections to regional trails and biking networks.

Wherever possible, link park access to regional trails and biking networks.

Work with the County to improve safety on Dry Creek Bikeway and the Sacramento Northern Bike Trail by providing lighting and safety call boxes.

1.3 Walkable and Bikeable

Strive to locate parks and recreational opportunities equitably throughout the District within a walkable distance and with bicycle access. Continue looking for new park locations or partnership opportunities so that all community members have a park within a 10 minute walk of their home.

Provide adequate bike racks and fix-it stations at parks and facilities. Where possible, provide drinking water/bottle filling stations.

1.4 Educate and Build Awareness

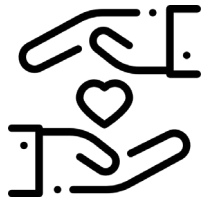
Help connect community members to the parks by sharing information about safe routes to walk or bike, and about alternatives to cars including ride sharing and bus routes. Each event or program should encourage walk and bike options when possible. Maximize visibility along trails, paths, and bikeways.

1.5 Wayfinding and Signage

Install wayfinding and directional signage in parks, and on pedestrian and bike friendly roads indicating access to local parks to increase connectivity between the communities and the parks as well as to help people locate and navigate within parks.

Enhance signage and wayfinding for visitors to Central Park's BMX and Horse Arena, Community Park and other spaces that serve visitors, to support local businesses and the District.

2. Health and Wellness



Support and encourage an active community by offering a range of programs and parks focused on health and wellness. Parks and recreation are vital to the health and wellness of the community and can provide a range of opportunities to support a healthy lifestyle.

2.1 Active Lifestyle

Support health and wellness by providing for a variety of amenities in District parks, and programming such as walking clubs that keep residents active, especially as they age. Strive to make programming affordable and accessible to all, considering those on a fixed budget.

2.2 Balanced Activities

Provide active and passive recreation elements to accommodate active play as well as passive relaxation and quiet enjoyment. Ensure that there are activities for those of all ages and interests. Updates to existing parks and new parks should be designed to adapt to evolving demographics, trends, and needs. In addition, parks should offer a variety of spaces for teens and girls, especially those who are not interested in sports.

2.3 Indoor and Outdoor Fitness

Provide equipment, programs, and amenities in parks and indoor facilities to allow for active recreation during all seasons. Evaluate the addition of new and popular activities, such as pickleball courts, frisbee golf, challenge elements, and more, to diversify offerings.

2.4 Park Pathways

Where possible, provide walking routes within parks that are safe, well-lit, and well-maintained. Include workout stations, informational signs, and mileage makers along the path to increase usage and functionality. These routes can be added around existing ballfields or other existing amenities using the space on the edges. This will also increase activation and use of the parks.

Strive to provide future trail construction and other improvements that enhance and connect natural ecological areas and avoid and minimize adverse impacts to native ecosystems.



3. Sustainable and Resilient



Create and manage community parks and recreation hubs that foster resilience and economic development, and support a fiscally sustainable department. Foster welcoming gathering spaces that accommodate community events and bring people downtown.

3.1 Community Hub

Reenvision the Community Center Park and Depot Park as a community hub to enhance the sense of place, improve community cohesion, and offer a robust environment for social wellness. The hub can also be a place for community events such as the Farmers Market as well as seasonal celebrations, to bring people downtown and support local businesses. Consider implementing street closings to host community events, such as the Farmers Market, food truck nights, etc.

3.2. Fiscally Sustainable District

Evaluate all new investments based on the Plan goals, implementation criteria, and current needs. Ensure that the District has the funds to properly maintain, program, and operate new facilities before committing to development.

Support the development of staff skills and capacity with increased access to professional training related to programming and serving a diverse community. In addition, identify and grow ability for staff to pursue and secure grants to meet ongoing programming and capital needs.

Support affordable program fees and facility access while identifying activities and events that may help to offset costs to the District, such as rentals.

3.3 “Pop-Up” Parks

Identify locations and programming for non-park spaces as pop-up parks throughout the District to supplement and enhance services. Pop-ups such as Sunday Streets or play streets can offer valuable opportunities to build and grow community. These pop-ups can be located in areas in Elverta where there is less access to parks, as well as in the center of town to encourage community gathering that provides opportunities for local businesses such as food and craft vendors. Setting specific hours of the day that a street will be closed for play, adding extra storage areas for equipment, and painting play area space on the street can help to operationalize the play street concept.

3.4 Environmental Sustainability

Promote environmental sustainability and resource management by considering energy usage, conserving water, and addressing flooding challenges throughout the parks and in District buildings.

Increase environmental education and awareness in parks through signage, programs, and design. Use creative signage, displays, and demonstration gardens to describe and interpret environmental and sustainable features. Explore nature-based solutions listed in Chapter 5 to mitigate flooding and extreme heat.

Resilience

“Resilience is the capacity of a system, be it an individual, a forest, a city or an economy, to deal with change and continue to develop. It is about how humans and nature can use shocks and disturbances like a financial crisis or climate change to spur renewal and innovative thinking.”

Source: Stockholm Resilience Centre

4. Unique, Sense of Place



Celebrate and enhance the community's character by making parks and facilities more appealing and diverse, integrating art, culture, natural features, and history. Each park should be a unique and identifiable place, integrating the environmental qualities and the community's culture, history, and identity.

4.1 Art and Culture

Integrate art and culturally expressive elements in each park, encouraging local artists, and youth and community participation.

This may be in the form of temporary installations and activities or longer-term art pieces. Hosting performing arts along with visual arts can also be a welcomed addition.

Incorporate unique elements such as creative play elements or distinct site furnishings, to make each park identifiable, memorable and reflective of Rio Linda Elverta's character. Carefully design the physical context of the site to offer a selection of meaningful physical, social, and cultural experiences for the users.

Consider expanding programming and events that bring community art into public spaces, such as street chalk painting, community mural painting, or wall tile making.

4.2 Functional Art

Incorporate art in functional elements such as seating, trash cans, paving, and fencing. Consider paving, wall surfaces, site furnishings (seating, bike racks, etc.) as play elements in lieu of manufactured play equipment, and as focal elements. Provide features that appeal to the users' imaginations and invite creative, interactive recreation experiences.

4.3 Natural Features

Celebrate natural features of parks, such as creek frontages, heritage trees, oak woodlands, and meadows. Enhance and expand access to natural features such as the Dry Creek Parkway using local and regional links. Provide opportunities for nature play within park infrastructure.

4.4 Historic Features

Celebrate community history and culture within parks and facilities by programming activities and events to highlight and share them. Storytelling, performances, signage and other visuals are all possible ways to enhance the community's connection to history and the variety of cultures in the District.



5. Inclusive and Equitable



Provide robust, welcoming, and quality parks and programs for the entire community, for all ages, genders, and abilities, and encourage multi-generational use. Ensure that the District provides active and passive activities accessible to all ages and abilities.

5.1 Inviting

Park amenities and recreation programs should include vibrant and welcoming places for the community to gather and connect. Park amenities should encourage people to linger, enjoy, spend time together, and feel safe. Design needs to be thoughtfully considered and developed to foster welcomed behaviors. The provision of well-designed plantings and lighting, seating, shade or wind-shelters, well-maintained restrooms, water fountains, multi-generational activities, and a range of recreation programs and equipment can foster a welcoming environment.

5.2 Well-Maintained

Ensure high maintenance levels at all parks, including incorporating sustainable practices and features to save energy and conserve water, to preserve habitat values, to promote environmental education, and to reduce maintenance and operations costs.

5.3 Universal Design

Provide park features and recreation programs that allow for engagement and comfort of people of all ages, from toddlers to grandparents. When developing or renovating parks and facilities, implement Universal Design approaches to serve community members of all abilities and minimize physical and programmatic barriers to participation.

5.4 Expand Programming

Increase programmatic offerings and active recreation opportunities for women and girls, and older adults. Routinely evaluate classes, programs, and parks to ensure they are serving the full range of community members.

Connect with the community on a regular basis to understand and refine programming options that will excite and involve them. Utilize pilot programming to test new ideas and bring people into programs.

5.5 Comfort and Accessibility

Encourage Universal Design practices that reduce the physical and attitudinal barriers between people with and without disabilities by developing a design and operational guidelines that allow for the full range of human diversity, including physical, perceptual and cognitive abilities, as well as different body sizes and shapes, and ages.

Establish targets for recreation programs that include and incorporate people of all abilities, as well as different languages and interests.

Universal Design

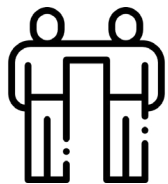
As described by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design, universal design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood, and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability, or disability. This concept suggests that instead of adapting your design to meet the needs of a minority of people, you begin the design by considering all people. If an environment is accessible, usable, convenient, and a pleasure to use, everyone benefits.

Ensure that parks meet and when possible exceed the Americans with Disability Act guidelines for park and facility construction and improvements.

5.6 Affordability

Ensure that the fee structure allows all community members the opportunity to participate in recreation programs and to have access to picnic area and sports field rentals or sports programs.

6. Partnerships



Build partnerships to expand collaborations, funding, services, and opportunities for the community. Maintain and improve community partnerships and volunteer efforts to complement District parks and recreation programs.

6.1 Community Partnerships

Encourage community sponsorships and partnerships of District recreation activities, amenities, and special events, to increase program offerings. Partner with community businesses to hold community events that both engage new business and improve park usage.

6.2 Agency Partnerships

Engage existing and potential partners including the County of Sacramento, local school districts, and local agencies such as the Rio Linda Elverta Community Water District, to increase access to available resources. Look for agency partnerships to fill District gaps, such as soccer fields, swimming pools, etc.

6.3 Grants

Pursue opportunities for grant funding in partnership, when appropriate, from other providers or agencies from Federal, State, and local agencies, and as well as foundations. Identify a range of possible grant opportunity areas including park development, resilience and climate protection, and health and wellness.

6.4 Foundation Partnerships

Pursue and expand funding and partnerships with foundations and nonprofits such as the Sacramento Tree Foundation, local Little Leagues, and private health foundations for park and facility improvements, programming, and services.

6.5 Local Stewardship

To address vandalism and safety concerns in local parks, establish neighborhood park steward groups. This model has been used in the District at Northbrook Park. Neighbors are park stewards, locking the gate in the evening and keeping the park safe.



Recreation Programming Recommendations

Programming is a critical element to the success of the District in serving community members. Recreation programming can bolster the Community Center's usage as well as open new opportunities to introduce community members to the District's facilities and parks, and activate spaces that are underutilized. By carefully developing and operating a diverse range of programs, the District can begin to address the needs of all residents, and help the parks function better and be fully utilized. Well-designed programs can become self-sustaining and offer a welcoming user experience for residents who might not otherwise go to a park, thereby activating the park in new ways.

Create More Teen Activities

Teenagers are one of the most challenging groups to program for, yet a critical part of recreation programming. Generally, they do not want to be considered as children, may not want to be part of an organized group, and are often more interested in expanding their

horizons. They need safe places day and night to "hang out." Beyond parks created for teens, programming can provide some of these spaces for teens.

Suggestions such as installing challenge courses for teens to have a more interesting and age-appropriate play area, opportunities for creating community art, and supporting emerging hobby areas such as the use of drones and remote controlled cars, are all ways to provide teens with spaces that they can enjoy on their own terms.

Increase Programs for Adults

The District has received positive feedback about the recreation programs for kids, but there is a desire for increased programming for adults. The District already offers some well-loved activities, such as an adult softball league, pickleball classes, and dance classes. Additional requests from the community were:

- Master swim classes and other swim classes
- Cooking, art, and music classes
- Mommy and me classes
- Exercise classes for seniors

Incorporate More Arts Programs in Parks

While some people prefer to enjoy local parks while exercising or being active, there are other ways to enjoy the outdoors. Allowing community members to access nature while also being creative is a great way to encourage park use. Art in parks can take many forms, including providing a small amphitheater for community members to use for theater events, music shows, or just for community members to enjoy. Another way to bring arts into the park is through a community garden. This allows community members who may not have the space or equipment at their homes to contribute to a garden. A community garden may take effort by community members to keep well maintained, but there were community members that expressed interest.



Park Specific Recommendations

The following pages describe recommendations for each specific park in the District. Each park project page has:

- vision for the future of the park,
- a description of park features, issues, and special considerations
- recommendations for park improvements
- concept photos
- aerial photo that includes the park boundaries, as well as suggestions for where each recommendation should be incorporated

Making a Community Hub

Additionally, there are two areas with park connections that are highlighted below. These are areas that should be considered together for increased connections to encourage community use. While not all of the areas identified below are District-owned, they all have the opportunity for potential partnerships and expansions.

CREATING A COMMUNITY HUB



CREATING A UNIQUE COMMUNITY DESTINATION



WESTSIDE PARK

Vision

A well-rounded community park that is used and valued by all by incorporating a range of amenities that serve all community members, addressing flooding issues, and increasing the space to relax in nature.



Description

Westside Park is a neighborhood park that provides a lighted ballfield, dog park, playground, and small picnic area. The park floods, which can restrict usage at times. There is a single stall ADA accessible restroom, which is planned to be replaced in early 2023.

Between the parking lot and ballfield is a shaded area with barbecue pits and picnic tables, which will be updated in early 2023.

There is a dog park with separate large and small dog areas. The adjacent school has given RLERPD use of the large field between the park and school. The play area is shared by the park and school. The park is a staging area for community parades.

Recommendations

Well used for the features it provides, the park would benefit from additional shade, and additional elements that would encourage a wider range of users.

- Add a walking trail around the perimeter of the ballfield, including markers to help track distances, and exercise equipment.
- Add functional art at the dog park or at the front of the park.
- Add area for cornhole, bocce, or similar multi-generational fun games.
- Improve the dog park with shade, better signage, and amenities such as seating areas.
- Continue to add non-sports-oriented amenities to increase appeal to a larger population, and to serve family members who are watching sports.
- Add bike racks to improve connectivity.
- Explore nature-based solutions for flooding.



WESTSIDE PARK

Shaded
Playground Area

Non-Sports
Amenities

Bocce Court



WESTSIDE PARK



BABE BEST PARK

Vision

A park that excels as a sports venue, while providing activities for all to enjoy.



Description

Babe Best Park is a well utilized park in the center of the District primarily used for sports, with several open space areas surrounded with picnic tables. Ballfields and bleachers are utilized by the Rio Linda Little League but maintained by the District through a partnership. The fields are at maximum capacity during the sports seasons, and supporting features, such as parking, are strained when multiple fields are in use.

New batting cages are being added at the north end of the park.

There are restrooms, a concession stand, and a small covered picnic area centrally located in the park. A small playground with parent seating is near the parking lot.

There are flooding issues at the rear of the park and northeast area.

Recommendations

The fields are at capacity and as a major community attraction, need improvements. Ensuring that the park is ADA accessible is also a top priority. Other recommendations include:

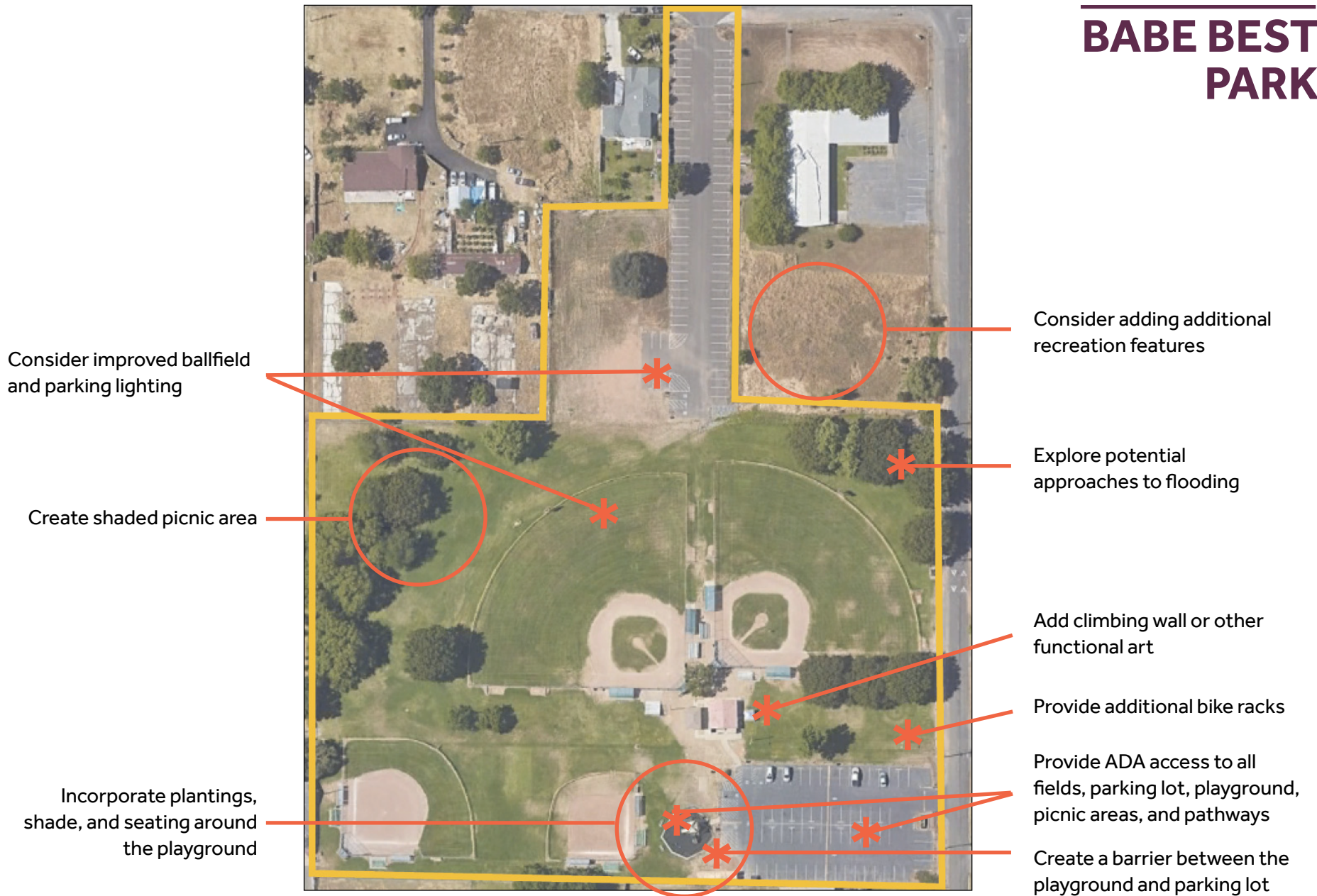
- Provide ADA access to all fields, parking lot, playground, picnic areas, and pathways.
- Create a barrier between the playground and parking lot to ensure safety for children and parents.
- Add a climbing wall or other functional art.
- Create a shaded picnic area to encourage families and others to use the park during ballgames, and separate from the ballfield.
- Incorporate plantings, shade, and seating around the playground.

BABE BEST PARK

- Explore potential approaches, especially nature-based solutions, to improve drainage and mitigate flooding
- Consider improved ballfield and parking lighting, with cut-offs to prevent spillover to residential properties, and clearly designated hours of use.
- Provide additional bike racks.
- Explore partnership with Sacramento Department of Transportation to pave and stripe 10th Street right of way (ROW) for diagonal parking to meet needs during games.
- Consider expanding the partnership with the adjacent church to provide additional recreation features on the unused church property.



BABE BEST PARK





BABE BEST PARK

'Fun'ctional Art

**Shaded Picnic
Areas**

**Plantings Around
Playground**



NORTHBROOK PARK

Vision

A welcoming and beautiful neighborhood park that provides a pathway to nature and promotes health and wellness.



Description

A neighborhood park adjacent to the Gibson Ranch Regional Park. Northbrook Park has a playground with parent seating, a half-court basketball, fitness equipment, and shaded lawns, as well as access to Dry Creek.

The park was acquired in 1994 and went through a period of increased vandalism and safety issues. Neighbors are now park stewards, locking the gate in the evening and keeping the park safe. The District has been improving park amenities, including renovating the playground and adding picnic tables.

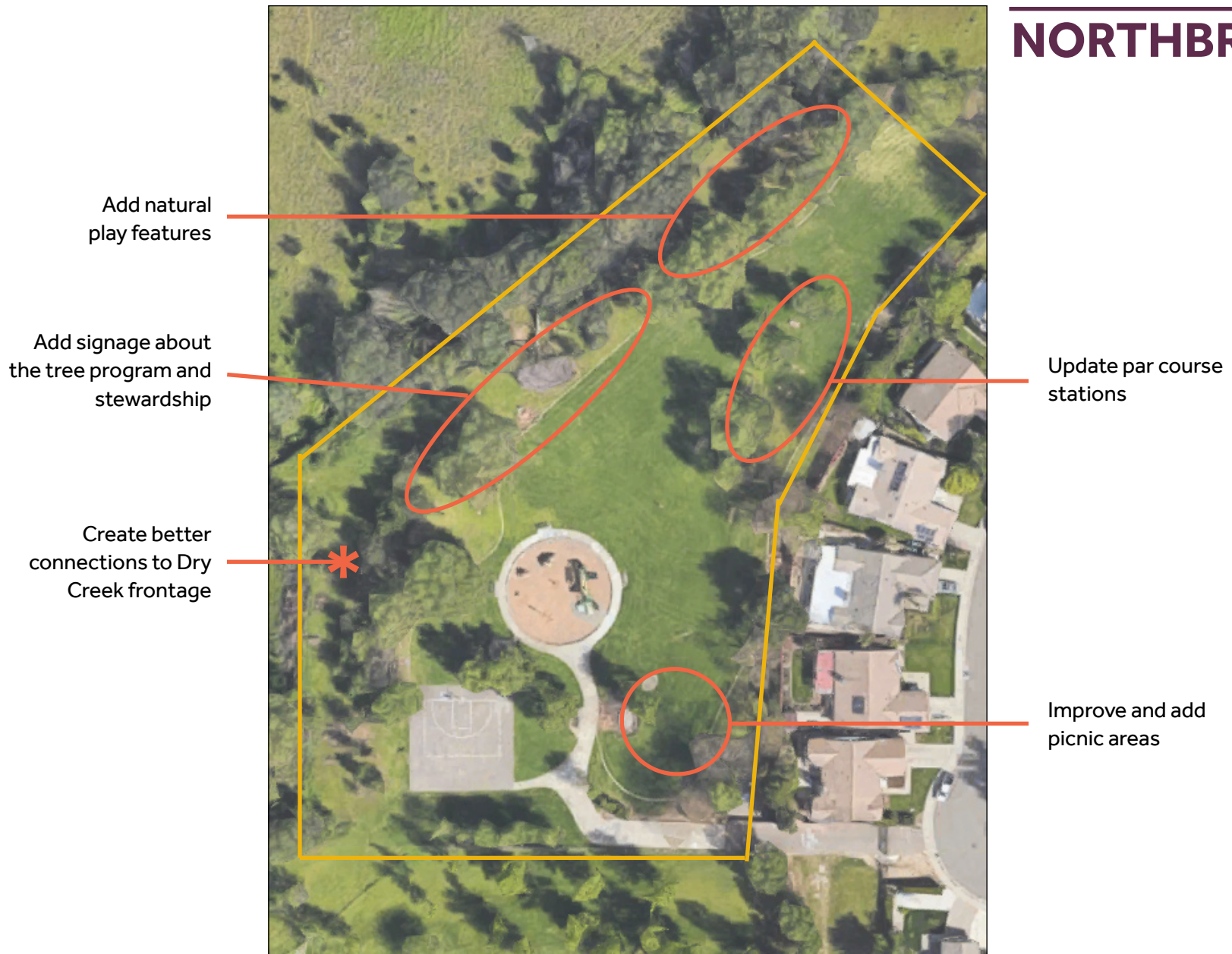
The Sacramento Tree Foundation has planted oaks. There is no on-site parking and no street frontage.

Recommendations

This park is a great opportunity for people to connect with nature, so increasing the ability and opportunity to do that is key. Only small improvements are needed to make this an even better park.

- Create better connections to Dry Creek frontage for an additional natural park element.
- Add signage about the tree program and stewardship.
- Update exercise stations and signage for use with a walking path that can be used for fitness.
- Continue the high level of maintenance and minor improvements.
- Add natural play features.
- Improve and add picnic areas.

NORTHBROOK PARK





NORTHBROOK PARK

Natural Play Area

Group Picnic Area

Nature Signage



CENTRAL PARK & HORSE ARENA

Vision

A regional park that draws community members locally and from the region for unique recreational experiences, and supports both big events and daily use.



Description

Central Park and Horse Arena is a large space that is limited to special uses and generally is underutilized.

A concessionaire leases the lighted BMX track and paved parking lot. Local, regional, and state BMX events are held here. As the only BMX facility in the region, it can draw up to 2,000 people. The large lawn area acts as overflow parking.

The lighted Horse Arena has a grandstand and hosts 1-2 rodeos per month (mostly Mexican charro style) through the summer (May – October). It is the only public horse arena in the area.

Sacramento Tree Foundation has a tree farm at the park perimeter near the creek.

The park lacks restrooms and other critical amenities for an event area. There are port-a-potties. The Lion's Club has container storage there.

Recommendations

Improvements to improve the park's functionality for events and allow additional use during non-event times could make this park more valuable to the community.

- Add restrooms and picnic tables between the BMX and Horse Arena areas.
- Identify improvements to modernize the Horse Arena that would increase usage, such as improved stands, an announcer booth, and flood mitigation measures.
- Explore adding other amenities, such as frisbee golf, skate park, and bouldering or ropes course to compliment and activate the park when events are not occurring.
- Install fencing around the parking area that can be closed off and used as a dog park when the parking area is not in use.

CENTRAL PARK & HORSE ARENA

- Evaluate improvements to the parking area that will optimize the number of cars that can be accommodated including striping and surfacing (e.g., wood chips) that could also allow other uses (such as dog park or frisbee golf area etc).
- Consider improving the connection between Roy E. Hayer Park and Central Park to share parking and restrooms and encourage high schoolers to walk over.
- Work with Rio Linda Elverta Community Water District to discuss potential flood management solutions using green infrastructure.



CENTRAL PARK & HORSE ARENA

Explore adding frisbee golf, skate park, and bouldering or ropes course

Add restrooms and picnic tables

Modernize the Horse Arena and amenities

Establish a dog park when parking area is not in use

Evaluate improvements to parking area

Develop flood management solutions

Consider improving the connection between Roy E. Hayer and Central Park





CENTRAL PARK & HORSE ARENA

**Dog Park in Part-Time
Parking Lot**

Frisbee Golf

Skate Park



ROY E. HAYER PARK

Vision

A fun and well used park with space for unique experiences and enjoyment of nature.



Description

The park is adjacent to Dry Creek and the High School sports fields, and connected by a pedestrian and bike bridge to Central Park. The park is divided into two activity areas - a smaller space with a picnic areas and a restroom, a partially shaded lawn, and access to Dry Creek; and a second larger area across the parking lot with a Quarter Midget Race Track. The Quarter Midget Track is owned by the District which has established a long term lease with the Capital Quarter Midget Association.

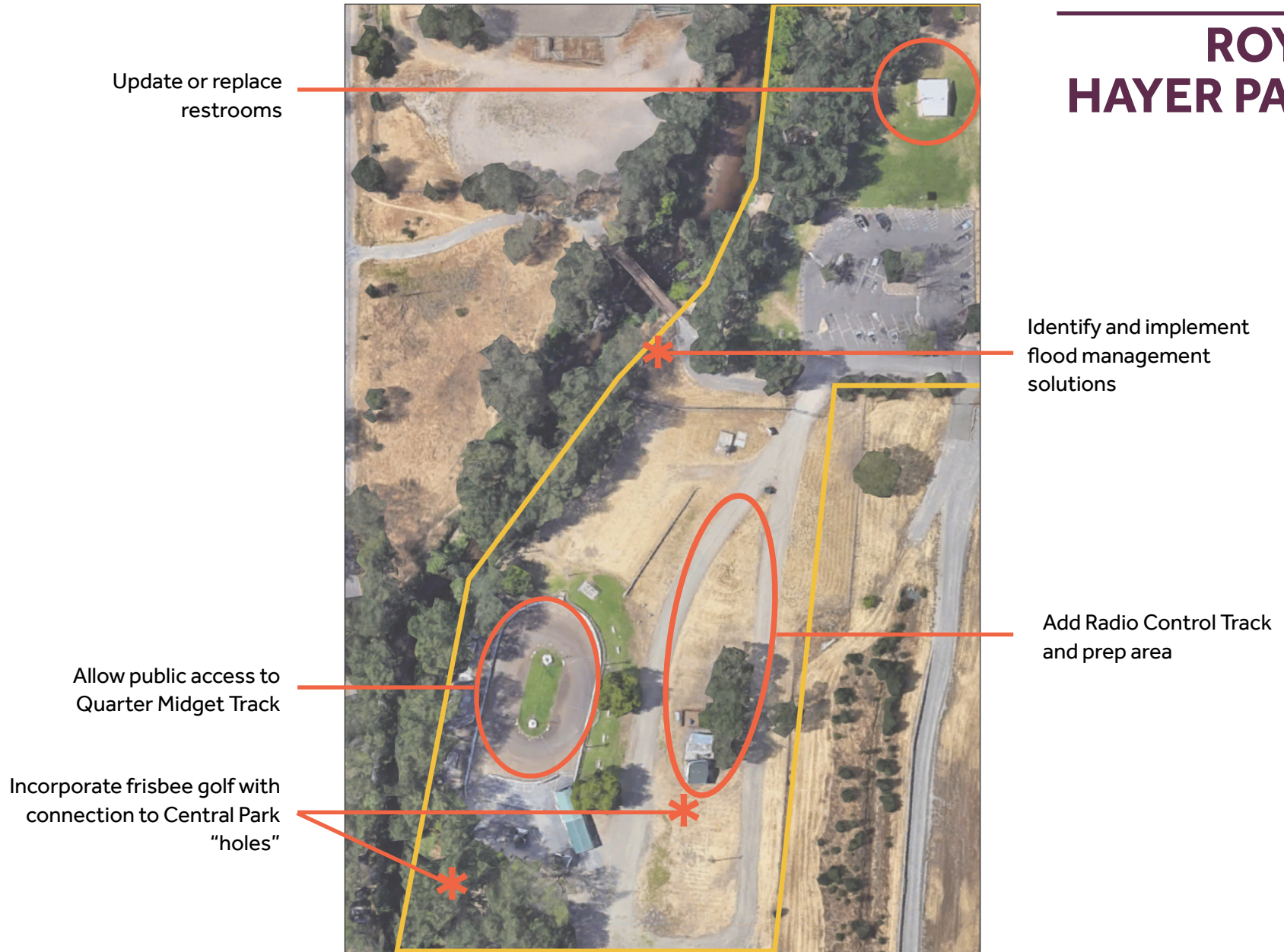
The smaller section is underused, and the Quarter Midget Track is currently limited to use by members and not available for general public use.

Recommendations

This park could benefit from more coordination with adjacent parks and facilities to maximize usage.

- Update or replace restrooms.
- Add a Radio Control Track and prep area near the Quarter Midget Track.
- Incorporate frisbee golf with connection to Central Park "holes".
- Work with a concessionaire to allow access to the Quarter Midget Track for the public and to increase use.
- Work with the County of Sacramento and Sacramento County Flood Control District to identify and implement flood management solutions using the parks, nature-based solutions and hybrid green/gray solutions.

ROY E. HAYER PARK





ROY E. HAYER PARK

RC Track

Quarter Midget
Track Prep Area

Picnic & Gathering
Area



DEPOT PARK

Vision

A vibrant community hub, focal point, and event space linking Main Street and Community Park.



Description

Depot Park is adjacent to the Community Center Park and has a rentable gazebo for group picnics with barbeque areas and a small building. The park connects Rio Linda's main commercial street with the District's Community Center and Park.

The Sacramento Northern Bike Trail passes through the park, including 25' or rights-of-way on either side of the trail. A large lawn is used for passive relaxation. The park is the site of the weekly Farmers' Market and Peddlers' Fair, as well as community festivals.

Recommendations

The following improvement could turn this park into a community hub, in a main thoroughfare.

- Redesign the area to better connect the community to Depot Park and to the Community Center Park and to activate the area as dynamic community gathering space, especially for activities like the Farmers' Market and community fairs.
- Add comfortable seating with shade.
- Allow for temporary closing of W. Front St. for community events and community activities to bring community members to Depot Park, Community Center Park, and the Community Center.
- Add a bocce ball court or other linear activities.
- Consider painting W. Front Street and adding other art elements to indicate its role as a community space.

DEPOT PARK

Better connect the community to create a gathering space and Farmers' Market space

Add comfortable seating with shade

Allow for temporary closing and painting of W. Front St for community events

Add bocce ball court and other linear activities





DEPOT PARK

Painted Street

Activating the
Space

Farmers' Market



COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

Vision

An enhanced community hub, offering activities for all ages and interests, from the skatepark to a community amphitheater.



Description

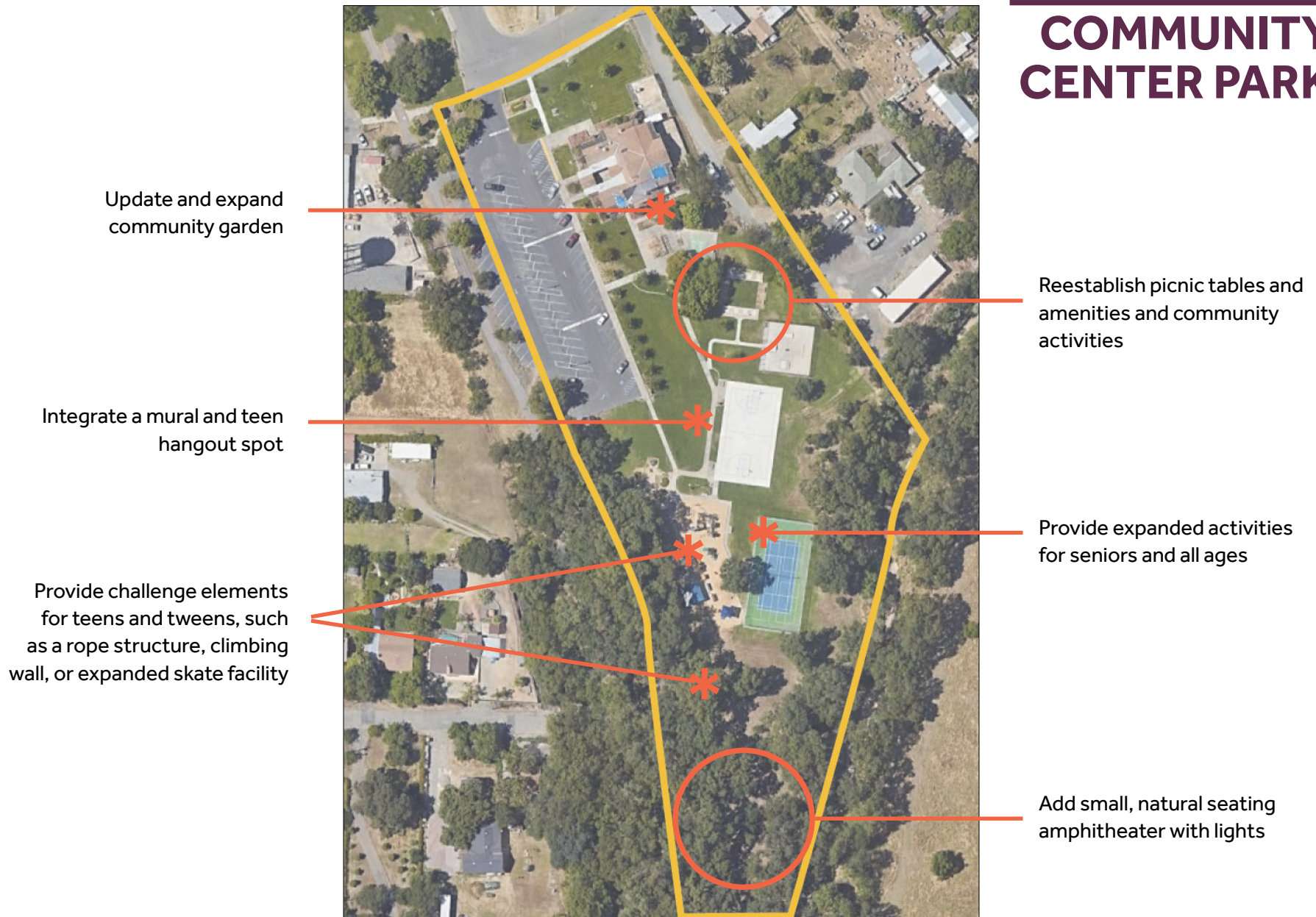
The Community Center Park, home to the District's Community Center and offices, is the heart of the District's programming and operations. The Park has multiple amenities for various ages, including a playground, tennis/pickleball, basketball court, skate park, horseshoes, shuffleboard, and picnic areas. It is located downtown, and is adjacent to the Sacramento Northern Bike Trail. There is ample parking. As a large community park, it contains some underused areas where additional elements could be located to fill community needs.

The park does have safety concerns with homeless and drug users.

Recommendations

- Add a small, natural seating amphitheater with lights.
- Provide expanded activities for seniors and all ages.
- Update and expand community garden in partnership with local gardeners. Explore community partners for maintenance and improvement of a pollinator garden and potential other demonstration gardens.
- Reestablish picnic tables and amenities for families and community activities. Consider rentable group picnic sites.
- Integrate a mural and teen hangout spot near the community center to provide a safe place for teens with the ability for ongoing oversight.
- Provide challenge elements for teens and tweens, such as a rope structure, climbing wall, or expanded skate facility.

COMMUNITY CENTER PARK





COMMUNITY CENTER PARK

Teen Playground

Community Garden

Amphitheater



MORAGA PARK

Vision

A comfortable and enjoyable neighborhood park with a range of amenities.



Description

Moraga Park is a small park located in a new development. The majority of the park is designated as a detention basin, but there is a small walking path around the park with benches and dog stations.

Recommendations

- Explore the possibility of natural or constructed play features within the detention basin for use in dry season.
- Add benches to the walking path.
- Add shade trees where possible.

MORAGA PARK





MORAGA PARK

Detention Basin

**Stormwater
Infrastructure**

Shade Trees



COMMUNITY CENTER

Vision

A vibrant place for the community to meet to recreate and be healthy.



Description

The Community Center is core to the District's programs, position in the community, and a central location for community events. The building contains RLERPD administrative offices, a commercial kitchen, meeting rooms, and a large hall that can be portioned for rentals. The Community Center hosts a range of events, programs, and senior programs and lunches.

The building was renovated and upgraded in 2016 and the roof and exterior were updated in 2021.

Recommendations

- Ensure lobby is welcoming and encourages community members to visit and meet.
- Enhance the internal courtyard with better seating, aesthetics, and amenities for parents and other users to wait and enjoy the space. This space could also house a ping pong table, chess tables or similar activity.
- Expand scheduled classes and programming opportunities for all ages activities.
- Better connect the main room to the outdoor area to improve the ability to rent the facility for parties and wedding events.



COMMUNITY CENTER

All Ages Programming

Activities in Courtyard

Welcoming Lobby



DEPOT BUILDING

Vision

A well-used and functional space for classes and meetings.



Description

The Depot Building is a replica of the original Rio Linda Station, used as a visitor center, meeting space, and location for District Board meetings.

The Depot Building can be rented for community events.

The main space is too small for many of the programs and so has limited ability for expansion and increased use.

Recommendations

- Update and regularly enhance historic displays.
- Extend programming to include teen programs and family game nights.



DEPOT BUILDING

Historic Displays

Updated Technology

Family Game Nights





Future Park Recommendations

Moving forward, the District needs to develop new parks in the northern part of the District, and will have opportunities to expand the parks and recreation opportunities in the two major specific plan areas - Grandpark and Elverta Specific Plan Area. The following are a few of the specific needs for the District.

All new parks and recreation buildings should be built to be easily accessible to the community. The park or recreation building should be linked either directly, or by a new connector, to the Sacramento Bike Trail.



Regulation Rectangular Sports Fields

Vision

Flexible rectangular sports fields to accommodate a variety of sports.

Desired Amenities

- Develop level turf area(s) for soccer, rugby, and lacrosse teams to play and hold games.
- Consult with community and AYSO representatives to maximize benefits of new facilities.
- Provide amenities for spectators or families, including seating with shade, restrooms, and parking.

Size and Location

Fields should be regulation size, so they can be used for not only practice, but also official games. There could be smaller fields alongside if room permits for drills and practice.



Community Aquatic Facility

Vision

A year around multi-use recreation pool

Desired Amenities

The community has expressed the desire for a multi-use recreational aquatic facility. A location and program elements need to be assessed as well as the capital and operating costs and feasibility of developing a community pool. Determine if it should be an indoor or outdoor pool. The following are some of the elements to consider.

- Not for competitive swimming
- Include 3-6 lap lanes
- Zero entry accessible

- Warmer water
- No diving well
- Slide or play features
- Locker and restroom facilities

Size and location

Size, format, and location of a pool need to be determined.

Other Considerations and Connections

A community aquatic center would require significant capital and long-range maintenance and operations funding. Fees for daily use and programs would need to be employed to help offset the ongoing costs.



Teen Park

Vision

Area for teens to hang out and have fun outdoors.

Desired Amenities

Develop a park area designed just for teens with large scale and challenge play equipment (climbing walls, zip lines, large rope structures, etc.) and areas that are welcoming for them to hangout.

Size and location

This element could be integrated into another park - particularly Community Park. The Teen Park could be fairly compact if the right equipment is provided. Consider a minimum of 0.5 acre up to 1 acre, ideally located adjacent to a skate park.



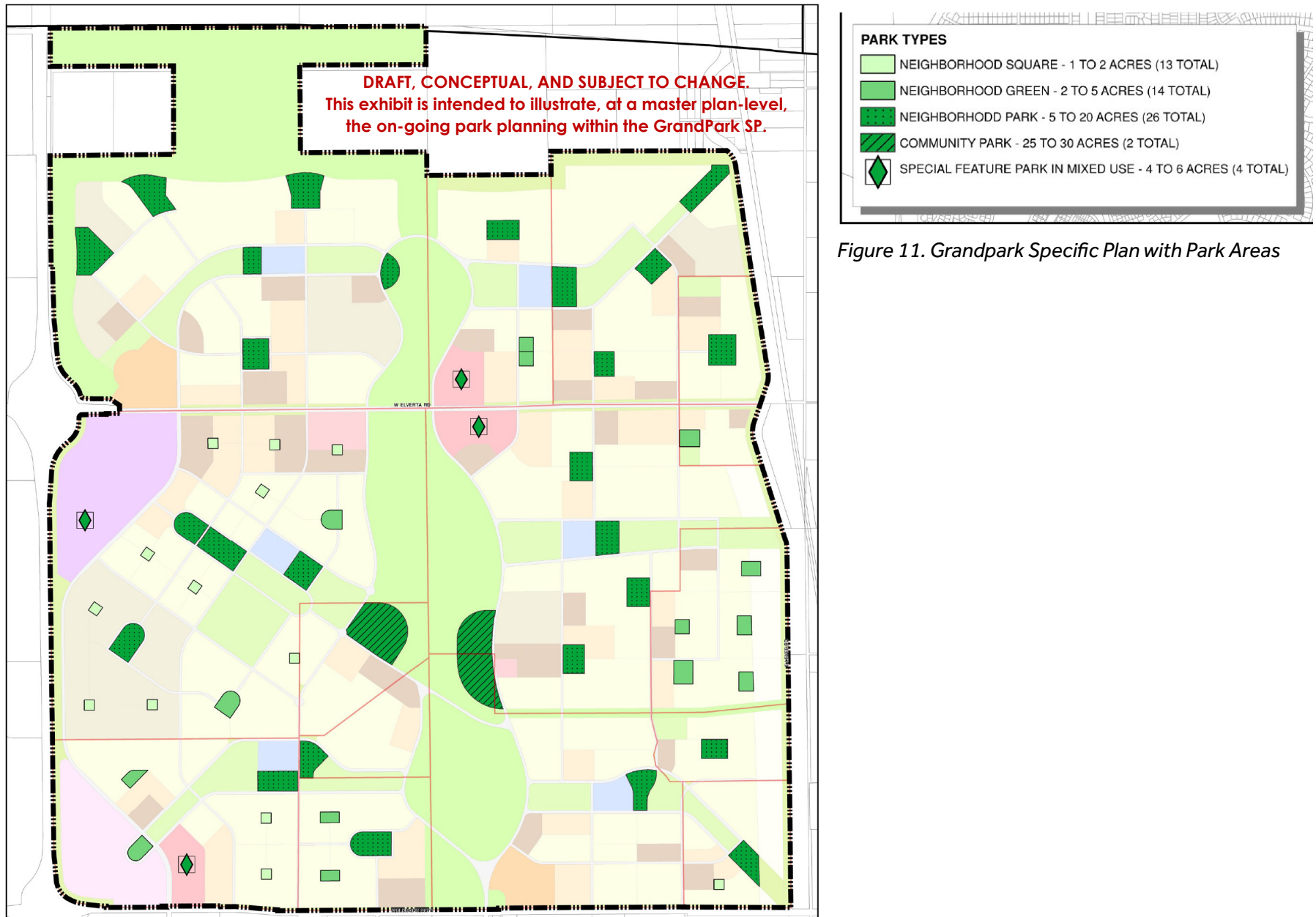


Figure 11. Grandpark Specific Plan with Park Areas

Grandpark

Grandpark is in the development process, although a timeline is not available. The District will manage the parks and recreation facilities located in the development once completed. Below are the amenities that are currently planned for Grandpark.

The Grandpark Specific Plan is a proposed +5,675 acre project located within the western portion of the District, generally between State Route 99 and East Levee Road. (See Figure 1) It is planned to include a combination of approximately 23,500 residential dwelling units, as well as office, commercial, open space, and public uses. It will include 59 parks totaling approximately 336 acres, and 1579 acres of open space. Grandpark's build out, including its park system, is envisioned to break ground within the next 10 years and be phased over a 30 year period.

Grandpark's parks are conceived as a well designed, integrated, and connected system, with a park accessible to all residents within a 10 minute walk. The planned parks consist of:

- **13 Neighborhood Squares** (1 - 2 acres) and **14 Neighborhood Greens** (2 - 5 acres) are intended to serve primarily their immediate neighborhood residents who live within ¼ mile. They will provide for relaxation, socializing, play, exercise, informal recreation and court sports.
- **26 Neighborhood Parks** (5 - 20 acres) will serve residents within ½ mile radius. These will accommodate a wider range of amenities, and will typically include a restroom, a multi-use sport field, larger spaces for group socializing, sports courts, and special amenities such as a sprayground, dog park, or skate park.
- **Two Community Parks** will serve the entire community.
- The **Sports Complex Community Park** (+30 acres)



is designed for active outdoor sporting needs with lighted, programmed fields including large multipurpose fields, adult-size softball and baseball fields, and full basketball courts. Support facilities include appropriate parking, a concession stand, shade structures, restrooms, and bleachers. Play equipment, a sprayground, and swings with a sports theme provide alternative play for spectators. A park maintenance building with an equipment yard is located on-site for RLERPD park staff.

- The **Aquatics and Community Center** (+25 acres) will offer active-living options and gathering spaces with easy access to nature along the Grand Parkway open space. The Aquatics Center is envisioned to operate in warm months during spring, summer, and fall. Pools with water slides and diving boards support recreational swimming, water fitness, and swim teams. The Community Center will include a large meeting room for rentals and business meetings; classrooms

for art, dance, and fitness programs; and a double- court gym for youth and adult sports programs. Outside, users enjoy reservable large and small shade structures, play equipment, a sprayground, a lighted tennis/pickleball complex, plus an amphitheater for special events. Support facilities include appropriate parking, restrooms, and equipment storage for all program and building needs.

- **Four Special Feature Parks** (4 – 6 acres) with unique themes and amenities differentiating them from other parks are envisioned to serve the entire community. Park themes would focus on appreciation of nature, universal play, plaza events and performances, and evening family activities.

The Elverta Specific Plan Area is a planned future development area in eastern Elverta. Although the Specific Plan was adopted in 2007, development has stalled, and the Plan has not moved forward. The Plan Area includes approximately 1,744 acres. Any future development under the Plan will be incremental, as the land has multiple owners.

The ultimate Plan Area build-out is capped at 4,500 dwelling units. The current Plan includes a 36.5 acre sports park, an 8.4 acre community center park, and five neighborhood parks of approximately 5 acres each. Approximately 178 acres of additional open space is planned in the form of drainage and utility corridors with trails.



Parks & Climate Resilience



Parks & Climate Resilience

"As the pace of climate change accelerates, parks can no longer be just single purpose public amenities. Parks must become multi-benefit assets to their immediately surrounding communities and the regions they are in."

NRPA Magazine, April 2022, Richard J. Dolesh.

The pace and severity of climate change will impact the District by increasing already persistent flooding as well as increasing the number of days of extreme heat. As indicated on the map on the following page, nearly every park in the District is located in a major flood zone. To date, the District has not been able to secure adequate funding to address these ongoing issues. While this plan is not focused on finding solutions for flooding or other climate impacts, it is essential that the District begin to plan and identify funding to help protect its assets and services for the community. This section is designed to help highlight those key challenges and to suggest potential ideas to inform grant and funding proposals.

Besides being places to enjoy nature, exercise, or relax, the District parks can address and be designed to better alleviate climate risks as well as help to protect the community's assets. Nature based solutions, often paired with "gray" or man-made solutions can mitigate the effects of these climate hazards, while also providing co-benefits to the community. **"Nature-based solutions" refers to the sustainable management and use of natural features and processes to tackle socio-environmental challenges. This chapter describes a number of nature-based solutions that may be considered in the District's parks.**

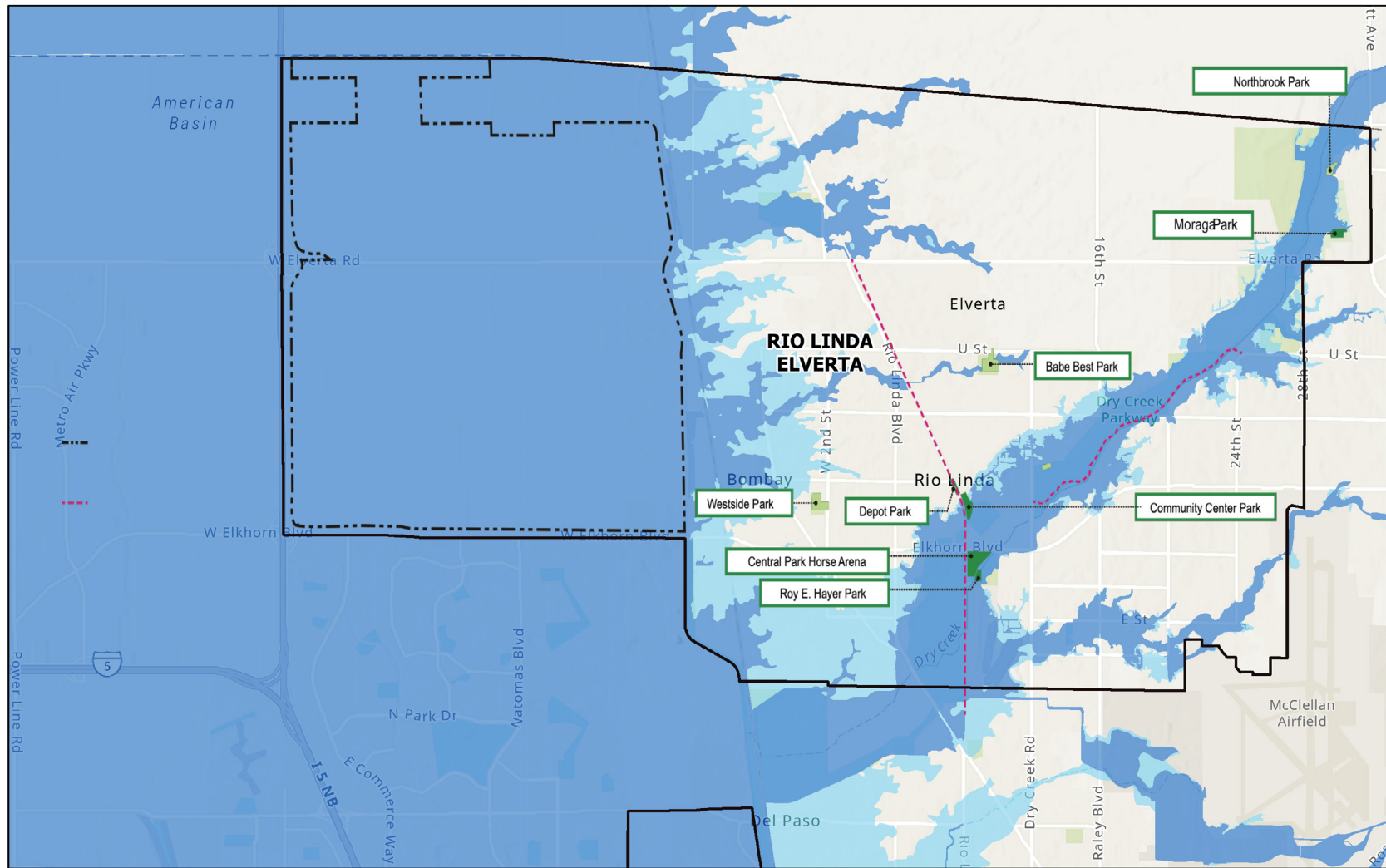


Rio Linda Flooding 2017

Background

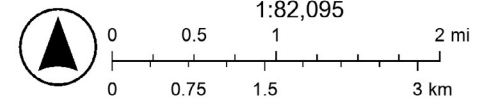
The communities of Rio Linda and Elverta have had a long history of periodic flooding along the various stream channels and drainage courses in the area. Much of the District lies within designated floodways, which include the stream channel and portions of the adjoining floodplain of the "100 year flood" flow. The major areas of flooding are generally along the three major drainage systems; Dry Creek, Rio Linda Creek and Steelhead Creek.

Due to several factors, the flooding in the District is worsening and negatively impacting the parks and the District's ability to invest in new and expanded amenities for the community. **Climate change** is causing more intense rainstorms, followed by long periods of drought. Additionally, upstream communities that are higher in elevation and on the same watershed have culverted portions of the creeks, increasing the speed and level of flooding in Rio Linda and Elverta.



9/14/2022

- 100-Year Flood Zones
- 500 - Year Zones
- 100-Year with Storm Surge
- World Hillshade



Esri, NASA, NGA, USGS, FEMA (<http://www.fema.gov/index.shtm>), County of Sacramento, California State Parks, Esri, HERE, Garmin, SafeGraph,

Figure 12. Rio Linda Elverta Flood Zones and Parks

Extreme heat, categorized as summertime temperatures that are much hotter or more humid than average, can be an issue for Rio Linda and Elverta. On average in Sacramento County, maximum temperatures exceed 90°F on 65.4 days. Extreme heat can not only be uncomfortable, but can cause heat-related illnesses, or even death. Older adults, the very young, and people with pre-existing conditions are at the highest risk. Since the District has a large older adult population, as well as health concerns, extreme heat needs to be considered when developing and improving parks and facilities.

The District will not be able to address these issues on its own and will require strong partnerships. Better understanding the District's and the parks' role in addressing flooding and extreme heat and

the potential solutions can help identify new funding and support, partnering with the Sacramento County Flood Control District, the County of Sacramento, and surrounding communities.

Potential Solutions

The District can and should explore integrating a range of potential nature based solutions the into the parks, especially those adjacent to streams and flood plains. The Plan focuses on nature-based solutions as the most cost effective and park appropriate. As illustrated in the graphic below, nature-based solutions often work together to create a more holistic approach.

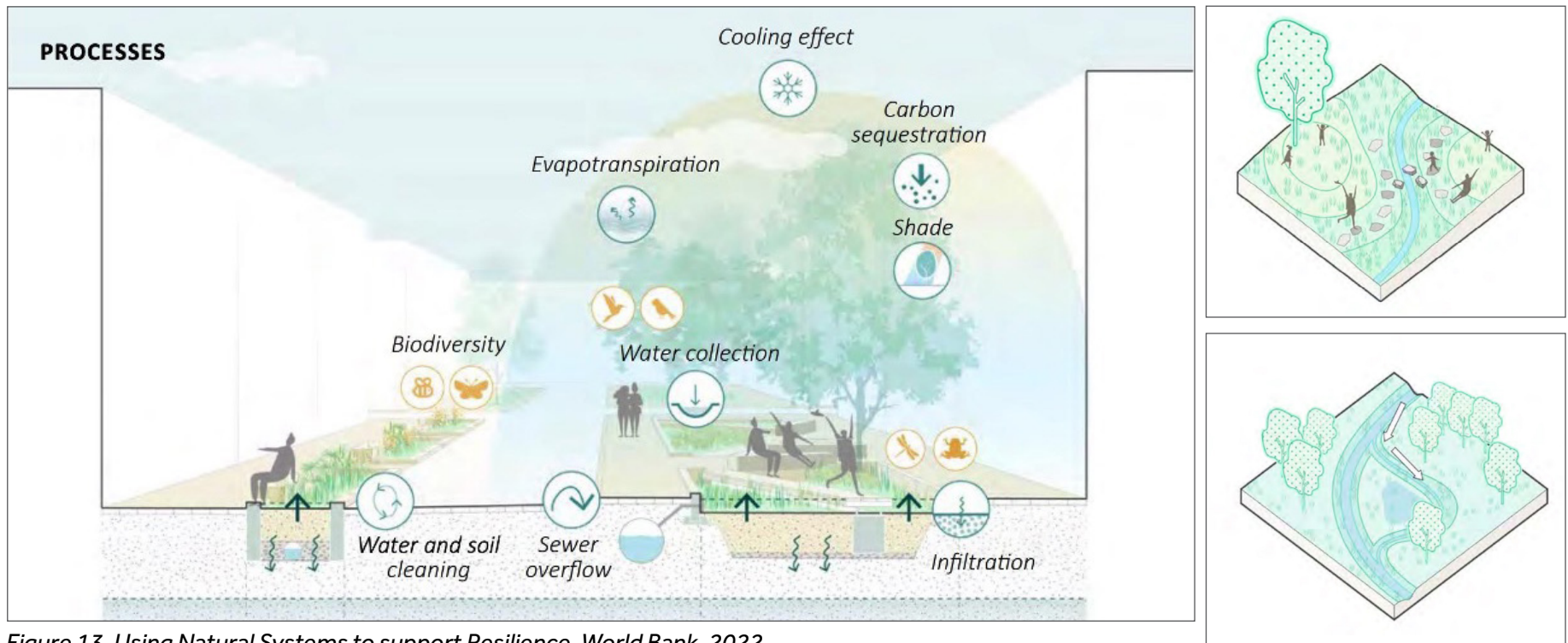


Figure 13. Using Natural Systems to support Resilience, World Bank, 2022



Bioswales



Pervious Pavement

Multi-benefit Solutions and Approach

Bioswales

Bioswales are long areas that allow stormwater to slow down and filter through the ground. They are usually large, long, curving areas of indented land filled with thick rooted native plants and rocks, placed near flood zones. They are best used in place of underground pipes and in areas untouched by concrete. The length of the bioswale allows water to spread out and filter more efficiently.

Bioswales move rain and stormwater to controlled locations and provide some filtration for pollutants. Since they require native plants and rocks, they are attractive and require little to no maintenance. Bioswales are implementable from the individual level to a more comprehensive level. One example of how they could be implemented in the District is between parks and parking lots, increasing the safety of the park and making it more aesthetically pleasing. According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, green infrastructure such as bioswales can reduce as much as 95 percent of major pollutants out of stormwater runoff, in addition can reduce stormwater runoff by as much as 90 percent.

Pervious Pavement

Pervious pavement is designed to allow slow percolation of storm runoff into the groundwater system. Impervious surfaces like concrete and buildings create storm water runoff and collection of water. Pervious pavement can be used instead of concrete on low traffic areas to allow percolation and filtration of water runoff without storm drains. Pervious pavement comes in many different forms depending on where it is used. For example, tiled pavement can be used on walkways, but finer grain material should be used on bike paths and parking lots. The different kinds of pervious material are:

porous asphalt, pervious concrete, permeable interlocking concrete pavers, and grid pavers.

As new parks are built, or existing parks receive renovations, pervious pavement systems should be considered by the District to reduce flooding of other pervious surfaces. Pervious pavement can be used in conjunction with bioswales, which would collect any rain that isn't able to penetrate the pavement.

Retention / Detention Ponds

Detention ponds are used in the District already. They hold water from flooding events or runoff from storms and slowly drain water into the ground to recharge ground water. Retention ponds always have water but can be filled to capacity when needed. Detention ponds, on the other hand, are mostly empty until needed. These can be placed in parks along with bioswales and rain gardens. Retention and detention ponds do best at the end of a slope and can be combined with rainwater harvesting techniques to be as effective as possible. They are considerably deeper than bioswales and rain gardens.

In many cases, detention basins can be integrated into the design of new parks, thus addressing stormwater management in addition to providing recreational opportunities. Because they are engineered to drain quickly, and are otherwise dry, they are usable for recreation for most of the year. Once stormwater projections have been calculated, a park may be designed with terraces to accommodate different flood levels. A terrace which detains a 5-10 year flood would be suitable for passive recreation, such as picnicking in a grassy meadow. A terrace which detains a 25 year flood could be suitable for sports fields or multi-purpose lawn. A 50-year flood terrace could accommodate sports courts. Parking, restrooms, lighting, and play areas should not be located in the lower terraces



Detention Pond Playground



Increased Stream Floodplains



Stream widening and restoration

Stream Restoration and Floodplains

Increasing riverine floodplains refers to restructuring river banks to a more natural form in order to mitigate flooding. Industrialization has led to the tightening and straightening of riverbeds as well as increased use of gray levees to prevent flooding. This leads to faster moving water with less room to flood and evolve naturally. Floodplain restoration is essential for flood management and will lead to health benefits like lowering urban heat, sequestering carbon, and increasing mindfulness within communities. With freer flowing water, sediment and nutrients will move naturally through ecosystems, replenishing resources and increasing overall well-being. Water flows will slow down, reducing erosion and flooding. Increasing floodplains/restoring them to what they were a hundred years ago is the most effective thing we can do to mitigate flooding and increase water health. Stream restoration may also include adding deeper areas of a stream for better support of water and habitat, preventing sediment

and erosion from blocking water ways, choosing vegetation that helps to stabilize stream beds and supports more intense flows. Some man-made enhancement may also be integrated.

Green Infrastructure

Development and management of green infrastructure to manage stormwater runoff and extreme rain events can help to alleviate persistent flooding, help to clean and treat runoff and support a healthier and cooler environment in the face of extreme heat. Parks and open space areas are key elements of a successful system if designed and managed as such. Creating turf areas and park spaces as areas to absorb water and manage it can help reduce the negative impacts of extreme weather and flooding. Green infrastructure can be added into the overall stormwater management system and can be developed along roadways, trails, and built into parks.

Tree Canopies

Tree canopies are planted tree communities of native or ecologically suited trees in parks and along roadways to reduce urban heat and flooding risks. Trees reflect solar radiation through photosynthesis, not only creating shade but reducing average temperatures as well. Temperatures drop during the day and significantly more at night. While pavement absorbs and stores heat, which is then radiated during the night, trees reflect and use sunlight. Additionally, trees establish healthy hydrologic circulation by filtering water, transferring, and holding it in soils.

The District should prioritize keeping tree canopies in existing and future developments as much as possible. Continue the partnership with the Sacramento Tree Foundation to plant shade trees in areas that are most exposed to sun. According to the National Park and Recreation Association, parks can act as a cooling oasis - as much as 17 degrees cooler than areas lacking trees and green space. In addition, the cooling benefits of parks can extend as far as a half-mile

from park boundaries, helping cool neighboring areas and reduce heat stress for residents.

Regenerative Landscaping Practices

Managing soils, plantings, and the overall landscape with regenerative practices is critical to building the health of the landscape, supporting better water management, and building resilience to drought and extreme heat. The District should evaluate and build a practice of regenerative landscape management practices for all of the parks. ReScape California offers a useful framework for local jurisdictions to develop and implement regenerative landscaping building on eight principles. The principles as illustrated in Figure 14 on the following page highlight the following:

Act Local - use and build upon local conditions, plants and processes;

Reduce Waste - avoid non-natives and invasive plants, and use salvaged and recycled materials;

Nurture Soil - healthy and well managed soil is the key to building resilience in parks, and to assisting in long-term health of the habitat, and increasing flood protection, as better soil can absorb more;

Sequester Carbon - healthy environments will sequester more carbon and help with climate change;

Save Water - selecting drought-tolerant plants and durable turfs, and utilizing mulch and compost will work together to make for more water resilient parks;

Protect Water & Air - use of permeable surfaces, minimizing stormwater runoff, using integrated pest management, and other elements will protect critical resources;

Create Habitat - ensure that biodiversity is supported with plant



Figure 14. ReScape California 8 Principles for Regenerative Landscapes. rescapeca.org

choices and practices that support beneficial insects, birds, butterflies, etc.

Implementation



Implementation

This Master Plan is intended as a living document, and a roadmap for the maintenance, improvement, and growth of the Rio Linda Elverta Recreation and Park District's parks, facilities, and programs over the next 20 years. This chapter provides criteria for evaluating recommended and potential future projects in order to prioritize the use of the District's resources. Projects will be implemented over time based on how they meet overall Plan goals and policies, and the additional criteria provided below.

Meeting the District's Vision

In determining the projects and activities that the District should move forward with, each project must be placed within the context of the District's Vision. It must be analyzed to evaluate how it fulfills the District's Goals and Policies and meets identified community needs. The Goals and Policies set forth in this Master Plan provide the initial basis for prioritizing recommended and potential future projects.



Prioritization Process

Prioritization of individual projects is essential for achieving an integrated, high-quality recreation and park system. With limited funding and resources, criteria must be established to determine which capital and maintenance projects to prioritize, as well as how to determine cost recovery and subsidy levels for programs and services. Available funding, resources, and partnerships must be considered, as well as the project's implications for ongoing maintenance and operations budget and staffing.

Capital and Maintenance Projects

To prioritize capital and maintenance projects resources, expenditures and benefits must be carefully weighed, and the overall value of each project must be analyzed. Potential projects must also be evaluated in light of potential targeted resources of funding or collaborative efforts. Prioritization should consider need, return on investment, and implications for maintenance and operations budgets. Establishing weighted criteria for evaluating potential projects will create a systematic approach to prioritization.

Categories to be considered should include:

Public Health and Safety/Wellness

- Does the project correct conditions that are safety hazards or code violations (e.g., unsafe equipment, seismic upgrade)?
- Does it provide safety and security for the users and property (e.g. visibility, lighting, gate, etc.)?
- Does it create awareness and recognition of health benefits?
- Does it help reduce impacts from climate change, flooding or extreme heat?

Access

- Does the project improve park access in an underserved community (e.g. new park, partnership agreement)?
- Does it correct ADA deficiencies?
- Does it improve a community park that is in a central location?
- Is it located along a pedestrian/bicycle corridor?

Protection of Infrastructure/Maintenance Efficiencies

- Does the project preserve the integrity of the District's existing infrastructure?
- Does it provide major repairs/renovations to an existing facility?
- Does it provide minor repairs/renovations to an existing facility?
- Do improvements reduce ongoing maintenance costs?
- Do improvements generate increased revenues for the District?
- Does it preserve natural settings and educate?

Maximize Park Usability

- Does the project improve or expand facilities for an underserved neighborhood?
- Does it improve potential for programs and services for teens, seniors, and families?
- Does it provide a specialized facility or element that is desired by the District-wide community (e.g. splash pad, disc golf course, amphitheater)?

Neighborhood Improvement/Enhancement

- Does the project improve the aesthetic and/or environmental quality of the District or neighborhood?
- Does it preserve, improve or enhance cultural, historical or natural resources?

Community Support

- Does the project have demonstrated support from the community?
- Has there been significant community input expressing the need for the project?
- Does the project support a park that is currently well used?
- Does it provide opportunities for engagement or volunteerism?

Collaborative Opportunities and Funding Availability

- Is District funding available?
- Is grant funding available?
- Is joint use or collaboration possible with outside public agencies (e.g., school districts, Sacramento County Parks)?
- Will it provide collaborative opportunities with non-profit organizations (e.g., RLE Historical Society, Chamber of Commerce, Sacramento Tree Foundation)?

Programs and Services

District programs and services are generally provided at varying levels of subsidy and cost recovery. To best fulfill the District's Vision and Goals, the programs and services should be evaluated through the lenses of core community values and the extent and level of community benefit provided. Further, cost recovery objectives should be reviewed in the context of affordability and inclusion.

Following is a framework from which to identify core services, to prioritize allocation of subsidies and resources, and to determine programs and services that should recover full costs or be provided in partnership with other entities or by the private sector. The principle is that programs and services provided by the District should align with the Vision and Goals of the District, which reflect the values of the community. A key element is the assessment of who benefits from the programs and services - those with the widest community benefits form the foundation of the District's core services, and more specialized services should be considered as resources allow. By categorizing each program and service according to how it relates to the District Vision and Goals, and how widespread is the benefit, allocation of public funds can be rationally determined.

Mostly Community Benefit

Services which carry out multiple aspects of the District's Vision and mostly benefit the community, are core services. Core programs and services should generally be offered at no or minimal cost to the community. These might include:

- Continuing to provide parks in accordance with the District's acreage and access goals as the District population grows
- Continuing the high quality of maintenance of the District's parks, facilities, and trails
- Considering a scholarship program to reach more low-income children, youth, and seniors, as well as adults



- Continuing to sponsor community-wide events
- Expanding outreach to broaden participation in recreation programs
- Providing public art
- Meeting the needs of the District's diverse population

Considerable Community Benefit

Services which address multiple aspects of the District's Vision through opportunities for individual participation and basic skill development form the next level of services. Costs should be at least partially offset by participant fees, but the Community benefit justifies significant subsidy. These might include:

- Classes and activities for seniors
- Early childhood programs

- Water safety and beginning swim lessons
- Health and wellness classes
- Community gardens
- Yoga/exercise in the parks
- Beginning dance or music classes for children and youth
- Computer/digital literacy classes

Balanced Individual/Community Benefit

While these services do carry out elements of the District's Vision and provide community benefit, there is a higher level of individual benefit, as the focus is more specialized. Fees for these programs should recover a higher percentage of the costs than those in the previous categories. These might include:

- camps and excursions
- youth and adult sports leagues

Considerable Individual Benefit

Specialized services appealing to a narrower group of participants should cover a high percentage, if not all, of direct and indirect costs.

These might include:

- Activities requiring specialized equipment or supplies (e.g. golf, pottery)
- Adult enrichment classes

Mostly Individual Benefit

These are services which the District is able to provide, but either fall outside the District's Vision, are also provided by private entities, or can generate revenue to support other programs and services.

These might include:

- Facility rentals for private events

After determining where on the spectrum specific programs and services may be classified, a cost recovery plan should be developed to support the District's delivery of programs and services. Fees should be set at a rate that encourages repeat, on-going use with consideration given to the users' ability to pay. Specific cost recovery goals and user fees should be continually monitored.

A cost recovery plan will identify opportunities to offset maintenance and operations costs with user fees. The District should prepare a plan that identifies appropriate user fees taking the following into consideration:

- Comparative analysis of fees of local private, non-profit, and public providers of similar facilities
- Actual costs of operations and maintenance of facilities

Priorities & Phasing

The matrix that follows lists recommended actions for the District to take. This matrix is intended as a snapshot and should be reviewed and updated annually. It is not all inclusive, and it is important that the District remain flexible and nimble to take advantage of opportunities that may arise, changing trends, and shifting community priorities.

The matrix is organized into sections for park/facility-specific recommendations, recreation programming, and operations and management. Each recommendation is followed by:

- Alignment with District Goals (1 – Connectivity, 2 - Health and Wellness, 3 - Sustainable and Resilient, 4 - Unique, Sense of Place, 5 - Inclusive and Equitable, 6 – Partnerships)
- Time Frame (Near Term – Within 2 years, Mid Term – 2-4 years, Long Term - 5+ years)
- Relative Costs – order of magnitude (\$ - within current budget, \$\$ - some additional funding needed, \$\$\$ - identified funding sources necessary)

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Parks & Facilities			
Babe Best Park			
Provide ADA access to all fields, the parking lot, playground, and pathways.	1, 5	Mid Term	\$\$
Create a barrier between the playground and parking lot to ensure safety for children and parents.	2	Near Term	\$
Add a climbing wall or other functional art.	4	Mid Term	\$\$
Create a shaded picnic area to encourage families and others to use the park during ballgames, and separate form the ballfield.	2, 5	Near Term	\$\$
Incorporate plantings, shade, and seating around the playground.	2	Near Term	\$\$
Explore potential approaches, especially nature-based solutions, to improve drainage and mitigate flooding.	3, 6	Long Term	\$\$
Consider improved ballfield and parking lighting, with cut-offs to prevent spillover to residential properties, and clearly designated hours of use.	2	Long Term	\$\$\$
Provide additional bike racks.	1, 2	Near Term	\$
Explore partnership with DOT to pave and stripe 10th Street ROW for diagonal parking to meet needs during games.	5, 6	Long Term	\$
Consider expanding partnership with the adjacent church to provide additional recreation features on the unused church property.	2, 5, 6	Near Term	\$

Key

Alignment with District Goals (1 – Connectivity, 2 - Health and Wellness, 3 - Sustainable and Resilient, 4 - Unique, Sense of Place, 5 - Inclusive and Equitable, 6 – Partnerships)

Time frame (Near Term – Within 2 years, Mid Term – 2-4 years, Long Term - 5+ years)

Relative Costs – order of magnitude (\$ - within current budget, \$\$ - some additional funding needed, \$\$\$ - identified funding sources necessary)

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Parks & Facilities			
Community Center Park			
Add a small, natural seating amphitheater with lights.	4	Long Term	\$\$\$
Provide expanded activities for seniors and all ages.	2, 5	Near Term	\$
Provide challenge elements for teens and tweens, such as rope structure, climbing wall, or expanded skate facility.	2, 4, 5	Mid Term	\$\$
Update and expand community garden in partnership with local gardeners. Explore community partners for maintenance and improvement of a pollinator garden and potential other demonstration gardens.	2, 3, 6,	Near Term	\$
Reestablish picnic tables and amenities for families and community activities.	5	Near Term	\$
Integrate a mural and teen hangout spot near the Community Center to provide a safe place for teens with the ability for ongoing oversight.	4, 5	Mid Term	\$\$
Depot Park			
Redesign the area to better connect the community and activate the area as dynamic community gathering space.	2, 5	Near Term	\$\$
Allow for temporary closing of W. Front Street for community events and community activities.	1, 4, 5	Near Term	\$
Add comfortable seating with shade.	5	Near Term	\$
Add a bocce ball court or other linear activities.	2, 4	Long Term	\$\$\$
Consider painting W. Front Street and adding other art elements to indicate its role as a community space.	1, 4, 5	Mid Term	\$

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Parks & Facilities			
Central Park and Horse Arena			
Add restrooms and picnic tables between the BMX and Horse Arena areas.	5	Mid Term	\$\$\$
Identify improvements to modernize the Horse Arena that would increase usage, such as improved stands, announcer booth, and flood mitigation measures.	3, 4, 6	Mid Term	\$\$\$
Add other amenities, such as frisbee golf, skate park, and bouldering or ropes course.	2,	Long Term	\$\$
Install fencing around the parking area that can be closed off and used as a dog park when the parking area is not in use.	4, 5	Near Term	\$\$
Evaluate paving, striping, and potential parking improvements on site to optimize parking spaces and usable activity space.	3	Near Term	\$
Consider improving the connection between Roy E. Hayer Park and Central Park to share parking and restrooms and encourage high schoolers to walk over.	1	Mid Term	\$
Work with Rio Linda Elverta Community Water District to discuss potential flood management solutions using green infrastructure.	3, 6	Near Term	\$

Key

Alignment with District Goals (1 – Connectivity, 2 - Health and Wellness, 3 - Sustainable and Resilient, 4 - Unique, Sense of Place, 5 - Inclusive and Equitable, 6 – Partnerships)

Time frame (Near Term – Within 2 years, Mid Term – 2-4 years, Long Term - 5+ years)

Relative Costs – order of magnitude (\$ - within current budget, \$\$ - some additional funding needed, \$\$\$ - identified funding sources necessary)

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Parks & Facilities			
Westside Park			
Add a walking trail around the perimeter of the ballfield, including markers to help track distances and exercise equipment.	1, 2, 5	Mid Term	\$\$
Add functional art at the dog park or at the front of the park.	4, 5	Long Term	\$\$
Add area for cornhole.	2, 5	Near Term	\$
Improve the dog park with shade, better signage, and amenities such as seating areas.	2, 3	Mid Term	\$
Continue to add non-sports-oriented amenities to increase appeal to a larger population; and to serve family members who are watching sports.	4, 5	Near Term	\$\$
Consider adding bike racks to improve connectivity.	1, 2	Near Term	\$
Explore nature-based solutions for flooding.	3	Near Term	\$\$\$
Moraga Park			
Explore the possibility of play features when detention area is not in use.	2, 5	Mid Term	\$\$
Add benches to the walking path.	2, 5	Near Term	\$
Add shade trees where possible.	2, 3	Mid Term	\$

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Parks & Facilities			
Roy E. Hayer Park			
Update or replace restrooms.	5	Near Term	\$\$\$
Add a Radio Control Track and prep area near the Quarter Midget Track.	4	Long Term	\$\$\$
Incorporate frisbee golf with connection to Central Park "holes".	2, 4	Mid Term	\$\$
Upgrade softball fields.	2, 3	Mid Term	\$\$
Work with a concessionaire to improve access to Quarter Midget Track for the public and to increase use.	3, 4, 5, 6	Near Term	\$
Work with County of Sacramento and Flood Control District to identify and implement flood management solutions using the parks, nature-based solutions and hybrid green/gray solutions.	3, 6	Near Term	\$
Northbrook Park			
Create better connections to Dry Creek frontage for an additional natural park element.	1, 3, 4	Near Term	\$
Add signage about the tree program and stewardship.	3, 6	Near Term	\$
Update exercise stations and signage for use with a walking path that can be used for fitness.	2	Mid Term	\$\$
Continue the high level of maintenance and minor improvements.	3, 5, 6	Near Term	\$
Add natural play features.	4	Near Term	\$
Improve and add picnic areas.	2, 5	Mid Term	\$

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Parks & Facilities			
Depot Building			
Improve spaces for classes.	5, 6	Mid Term	\$\$
Enhance historic displays.	4	Mid Term	\$
Extend programming to include teen programs and family game nights.	5	Near Term	\$
Community Center			
Ensure lobby is welcoming and encourages community members to visit and meet.	1, 5	Near Term	\$
Enhance the internal courtyard with better seating, aesthetics, and amenities for parents and other users to wait and enjoy the space.	4, 5	Mid Term	\$\$
Expand scheduled classes and programming opportunities for all ages activities.	2, 5	Near Term	\$
Better connect the main room to the outdoor area to improve the ability to rent the facility for parties and wedding events.	3, 5	Mid Term	\$\$

Key

Alignment with District Goals (1 – Connectivity, 2 - Health and Wellness, 3 - Sustainable and Resilient, 4 - Unique, Sense of Place, 5 - Inclusive and Equitable, 6 – Partnerships)

Time frame (Near Term – Within 2 years, Mid Term – 2-4 years, Long Term - 5+ years)

Relative Costs – order of magnitude (\$ - within current budget, \$\$ - some additional funding needed, \$\$\$ - identified funding sources necessary)

Description	Goal	Time Frame	Cost
Programs			
Expand programming for adults, such as masters swimming, cooking, art and music classes.	2, 3, 5, 6	Near Term	\$
Add family based programming, such as mommy and me classes.	2, 5	Near Term	\$
Expand senior programs, such as exercise classes.	2, 5	Near Term	\$
Expand offerings of Community events.	1, 3, 5, 6	Mid Term	\$\$
Provide additional opportunities for art and education in parks, such as performance art, painting, nature walks, etc.	4, 6	Near Term	\$
Operations and Maintenance			
Continue the District's high quality maintenance to ensure that parks are attractive and welcoming.	1, 3, 4	Near Term	\$\$
Work with County agencies to address issues of homelessness that impact the District's parks and the County's trails that connect to the parks.	1, 2, 5, 6	Near Term	\$
Expand and enhance existing partnerships with County agencies, School Districts, non-profits and private sector entities.	3, 5, 6	Near Term	\$
Explore opportunities for new partnerships to expand recreational opportunities for District residents.	3, 5, 6	Near Term	\$
Incorporate green infrastructure to address stormwater management.	3	Near Term	\$\$
Explore options for creek restoration and green infrastructure to mitigate flooding effects.	3, 6	Long Term	\$\$\$
Increase tree planting in parks to provide shade and mitigate increasing heat events.	3, 6	Near Term	\$

Funding Strategies

Assessments

The District receives the majority of its stable funding stream from property taxes collected and disbursed by the County. As new development occurs, the District receives Park Development Impact Fees as well. The District is eligible to create special assessment districts, such as Landscape and Lighting Districts, wherein property owners are assessed an annual amount dedicated to the upkeep of their parks and streetscapes. This type of assessment must be approved by vote of the impacted property owners, which is a significant challenge. To successfully establish an assessment district, the District must actively involve its citizens and communicate the many and varied benefits they enjoy from their parks. The District must outreach to property owners and present a clear case for the benefits that the park system provides them, and the need for the requested funding.

Benefits of parks and recreation:

- Improved physical health and mental health
- Places to relax and socialize
- Well maintained parks increase property values
- Attract non-residents to the area who spend money on local businesses
- Safe and interesting places to hang out and quality recreation programming positively impact youth and reduce delinquency
- Historic, artistic, and natural features can function as outdoor classrooms and provide inspiration
- Mitigate stormwater and flooding
- Mitigate extreme heat impacts

Government and Foundation Grant Funding

Governmental grants have historically provided a substantial source of capital for park and recreation agencies. A number of private foundations and non-profit organizations also provide capital grants for park and recreation projects. Most grant programs have become extremely competitive. A strong grant-writing and grants management program is critical to identifying, making applications, and securing grant funding. With limited staff, the District should be strategic about the grants it pursues.

While there are various grants available specifically for park and recreation projects, grant programs with other focus areas may also support park and recreation projects that provide multiple benefits, such as environmental resilience and sustainability, health and wellness, habitat preservation or development, and open space protection. Recent federal legislation is allocating significant funding for projects that plan and design improved trail and greenways, use nature-based solutions to address stormwater management, create climate-smart rural communities, conserve public lands and restore ecosystems, and plant trees. Many potential District projects can fulfill these goals and be competitive for funding. A number of governmental grants, such as Land and Water Conservation Fund grants, are administered through the State of California and include weighted criteria that consider whether a proposed project benefits a disadvantaged community. At the time of this report, the State's Community FactFinder website indicates that Depot Park, the Community Center, Community Center Park, Central Park and Horse Arena, and Roy E. Hayer Park are within a half mile of an identified disadvantaged community as well as a severely disadvantaged community, thus increasing the possibility of grant funding for projects at those parks and facilities.

Leverage Resources

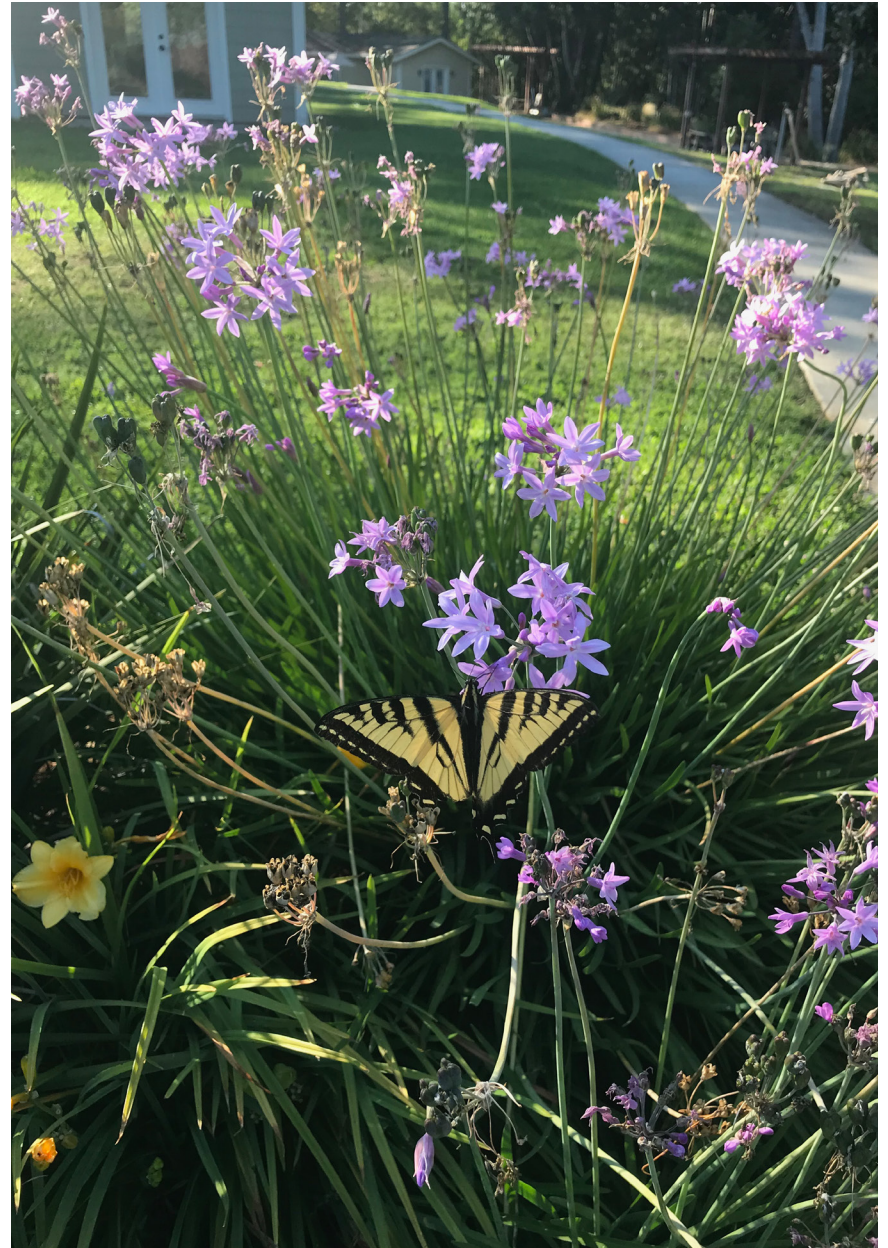
Many grants have matching fund requirements. Leveraging resources made available through private fund raising or other sources will increase grant revenues that would otherwise be unavailable. Examples of resource leveraging include public/private partnerships, and volunteerism. Phasing projects and making them manageable sometimes increases the opportunity to leverage resources. Development of the Class I Multi-Use Trails along the Sacramento Northern Rail Corridor and the Dry Creek Parkway are examples of transforming once unused swaths of land into valuable community assets with the help of partners and leveraging resources. These trails provide valuable connections between neighborhoods, parks, and schools.

Volunteer Community Leadership

Volunteers may be engaged for park maintenance and operations. Although they cannot come close to compensating for the funds needed to provide professional park services, volunteer efforts can help to stretch existing revenues. Nonprofit clubs and organizations can provide further volunteer resources. An example of an active organization in the District is the Rio Linda Elverta Little League, which helps to maintain the Babe Best Park ballfields.

A further benefit of involving the public in park stewardship is a strengthening of sense of community, and an increased awareness of the need for funds to maintain and operate parks. This can help to build the public support necessary to enact an assessment or other revenue measure for park operations, as discussed above.

A successful individual donor campaign typically requires strong, visible community leaders who will both “give and get.” These individuals can, with proper support, provide endorsement, access to wealth, and a sense of enthusiasm in an otherwise crowded fundraising marketplace.



Naming, Sponsorships, and Adopt-a-Park Programs

Another method of securing private funding is through sponsorship. Many events, facilities and programs lend themselves to business sponsorships that provide visibility and generate good will for the businesses concerned. The District's events such as the Eggstravaganza, or Movies in the Park/Pool as well as other community-wide events are prime examples of sponsorship opportunities.

The District should provide opportunities for residents to provide targeted funding for the maintenance, improvement, or addition to a specific park. This can be formalized by working with a Friends of the Parks group or establishing an adopt-a-park program. Programs whereby citizens may donate funds for installation of a bench, tree or other park improvement in recognition and commemoration of a person, event, group, or organization can enhance and inspire. These programs may not generate substantial funding but can provide a positive tool for engagement, stewardship of parks, and a sense of community. The neighbors of Northbrook Park for example, have undertaken stewardship of the park, in terms of maintaining security and keeping eyes on the park. A "Friends of the Parks" organization can also provide the District with additional fundraising capacity for specific targeted projects, or for general support, whether by memberships, hosting fundraising events, or being a conduit for soliciting donations of funds, in-kind materials or equipment, or services.

Legacy giving is the number one form of giving in the U.S. Such a program may be an additional source of funding for the District's Recreation and Parks. Funds may be designated for operations as well as for capital projects.

Environmental Efficiencies and Rebates

The emphasis on energy-efficient systems and buildings with cost-effective design is a major factor in the long-term sustainability of costs. However, these systems typically have greater initial costs and savings are leveraged over the life of the building and its systems. The District should continue to use cost-effective designs in all park and facility designs and renovations, and a LEED policy should be established. There are local (such as PG&E), state, and federal rebates that are sometimes available to offset these costs. The District should take advantage of these opportunities as they are available.

Public and Private Partnerships

Partnership with private and public organizations, including users, and even some vendors, can generate resources for facility operations and improvements. The District should expand and enhance partnerships with government entities, the county, agencies, non-profits, and other providers (and facility owners) to assist with offering programs, sharing maintenance efforts, or sharing facilities. Partners may include Twin Rivers Unified and Elverta Joint Elementary School Districts, as well as Gibson Ranch Park, Dry Creek Parkway, Rio Linda Elverta Historical Society and others. In some cases, the District has entered into a contract with a private concessionaire, allowing the concessionaire to operate and maintain facilities within the District's parks. Lease agreements such as the leases for operation of Capitol Quarter Midget Track and Elkhorn BMX, provide desired activities on District properties, as well as generating income to support the District's ongoing maintenance and operations. The District could explore other income generating leases such as cell towers placement in appropriate park locations. A concrete pad with power and water hookups could be a source of rental income from vendors who could set up to sell food or other goods and services at park facilities.

Private Nonprofit Hospital Funding

Health and wellness is a primary focus of the District. Private nonprofit hospitals within California must provide charitable care and other benefits to their communities in order to maintain tax exempt status. To fulfill this requirement, hospitals must work with public health agencies and other members of the community to assess the community's health needs and develop a plan for addressing those needs. If expenditures on park and playground infrastructure and programming are needed to advance the health of the community, those expenditures can qualify as community benefit activities. The District should explore working with local public health agencies, school districts and community organizations to ensure that the hospitals such as Sutter Health's Sutter Medical Center Sacramento and Dignity Health's Mercy San Juan Medical Center are aware of the critical importance of recreational facilities and the community benefit of supporting those facilities, and work to include those under the umbrella of their community benefit obligations pursuant to state and federal requirements.