

**PARKS AND
RECREATION ELEMENT**
City of Sutter Creek General Plan

**SUTTER CREEK GENERAL PLAN
Parks and Recreation Element**

INTRODUCTION

Statutory Requirements There is no State requirement that a local general plan contain a parks and/or recreation element. The State's Public Resources Code does however require that "Every city and county shall consider the demands for trail oriented recreational use (Section 6016)."

City's Purpose The City's purpose in including a Parks and Recreation Element in its General Plan is to establish and maintain a comprehensive program to insure adequate public parks and trails are developed and maintained as the City grows. Adequate parks and trails systems will serve to benefit public health, enhance the quality of life in Sutter Creek and complement the goals and objectives of other general plan elements especially the Conservation/Open Space and Circulation Elements.

Format The format of the Parks and Recreation Element includes a brief assessment of existing parks and recreational facilities in the City and planning area. This assessment is followed by a brief description of policies and programs that are currently in place to acquire, develop and maintain parks and recreational facilities in the City.

Following the discussion of current facilities and programs, the Element addresses needs and opportunities for expanding and maintaining parks and a trail system as the City grows. Input for this Element was provided by the City's General Plan Task Forces #2 and #3. The Task Forces identified each of the following types of parks as being needed within the 20 year planning horizon:

- a regional park/sports complex,
- community park(s),
- neighborhood parks,
- linear parkway(s),
- a perimeter greenbelt/recreational trail, and
- an interlinking bicycle and pedestrian trail network.

After a discussion of the needs and opportunities for acquiring and developing each of these types of facilities, the Element contains a list of goals, policies, objectives, and implementation measures which constitute the framework of a Citywide program to meet the above stated purpose of this Element.

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EXISTING PARKLANDS, FACILITIES AND POLICIES

Parks and Facilities	The City presently owns and maintains approximately 3.25 acres of parklands. These parklands include a playground facility on Bryson Drive near Sutter Hill and a ball field, playground and picnic facility (Cribb's Field and Minnie Provis Park) behind City Hall between Church Street and the Creek. Although 3.25 acres of parklands serving a current estimated population of 1,835 meets the minimum State recommended ratio of 1 acre per 1000 residents, it is considered inadequate by the City.
School Facilities	Outdoor recreational facilities at schools in the City are also made available for public recreation. Use of school facilities is consistently strained however because there is so much demand being generated by youth soccer, the Softball Association, Little League, persons wanting to play tennis, etc. Often the schools own needs preclude their use by the general public. The school's <u>Master Plan for Development</u> calls for a consolidation rather than an expansion of high school facilities over the next 20 years which will worsen the situation unless the new elementary school to be located in Sutter Creek includes sufficient recreational facilities that are available to the public.
Parkland Dedication/ In-Lieu Ordinance	The City has adopted a parkland dedication/in-lieu fee (Quimby) ordinance for the purpose of acquiring and developing additional recreational grounds and facilities in the City. Under the ordinance new residential developments must either dedicate land or pay an in-lieu fee (or a combination, at the option of the City) based upon a ratio of 5 acres per 1000 residents anticipated in the development. The ordinance will, over time, go a long way toward establishing the multifaceted parks and trails program outlined in the following text. However, additional resources will also be required.
Cost vs. Revenue Programs	The cost for a regional park, for example, may exceed the in-lieu revenues obtained by the ordinance. Also, since some parks and recreational areas may be considered open space in accordance with the General Plan's Conservation and Open Space Element, developments may tend to meet their Quimby ordinance requirements at the same time they meet their open space requirements thereby reducing the overall effectiveness of the Quimby ordinance as a means to generate in-lieu revenues. This could mean the City would need additional revenue sources, especially for the purpose of developing and maintaining park and recreational facilities. The Public Services and Facilities Element calls for a citywide long term capital improvement program and funding strategy which is to take into consideration the costs for developing and maintaining parks and trails as well as other components of public services and facilities.

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Maintenance The Quimby ordinance is not designed to provide revenues for ongoing maintenance costs that will increase as an expanded parks and trail system is established. The City presently spends approximately \$15,000 per year maintaining its 3.25 acres of parklands (approximately \$7.50 per resident). If the planned ratio of parklands per residents is increased to approach 5 acres per resident and if open space requirements in the Conservation/Open Space Element tend to add additional public lands, this cost per resident ratio for maintenance will increase.

Liability Liability insurance may also be a significant ongoing cost factor. Task Force #2 provided research which indicated that although liability costs and concerns can be reduced so that they are not prohibitive, liability insurance will still likely be a cost factor worth consideration. An expanded parks and trail system will also add to demands upon police protection services.

PROJECTED NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Regional Park/Sports Complex The City's General Plan Task Forces identified the need for a fairly large regional park facility. Before the end of the 20 year planning period (by 2014), growth in the City and entire western Amador County region will increase demands such that a regional park and/or sports complex will be needed. The facility should include baseball and softball diamonds, grass outfields adequate for soccer and other activities, restrooms, concessions, night-time lighting, seating and parking facilities. The facility could also include playground and picnic facilities and be designed to serve outdoor entertainment purposes as well. The Sutter Hill/ Martell area is identified as the area where such a facility should be located consistent with the Land Use Element and regional access factors.

It is possible the regional park/sports complex could be part of a community college or county complex in the Sutter Hill/Martell area. The City and/or County could also consider a plan whereby new commercial and industrial land uses in the Sutter Hill/Martell area are required to contribute land or in-lieu fees toward the facility. The facility should require a cooperative effort including the County and City of Jackson. The facility operators (City or other) would likely charge user fees to defray ongoing costs.

A regional park/sports complex would reduce the burden upon smaller "community" parks and school facilities in the planning area. Until such a park is available, community parks and school facilities will continue to fill this need.

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Community Parks Additional "community parks" are an immediate need that will become more serious if definite plans for a regional park do not develop. The City presently has one park that fits the general definition of a community park; Minnie Provis Park, near City Hall. The school's recreational facilities, especially ball fields and courts at Amador High School, also try to fulfill the purposes of community parks. Community parks generally require several acres or more and include facilities for organized or individual sports such as ball fields, tennis, basketball and/or volleyball courts as well as area for picnics and community or family functions.

Neighborhood Parks Neighborhood parks tend to serve the needs of neighborhood children and youth more specifically than larger community parks. As such, they typically contain playground facilities, a large lawn area, perhaps a basketball half-court and picnic benches. Sometimes larger neighborhood parks are privately owned and operated. They may be associated with a lake or pond and water sports activities or they may include a neighborhood "rec hall".

Sutter Creek presently has one small neighborhood park on Bryson Drive. Minnie Provis Park and the elementary and primary school grounds also tend to serve as neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks and community parks are the primary focus of the City's current Quimby ordinance wherein large new developments are required to provide area for such parks so that they are interspersed and available to neighborhoods throughout the planning area as the City grows.

Sutter Creek Linear Parkway The City's General Plan Task Forces agreed that Sutter Creek should be developed into a linear parkway which will serve not only local residents but serve to enhance tourism and thus the local economy. Similar parks exist in other communities such as San Luis Obispo and Ashland, Oregon.

The City presently owns most of the north side of Sutter Creek between Highway 49 and Minnie Provis Park. This is the area where the parkway could be established or begun. Cooperation from local business and private property owners will have to be obtained for the parkway to include other parts of the downtown area. Requirements for dedication of flood plain and creekside properties could help extend the linear parkway outside of the existing developed area as the City grows. A secondary purpose of the City's Quimby ordinance could be to acquire and/or construct the parkway. Construction of the parkway will have to be carefully designed and carried out with major reliance upon natural materials and hand labor to avoid conflicts with the policies and objectives of the General Plan's other elements.

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Recreational Trails	State law requires the City to address "demands for trail oriented recreational use" in its general plan. The State Office of Planning and Research's <u>Book of Lists</u> suggests that as many as 166 other jurisdictions in the State have adopted recreational trail plans.
Interlinking Pedestrian and Bicycle Trail Network	The Circulation Element requires that most new street and road improvements should include sidewalks and that bicycle shoulders should be included on most new collectors and arterials. In many parts of the City these requirements may be impractical due to slope, density, open space concerns, or constraints of existing development. The establishment of an interlinking bicycle and pedestrian trail network could thereby meet the purpose for pedestrian and bicycle circulation as addressed in the Circulation Element as well as the need for recreational trails. Sufficient bicycle and pedestrian facilities not only provide for an increasing population of health-minded joggers, walkers and cyclists, but they help save gasoline and reduce traffic congestion and air pollution. Pedestrian and bicycle facilities must be carefully designed to avoid safety hazards, including those that can occur between pedestrians and bicyclists. Motorized vehicles should not be allowed within the trail system. Task Force #2 recommended that the system should also extend <u>beyond</u> the planning area by including lanes or trails along the Sutter Creek-Volcano Road and along County roads between Sutter Creek and Plymouth. The Amador County Transportation Commission is preparing a countywide bicycle and pedestrian plan that should address these facilities.

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, POLICIES, AND IMPLEMENTATION MEASURES

GOAL	Goal 9.1: The goal of the Sutter Creek General Plan Parks and Recreation Element is to improve and maintain a full range of parks and recreational facilities as the City grows.
Policies	POLICY 9.1: All new developments shall be designed to help achieve all of the objectives listed below. POLICY 9.2: Some parklands and recreational facilities may be considered open space land uses for purposes of the General Plan provided they meet the criteria set forth for open space specified in the Land Use Element and Conservation/Open Space Element. POLICY 9.3: Public open space, trails, and park maintenance, overhead and liability insurance should be funded through a special district or other mechanism formed to maintain parks and landscaping as well as lighting or other facilities as deemed appropriate and consistent with the CIP to be developed under Objective 5.13 of the Public Services and Facilities Element.

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**Objectives
and
Implementa-
tion Measures**

POLICY 9.4: All school recreational facilities should remain available for public use when not being occupied by school functions.

POLICY 9.5: The new elementary school planned for Sutter Creek should include ample recreational facilities that are made available for public use when not being occupied by school functions.

OBJECTIVE 9.1: A parks commission should be established to oversee implementation of this Element.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.1: The parks commission should be appointed by the City Council and made up of qualified and well motivated people. The amount of additional planning and preparation that is necessary to accomplish the goal and objectives of this Element is significant. The commission should develop additional details addressing all components of this 20 year plan including design concepts, prioritized locations, and funding alternatives. Progress reports to the Planning Commission could help assure progress and communication with respect to ongoing development proposals. Target date: before 2000

OBJECTIVE 9.2: A regional park/sports complex should be established in the Sutter Hill/Martell area that will serve the expanding needs of all of western Amador County.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.2: The general purposes and features of a regional park/sports complex are described in the previous text, as are some general considerations for obtaining such a facility. Target date: before 1997

OBJECTIVE 9.3: One or more additional community parks should be established in the City.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.3: The general purposes and definitions of community parks are described in the previous text. New community parks will be acquired and constructed by dedications and "Quimby ordinance" in-lieu fees. Special assessment or benefit districts may be established for ongoing maintenance and overhead costs. Target date: before 2000 and ongoing

OBJECTIVE 9.4: Neighborhood parks should be located within walking distance of the residences they are intended to serve.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.4: The general definition of neighborhood parks is contained in the previous text. All new large residential developments should include neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks may include private parks provided they are maintained and accessible to all residents of the neighborhood being served for little or no gate fee. Target date: ongoing.

OBJECTIVE 9.5: The Sutter Creek corridor or 100 year flood plain should be made into an attractive, yet safe, linear parkway.

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.5a: The general purposes and parameters for the Sutter Creek linear parkway are addressed in the previous text. The City could "seed" establishment of the parkway by using local volunteers to design and construct a part of the parkway on City-owned property near City Hall. The City could also sponsor a workshop of local business leaders and draw upon the direct experience of other communities whose commerce and tourism have improved due to similar park facilities. Target date: before 2000

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.5b: Dedication of creekside greenways is a requirement contained in the land use element that applies to new developments along Sutter Creek and Gopher Gulch. As future development occurs improvements in the creekside greenway zones should consist only of passive recreation facilities including bicycle paths, pedestrian trails, picnic areas, open space and similar uses. Riparian habitat should be maintained as much as possible. New plantings should consist of native plants to the greatest extent possible. The following controls should also apply:

1. Urban structures and facilities such as houses, commercial and industrial buildings, and parking lots should be prohibited;
2. Filling of any type should be prohibited;
3. The obstruction of stream flow by manmade facilities should be prohibited;
4. The destruction of riparian vegetation should be prohibited except for flood control and public health and safety reasons.

OBJECTIVE 9.7: An interlinking Citywide network of pedestrian and bicycle trails should be established to supplement the circulation system, especially in areas where sidewalks, paths and bicycle shoulders are inadequate or unsafe.

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IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.7a: A general explanation of the interlinking pedestrian and bicycle trail network is provided in the previous text of this Element. The network is also addressed by objectives and policies found within the Circulation Element. The City's Parks Commission and/or Planning Commission should study alternative designs and locations, and develop maps and diagrams for essential components of the network. The Commission(s) should also address means to obtain needed trails in developed parts of the City. All new developments should be required to provide for links to the system where necessary. Such links should not generally be considered a contribution to parklands dedication if it serves in-lieu of other pedestrian and bicycle facilities.

Target date: before 2000

IMPLEMENTATION MEASURE 9.7b: The City should participate in and oversee the countywide bicycle and pedestrian plan being developed by the Local Transportation Commission. Target date: immediate