

Chapter 4

Recreation

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the OSCAR Element addresses Recreation. The chapter covers parks and recreational facilities as well as the delivery of recreation services to the people of Oakland.

Oakland has a legacy of fine parks and recreational facilities. From the time the city was first settled, parks have provided focal points for community and neighborhood life and have satisfied the leisure activity needs of Oakland residents. Today the city has some 2,942 acres of parkland, amounting to about 8 acres for every 1,000 residents. There are more than 130 parks and athletic field complexes in Oakland, ranging from undeveloped open space lands to intensely developed urban spaces. A broad variety of leisure and other human services are provided from these sites.

While their value to the community is indisputable, many of Oakland's parks and recreational programs have been hard hit by cutbacks in funding for programs, maintenance, and capital improvements. With the ever present threat of further budget reductions, services once taken for granted now undergo constant scrutiny. At the same time, social problems like drugs and crime have taken a devastating toll on many parks and have prevented their use and enjoyment by residents of surrounding areas. In some areas, changing recreational preferences and neighborhood demographics have made park facilities obsolete, while aging facilities in other areas make rehabilitation or replacement necessary.

The obstacles to improving the parks are further compounded by the lack of park acreage in many parts of the city. Historically, Oakland's parks were developed to fill particular needs or because civic-minded landowners offered their properties to the city. Growth occurred without an overall acquisition strategy or adopted standard for parkland. As a result, large areas of Oakland developed with no parks at all, creating enormous discrepancies from one area to the next. Where parks were set aside, they were often too small to sustain a sufficiently broad range of uses. Many became so crowded with recreational buildings and facilities that

their role as passive open space was seriously compromised.

It is this climate of land deficiency, economic uncertainty, social change, and aging infrastructure that has made long-range planning a necessity. The high cost of acquiring and maintaining parkland has made it essential to have a systematic way of prioritizing projects. The OSCAR Element provides a means of evaluating what we have, identifying what we are missing, and setting policies and actions for how to close the gap between the two.

Although this chapter is comprehensive in scope, it is not intended to be a "Park Master Plan." The City still needs to prepare a plan which specifically addresses capital improvements, funding sources, park administration, and program changes. The OSCAR Element sets a policy framework for such a plan but stops short of making detailed recommendations for service delivery and capital improvements.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF OAKLAND'S PARK SYSTEM

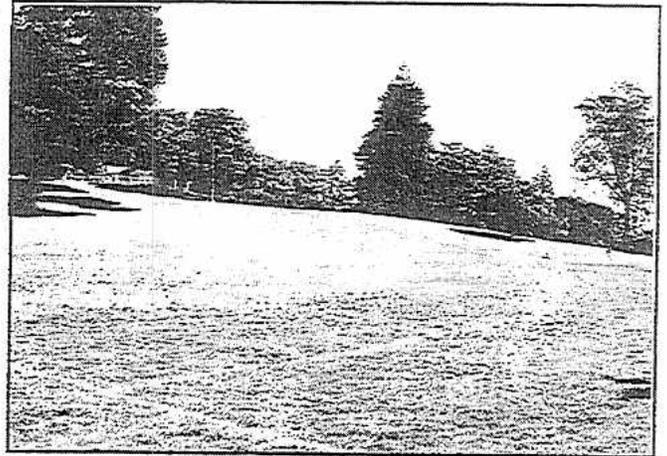
The Early Years

Even in the days when Oakland was a frontier outpost with just a few thousand residents, parks were an important part of the local scene. Oakland's oldest parks--San Antonio, Clinton, and the so-called "seven squares"--date back almost to city's incorporation in 1852.

San Antonio Park, one of the first, had its beginnings as a public square in 1854. The park's central feature was a bull ring, which featured gruesome bullfights as well as fights pitting bulls against grizzly bears. On the grounds of the park, cattle were bought and sold, rodeos and horse races were held, and fiestas were celebrated by the largely Mexican and Spanish local population. Less than a mile west, the town of Clinton sprang up near what is now East 12th Street and 9th Avenue. Clinton Square, the town's "village green," was established at about the same time as San Antonio Park.

Meanwhile, the 1854 deed of partition for the new City of Oakland recorded seven city squares located in what is now the downtown/ Chinatown district. Four of these squares--Lafayette, Harrison, Jefferson, and Lincoln--remain today, though each has been altered over the years. One--Madison--was relocated in the 1960s to make way for the Lake Merritt BART station. Two of the squares were developed with public administration buildings in the early 1900s and today bear no evidence of their original use.

By the late 1860s, the focus shifted to the marshy headwaters of San Antonio Slough, today known as Lake Merritt. Mayor Samuel Merritt advocated converting the Slough, which people disliked for its appearance and smell at low tide, into a lake which would form the nucleus of a future water park. An earthen dam, wooden flood gates, and a new public bridge were installed in 1867 along what is now 12th Street. However, it was not until 1907 (after a post-'06 earthquake "tent city" was removed from the park) that Lakeside Park was established.



San Antonio Park originated as a public square and bullfighting ring in 1854. Rodeos, fiestas, bullfights, and even fights pitting bulls against grizzly bears were held here.

The Era of Expansion

In 1906, Charles Mulford Robinson submitted one of the first General Plans for the City of Oakland. The Plan described the city's 38.5 acres of parks as "a pitiful showing" for a city the size of Oakland and also criticized the lack of access to the waterfront and estuary. The Plan strongly urged the city to form a chain of parks extending from Lake Merritt along Indian Gulch (Trestle Glen) to Dimond Canyon. The Plan also expressed the need for smaller neighborhood parks, which were conspicuously absent at the time and which would serve ornamental and recreational purposes. Above all, Robinson urged expediency in land acquisition, because land values were still relatively inexpensive at the time.

One of the Plan's greatest supporters was Mayor Mott. Mott had recently visited parks in major cities on the East Coast, and was impressed by projects like Central Park in New York and the Commons in Boston. Oakland voters stood behind the Mayor and approved a bond measure of nearly one million dollars for park improvements in 1907. During the next few years, Oakland set about acquiring key sites for parks and making improvements to existing parks. However, the bond money was not enough to create the so-called "Wildwood Chain" of parks from Lake Merritt to Dimond Canyon. The land was developed into what is now the Trestle Glen district soon after.

While Mayor Mott had not been granted everything he had hoped for, he was encouraged by signs that Oakland was finally beginning to realize the importance of a healthy park system. The next major actions Mott took were to create a Playground Commission in 1908 and a Park Commission in 1909. The Park Commission was responsible for administering the city's park system, and in particular the acquisition and improvement programs which were underway. Prior to this time, the parks had been under the control of the street department, with the head gardener in charge.

Despite the increase in public support, there were still many interests in Oakland which tried to impede the efforts of the Park Commission in the area of land acquisition. During the term of Mayor Davie (1915-1931), almost every proposed appropriation for park purposes was contested by elements of the public, the City Council, and Davie himself. Nevertheless, park expansion and improvement continued throughout the period so that by 1934 park area in Oakland had grown to 629 acres. Meanwhile, the Playground Commission's jurisdiction had grown to 70 public playgrounds, a municipal golf course, five mountain camps, and a public swimming pool.

Birth of the Regional Parks

While parkland acquisition proceeded in the flatlands, another movement was afoot in the East Bay Hills. As early as 1866, Frederick Law Olmsted suggested construction of "scenic lanes" through the hills above Oakland. The sentiment was repeated in the 1906 and 1915 Oakland City Plans, both of which urged the creation of scenic hill area parks. Ultimately, it was water rather than beauty that compelled the protection of these lands as open space.

By the turn of the century, water companies had purchased several of the East Bay canyons and had set about digging wells and planning reservoirs in the hills. However, the combination of rapid growth and drought during the 1920s illustrated that these basins were not sufficient to meet the area's water needs. The area's independent water districts merged and proceeded to develop large new reservoirs in the Sierra foothills. With the formation of the East Bay Municipal Utility District in 1928 and the construction of the new Mokelumne

Aqueduct, some 10,000 acres above Oakland and Berkeley were declared surplus and were offered for sale.

A land rush ensued, pitting developers and builders against East Bay naturalists and outdoor groups. In 1928, the citizen-based East Bay Metropolitan Park Association was created with the goal of creating a 22-mile chain of parks from Wildcat Canyon to Lake Chabot. EBMUD responded unsympathetically to their proposal. In 1931, park supporters proposed a new special district which would encompass nine cities and two counties. After a massive public relations campaign, the cities of northern Alameda County approved the District's formation in November, 1934 by a more than 2 to 1 margin.

The first task of the new District was to amass land. Tilden was purchased first, for about \$300 an acre. Sibley, Lake Temescal, and a small portion of Redwood were purchased next. A number of WPA and Conservation Corps projects were immediately undertaken, including the construction of Skyline Boulevard and the development of playfields, trails, camps, and picnic sites. Redwood was expanded in 1939, with the Roberts Recreation Area developed 14 years later in 1953. Anthony Chabot Regional Park, then known as Grass Valley, was added in 1952. Later acquisitions in Oakland included Huckleberry Botanical Preserve in the 1970s, San Leandro Bay (Martin Luther King Junior) Regional Shoreline, which opened in 1979, and Claremont Canyon, mostly acquired during the 1980s.

Modern Times

During the period of major acquisition by the Regional Park District, the City's focus shifted towards physical improvements to its parks, including recreation center buildings and ballfields, basketball courts, restrooms, lighting, and play areas at many locations. Almost no new land acquisition took place between the 1940s and the late 1950s. The 1960s and early 1970s saw a second wave of new parks, most associated with freeway construction, flood control, and urban renewal projects. During the "Great Society" years of the mid-1960s, parks were viewed as a way to improve living conditions and their necessity was bolstered by rising social problems and poverty in the neighborhoods. The number of city

parks increased dramatically during this period, although total park acreage increased only slightly.

Among the more significant administrative changes of the modern era was the creation of the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) and the formation of the Oakland Office of Parks and Recreation. The former resulted in all school playgrounds and many school athletic fields becoming the legal property of the OUSD. The latter resulted in the merging of the Playgrounds Department and the Parks Department, and the consolidation of the two Commissions into a Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission.

A complete history of most parks in Oakland can be found in OSCAR Technical Report Volume Two.

PARK CLASSIFICATION SYSTEM

Despite its long history of park development, Oakland has never adopted a formal classification system for its parks. Most large cities in the United States have classification systems of one kind or another and use these systems as the basis for decisions regarding future activities within each park as well as future acquisitions or capital improvements. The National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) identifies park classification as "the basic element of the planning function."

The following 10 categories of parks are proposed for Oakland. These categories are based on NRPA guidelines but have been adapted to reflect local circumstances:

- Region-Serving Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Active Mini-Park
- Passive Mini-Park
- Linear Park
- Special Use Park
- Resource Conservation Park
- Athletic Field Park/ School Athletic Field
- School Playgrounds

Each park type is described in Table 8. In each case, the description is preceded by a size range, a service area, and a service goal. Service areas tend to be broader in the hills than in the flatlands due to the difference in density and auto ownership in the two areas. Because the percentage of households without autos is ten times greater in the flatlands than in the hills and the average density is five times greater, the same service standard cannot be applied in both places.

The classification system is intended for general direction only. Since each park and each community are different, each community or neighborhood should have the flexibility to decide if the facilities listed would be appropriate in their local park. Parks that fall short of the standards in Table 8 do not necessarily need to be changed or expanded, particularly if they are hemmed in by development or work well as they are.

The classification system emphasizes neighborhood, community, and region-serving parks as the building blocks of the city's recreation system. A limited number of region-serving parks already exist in the city, attracting visitors from Oakland and other Bay Area cities. At the community level, each of the city's planning areas (there are 10, excluding the Port) should have a major community park. These parks should provide opportunities for active and passive recreation, social interaction, education, and cultural enrichment for all residents in the community. A series of neighborhood parks should serve smaller areas within each community.

Planning for Oakland's parks should reinforce the notion that Oakland is a city of neighborhoods. At all levels, the parks should become positive focal points and organizing blocks for these neighborhoods.

Table 8: Oakland Park Classification System

Region-Serving Park

Size Range: 25 acres or larger

Service Area: Citywide

Service Goal: None stated

Oakland's region-serving parks are large recreation areas with diverse natural and man-made features. They draw patrons from throughout the city and, to a limited extent, other communities. Such parks should be large enough to accommodate several different functional areas. Typical facilities include:

- ✓ children's playground and tot lot
- ✓ beaches and boat ramps (at waterfront sites)
- ✓ performance and/or festival spaces
- ✓ group picnic areas (including park shelter buildings)
- ✓ athletic fields, where space is available
- ✓ large lawns, walkways, gardens, and sitting areas
- ✓ unique natural features, such as forests, lakes, and open landscapes
- ✓ museums and other educational or cultural institutions serving recreational needs
- ✓ facilities for specialized active recreation like lawn bowling or horseback riding

Where region-serving parks are located in populated areas, they may also be used as neighborhood or community parks by nearby residents. Where appropriate and where comparable facilities do not exist nearby, some of the facilities usually found in these types of parks may be appropriate in region-serving parks. Region-serving parks may also contain large natural areas used for resource conservation.

There are no per capita standards recommended for region-serving parks. The service area is citywide. Due to their regional draw, all region-serving parks should be transit-served.

Community Park

Size Range: 5-20 acres

Service Area: 1/2 mile radius in flatlands, one mile radius in hills

Service Goal: A community park of at least 7.5 acres in every one of the ten (non-Port) planning areas.

A Community Park is a large natural and/or landscaped area which provides both a refuge from the urban environment and a place for active recreation. Such parks usually serve a cluster of neighborhoods within a one-half or one-mile radius. The facilities that should be included are:

- | | |
|--|--|
| ✓ tennis courts | ✓ well-lighted off-street parking |
| ✓ large children's playground and tot lot | ✓ outdoor performance area |
| ✓ recreation center | ✓ active play area for activities such as volleyball |
| ✓ lighted softball and baseball fields | ✓ soccer/football field, unless a field is available |
| ✓ picnic areas | within one mile |
| ✓ basketball courts (preferably with lighting) | |
| ✓ restroom facilities | |

Table 8 (Continued)

Where land is available and comparable facilities do not exist nearby, community parks should also have a swimming pool and gymnasium. Where land is not available, sites on the perimeter of the existing park should be considered for such facilities.

To accommodate all of these facilities while still allowing enough room for passive recreation requires a site of about 15 to 25 acres. Since all but one of the existing community parks in Oakland are smaller than that, care must be taken not to crowd in new facilities at the expense of natural areas or lawns. In most cases, new facilities should only be added when the existing park can be physically expanded.

Each of the city's populated planning areas should have at least one community park. Each park should be staffed by recreation personnel throughout the year.

Neighborhood Park

Size Range: 2-10 acres

Service Area: 1/4 mile radius in flatlands, 1/2 mile radius in hills

Service Goal: A neighborhood park of at least 3 acres for every 5,000 Oakland residents.

A neighborhood park is essentially a scaled-down version of a community park. The typical Oakland neighborhood park is located in a residential area within walking distance of its primary users. Many are located adjacent to elementary schools, with facilities used by both the school and the neighborhood. Neighborhood parks should contain:

- ✓ landscaped picnic areas and lawn
- ✓ children's play areas/ tot lot
- ✓ hard court area for basketball
- ✓ multi-purpose turf area (ballfield)
- ✓ rest rooms, where the park supports major athletic events and where there is community support
- ✓ picnic tables and sitting areas

For neighborhood parks that are located outside the service area of community parks, other facilities such as recreation centers and tennis courts may be appropriate. At least some off-street parking should be provided at the recreation centers and in other areas where street parking is limited.

Neighborhood parks should also include areas for imaginative play not found in the typical backyard. These might include groves of trees, creeks, or undeveloped grassy areas. There should also be benches and picnic tables for adults.

The decision to provide night lighting and restrooms should be made on a site by site basis depending on what the community determines to be most desirable. Generally, restrooms are appropriate in parks which accommodate activities that are long-term in nature, including baseball games. Restrooms would not ordinarily be appropriate in parks which accommodated a children's play area and basketball courts only.

Table 8 (Continued)

Active Mini-Parks

Size Range: Less than one acre

Service Area: 1/8 mile radius in flatlands, 1/4 mile radius in hills

Service Goal: None stated. Due to resource limitations and security issues, active mini-parks should only be developed in high density neighborhoods or employment centers beyond the service area of neighborhood or community parks.

Active mini-parks are typically located in high density neighborhoods and serve a specific group of people, usually small children. They are essentially substitutes for private backyards. The focus of the active mini-park is usually play apparatus, including swings, slides, and climbing structures. They should also contain a small lawn or garden area, benches, and picnic tables. Where space is available, a hardcourt area for basketball may also be accommodated. Most of the mini-parks are located in areas where neighborhood parks are not closeby.

Passive Mini-Parks

Size Range: Less than one acre

Service Area: None

Service Goal: Provide in new subdivisions and redevelopment areas to enhance neighborhood appearance

Passive mini-parks are small landscaped areas located adjacent to or in the center of streets. Their primary function is aesthetic, with most of these areas specifically set aside to enhance the beauty of urban residential neighborhoods. Such parks usually contain a lawn area complemented by ornamental landscaping and shade trees. They are generally not suited for facilities, although at a neighborhood's request, a small lot or community garden may be appropriate.

Linear Park

Size Range: Varies

Service Area: Depends on size of park

Service Goal: Provide where possible along creek and shoreline areas and within major medians

A linear park has one of two functions:

- (1) It protects and provides linear access to a natural feature such as a creek or shoreline
- (2) It provides a connection between two points, sometimes through joint use of an existing linear feature like a BART line or transmission line right of way.

In the first case, the key feature of the linear park is usually a trail, with occasional benches or sitting areas. The linear park may include facilities such as fishing piers (if it is on the shoreline) and children's play areas if such facilities can be sited in a way that minimizes environmental and visual impacts. Play areas which integrate creeks and treat them as an opportunity for creative play are encouraged. In the second case, the park usually contains a paved trail or bike path. Other facilities may be appropriate where space is available.

Table 8 (Continued)

Special Use Park

Size Range: *Varies*

Service Area: *Usually citywide, but depends on activity*

Service Goal: *None stated*

These are areas for specialized or single purpose activities, including golf courses, swimming pools, zoos, ornamental gardens, horse stables, and historic sites. Also included are city squares which may lack recreational facilities but which serve an aesthetic function and may have historic significance. In general, activities in special use parks should complement and be related to the special use. If the park's primary function is historical or aesthetic, facilities for active recreation would usually be inappropriate.

Resource Conservation Areas

Size Range: *Whatever is required to protect the resource*

Service Area: *Varies from neighborhood to citywide*

Service Goal: *None stated*

The primary purpose of Resource Conservation Areas (RCAs) is to protect the natural environment. Recreational use is a secondary objective and is usually limited to activities such as hiking, nature study, and birdwatching. In Oakland, RCAs are located in areas where development would have an obtrusive visual or ecological impact. These include steep hillsides, wetlands, riparian canyons, and areas with important wildlife habitat value. In some cases, RCAs may lie within the boundaries of large parks which also contain region-serving facilities. This is the case at Joaquin Miller Park and Lake Temescal, as well as Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline.

Small, low-impact facilities (such as tot lots or nature boardwalks) may be appropriate in RCAs when they are located adjacent to access points or parking areas. However, athletic fields, active play areas, and buildings are inappropriate in most cases. Where public access is provided, it should be compatible with the natural state of the area. Vegetation management for fire prevention and habitat improvement are both encouraged, as well as projects which restore original site qualities such as stream restoration and planting of native species.

Athletic Field Park/ School Athletic Fields

Size Range: *4-15 acres*

Service Area: *Usually one mile*

Service Goal: *One athletic field complex (capable of supporting soccer, football, and baseball games) for every 20,000 residents.*

Athletic field parks are large open sites whose primary purpose is to provide a place for high school and league ball games. They typically contain regulation size baseball, softball, soccer, and/or football fields. Most of the athletic fields on school sites also incorporate a perimeter track for track and field events, and bleachers for spectators.

Athletic field parks are distinguished from neighborhood and community parks by the absence of other facilities, such as recreation centers, tennis courts, and basketball courts and by a de-emphasis on natural features such as

Table 8 (Continued)

woodlands or streams. The fields usually consist of flat, unobstructed lawn areas, with improvements such as goal posts, backstops, and bases. Some are lighted for evening play. Some include restrooms, locker rooms and showers.

Some of the athletic field parks may have the potential to be expanded to community or neighborhood parks. This would be done by developing an unused part of the site with such facilities as basketball courts and children's play apparatus. Such conversions should only occur where there is broad-based community support and a shortage of existing recreational facilities and where there would be minimal impact on the existing fields.

School Playgrounds

Size Range: None stated, set by State of California

Service Area: Same as school service area

Service Goal: One per school, staffed and available to the public during non-school daylight hours

School playgrounds are located on public school properties and provide recreational facilities and play areas for students. Through joint use agreements between the Oakland Unified School District and the Oakland Office of Parks and Recreation, the playgrounds are usually open to the public during daylight hours when school is not in session. School playgrounds are generally fenced and gated and are locked at night.

Most playgrounds consist of hardcourt areas for kickball and other ball sports, basketball courts, and play apparatus (swings, slides, climbing structures) for school-age children. Some contain portable classroom buildings that are open during summer hours. A few of the high school playgrounds contain tennis courts.

Per Capita Standards

Per capita standards provide a way of measuring the overall need for parks and identifying where deficiencies exist. By highlighting the gaps in park services, they also enhance the city's competitiveness in obtaining government and private funding for improvements.

Oakland's per capita standards are based on National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) guidelines, with modifications made to reflect the fact that Oakland is a mature, relatively dense city with a limited supply of vacant land. The two major standards differentiate between *total* park acreage and *local-serving* park acreage.

A total park acreage standard of 10 acres per 1,000 residents is proposed. This standard has been in place since the 1976 OSCAR Element. The standard should only be applied for the city as a whole and should be

based on all parkland in the city, regardless of function or ownership. Oakland currently has 8.26 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.

A local-serving park acreage standard of 4 acres per 1,000 residents is proposed. This standard can be applied at both a citywide and community level. It includes all parks which meet the active recreational needs of the community. Parks with no facilities (like Claremont Canyon and Leona Open Space) are not included, nor are parks which serve a special purpose like the Zoo, the golf courses, or Dunsmuir House (See OSCAR Technical Report Volume 2, Chapter 3 for further explanation). Oakland presently has 1.33 acres of local-serving park acreage per capita. Achieving the 4 acre per 1,000 standard would require the acquisition of nearly 1,000 acres of relatively flat land. While this will be impossible without massive redevelopment, major gains towards the standard can be made through expansion of existing parks, improvement of creek and

shoreline access, acquisition of vacant parcels, and incorporation of new parks in major redevelopment projects.

How Oakland Measures Up

Oakland's parks are identified in Figure 15. Table 9 summarizes Oakland's parks by functional category. A complete listing of these parks can be found in Appendix A.

As Table 9 indicates, more than half the city's park acreage consists of "Resource Conservation Areas"; that is, passive open space that is undeveloped. Most of this land consists of steeply sloping hillsides with limited potential for recreation. "Special use" parks such as the golf courses, zoo and the Morcom Rose Garden constitute about a fifth of Oakland's park acreage.

Only about a quarter of the park acreage in the city consists of traditional region-serving, community, neighborhood, and mini-parks. These parks are distributed throughout the city but are definitely more prevalent in some areas than others.

West Oakland and the North Hills tend to be better served than other areas, but even these neighborhoods are deficient in active recreational facilities. The greatest deficiencies are in Fruitvale and Central East Oakland. In the broad band of flatland neighborhoods extending from 23rd Avenue to Hegenberger Road, about 100,000 residents are served by only a handful of small neighborhood parks. As Table 10 indicates, local-serving park acreage in these areas is only about 20 percent of the city standard.

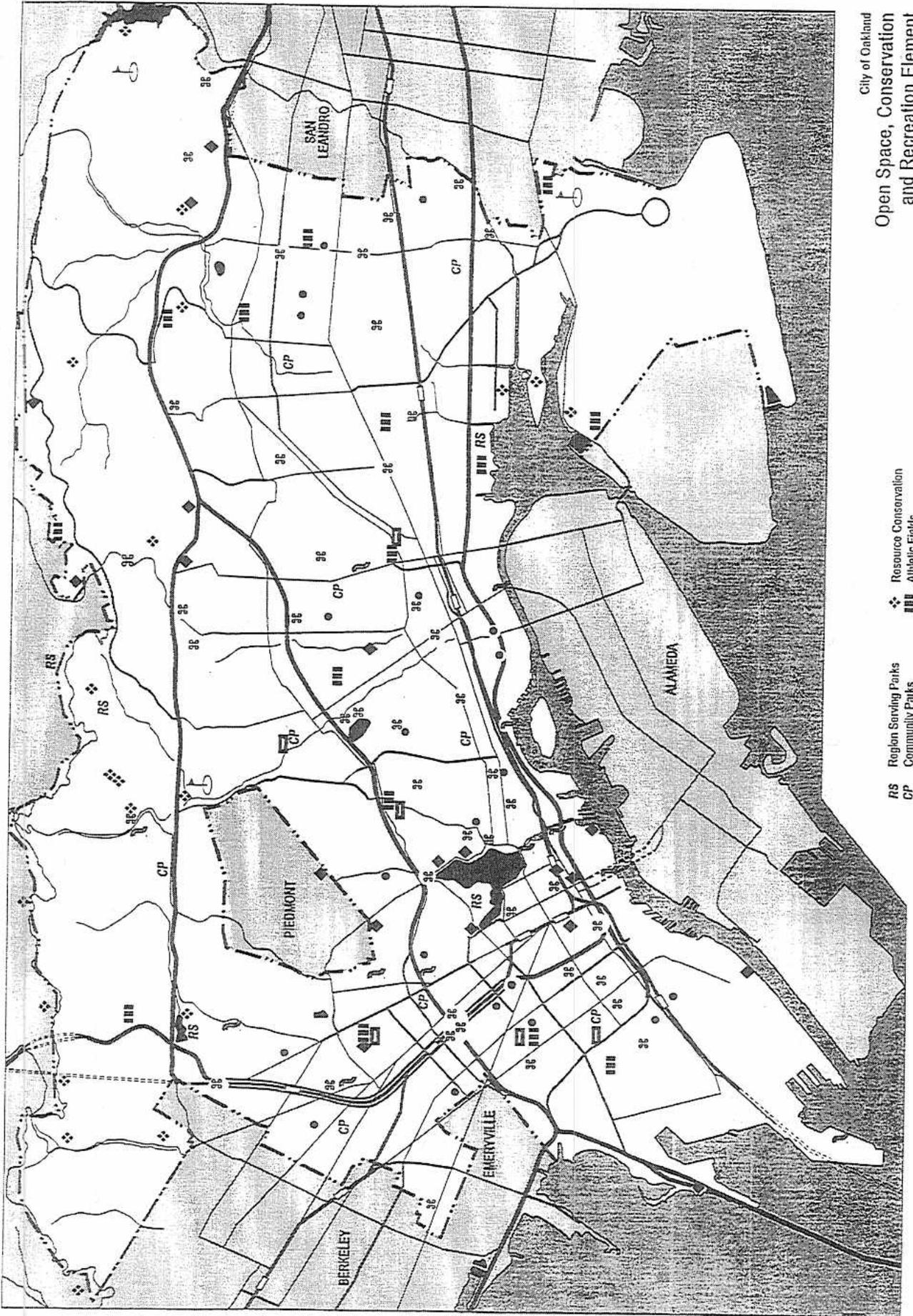
Table 9: Summary of Oakland's Parks

<u>Type</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Acreage</u>
Region-Serving Parks	5	332.0
Community Parks	9	101.1
Neighborhood Parks	44	126.0
Active Mini-Parks	16	5.8
Passive Mini-Parks	5	2.2
Linear Parks	12	33.0
Special Use Parks	24	651.1
Resource Conservation Areas	19	1,622.8
<u>Athletic Field Parks</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>68.6</u>
TOTAL	147 ¹	2,942.6 ²
School Properties	70	131 ³
GRAND TOTAL ACREAGE		3,073.6

¹ Actual number of parks is smaller; several parks have been divided into multiple categories.

² 906.2 acres of this total is within East Bay Regional Parks within Oakland city limits.

³ Acreage estimate based on aerial photographs of schoolyards.



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 and Recreation Element
Figure 15:
 Oakland Parks by Category
 Office of Planning & Building, 1995

- | | | | |
|----|----------------------|---|-----------------------|
| RS | Region Serving Parks | ▣ | Resource Conservation |
| CP | Community Parks | ◆ | Athletic Fields |
| 3C | Neighborhood Parks | ⊠ | Special Use |
| ○ | Mini Parks | ⊞ | Swimming Pools |
| — | Linear Parks | ⊞ | Golf Courses |



Map Source: City of Oakland

Table 10: Local Serving Park Acreage Per Capita

	Acres per 1,000 residents
West Oakland	2.43
North Hills	2.35
Elmhurst	1.73
Central	1.65
South Hills	1.49
Citywide Average	1.33
Lower Hills	1.20
North Oakland	1.18
Central East Oakland	0.86
San Antonio	0.78
Fruitvale	0.68
ADOPTED STANDARD	4.00

Figures 16 and 17 show those neighborhoods within the service areas of Oakland's parks and those neighborhoods outside these service areas. Figure 17 illustrates deficiencies in virtually all flatland communities, particularly in North and East Oakland. For some East Oakland residents, the nearest park may be as much as a mile away. While some hill areas are also a mile away from local parks, the deficiency is offset to a great extent by much higher mobility, lower densities, and proximity to the regional parks.

Figure 17 also identifies areas where new parks are needed to offset the deficiencies. The policies in this chapter and the recommendations in the next chapter reflect this analysis.

What the two Figures do not show is that even areas that already are served by parks may be deficient in other ways. For instance, Figure 16 shows a large concentration of parks in the Lower San Antonio and Fruitvale areas. Most of these parks are only an acre or two in size, much smaller than the standards set in Table 8. Many lack the facilities or amenities that are typically found in neighborhood or community parks. Moreover, these areas are the most dense in the city and have very high concentrations of children. As the next section notes, social and economic factors may make demands on the existing parks higher here than in other parts of Oakland.

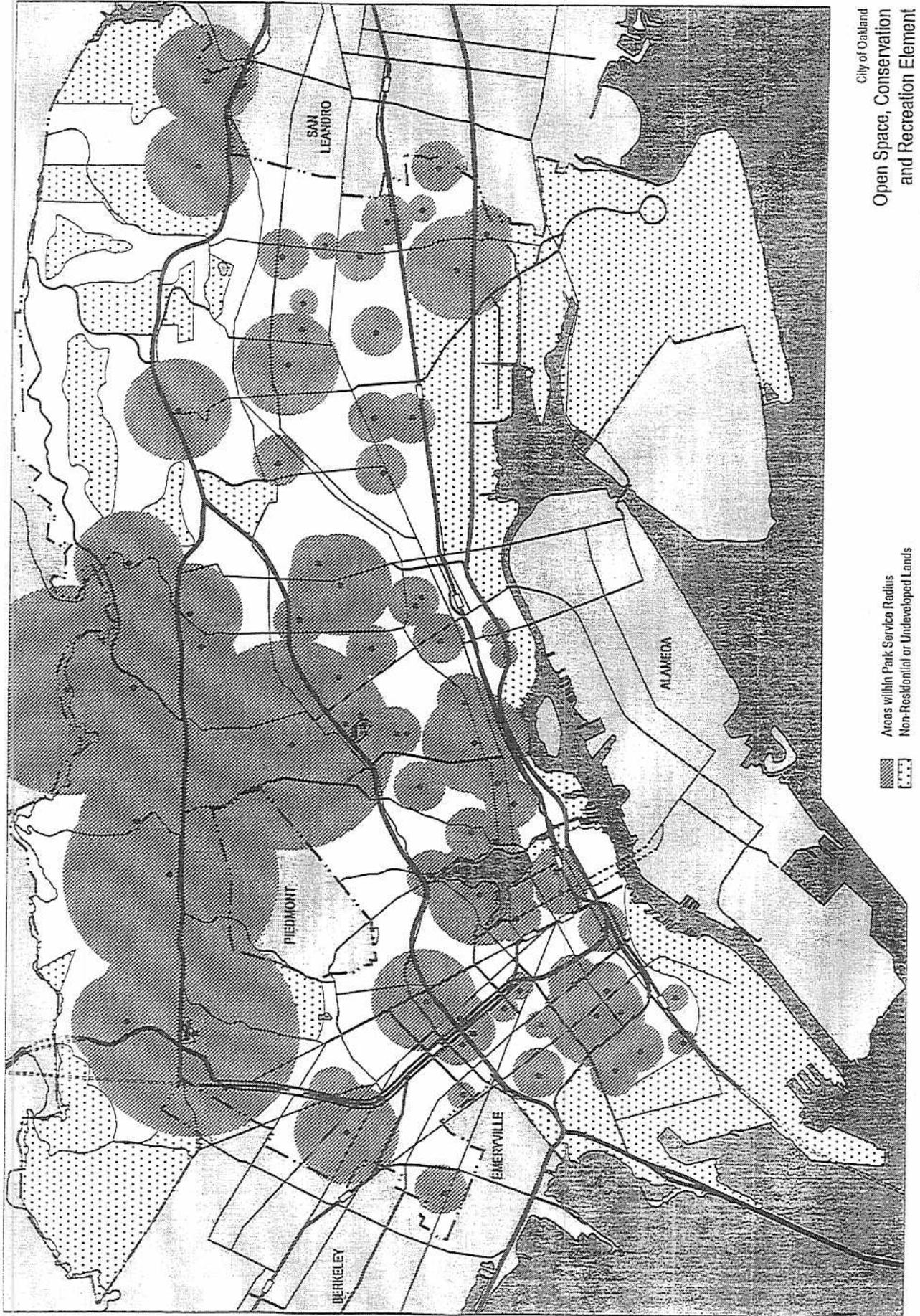
FACTORS AFFECTING RECREATIONAL NEEDS

Per capita standards alone are not enough to evaluate Oakland's parks and recreational facilities. Because the city is large and contains many different social, economic, and cultural groups, the needs of different populations must be considered as well. Lower income areas may have greater needs for public parks since residents may lack the means to afford private facilities and may be less mobile. Areas with large proportions of children have different needs than those with large numbers of "empty nesters." Culture also may have a bearing on recreational needs. Immigrant populations may require certain social services in conjunction with recreation, or may prefer different types of facilities than those conventionally provided.

Generally, the need for city parks and recreational facilities is highest in the denser flatland neighborhoods as a result of:

- lower household incomes and more limited means to afford private recreation
- limited mobility due to lower rates of auto ownership
- larger numbers of children
- larger numbers of apartment dwellers living in housing without useable open space
- denser development patterns without the aesthetic amenities afforded by open space
- larger numbers of immigrants and persons requiring cultural and social services
- larger concentrations of "at risk" youth

Some of the demographic factors affecting recreational needs are highlighted below and are summarized in Table 11.

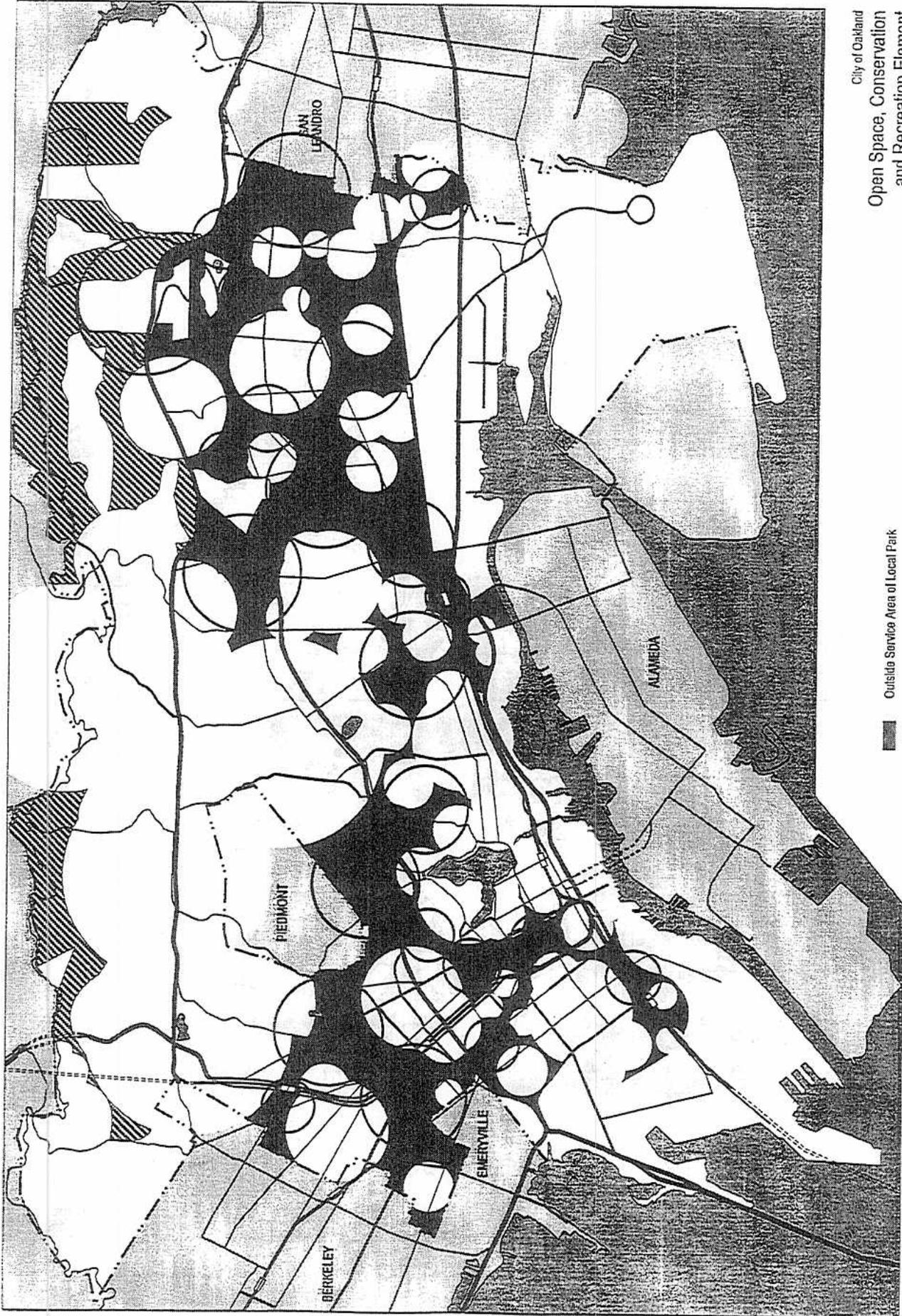


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**Figure 16: Areas Served by
 Oakland Parks**

Note: Most Special Use Parks, Resource Conservation Parks, Passive Mini-Parks, and Linear Parks have been excluded since they lack active recreational facilities. High School athletic fields





City of Oakland
 Open Space, Conservation
 and Recreation Element

Figure 17:

Park Deficient Areas

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- Outsida Service Area of Local Park
- General Areas Where New Parks are Needed
- ▨ Deficiency offset by access to private yards, regional parks, & other open lands



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Table 11: Factors Affecting Recreational Needs

<u>Planning Area</u>	<u>% of Persons Under 18</u>	<u>% of Persons Over 65</u>	<u>Median Household Income</u>	<u>% of Housing in Bldgs with 2+ units</u>	<u>% Persons Households w/out Auto</u>	<u>% Persons not speaking English</u>	<u>Persons per square mile</u>
North Hills	17.6	15.9	\$68,360	10.0	2.7	0.9	2,627
South Hills	20.5	13.9	\$59,847	14.2	2.1	2.5	1,793
Lower Hills	20.1	14.8	\$41,570	39.1	10.4	6.2	9,465
North Oakland	18.4	14.9	\$25,602	59.7	23.6	4.3	13,175
West Oakland	33.5	14.5	\$12,197	70.4	48.9	9.3	9,289
Chinatown/ Central	12.1	19.0	\$21,049	95.1	38.9	17.0	11,488
Fruitvale	32.4	8.5	\$26,059	50.2	22.3	19.7	13,781
San Antonio	30.1	9.2	\$22,898	70.9	29.0	25.6	20,157
Central East Oakland	31.9	9.6	\$26,047	37.1	22.3	9.7	9,591
Elmhurst	33.4	9.6	\$24,633	31.0	23.7	5.7	9,546
City Total	26.2	12.2	\$30,261	48.4	23.3	11.1	8,014

Source: Oakland Office of Planning and Building, 1993

Total Population

Recreational demand is influenced by the overall size of the population. Oakland's population was about 372,000 in 1990, up nearly 10 percent from 1980. Some of the increase was the result of new construction, particularly in the South Hills.

However, a greater share was due to immigration from Pacific Rim nations, with parts of the San Antonio and Fruitvale districts witnessing population increases upwards of 40 percent. West Oakland and Chinatown also grew faster than the city as a whole, while North and East Oakland generally grew more slowly.

The population increase in San Antonio-Fruitvale occurred with very little new housing added, making existing housing in the community much more crowded. This has placed a premium of what little open space exists in the neighborhood. With no new parks added, established parks like Sanborn and San Antonio have borne the brunt of the growth. These parks are often crowded with new users, particularly children and teens.

Age

Between 1980 and 1990, the number of persons under 18 increased more rapidly than the population as a whole. As a result, greater demands have been placed on parks throughout Oakland, especially on playgrounds and tot lots.

Citywide, about 25 percent of Oakland's population is under 18. However, in much of San Antonio-Fruitvale, and in parts of West Oakland, Central East Oakland and Elmhurst, the figure exceeds 35 percent. Many of these areas also have high concentrations of lower income households and families on public assistance. Improved park facilities, programs, and transportation may be needed in these areas.

Like persons under 18, Oakland's senior citizens may also have income and mobility limitations which affect their access to recreation. Seniors may also have certain recreational needs and preferences which distinguish them from the community at large. The greatest concentrations of senior citizens are downtown, around Lake Merritt, near Piedmont Avenue, in North and West Oakland, and in the hills. In some downtown census tracts, the percentage of seniors is three times greater than the city average. Parks serving this area and others like it should recognize the need for senior recreational activities.

Income

National surveys have found that increases in income tend to increase participation in recreation. This is significant in Oakland, where there are great disparities in income from one neighborhood to the next. For instance, household income in West Oakland is less than half the city median, while income in the North Hills is more than twice the city median. Many lower income households are unable to afford private recreational facilities and cannot travel to parks in other neighborhoods. More desirable programs, facilities, better transit service, access for the disabled, and improved public safety are needed to help increase the participation rate in these areas.

Housing Type/Density

Housing type and density provide further indications of where recreational needs are greatest. Generally, those areas with higher proportions of multiple family housing have higher demand for public open space, since access to private open space (backyards) is limited. Many residents do not have the opportunity to place swing sets or, in some cases, even chairs in their yards. Table 11 shows the percentage of housing stock in each of the Planning Areas that consists of multi-unit buildings. The figure is very high (95%) in the Central Planning Area, and relatively high in the San Antonio, West Oakland, and North Oakland areas. Because parks in these areas double as backyards for local apartment dwellers, they face different demands than parks in the hill neighborhoods.

Table 11 also shows population density in the Planning Areas. San Antonio stands out as the most dense planning area in the city, followed by Fruitvale and North Oakland. Certain neighborhoods in other parts of the city stand out as being particularly dense, including Adams Point, the Oak Center area, and Cleveland Heights. While the densest areas tend to be relatively close to Lake Merritt and Lakeside Park, they are not adequately served with facilities for active recreation such as ballfields, playgrounds, and recreation centers.

Mobility

Persons without cars must rely on walking, rides, and public transit to reach local parks. Getting to the regional parks or even community parks may be difficult since transit service is infrequent or non-existent. The number of households without autos is highest in West Oakland (49 %) and in the Central/ Chinatown area (39 %). Most of both communities are within walking distance of city parks, but often these parks lack the facilities needed to serve the local population. In some cases, there are also physical obstacles such as freeways or busy arterials that limit the use of the park by young children.

On the other hand, the North and South Hill areas have almost no households without cars. Seventy percent of the households have two or more cars. This affords the ability to travel to different parks for different kinds of recreation activities.

Physical disabilities present another kind of mobility limitation, discussed in the OSCAR policies on "special needs." Approximately 3 percent of all Oaklanders are disabled. In some cases, disabled persons may be able to reach the parks via autos or transit but once they arrive, they cannot use the facilities due to physical barriers such as stairs.

Culture

Oakland has become more ethnically diverse during the past few decades, creating the need for parks and recreational programs which meet the needs of many different cultures. The number of non-English speaking persons has grown substantially since 1980. Today, more than 25 percent of the city's population speaks a language other than English in their home and 11 percent are "linguistically isolated," meaning their English is very limited. In the Chinatown, San Antonio, and Fruitvale area, the figures for linguistic isolation are significantly higher, exceeding 50 percent in some census tracts.

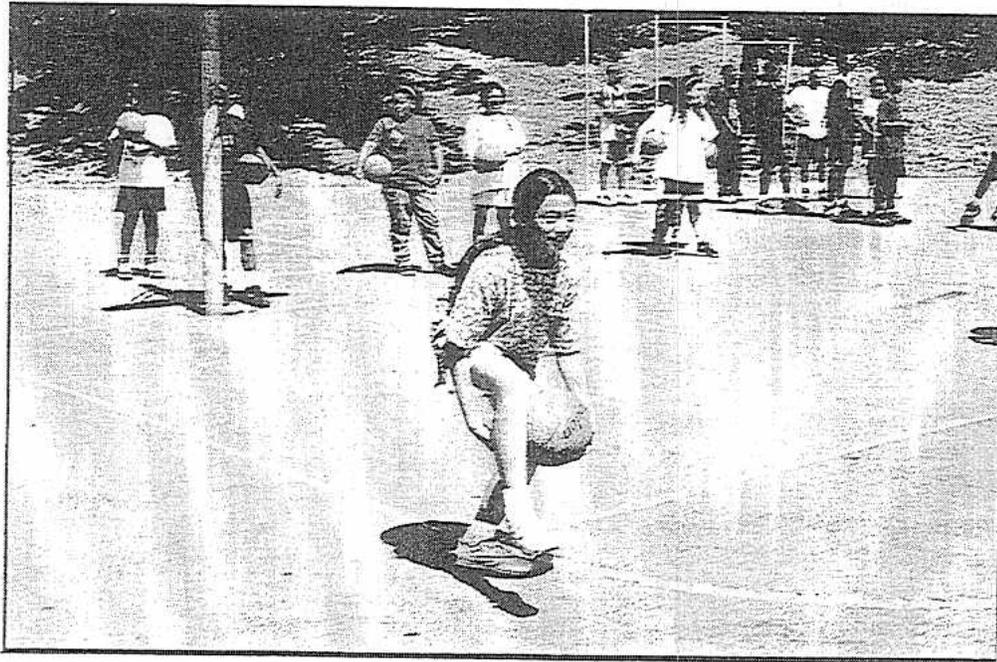
Multi-lingual programs, signs, and outreach may be needed at parks in these neighborhoods, as well as programs which respond to Pacific rim cultures and traditions. There may also be a strong demand for social services (such as English language education, health care,

and job training) in conjunction with recreational services.

Future Trends

Based on trends of the 1970s and 1980s, Oakland's population is likely to become larger, older and more diverse during the next decade. At the same time, the demand for recreation is likely to change as a result of technology and lifestyle changes. Some of the major social and economic trends affecting recreation are highlighted below:

1. Oakland's population is expected to increase slightly by 2000, fueled by immigration from Mexico, Central America, and Asia. Ethnic enclaves will continue to flourish in the flatland neighborhoods east of Lake Merritt, possibly expanding to other parts of the city. As a result of these changes, the demand for multi-cultural activities and new kinds of recreational activities will grow.
2. The number of senior citizens is expected to rise, as persons in the 45-64 age bracket mature. The number of teens and young adults will rise, as the new "baby boomers" grow older. Additional programs aimed at these groups will be needed. Continued interest in health and fitness will increase recreational demand for all age groups.
3. As a result of emerging technology, there will be a demand for more stimulating and exciting forms of recreation. Home-centered entertainment will keep expanding as a result of home computers, video games, interactive media, and links to the "information superhighway." City parks and recreational services will need to adapt to remain viable.
4. The need for programs targeting "youth at risk" will continue to be very high. As long as crime and drug problems persist, there will be an urgent need for positive alternatives for youth, especially organized recreation.





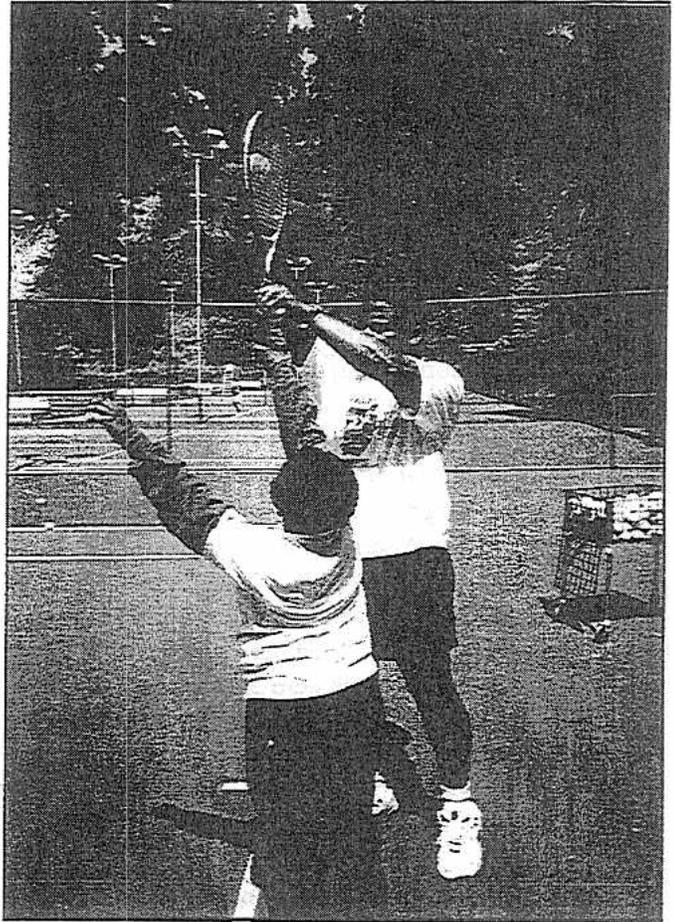
5. Changes in the work environment will affect the demand for recreation. Day care services and programs for "latch key" children will become more critical as the trend towards two-income households continues and as the percentage of single parent households grows. The demand for recreation at the workplace could become more significant, placing greater demands on parks in downtown Oakland and in other areas with growing employment bases. The trend towards flextime and telecommuting could increase personal leisure time and the demand for parks in other areas.
6. Parts of Oakland will become more densely populated, particularly around transit stations and along transit corridors, downtown, in neighborhoods with high foreign immigration, and in redeveloping former industrial areas. Demand for new parks in these areas will grow.
7. The "privatization" of some types of recreation previously provided by public agencies will continue. A number of privately-owned indoor playgrounds have already opened in the East Bay. Public subsidies will be required if Oakland's parks are to remain competitive with such facilities.
8. Recreational services will continue to be scrutinized due to budget shortages and property tax limits. If services are cut, lower income households will continue to bear a larger share of the burden, since they have less access to private recreation. Equity issues will compel the city to explore new funding sources and other solutions.

The City's recreational programs will need to adapt to these trends by closely monitoring successes and failures and by encouraging feedback from the community. Coordination with the schools, social service providers, and organizations representing seniors, youth, and immigrant populations will be especially critical during the years ahead.

RECREATIONAL NEEDS SURVEY

In the Summer of 1992, the Office of Planning and Building coordinated a telephone survey of 420 randomly selected Oakland households on park and recreation issues. A complete description of the survey, including the methodology, list of questions, and analysis of responses, is contained in OSCAR Technical Report Volume Two. Some of the major findings are encapsulated in Figures 18 and 19 and are highlighted below:

- *Overall, name recognition of neighborhood parks is low.* When asked to name the park closest to their home, most respondents listed large community and regional parks and overlooked the smaller parks close to their residences. For instance, 12 percent of the Hill area households listed Lakeside Park/Lake Merritt as being the park closest to their home.
- *About 70 percent of the households surveyed said they used their local park at least once a year; about 25 percent used their local park once a week or more.* Renters appeared to use the parks more often than homeowners, and households with children used the parks more often than those without. Park use was heaviest in the San Antonio-Fruitvale area and lightest in East Oakland.
- *The major reason people gave for not visiting their park more often was lack of time, followed by safety.* One-third of all respondents indicated they would use the parks more often if they were safer. About one-fifth of the respondents said they would use the parks more often if there were better facilities. Facilities for children (playgrounds/ tot lots) were mentioned most often.
- *The vast majority of Oakland residents (94 percent) drive or walk to their local parks.* About 71 percent of the households in North Oakland, West Oakland, and downtown walk to their parks, compared to 36 percent in the Hills. About three-quarters of the respondents could reach their local park from their home within ten minutes.
- *Local parks are generally used for "passive" recreational activities.* Sunning, reading, relaxing, walking, hiking, and people watching were among the most popular pastimes. About one quarter of Oakland's households use their local park to watch their children play, or to play with their children.
- *Most respondents were satisfied with park maintenance.* Nearly 80 percent indicated that their local park was well maintained, and only 12 percent indicated their local park was poorly maintained. Criticism of park maintenance was highest in the San Antonio-Fruitvale area and among infrequent park users, and was lowest in the Hills and among occasional park users.



- *Concerns about park safety are widespread, although 80 percent of the respondents feel that their local parks are safe during daylight hours.* More than half of the respondents felt their local parks were unsafe at night.
- *A majority of Oakland residents are satisfied with the city park system.* Citywide, about 58 percent were satisfied or very satisfied. Residents in the Hills generally gave the most favorable assessment, while San Antonio-Fruitvale and East Oakland residents were most critical.
- *Participation in recreational activities of some kind is an integral part of the lifestyle of most Oakland residents.* Nearly all of the households polled spend some time each week participating in recreation. When inquiries were made on the kinds of activities in which household members participated, 39 different sports and activities were mentioned. Twenty of these were sports and activities listed by more than 10 respondents.

The top listed recreational activity for children under 18 was the use of playground equipment, followed by swimming, bicycling, baseball, and basketball. The

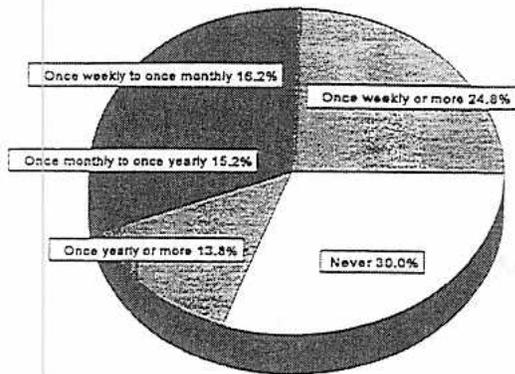
top listed recreational activity for persons 18-65 was walking (and hiking), followed by swimming, bicycling, basketball, and jogging. The top listed recreational activities for senior citizens were reading, sunning, walking, and hiking.

- *About half of the city's residents indicated that they relied on Oakland's parks for their primary recreational activities.* The percentages were highest in San Antonio-Fruitvale (66%) and lowest in the Hills (37%).
- *More than half of the respondents, including 45 percent of the very low income households, indicated they would be willing to pay fees for certain recreational activities.* The most frequently mentioned activity was swimming, followed by classes and programs. The amounts mentioned were generally between \$1.00 and \$5.00 per visit.
- *Oakland residents rely on a variety of sources to find about their local parks.* Newspapers were the leading source and were used by 35 percent of the households surveyed. Very close behind, 34 percent said that family and friends were a source of information on the parks.

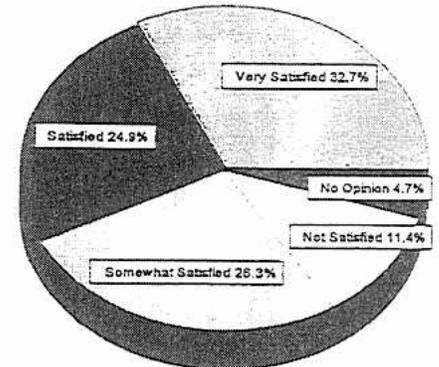


Figure 18: Resident Attitudes Towards Oakland Parks
Asked of 420 randomly selected Oakland Households, August 1992

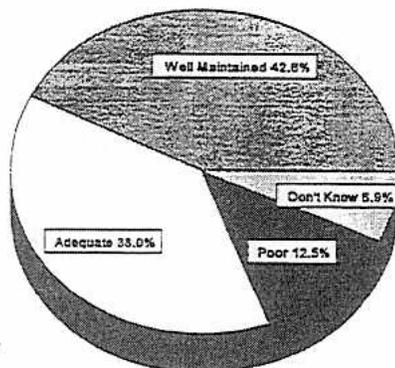
How often do you visit your local park?



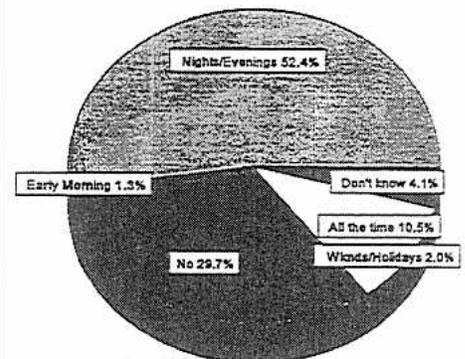
Overall, how satisfied are you with your local park?



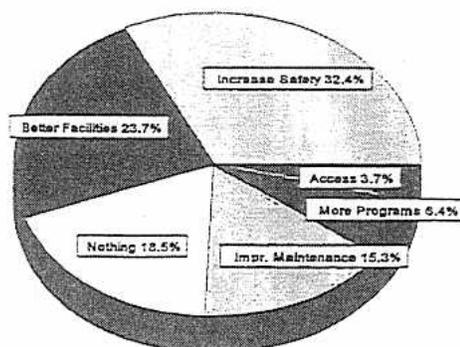
How would you describe maintenance levels in your local park?



Are there any times of day when you feel unsafe in your local park?



What changes would influence you to visit your local park more often?



Level of satisfaction with local parks

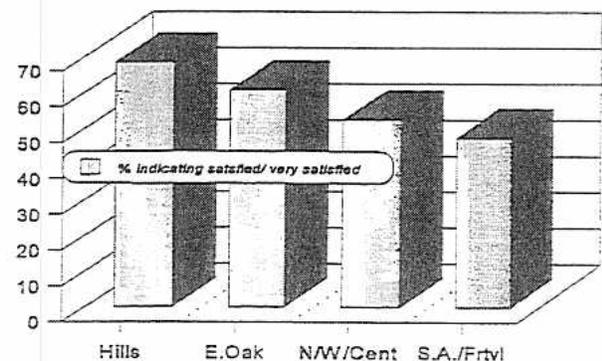
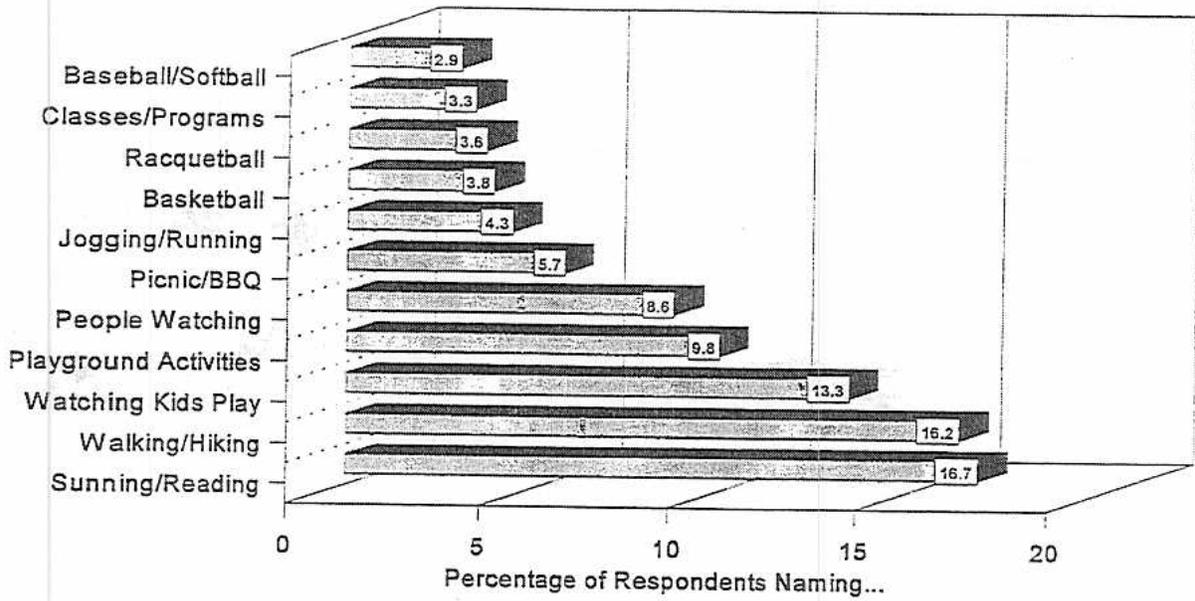


Figure 19: Recreational Preferences of Oakland Households
Asked of 420 randomly selected households, August, 1992

What do you most like to do in your local park?



What kinds of recreational activities do the people in your household under 18 participate in?

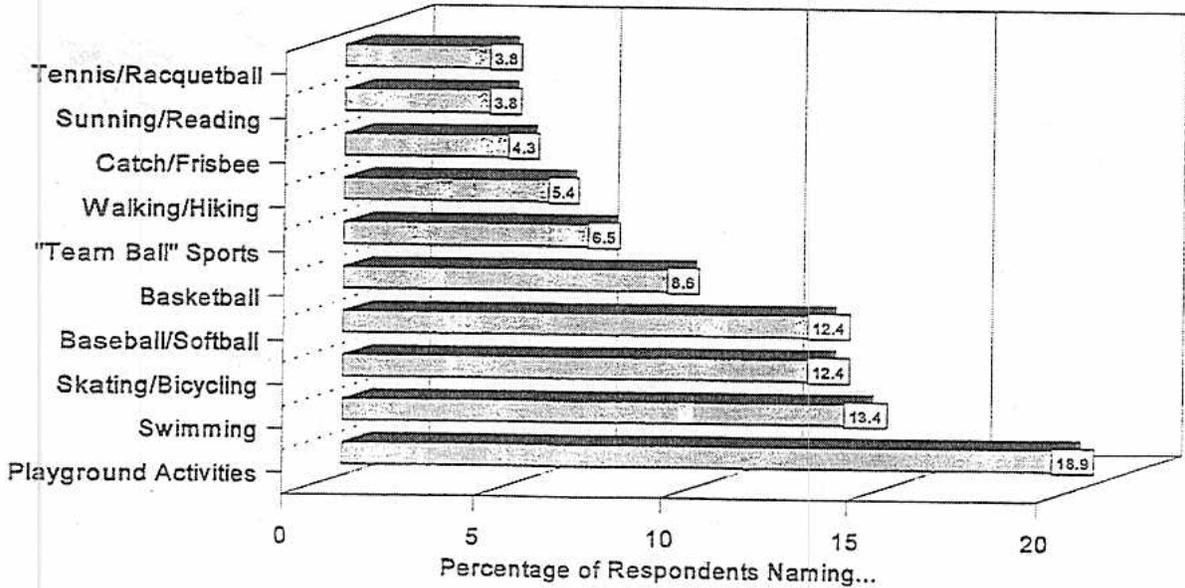
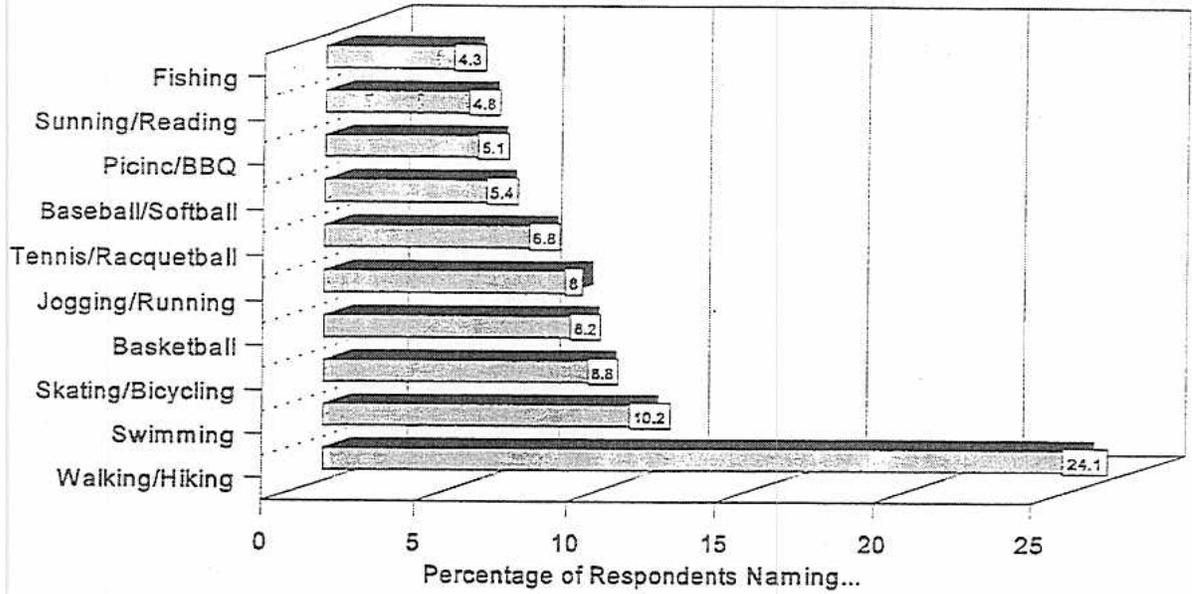
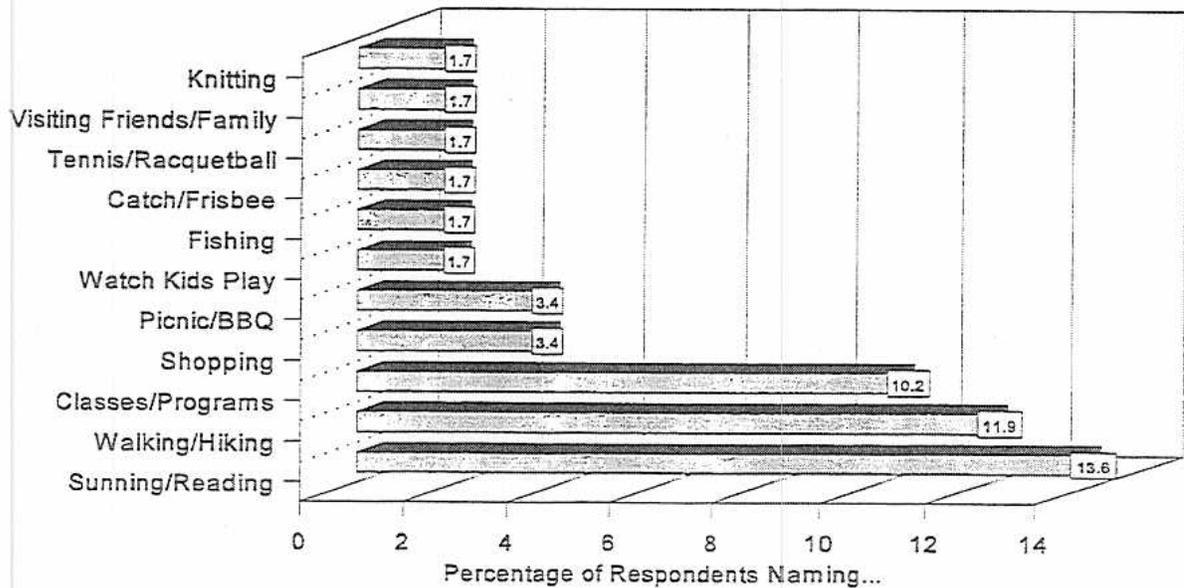


Figure 19, page 2

What kinds of recreational activities do the people in your household aged 18-65 participate in?



What kinds of recreational activities do the people in your household over 65 participate in?



Principles

The following 12 principles will guide park and recreation planning in Oakland during the coming years:

1. A park should be available within walking distance of every Oakland resident. No person should have to travel too far from home to gain access to recreational services.
2. Oakland's parks should support a wide range of passive and active recreational activities. A balance between region-serving, community-serving, neighborhood-serving, and special use parks should be achieved, with neighborhood parks providing the foundation or "building blocks" of the park system.
3. Oakland's existing parks should be regarded as a limited and precious resource. They should be carefully managed and conserved in the future. Zoning and master planning should be used to protect and manage park resources.
4. Parks should build upon and complement the city's diverse natural and cultural resources. Their design and programming must respond to ethnic and cultural diversity in ways that recognize different values, lifestyles, and languages.
5. Services, facilities, and programs must respond to the unique character and needs of individual areas. Parks should reinforce the identity of individual neighborhoods and be adapted to meet the wishes of neighborhood residents.
6. Recreation should promote the positive self-esteem, responsibility, leadership, and development of Oakland's youth. While programs should serve all populations in the city, a special effort should be made to reach children and teens.
7. Recreation should contribute to the health and well-being of Oakland residents, workers, and visitors. Park and recreational services should promote health and fitness for all.
8. Parks should contribute to and be supportive of Oakland's economic development goals. Features and facilities should contribute positively to Oakland's image and should make the city a more attractive location for new business and tourism.
9. Recreational needs created by new growth should be offset by resources contributed by that growth. In other words, new development should pay its fair share to meet the increased demand for parks resulting from that development.
10. The allocation of public money for recreation must be systematic and based an approach which prioritizes the areas with the greatest need. This includes those areas with the lowest per capita park acreage and the poorest access to private open space.
11. The need for rehabilitation and maintenance of existing facilities should be the first consideration in setting budget priorities. In most cases, new facilities should not be developed unless existing facilities are deemed to be satisfactory. Projected maintenance costs should be fully accounted for in all new facilities, with an assurance that these costs will not jeopardize existing facilities.
12. A priority must be placed on making the parks safe. While a range of physical and law enforcement solutions can be explored, the single most effective solution to crime in parks is to increase legitimate use of the parks. Expanding park activities should be viewed as a central part of crime prevention.

PARK LAND USE

GOAL REC-1: A PARK SYSTEM WHICH MEETS A DIVERSE RANGE OF RECREATIONAL NEEDS WITHOUT COMPROMISING THE VALUE OF PARKS AS OPEN SPACE.

OBJECTIVE REC-1: PARK PLANNING AND MANAGEMENT

To establish a rational, systematic approach for planning and managing public parks.

POLICY REC-1.1: PROTECTION OF PARK OPEN SPACE

Use a variety of measures, including zoning and park classification, to protect the basic function of parks as public open spaces and to evaluate and review future park projects. Use the park classification system outlined in Table 8 (Oakland Park Classification System) and illustrated in Figure 16 (Oakland Parks by Category) as the basis for determining the kinds of facilities that are appropriate in each park.

Policy REC-1.1 emphasizes two regulatory tools for managing Oakland's parks: (1) open space zoning and (2) park classification.

Open space zoning allows the actual function of parkland to be recognized and clarified. It enables development standards to be specifically geared to the kind of uses that occur in parks as opposed to residential or commercial areas. Park zoning acknowledges the primary use of the land to be recreation and open space and is an expression of the City's intent to retain the land as open space. It also creates a formalized procedure for citizen involvement in making decisions affecting park development.

As mentioned in the Open Space Chapter of this document, a Resource Conservation (RC) zoning district

will apply to nearly 1,700 acres of environmentally sensitive parkland located in the hill and wetland areas. An "Urban Parks" (UP) zoning district will apply to the remaining 1,326 acres of parkland in the City, including the public golf courses. School playgrounds and Peralta College properties would not be rezoned. Appendix A identifies proposed zoning changes for all Oakland parks.

The second regulatory tool mentioned in Policy REC-1.1 is park classification. A park's designation as a region-serving park, community park, neighborhood park, etc. should be the primary means of determining future land uses and activities in the park. Table 8 of this chapter (p.4-5) describes the proposed classification system for Oakland's parks. Appendix A identifies how each park has been classified.

ACTION REC-1.1.1: CREATION OF PARK ZONING DISTRICTS

As described in Actions OS-1.1.1, OS-2.1.1, and OS-3.3.1, and as depicted in Table 12, adopt three new zoning designations for open space, including two to be applied to City and Regional parks. Zone those parks characterized by steep slopes and/or environmentally sensitive resources as "Resource Conservation" and zone other active or passive public open spaces as "Urban Parks."

The ordinance text for the RC District would limit uses to trails, viewpoints, shelters, and other facilities which accommodate low intensity activities like jogging, walking, and environmental education. The text for the UP District would specify a much broader range of uses depending on the type and size of the park.

Provisions in the zoning ordinance would ensure continued public use and enjoyment of these lands for recreational purposes. New facilities would need to be compatible with the character and function of the park as well as surrounding neighborhood. The zoning text itself would identify permitted, conditionally permitted, and prohibited uses in both districts. The distinction between each category would depend on the impacts the use is likely to have on the park and whether the park is classified as a neighborhood park, community park, region-serving park, etc. The ordinance would also include standards for height, setback, and parking for new facilities.

As currently envisioned, existing recreational activities and facilities in each park would be listed as permitted uses, new recreational activities consistent with the character and function of the park would require a public hearing and recommendation by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC), and uses which could significantly change the character of the park would require approval by both the PRAC and the Planning Commission.

An outline of the proposed park zoning provisions is contained in Table 12. The actual text of the ordinance should be prepared after the OSCAR is adopted. The list of permitted and conditionally permitted uses will be

especially critical and should be prepared with extensive public input.

POLICY REC-1.2: NO NET LOSS OF OPEN SPACE

Unless overriding considerations exist, allow no net loss of open space within Oakland's urban park system. In other words, the area covered by park buildings or other recreational facilities in the future should be offset in the long-run by acquisition or improvement of an equivalent or larger area of open space. Replacement open space should be of comparable value to the space lost and should generally serve an area identified on Figure 18 (Park Deficient Areas) as having un-met needs.

The no net loss policy should be implemented by maintaining a "balance sheet" which tallies annual additions of open space and subtractions resulting when buildings are constructed or expanded within City parks. At year's end, the goal would be for the "plus" column to outweigh the "minus" column. Because most park buildings or additions are relatively small, the balance sheet approach is more feasible than a 1:1 replacement requirement (the latter could result in the City being burdened with a growing number of small, unusable plots of land).

An example of how this policy would work in practice is as follows: If the Office of Parks and Recreation added a total of 10,000 square feet of floor space to its various parks in a given year, it should also have added at least 10,000 square feet of open space to its inventory during that year. The "replacement" open space might consist of new community gardens, land trust sites acquired by the City, new pocket parks or plazas, restored mid-block paths, new segments of the Bay Trail, expansions of existing parks, or perhaps joint City-School schoolyard "greening" projects. Ideally, the new open spaces would be close to the parks that were impacted by new buildings, or at least within neighborhoods that are underserved by parks. The replacement open space also should be of comparable value to the space removed. In other words, if buildings were placed on flat lawn areas, the replacement open space should also be flat and open.

Table 12: Outline of Proposed Ordinance Text for Urban Park (UP) Zone

I. TITLE, PURPOSE, AND APPLICABILITY OF ZONE

II. USE PROVISIONS

A. **Facilities and Activities Permitted by Right.** This would include facilities traditionally associated with recreation that *already exist in the park*. For instance, existing play equipment, hard court areas, play fields, putting greens, tennis courts, community gardens, maintenance facilities, and bowling lawns in parks would be included. Routine building and grounds maintenance would be considered activities permitted by right. The list would be structured so that any improvement or change in use would require approval by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission or Planning Commission.

B. **Facilities and Activities Subject to a PRAC Public Hearing.** This would include a listing of new uses subject to a public hearing by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC). The PRAC would need to make findings that the park can accommodate the new use and continue to maintain its desired character and function (see Table 13). The determination would also consider potential off-site impacts such as traffic and noise. Typical uses requiring a PRAC public hearing would be new playground equipment or basketball courts. Different PRAC-permitted uses would be specified for each category of park.

Certain types of improvements might require more focused analysis by staff. For instance, installation of lights around playfields, ballfields, tennis courts, or hardcourt areas would require an evaluation of the impacts of the potentially more intensive use of the facilities as well as light, glare, and noise impacts on nearby areas. Staff reports to the PRAC would thoroughly document impacts and mitigation measures.

C. **Facilities and Activities Requiring Planning Commission Approval.** Uses which are likely to have a significant impact on the character of a park would require review by the Planning Commission as well as the PRAC. These would include special facilities like community centers, new gymnasiums or swimming pools, observatories, zoos, and arboreta. The list of uses could also be defined to include park offices, large concession areas, visitors centers, caretaker's residences, and park maintenance facilities serving areas outside the impacted park. Different uses would be specified for each category of park. Approval would be based on certain findings of fact (see Table 13).

Exceptions to the requirement for a Commission hearing would be permitted if the facility is being built in accordance with a master plan that has been adopted by a City Council through a process incorporating public review. An example would be new facilities at the Oakland Zoo which are consistent with the 1990 Master Plan.

D. **Prohibited Uses.** This list would include uses that conflict with the recreational function of parks or which restrict public enjoyment of a park or open space. These include residential, commercial, and industrial uses (except caretakers quarters, park concessions, or park maintenance uses which are permitted through the conditional use process). Non-recreational public projects, such as jails, parking lots not directly supporting a park activity, sewage treatment plants, solid waste transfer stations, animal control facilities, post offices, and non-park city offices, could also be prohibited.

Table 12, continued...

III. DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS

- A. **Height.** A maximum height limit for new buildings would be set. One option would be to set a 30 foot height limit unless the building has a functional requirement to be taller (as is the case with gymnasiums). In such cases, the ordinance would require that every effort be made to keep the height of the building as low as possible to retain the compatibility of the site with adjoining uses.
- B. **Setbacks.** Setbacks from park edges would be specified to establish a compatible physical relationship with adjacent uses and to protect neighbor privacy and reduce noise problems. One option would be to require a 20 foot setback from any abutting residential lot for all new park structures, play equipment, hardcourts, or ballfields, unless the size of the park makes such a setback impossible, or if topography provides adequate screening, privacy, and noise reduction. For continuity of street frontage, front yard setbacks would generally be the same as what is required in the adjacent zone.
- C. **Parking.** Existing parking requirements for public assembly grounds like indoor pools and community centers would be followed. However, the amount of parking ordinarily required could be increased or decreased to reflect the anticipated demand at a particular facility and specific conditions of a particular park that might influence parking availability. Parking requirements might be decreased where the facility is specifically intended for people who will arrive on foot or by bike; for facilities where parking will be shared with adjoining projects; for facilities where on-street parking is already adequate; for facilities where the nature of the facility requires less parking than what is specified in zoning; and for facilities where providing the required amount of parking would displace important open space or recreational features of the park and diminish its character. Increases of parking may be appropriate where there is already a parking shortage.
- D. **Lot coverage.** Consideration should be given to an overall building coverage limit to prevent the overdevelopment of parks and maintain a sense of openness. Varying lot coverage limits might be used depending on the category of park. For instance, a limit of 15 percent might be used for neighborhood and community parks, while 5 percent could be used in passive open spaces and no limit might apply in special use parks. Waivers from the lot coverage requirement would only be permitted where: (a) the character of the park and balance between its uses would not be negatively impacted; (b) the surrounding area would not be negatively impacted by the loss of open space; or (c) the improvement relates to the function of the park and other facilities already existing.

If the City finds that it is covering open space at a faster rate than it is creating new open space, corrective actions should be taken before proceeding with new projects. This could include a requirement to include replacement open space funding within the budget for new projects, or even a moratorium on buildings within City parks until additional open space is added to the inventory. To avoid the need for such measures, the City should consider starting a land "banking" program. Under this approach, the City would designate a site as open space and receive "credit" that enabled future projects to be built without considering replacement open space needs. In the future, the City might also establish a fund for future open space acquisition or even a "replacement open space surcharge" similar to the 1.5 percent public arts surcharge now placed on capital improvement projects.

(Note: this policy does not apply to projects that are consistent with park master plans approved prior to the date of the OSCAR Element's adoption, such as Chabot Observatory and the Knowland Park Zoo and Dunsmuir House and Gardens expansions.)

ACTION REC-1.2.1: MAINTAIN OPEN SPACE "BALANCE SHEET"

Following the adoption of the OSCAR, develop and maintain a computer spreadsheet which tracks:

- (1) additions of floor area to Oakland parks;*
- (2) additions of uncovered (pervious) open space; and*
- (3) the net difference between (1) and (2). Prepare an annual staff report to the Parks and Recreation Commission which summarizes the findings.*

POLICY REC-1.3: SITING OF BUILDINGS IN PARKS

To the maximum extent practical, accommodate new *recreational* buildings in City parks by expanding the park onto nearby vacant or underutilized land rather than covering open space within existing park boundaries. Strongly discourage new *non-recreational* buildings in City parks unless their construction is a matter of public necessity and the use cannot be reasonably accommodated in another location. Exceptions to this policy may be made in cases where there are (a) no feasible alternatives to placing buildings in parks; (b) the buildings are being developed in accordance with an overall Master Plan for the impacted park; and (c) replacement open space will be provided as specified in Policy REC-1.2.

Policy REC-1.3 is intended to protect heavily utilized parks from overdevelopment with buildings, recreational or otherwise. All three of the "exceptions" in this policy must be met before a building is placed in a park.

There are a few other cases where this policy may not be applicable. It would not apply to new buildings which are replacing existing buildings. It would not apply to parks which are being developed in accordance with an already adopted master plan, such as the Knowland Park Zoo.

There may also be cases where the public value of a recreational development provides a compelling argument for construction on an open space. This may be true in parks which are seriously underutilized, compromised by security problems, or in areas severely lacking in certain indoor recreation facilities. In such cases, construction of a park building must be preceded by completion of a park master plan and assurance of replacement open space.

In no way should this policy be interpreted as a disincentive to pursue new indoor recreational facilities. Many Oakland neighborhoods urgently need more gymnasiums, swimming pools, cultural buildings, recreation centers, and other indoor facilities. However, Oaklanders should not sacrifice their limited urban open space to accommodate these facilities. Facilities should be placed adjacent to the parks, or should compensate for their impact on the park with replacement open space.

Parks must not be viewed as "vacant sites" for new public buildings.

ACTION REC-1.3.1: IMPERVIOUS SURFACE COVERAGE LIMITS

Structure the "Urban Park" zoning district to place a percentage limit on the area in City parks that may be covered by structures or impervious surfaces. Coverage limits would vary depending on the size and classification of the park. Allow exceedances of this limit only if specific findings can be made regarding the consistency of the project with an adopted master plan, the level of public support for the project, compliance with Policy REC-1.2 (No Net Loss of Open Space), and the project's ability to enhance an underutilized open space.

POLICY REC-1.4: PARK IMPROVEMENT OR CHANGE IN USE

Require any improvement or change in use within a City of Oakland park to be subject to a formal review and approval process. Provide potential park users and local residents with opportunities to participate in this process.

On March 31, 1992, the Oakland City Council adopted interim controls governing land use changes within Oakland city parks. These controls were to remain in effect until the new OSCAR was adopted. Table 13 describes permanent controls which will replace the interim controls. Since these controls are predicated on new zoning being in place, the interim controls will need to remain in effect until the zoning ordinance is amended.

The new development review procedure would require a widely noticed predevelopment meeting (conducted by staff) prior to any improvement or change of use in a city park. Modifications to the project would be made based on initial public comment.

Minor projects that are consistent with the classification of the park would then proceed to a public hearing held

by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission (PRAC). The PRAC would hear staff analysis and public comment on the project and would approve, deny, or modify the project based on their ability to make certain findings (see Table 13). Appeals of PRAC decisions could be made to the Planning Commission.

Major projects or projects which are not consistent with the classification of the park would be forwarded to the Planning Commission after a public hearing by the PRAC. The Commission would approve, deny, or modify the project based on the PRAC recommendations, additional public testimony, and their ability to make certain findings on the project. Appeals of Planning Commission decisions could be made to the City Council.

City Council approval would be required when applying for grants which would enable major new projects to be constructed, or when acquiring land or dedicating land for park purposes. As with the PRAC and Planning Commission, findings would need to be made before approving grant applications or accepting land dedications.

ACTION REC-1.4.1: PERMANENT LAND USE CONTROLS

After establishing new open space zoning designations (see Actions OS-1.1.1 and OS-2.1.1), adopt an ordinance based on Table 13 (Proposed Procedures for Improvement or Change in Use Within Oakland Parks) establishing permanent controls for park improvements and land use changes.

Table 13: Proposed Procedure for Improvements or Change in Use Within Oakland Parks

All improvements or changes in use within Oakland city parks would be subject to requirements outlined below. An "improvement" would be defined as any project which, if proposed by a private applicant, would require issuance of a building, grading, or demolition permit by the City of Oakland (routine maintenance would be excluded). A "change in use" would be defined as the establishment or authorization of any activity which is not already established in the particular park, or the expansion of any existing use (excluding recreational programming or one-time facility uses). Projects approved by the City Council in conjunction with the public art program, Measure AA or Measure K (Series A only) are exempt from these requirements.

The following procedure would be followed:

1. **Determination of Compliance with Zoning and Park Classification System.** The Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) would make a determination as to the conformance of the proposed improvement or change in use with (a) the list of permitted or conditionally permitted uses in the new zoning ordinance, (b) the development standards listed in the new zoning ordinance, and (c) the intended function of the park based on its adopted classification (as a neighborhood park, community park, special use park, etc.).
2. **Predevelopment Neighborhood Meeting.** A neighborhood meeting would then be convened at a location in the vicinity of park or open space land affected by the proposed change in use or improvement. The purpose of the meeting would be to inform concerned citizens of the proposed project. The meeting would be noticed via public notice posting on the premises of the park or open space land and on all utility poles within 300' of the park border. Notices would also be mailed to all neighborhood organizations and schools within a one-mile radius of the park border.
3. **Administrative Project Review.** Once preliminary feedback has been obtained from the community and factored into the design of the project, the OPR would follow the requirements of Administrative Instruction 3002, including CEQA review of the project by the Office of Planning and Building.
4. **Public Posting and Notice of Public Hearing.** A public notice would then be posted on each utility pole within 300' of the impacted park's borders, on the premises of the park, and at all branches of the Oakland Public Library. In addition, notices would be mailed to neighborhood groups and affected Community Development District Boards. Public notices would be posted at least 10 days prior to the date of the public hearing and would contain: (a) a description of the project, including its location; (b) the date, time, and place of the public hearing, and (c) the City staff contact person.
5. **Public Hearing by the PRAC.** A public hearing would be required for any project which falls on the list of facilities requiring such a hearing by the PRAC. The purpose of the hearing would be to review the proposed change in use or improvement and hear all public comments and suggestions on the project. The PRAC would be required to make specific findings of fact on the project, namely that: (1) the project will be compatible with and will not adversely affect abutting properties or the surrounding neighborhood, with consideration given to scale, bulk, coverage, views, and density; neighborhood character, traffic, and any other relevant impacts; (2) the project is consistent with the development standards specified in the zoning ordinance; (3) the project will provide a convenient and functional public environment and will be as attractive as possible; (4) the project will enhance the public use or successful operation of the park or open space and that sufficient open space remains on the site to meet local needs; (5) the project will enhance or augment public open space lands in the surrounding area; (6) the project serves an identified need and will provide an essential service to the community. The PRAC would have the authority to require any modifications to the project which it deems necessary and appropriate.

Table 13, continued...

6.	Public Hearing by the Planning Commission. Projects which meet the zoning criteria for Planning Commission approval would be forwarded to the Commission for public hearing(s) after the public hearing by the PRAC. A similar process would be followed and the same findings of fact would be required. The Commission would consider the recommendation of the PRAC and would have the authority to approve, deny, or modify the project.
7.	Appeals. Any interested party could appeal a decision of the PRAC to the Planning Commission within 5 days of the date of their decision. Decisions of the Planning Commission may be appealed to the City Council. The appeal would specifically claim where there was an error or abuse of discretion by the PRAC or Planning Commission or wherein its decision is not supported by the evidence in the record. Upon receipt of the appeal by the City Clerk, a hearing would be scheduled at the next available Planning Commission or City Council meeting. On considering the appeal, the Commission/Council would determine whether the proposed change of use or improvements conform to the applicable criteria and could approve, deny, or require such changes in the project that it deems necessary.

POLICY REC-1.5: PARK MASTER PLANNING

Use master plans as a tool for making long-range decisions for park land use, determining needs for capital improvements and funding sources, and soliciting community opinion on how parks should be managed.

Park master plans should provide guidance in the management of park resources, placement of new facilities or amenities, and resolution of land use and traffic issues. Several parks stand out as being in urgent need of master plans by virtue of their heavy use, large size, location in severely underserved areas, or social challenges. While a priority should be placed on plans for these parks, the ultimate goal should be to develop a citywide park plan and a master plan for each park in the city.

All park plans should be developed with maximum input from park users, neighborhood residents, and nearby businesses. Public meetings and design workshops should be held to set objectives, develop and evaluate alternatives, and formulate recommendations. Public hearings before the Parks and Recreation Advisory Commission and City Council should be held to adopt each plan.

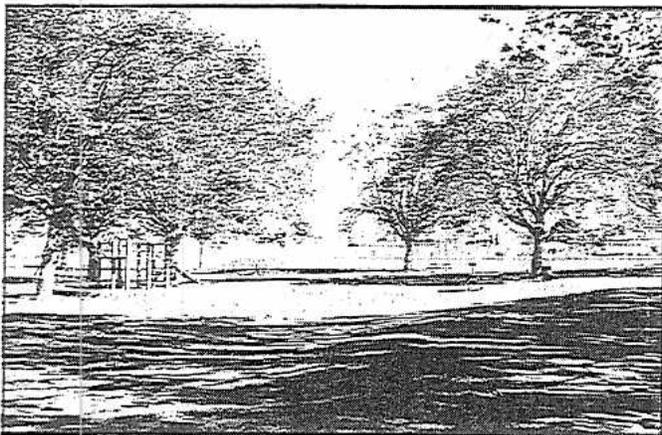
ACTION REC-1.5.1: ADOPTION OF CITYWIDE PARK PLAN

Adopt a Citywide Park and Recreation Master Plan by the year 2000, including a 5-year capital improvement program. Update the Plan every 10 years.

A Parks and Recreation Master Plan is needed to guide decisions regarding the delivery of services and programs, and the expenditure of funds for operations, maintenance, and capital improvements. The OSCAR Element provides general policy direction on these topics. However, more specific recommendations are beyond the scope of the City's general plan.

Other large California cities, including San Francisco, San Jose, and Sacramento, maintain park master plans in addition to their General Plan Recreation Elements. These plans typically focus on leisure services and operations/ maintenance issues rather than the land use issues addressed in the OSCAR.

Once a Parks Plan has been adopted, it should be updated every 10 years. An implementation plan, including a five-year capital improvement schedule, should be prepared every year.



Bushrod Park is among those targeted as needing a park master plan.

ACTION REC-1.5.2: PREPARATION OF PARK MASTER PLANS

Adopt master plans for individual Oakland parks, focusing first on those parks where major land use or resource management issues exist (including Lakeside Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Bushrod Park, San Antonio Park, Dimond Park, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline). Base future land use and facility decisions within City parks on these master plans.

Each park plan should include a resource analysis of the site, a needs assessment of the service area, an overview or opportunities and constraints, and a land use and activity plan. Each plan also should have a capital improvement plan and funding strategy. Park plans should address a range of issues, including views, traffic, pedestrian circulation, safety, and infrastructure. The plans should also explain existing and future maintenance and renovation needs, as well as sources of funding to meet these needs.

A priority should be placed on master plans for Lakeside Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Bushrod Park, San Antonio Park, Dimond Park, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline (EBRPD) due to the size of these parks and the issues at hand.

ACTION REC-1.5.3: OPEN SPACE COMPONENT OF OTHER PLANS

Include an open space and parks component in any area plan, neighborhood plan, or redevelopment plan undertaken by the City.

This action acknowledges the importance of open space and recreation as an urban planning consideration. Area plans, neighborhood plans, rezoning studies, neighborhood commercial revitalization (NCR) and redevelopment plans should consider needs and opportunities for open space and recreation.

ACTION REC-1.5.4: OSCAR ELEMENT UPDATES

Update the OSCAR Element at least once every 10 years and supplement it where appropriate with detailed planning studies of specific areas or subjects.

The City should make every effort possible to update the OSCAR at least once every ten years. To the extent feasible, these updates should be timed with updates of the other elements of the General Plan so that OSCAR-related issues are addressed concurrently with land use, public safety, transportation, and housing issues.

In the interim period, more specific studies on parks and open space should be pursued, particularly those identified as "Action" items in the OSCAR. An on-going effort should be made to make the OSCAR Element background data available to the public, with reports and maps distributed to schools, libraries, and recreation centers. The Comprehensive Planning Division of the Office of Planning and Building will remain the repository for all OSCAR files and data.

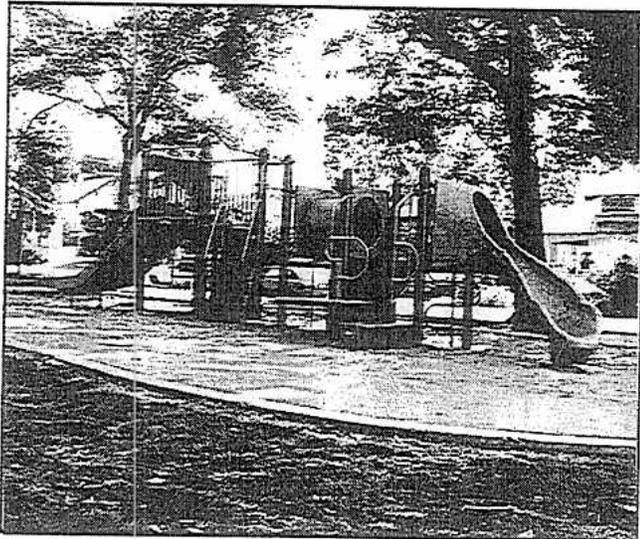
OBJECTIVE REC-2: PARK DESIGN AND COMPATIBILITY OF USES

To ensure that parks are well designed, and that facilities and activities within parks are compatible with each other, the natural environment, historic resources, and the surrounding community.

POLICY REC-2.1: PARK CONVERSIONS TO OTHER USES

Protect parks from conversion to other uses, except for minor boundary changes which would improve their value or usefulness. In any case, as prescribed by Policy REC-1.2, replace whatever land and facilities are given up with land and facilities of at least equal value and capacity.

Parks should be protected from conversion to non-park uses, including freeways, port facilities, and urban development. If there is a compelling reason for a park to be converted, replacement open space and facilities must be provided.



POLICY REC-2.2: CONFLICTS BETWEEN PARK USES

Site park activities and facilities in a manner which minimizes conflict between park uses. Wherever feasible, use National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) standards to determine the area and dimensional requirements for new facilities. In new parks, arrange activities and land uses to accommodate all of the intended uses, in optimal relationship to one another and making the most efficient use of the space possible.

This policy directs the Office of Parks and Recreation to site new park facilities in a manner which maximizes the usefulness of the facility while minimizing its impact on existing uses.

The design of any park should be based on the particular uses to be accommodated, the site conditions, and the surroundings. A nature study area in the hills, a neighborhood playground in the flatlands, and a downtown plaza will require completely different design solutions, making it hard to generalize about project design.

The following basic principles, first articulated in the 1976 OSCAR Element, should continue to be followed:

- Large enough areas should be provided for each activity.
- Multi-purpose spaces should be created for compatible activities (e.g.; softball and baseball).
- Separate domains should be provided for conflicting activities (i.e.; softball and picnicking, etc.).
- Baseball diamonds, game courts, and other spaces should be oriented to minimize wind exposure and glare from the sun.
- Restrooms or drinking fountains should be conveniently located, although not so prominently that they dominate the site.

- Efficient pedestrian circulation between various activity areas should be accommodated.
- An area for off-street parking should be provided at those sites where parking is appropriate (community parks, athletic fields in areas with on-street parking shortages, parks with major attractions, parks without easy transit or pedestrian/bicycle access).
- Where feasible, spaces should be designed for easy adaptation to different activities as future user populations dictate.
- Greenery should provide relief from the harsh aspects of urban life as well as a chance for direct contact with nature. Trees are especially desirable.
- Features which enhance the identity of the space, such as historic buildings, creeks, sculptures, and masses of trees should be encouraged.
- Safety and maintenance considerations should be paramount.
- The design of the park should be related to the surrounding land uses and neighborhood. In some cases, this may require screening of park uses; in other cases, this may involve emphasizing vistas by thinning vegetation within the site.
- Fencing, when used, should be attractive and should not detract from the aesthetic quality of the space.
- Diversity and innovation should be emphasized. Parks and recreational facilities should appeal to the user's imagination and creative impulses.
- Potential users and community residents should be fully involved in park planning and design.

POLICY REC-2.3: ENVIRONMENTALLY-SENSITIVE DESIGN

Protect sensitive natural areas within parks, including creeks and woodlands, and integrate them into park design. Require new recreational facilities to respect existing park character, be compatible with the natural environment, and achieve a high standard of design quality.

The design and planning of new park buildings, facilities, or landscaping should strive towards design excellence. All improvements should contain design elements which are compatible with the natural environment and the park environment. Building additions should be architecturally compatible with existing buildings. For parks which are historically significant, efforts should be made to incorporate historic features in the design. Traditional street lights, fountains, and street furniture can be used to enhance the overall appearance and integrity of such parks.

The policy also supports maintaining or improving the visual integrity of Oakland's parks. Any new utilities through the parks should be placed underground to maintain visual quality.

ACTION REC-2.3.1: PARK DESIGN GUIDELINES

Prepare design guidelines for park improvements.

Such guidelines would focus on the design of new buildings and additions, street furniture (including lighting), landscaping, and playground equipment.

POLICY REC-2.4: OFF-SITE CONFLICTS

Manage park facilities and activities in a manner which minimizes negative impacts on adjacent residential, commercial, or industrial areas.

Park activities should minimize negative off-site impacts as much as possible. While some of Oakland's parks are capable of handling large crowds and additional activities, other parks are already too crowded and are located in areas with severe parking shortages. In general, large group activities should occur in region-serving parks, community parks, and appropriate special use parks rather than in neighborhood parks. Major festivals and concerts should generally occur in non-residential area parks to avoid noise conflicts and other related problems. First priority for improvements like night lighting of baseball fields should be in those areas where potential negative impacts (noise, light, etc.) will be lowest. This would include parks in industrial areas or along major arterials or freeways.

ACTION REC-2.4.1: LAND USE COMPATIBILITY GUIDELINES

Develop criteria to determine which park activities are potentially incompatible with residential, commercial, industrial, and transportation uses.

Such criteria also could be used during project-level environmental review. For instance, noise compatibility criteria could state the ambient noise levels acceptable for different recreational activities.

POLICY REC-2.5: PARK VISIBILITY

Plan and design parks in a way which maximizes their visibility while minimizing conflicts between pedestrians, bicyclists, and automobiles.

Community and region serving parks should generally have some frontage on an arterial street to increase the visibility of park activities, promote recognition of the park, and provide direct transit access. Within such parks, major attractions like recreation centers or public assembly places should be located close to the major street. Tot lots, playgrounds, and other areas where children congregate should generally be located away from the major street for traffic safety and noise purposes. Such facilities should still be relatively close to the less heavily traveled streets around the park so that activities remain plainly visible.

Wherever a children's play area abuts a street directly, provisions should be made to reduce the risk of accidents. Fencing should be provided around the play area, and where appropriate, traffic signals and crosswalks should be provided.

Parks should be designed in a manner that minimizes reliance on automobiles. The 1992 Resident Survey found that about two-thirds of all flatland residents walked or bicycled to their parks. Provisions for bicycles (racks, etc.) and pedestrians should be made at all parks. The City should work with AC Transit to improve bus service to Oakland's parks and ensure that routes along parks include stops at the parks.

For those parks that are bisected by roads, measures to discourage or reduce through-traffic should be considered during the master planning process. The use of speed humps, stop signs and other devices to slow traffic down should be considered. Consideration might also be given to restricting through-traffic during peak times, either through a fee (as is currently done on Bellevue Drive during the weekends) or a prohibition on cars (similar to weekend rules in Golden Gate Park).

POLICY REC-2.6: HISTORIC PARK FEATURES

Respect historic park features when designing park improvements or programming new park activities.

Many of Oakland's parks provide opportunities to learn about the events, people, and places that have shaped the city's history. Among Oakland's historic parks are:

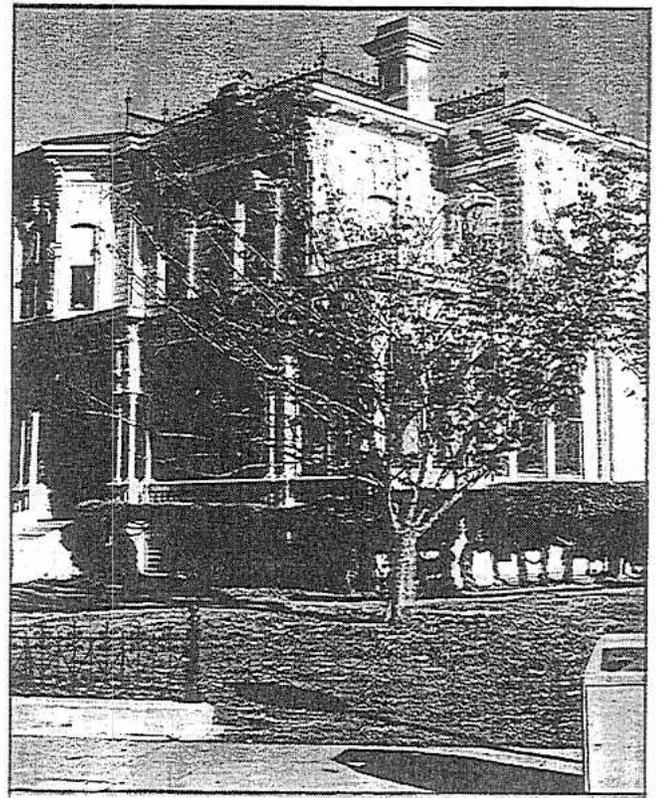
- ✓ Those dating from the 1854 deed of partition, including Jefferson, Lafayette, Harrison, and Lincoln Squares;
- ✓ Town squares in the old communities of Clinton and San Antonio;
- ✓ Lakeside Park, with its many noteworthy structures and design elements;
- ✓ City Hall Plaza; and
- ✓ Joaquin Miller Park, both for the legacy left by poet Joaquin Miller and various WPA improvements.

Several parks contain former residences and grounds which are historically significant, including Dunsmuir House and Gardens, Peralta Hacienda, Mosswood Park, Knowland Park, and DeFremery Park. Other parks are noteworthy for their design features (fountains, bridges, ornamentation, etc.), including Oak Glen Park in the center of Richmond Boulevard. Still other parks may contain natural features of significance such as Lake Merritt or the old survivor redwood tree in Leona Heights Park. Historic significance might also be associated with historic events which occurred in parks, or with famous individuals who regularly used the parks (professional athletes, artists, writers, etc.).

Table 14 identifies historic features within Oakland's parks and open spaces. The table should be used as a guide for determining which parks are impacted by local Historic Preservation policies and ordinances. The City will continue to pursue the addition of new historic parks or park features to the National Register and locally-designated lists. New parks also may be added to the Preservation Study List over time. Once a park or park feature has been landmarked, a variety of incentives and regulations are imposed according to the specific importance of each property.

As with all historic structures, preservation efforts should consider the *context* of the historic feature as well as the feature itself. For instance, if a fence is built beside a historic park building, its design should be compatible with the building and its grounds. Likewise, it may be inappropriate to site a tot lot or basketball court on the grounds of a landmarked residence that is now a city park. Where recreational improvements are made at historic parks, it is important that they not compromise the integrity of the historic features.

In most cases, landmarking of specific park features rather than the entire park will provide sufficient protection of historic resources. Landmarking of entire parks is only recommended where the land itself has historic significance. This is the case for the original city squares in downtown Oakland and the former Town of Clinton, and in San Antonio Park, established as a public square in 1854.



The historic features of Oakland's parks include the Camron Stanford House, in Lakeside Park on the shores of Lake Merritt.

Table 14: Landmark Status of Oakland Parks

<u>National Register of Historic Places</u>	<u>Location</u>
Lake Merritt Wild Duck Refuge (1966) ¹	Lakeside Park
Joaquin Miller House (the Abbey) (1966)	Joaquin Miller Park
Dunsmuir House (1972)	Dunsmuir House/Gardens
Camron Stanford House (1972)	Lake perimeter area
Peralta House (1977)	Peralta Hacienda Park
USS Potomac (1987)	Jack London Square
Oakland Museum (1993)	1000 Oak Street
<u>Locally designated Historic Landmarks</u>	<u>Location</u>
Camron Stanford House (1975)	Lake perimeter area
Tower to General Fremont (1975)	Joaquin Miller Park
Moss Cottage (1975)	Mosswood Park
Peralta House (1975)	Peralta Hacienda Park
Site of Adobe Hdqtrs. (1975)	Peralta Hacienda Park
Dunsmuir House/ Carriage House (1980)	Dunsmuir House/Gardens
Morcom Amphitheater of Roses (1980)	Morcom Rose Garden
De Fremery House (1981)	De Fremery Park
Jefferson Square (1983)	Jefferson Square
Lincoln Square (1983)	Lincoln Square
Necklace of Lights (1985)	Lake Merritt Perimeter
Preservation Park (1979)	Preservation Park
Leimert Bridge (1980)	Dimond Park Extension
Latham Square Fountain (1984)	15th/ Telegraph
North Field (1980)	Oakland International Airport
<u>Locally Designated Landmark Natural Features</u>	<u>Location</u>
Arbor Villa Palm Trees (1978)	Ninth Avenue
Old Survivor Redwood Tree (1980)	Leona Park
Lake Merritt (1980)	Lakeside Park/Wildlife Refuge
<u>Preservation Study List (rating, A= highest importance)</u>	<u>Location</u>
Veterans Memorial Building (A)	Adams Park
Harrison Square (A)	Harrison Square/Railroad Park
1520 Lakeside (Boathouse) (A)	Lake Merritt Perimeter
<u>Developed parcels with substantial open space/landscaped areas on Preservation Study List</u>	
Claremont Hotel	
Highland Hospital	
Mills College (Bell Tower and Mills Hall)	

¹ (*) = includes seven individual features within the Park; see Ordinance 9978 C.M.S.

ACTION REC-2.6.1: LANDMARK DESIGNATION OF HISTORIC PARKS

Designate Lafayette Square, Harrison Square, Clinton Square, San Antonio Park, City Hall Plaza, and City Stables as Oakland landmarks.

Although these parks are among the most historic sites in the city, none are presently landmarked. Harrison Square is on the Preservation Study List, and San Antonio Park and Lafayette Square are under consideration for landmarking. Since Lafayette Square is located within the S-7 Historic Preservation overlay zone, some degree of protection has already been provided. The only parks that have already been landmarked are Lincoln and Jefferson Squares and the Morcom Rose Garden. Additional park features, such as the 1911 bridge and fountain in Oak Glen Park, should be considered for landmark designation in the future.

(see also Historic Preservation Element Action 3.2.2 requiring City-owned historic properties to be managed to ensure their preservation).

ACTION REC-2.6.2: HISTORIC RESOURCE INVENTORIES

Continue the efforts of the Oakland Heritage Alliance, the Cultural Resources Survey, the Oakland Museum, and other groups working to inventory historic resources in Oakland's parks.

OBJECTIVE REC-3: PARKLAND AND PARK FACILITY DEFICIENCIES

To reduce the deficiencies in park acreage and recreational facilities in the most equitable, cost-effective way possible.

Virtually every Oakland neighborhood has some type of land or facility deficiency. None of the city's Planning Areas meets the adopted park acreage standards and most are deficient in recreational facilities. Because money is limited, priorities must be established.

Priority-setting should begin with a look at the kinds of problems that need to be addressed. First, some neighborhoods lack parks and recreational facilities altogether. Second, some neighborhoods have parks, but they are too small to meet local needs. Third, some neighborhoods have parks that were once adequate but have declined because of deferred maintenance, outdated facilities, and factors like vandalism and safety concerns.

Each type of problem requires a different type of solution. In the first instance, the most effective strategy may be to make the most of existing open space in the neighborhood. This could mean improving access to schoolyards, acquiring vacant land for park development, including parks within redevelopment projects, and creating linear parks along creeks. In the second instance, the focus will be on expanding existing parks and facilities, primarily through land acquisition. This provides a more manageable solution than scattering new mini-parks throughout the neighborhood.

In the third instance, the focus should be on maintenance, rehabilitation, and safety improvements. This is currently the City's highest priority since it protects public investment and maximizes the effective delivery of park services. In general, the City's resources should not be directed towards new parks until the deficiencies in maintenance and safety at existing parks have been addressed.

POLICY REC-3.1: LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

Use the level of service of standards in Table 15 (Level of Service Standards for Oakland Parks) as a means of determining where unmet needs exist and prioritizing future capital investments.

As mentioned on Page 4-9, level of service standards are a way to measure the need for parks and figure out where deficiencies exist. Two types of service standards are proposed. *Per capita standards* prescribe the acreage in parkland (or recreational facilities) that should exist per 1,000 residents. *Service area standards* prescribe the expected area that will be served by a given park or recreational facility.

In both cases, the standards are based on National Recreation and Park Association guidelines, adapted to local conditions.

While the ultimate goal is to achieve these standards in every Oakland neighborhood, the city's built-out character presents a major obstacle in most cases. The immediate goal is to make significant inroads in the gap between what exists now and what is ultimately desired. The City should work towards reducing that gap in its annual capital improvement program.

Table 15 should be consulted for a comprehensive listing of service standards. The table is consistent with Table 8, and with the text found on Pages 9-10 of this chapter.

Table 15: Level of Service Standards for Oakland Parks

Overall Service Goal: Wherever practical and not precluded by environmental constraints (such as steep terrain), a local-serving park should be provided within 1/4 mile of all residents of the Oakland flatlands, and within 1/2 mile of all residents of the Oakland hills. "Local-serving" parks include neighborhood parks, community parks, athletic fields, school playgrounds, city squares, active mini-parks, and the portions of region-serving parks containing active facilities.

<u>Park Type</u>	<u>Acres/1,000 residents</u>	
	<u>1994</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Total park and public open space acreage	8.26	10.0
Local-serving park acreage	1.33	4.0
<u>Facility Type</u>	<u>Facilities per resident</u>	
	<u>1994</u>	<u>Goal</u>
Baseball/ Softball diamonds	1/8,500	1/5,000
Tennis courts	1/9,000	1/5,000
Soccer or football fields	1/23,250	1/15,000
Swimming Pools	1/62,000	1/25,000
Golf Courses (18 holes)	1/150,000	1/150,000
Gymnasiums	1/41,000	1/25,000

POLICY REC-3.2: SYSTEMATIC ALLOCATION OF FUNDS

Follow a systematic process in allocating park and recreation funds. In general, allocate the greatest expenditures to those areas with the greatest unmet needs and place a priority on projects which maximize reductions in deficiency for the amount of money spent. However, maintain the flexibility to consider such factors as site opportunities, the availability of grants or matching funds, and linkages to other kinds of projects.

This policy combines several which first appeared in the 1976 OSCAR Element. Its message is still applicable today. Park funds must be spent with a conscious and deliberate effort to reduce shortages and address unmet needs. Priorities need to be reassessed each year, since park needs are dynamic and always changing.

The following steps should be followed on an annual basis:

1. **Quantify unmet needs in dollars.** The Office of Parks and Recreation already conducts this task on a regular basis. Current cost estimates for unmet needs are in the hundreds of millions of dollars. The authorization of \$60 million in bonds through Oakland's Measure K (supplemented by Measure AA) has made and will continue to make a significant dent in these needs, but will by no means eliminate them entirely.
2. **Prioritize expenditures.** In general, the highest priority should be given to areas where there the needs are greatest. These include areas with the lowest park acreage per capita, highest population density, lowest income, and highest concentrations of children. A lower priority would be placed on areas that are served by private open space, including private yards, and areas with highly mobile populations. The idea is to concentrate service improvements in the most deficient areas without totally neglecting those areas which are relatively well off.
3. **Decide what proportion of the City's overall budget can be spent for parks and recreation.** This is done by the City Manager and City Council through the annual budgeting process. Parks must compete for a limited pool of funds with libraries, police, and other city services. The share allocated to parks varies from year to year depending on the overall budget and perceptions of need. In any case, the proportion should continue to be significant, since parks are basic city amenities and are fundamental to the quality of life in Oakland.
4. **Allocate expenditures to specific projects.** This will require balancing maintenance/ rehabilitation projects with new construction/acquisition projects, and local-serving projects with region-serving projects. OSCAR policies emphasize local-serving projects and urge the Regional Park District to meet a greater share of the demand for region-serving projects.

ACTION REC-3.2.1: ANNUAL LIST OF PROJECTS

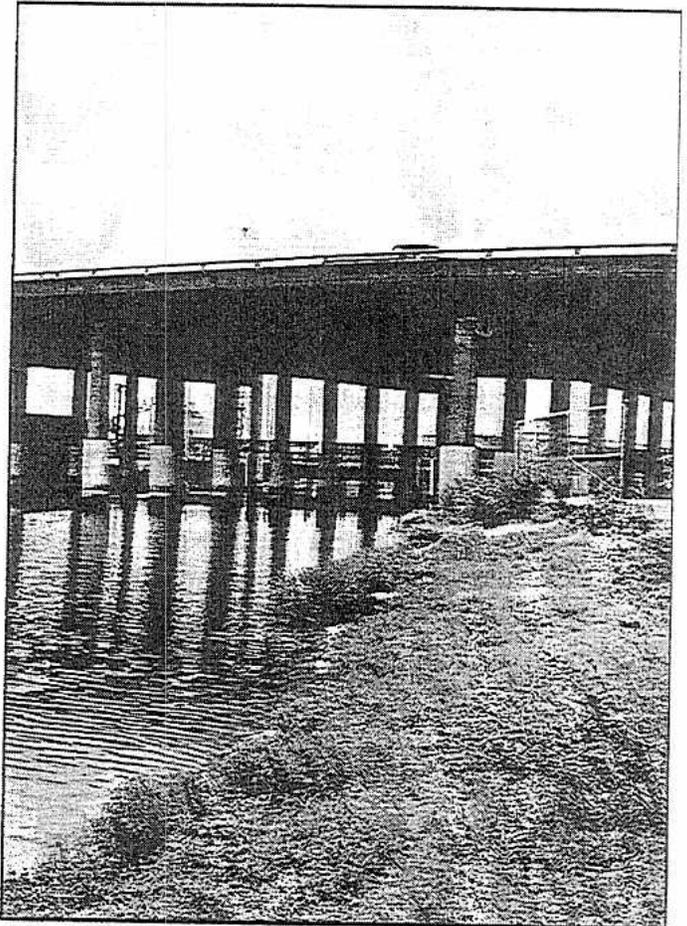
Compile and annually update a list of projects requiring funding, including cost estimates for each project, proposed funding sources, and a relative priority ranking. Include capital improvement projects, land acquisition projects, and major maintenance/ rehabilitation projects on the list.

The current "unfunded projects list" does not include the full range of projects that would be required to meet the level of service standards. The list should be expanded and should become a comprehensive source from which park and recreation projects can be picked as money becomes available. It should reflect the needs analysis and deficiencies identified in this Element and should include long-range as well as immediate needs. Table 16 provides a summary of unmet needs in Oakland parks, based on the analyses done during the OSCAR Update program.

ACTION REC-3.2.2: REGULAR NEEDS ASSESSMENTS

Reassess recreational needs and standards on a regular basis, using demographic data, surveys and questionnaires, updated facility information, leisure trends, and NRPA guidelines. Initiate an on-going evaluation or suggestion box process to identify the strengths and weaknesses of the park system and conduct a random sample survey similar to the OSCAR resident survey at least once every five years.

The Office of Parks and Recreation should keep abreast of changes in recreational needs and should update its plans and programs regularly. A regular procedure for feedback on park programs should be established. At a minimum, this should include evaluation forms for all park programs and suggestion boxes at all recreation centers.



Among the City's unfunded capital improvement projects is completion of the "missing link" on the planned trail between Lake Merritt and the Estuary.

The Recreation Advisory Councils should sponsor periodic community meetings to obtain feedback on park and recreation service issues. In addition, surveys like the one completed for the OSCAR update should be conducted at least once every five years to see how recreational needs have changed. Input from meetings, surveys, and program participants should be used to structure future plans, programs, and budgets.

Table 16: Major Unmet Capital Needs in Oakland Parks (not necessarily in priority order)

1. General safety and security improvements, particularly in flatland parks
2. General rehabilitation and updating needs for play apparatus, ballfields, recreation centers, and irrigation systems (citywide, particularly in flatland parks)
3. Additional local-serving parks (citywide, and especially in San Antonio-Fruitvale, Central East Oakland, and North Oakland)
4. Swimming pools (especially in Elmhurst. Additionally, at least one indoor swimming pool should be provided somewhere in the city).
5. Baseball fields (especially in the Lower Hills, Central East Oakland, Central/ Chinatown, and Lower Fruitvale).
6. Tennis courts (especially in Fruitvale, Central/ Chinatown, and South Hills).
7. Football/soccer fields (especially in Elmhurst, Central/ Chinatown, and Lower Fruitvale).
8. Additional fishing piers and shoreline access points (especially in San Antonio-Fruitvale and in the Harbor area near West Oakland).
9. Recreational bikeways (citywide).
10. Retrofitting of facilities for disabled users (citywide).
11. Night lighting of additional facilities (especially for playfields in non-residential areas).
12. "Dog" park, providing exercise/play areas and possibly providing obedience training, veterinary and vaccination services, and a kennel (citywide).
13. Places for nature study and education within existing open space reserves (especially in the hills, and along the shoreline and creeks).
14. Additional downtown plazas and mini-parks (and rehabilitation of City Hall Plaza).
15. Bowling alley (citywide).
16. Ice rink (citywide).
17. Expansion of "undersized" parks (especially Brookdale, Rainbow, Sanborn, Manzanita, and Poplar).
18. Redesign of poorly laid out parks (especially Bushrod, Foothill Meadows, Golden Gate, Lazear, Sobrante, Stonehurst, and Tyrone Carney).
19. Improvements to Lake Merritt (bulkhead walls, etc.) and the surrounding parkland (promenade, duck pond, park buildings, etc.).
20. Improvements to Greenman Field, including possible expansion into Havenscourt Schoolyard.

POLICY REC-3.3: PARK LOCATION FACTORS

Consider a range of factors when locating new parks or recreational facilities, including local recreational needs, projected operating and maintenance costs, budgetary constraints, surrounding land uses, citizen wishes, accessibility, the need to protect or enhance a historic resource, and site visibility.

A number of factors should be considered when creating a park or building a new recreational facility. The text below expands on Policy REC-3.3 by discussing these factors.

The first step in locating any kind of park project is to identify its purpose and function. The activities to be accommodated, site constraints and assets, intended user groups, and use patterns must all be considered.

For new parks, the sites must contain enough space to accommodate these desired activities. This sounds like a basic premise, but it has not always been followed in the past. As a result, some Oakland parks are too crowded and have too many overlapping functions going on within the same area.

Factors like shape, grade, vegetation, and other physical characteristics should be taken into consideration. Different sites offer different kinds of advantages. Linear sites may bring recreation closer to a larger number of people but are more difficult to develop with active recreational facilities. Very small sites can bring "breathing room" into underserved areas but if they are poorly sited they can also become local "hangouts" and fail to attract the users they were designed to serve. In general, new neighborhood parks should contain at least two acres of relatively level (less than 5 percent grade) ground and new community parks should contain at least five acres of relatively level ground.

Sites with unique vegetation, topography, or other natural features are especially desirable for Resource Conservation parks (see "Open Space" policies). However, even in community and neighborhood parks, features like mature trees give the park a headstart in serving an aesthetic function within the community. Locating new parks on such properties provides a means

to conserve natural resources as well as enhance the recreation experience.

New parks or recreational facilities must be convenient and accessible to potential users. This general rule implies different things for different sites. For a neighborhood park or playground, the most important concern is good pedestrian access. For the typical community park, pedestrian access is still significant but the site should also be easy to get to by bike, transit, and car. This suggests a location on a major street. For region-serving parks, many users will be coming by car although it will be important to offer alternatives in the form of good bikeway, pedestrian, and transit access.

Visibility is another issue to be considered in siting new parks. Where a feeling of seclusion is important, as it is in the Resource Conservation Areas, obscured visibility may be desirable. On the other hand, hard-to-find neighborhood parks can reduce patronage and may create security problems. For community- and region-serving parks, visibility from major travel routes is desirable. Even for neighborhood parks, a fairly prominent location is usually desirable.

Compatibility with adjacent land uses is another important factor. This varies somewhat for different kinds of parks and recreation areas. A passive open space or landscaped mini-park is usually a good neighbor to housing. A large active recreation area which produces noise and draws big crowds generally is not. Unless an adequate buffer strip or other separation can be provided next to the houses, this kind of recreation space may be better located in a non-residential area. At the same time, some non-residential uses (scrap yards, noisy industrial plants, uses with noxious odors) make a location undesirable for recreational use altogether. Depending on the activity, there may be other instances where the park itself can work effectively as a buffer between such industrial uses and nearby residential areas.

For most kinds of parks and recreation areas, a location next to a local civic building--especially a school--is desirable. This can enhance the site's identity and encourage patronage and user safety. A location next to a commercial center may be desirable for intensively used community or region-serving parks.

Opportunities for park dedication may also arise when historic buildings become available to the city for preservation or restoration. For instance, the old AMTRAK station in West Oakland could become part of a city park. In the past, parks have been created at a number of historic residences in Oakland, including the homes of Antonio Maria Peralta and Josiah Stanford. In addition, parks have been created on historic sites where buildings once stood. For instance, Vantage Point Park in the San Antonio District was once the site of the local Wells Fargo office, a hotel, and the stables for the Town of Clinton.

ACTION REC-3.3.1: PROJECTIONS OF OPERATING AND MAINTENANCE COSTS

Include a projection of operating and maintenance costs for new parks or recreational facilities whenever such parks or facilities are proposed.

This action underscores the need to consider operating and maintenance costs when programming future projects. If such costs are projected to be inordinately high or might impair the city's ability to maintain existing facilities, the project should not be pursued. High operating and maintenance costs may also require that sites be developed in phases rather than all at once. The City should explore a number of solutions to reduce maintenance costs, including community-run maintenance programs.



PARK OPERATIONS

GOAL REC-2: SAFE, CLEAN, ACCESSIBLE, EFFICIENTLY-RUN PARKS THAT COMPLEMENT THE QUALITY OF LIFE IN OAKLAND.

OBJECTIVE REC-4: MAINTENANCE AND REHABILITATION

To maintain park facilities so that their ability to meet recreational needs is optimized and to rehabilitate recreational facilities on a regular basis so that they remain useful, attractive, and safe.

Objective REC-4 addresses two critical facets of park operations: maintenance and rehabilitation.

Regular maintenance of parks and park facilities is essential to permit public use and enjoyment of Oakland's parks. The age of Oakland's parks, decrease in staff and operating funds, heavy use of many facilities, and incidence of vandalism have made maintenance a higher priority than it was 20 or 30 years ago. Although most residents polled in the 1992 household survey indicated that park maintenance was satisfactory, there is a widespread feeling that new park facilities should not be built if maintenance levels at existing facilities would suffer.

Rehabilitation of park infrastructure is also critical. Many park improvements and recreation centers have been in service continuously for decades without being restored or renovated. With the passage of Measure K by Oakland voters in 1990, a greater percentage of public funds has been expended on renovation and rehabilitation of Oakland's aging park system. The emphasis on rehabilitation is likely to continue in the future, considering the high cost of new construction and the limited availability of vacant land.

Despite Measure K, there are still enormous unmet capital needs for rehabilitation. Nearly all of the recreation centers are in need of updating. Typical *interior* needs are for improved bathrooms, security features, general modernization, room additions, and gymnasium renovations. In some cases, the centers are operating beyond their design capacities or are overtaxed by heavy use. In other cases, they have simply deteriorated with age. Typical *exterior* needs are for turf improvements on playing fields, benches, landscaping, new irrigation systems, fence replacement, and lighting.

POLICY REC-4.1: SYSTEMATIC MAINTENANCE PROVISIONS

Provide for on-going, systematic maintenance of all parks and recreational facilities to prevent deterioration, ensure public safety, and permit continued public use and enjoyment.

The City of Oakland will strive to provide adequate maintenance services at all City parks. Routine maintenance needs should be evaluated on a regular basis. Parks which receive very heavy use should receive more frequent maintenance than those with lesser use.

Given budget constraints, the City will promote improvements which reduce maintenance costs. These might include low-maintenance landscaping, more efficient mowers, and automated irrigation systems. Budget constraints also make it imperative to search for new financing mechanisms which provide a reliable funding source for long-term maintenance needs.

Maintenance costs might also be reduced by re-organizing the way services are provided. Presently, park maintenance falls under the jurisdiction of several different departments. The Park Services Division maintains outdoor areas in city parks; the Office of Public Works maintains roads, sidewalks, restrooms, and buildings and is responsible for most repair work. The School District maintains its recreational facilities, although the City has certain responsibilities for jointly used areas. These arrangements should be closely examined for their cost-effectiveness and efficiency.

ACTION REC-4.1.1: PRIORITY ON MAINTENANCE

Establish an annual budgeting process within the Office of Parks and Recreation which assigns a very high priority to park maintenance.

ACTION REC-4.1.2: IMPROVEMENTS WHICH REDUCE MAINTENANCE COSTS

Undertake improvements and upgrades at Oakland parks which reduce annual maintenance costs. Consider community-run maintenance programs for specific parks or park areas as a means of controlling costs.

Community maintenance programs include those run by the East Bay Conservation Corps, Sierra Club, Urban Creeks Council and other non-profit conservation groups. The City will support continued partnerships with the East Bay Conservation Corps in the maintenance of the natural landscape within city park and open space areas.

ACTION REC-4.1.3: SCHOOL DISTRICT COORDINATION

Issue Administrative Instructions and Joint Use Agreements as needed to clarify maintenance responsibilities with the Oakland Unified School District for jointly used properties.

POLICY REC-4.2: ENVIRONMENTAL RESPONSIBILITY

Encourage maintenance practices which conserve energy and water, promote recycling, and minimize harmful side effects on the environment. Ensure that any application of chemical pesticides and herbicides is managed to avoid pollution of ground and surface waters.

The City should be a role model for Oakland residents and businesses in the maintenance of its parks and open spaces. The fire prevention, energy and water conservation, and habitat management measures described in the Conservation Chapter of the OSCAR Element must be followed on City-owned lands if they are to be expected on private land.

ACTION REC-4.2.1: INTEGRATED PEST MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Develop and implement an Integrated Pest Management Program (IPMP) which emphasizes environmentally safe approaches to insect and weed control.

The Offices of Parks and Recreation, Public Works, and General Services have developed a proposed IPMP for City parks, landscaped rights of way, and public buildings. The proposal includes pest control policies and procedures which minimize the indiscriminate use of herbicides and pesticides and promote the use of environmentally safe technologies.

POLICY REC-4.3: RENOVATION AND REHABILITATION PRIORITIES

Where cost savings and equivalent benefits would be achieved, renovate and rehabilitate existing facilities before building new facilities. Give rehabilitation priority to projects which would: (a) increase park safety and usefulness; (b) reduce operating and maintenance expenses; and (c) prevent a facility from deteriorating to the point of becoming unusable or expensive to repair. For projects meeting these criteria, give highest priority to projects in areas which are underserved by parks and recreational facilities, and projects which would benefit the greatest number of persons.

Past master plans for Oakland's parks emphasized land acquisition and construction of new park buildings. A shift in emphasis is needed due to constrained finances, the aging building stock, and the growing obsolescence of some park facilities. Repair of facilities is usually less expensive than full replacement and is the most cost-effective way to protect the city's investment in its parks.

Parks which are now marginally useful can be given new life through renovation. Most of Oakland's parks were developed at a time when safety standards were lower, expectations for "adventure play" were simpler, and considerations for special needs groups (including disabled persons) were absent. Some parks were developed to serve user groups that have since left the neighborhood, leaving current residents with parks that seem uninteresting. The City will strive to meet the needs of all residents, and to redesign those parks which have become obsolete.

Because renovation needs are so great, an emphasis must be placed on those projects with the greatest public benefit. In general, projects in areas where residents lack access to sufficient or adequate facilities should receive top priority. An especially high priority also should be placed on projects which result in long-term cost savings for operations and maintenance. This could include replacement of manually operated irrigation systems with automatic systems, use of more energy-efficient lighting, etc.

ACTION REC-4.3.1: ANNUAL LIST OF PRIORITY PROJECTS

Develop an annual list of priority rehabilitation projects based on an annual inspection of all sites and feedback from the public (see also Action REC-3.2.1).

The list should be sufficiently flexible to take advantage of grants, outside revenue sources, and other funding opportunities that may arise during the course of the year.



OBJECTIVE REC-5: PARK SAFETY

To improve personal safety and reduce crime in Oakland's parks.

There is a widespread perception, sometimes based on actual experiences and sometimes based on media reports and hearsay, that many of Oakland's parks are unsafe. This perception, combined with the visible impacts of vandalism and loitering, has contributed to a reduction in park use in many Oakland neighborhoods. Paradoxically, the biggest obstacle to making the parks safe is the lack of patronage by local residents. Bringing people of all ages back to the parks -- "taking back the parks" so to speak -- has proven to be the most effective way to combat crime and vandalism in parks around the country.

The problem of park safety is especially germane because it deeply affects Oakland's image and the quality of life in our neighborhoods. Although statistics tell us that the parks may be safer than the city streets around them, this provides little solace. One reason is that parks are intended to be safe havens from urban life. Another is that they are regarded as a resource for young children. Moreover, because parks are public spaces, park crime reflects poorly on the city's public image. Vandalism of park property becomes an affront to our efforts to improve Oakland and make it a better place to live.

The range of crime in Oakland parks mirrors that which takes place across the city. It varies widely in type, cause, and pattern of occurrence. The most prevalent crimes in Oakland's parks are auto break-ins, vagrancy, vandalism, narcotics possession, graffiti, sexual solicitation, and disorderly conduct. Between 1984 and 1993, the Ranger Unit reported 283 larceny thefts, 107 auto thefts, 96 burglaries, 154 narcotics offenses, 137 non-violent sex offenses, and 300 incidences of public intoxication. While rarely resulting in personal harm or injury, these crimes impart impressions of fear and neglect. Once these perceptions become rooted, they are difficult to eliminate.

A number of policies are proposed to address and combat crime in Oakland's parks. These range from reactive strategies such as adding burglar alarms and park rangers to pro-active strategies which address the roots of crime and deterrents to criminal behavior. In most instances, funding remains a significant constraint to developing a completely effective response. While there is no magic solution to completely eliminating safety problems, progress can be made through the combined efforts of the City and its residents.

POLICY REC-5.1: INCREASED RANGE OF ACTIVITIES

Promote an increased range of activities within Oakland's parks as a means of introducing new users to the parks and improving safety through numbers.

The most effective strategy for making parks safer is to increase legitimate park use. This does not necessarily require increases in staffing and operating expenses. For instance, community gardening may bring dozens of people of all ages and cultures into the parks. This is primarily a volunteer-driven activity which can go a long way towards pride of ownership.

Another part of this strategy is to allow non-recreational use of the city's recreation centers. Encouraging community groups, social service organizations, senior groups, and clubs to use recreation centers can increase patronage at the centers and bolster the perception that the centers are a community resource.

ACTION REC-5.1.1: DESIGNATION OF COMMUNITY GARDEN AREAS

Designate areas within neighborhood parks and mini-parks for community gardening where appropriate as a means of bringing new user groups to the parks.

ACTION REC-5.1.2: NON-RECREATIONAL USE OF RECREATION CENTERS

Allow the City's 22 Recreation Centers to be used for a range of non-recreational activities where appropriate, including the delivery of social services provided by other agencies. Develop rules specifying conditions and criteria for non-recreational use of recreational centers.

The city's recreation centers should be used to deliver other community services, including senior services, day care, and meeting space for neighborhood groups and clubs. Many of the centers are already used in this manner. Multiple use of the space can promote a greater sense of community ownership, more activity by more users, and ultimately higher levels of safety in the park. Such activities should be promoted where space is available and should be monitored through written agreements.

ACTION REC-5.1.3: OPPORTUNITIES FOR YOUTH

Expand recreational opportunities for young people to provide a viable, positive alternative to anti-social behavior. Consider extended hours of operation at certain recreation centers, evening sports events, and other after-hours activities oriented towards Oakland youth.

Recreational and cultural programs, sports activities, and after-school programs for youth serve two clear benefits. First, they provide a constructive environment for young people, instilling positive values, providing education, encouraging physical fitness, emphasizing teamwork, and creating a sense of belonging and self-worth. Second, they provide a past-time for young people, filling the time void that exists after school and in the evening and in some cases, substituting for absentee or working parents.

Some opportunities for such programs have already been seized but many more exist. Expanding the hours at the recreation centers, expanding arts and crafts programs, classes, and services could go a long way towards

meeting the needs of Oakland youth. Additional evening sports programs like Midnight Basketball also might be created. Other programs might capitalize on Oakland's natural resources, giving kids a chance to assist in tree planting, gardening, stream restoration, and fire prevention. All of these concepts require a commitment of human resources, including both paid and volunteer staff. The bottom line is that more money is needed. Efforts to increase state and federal funding for such programs should be vigorously pursued.

POLICY REC-5.2: SAFETY-ORIENTED DESIGN

Use a wide range of physical design solutions to improve safety at Oakland's parks, including lighting, signage, landscape design, fencing, vandal-resistant building materials, and emergency response features.

Park facilities should be designed or redesigned to ensure personal safety and to facilitate security and policing. In some cases, this may be as simple as removing bushes or shrubs; in other cases, this may mean relocating parking lots closer to recreation centers or moving activity areas from the "back" of parks to the "front." For instance, Stonehurst Park would benefit if the children's play area was moved from a remote location in the back of the park to a more prominent location closer to the street. Bushrod Park would benefit from a relocation of its main facilities along lightly traveled 59th Street to the more visible Shattuck Avenue.

On a smaller scale, creating "defensible" space might mean adding windows to recreation centers so the play areas beside them are visible from within, or simply designing interior and exterior spaces to avoid hiding places.

Some of the structural solutions for improving park security are described below:

- *Gates and Fencing.* While gates and fences are not suitable for all parks, they may be appropriate at mini-parks and around equipment within some of the neighborhood parks. Even a low (3') fence can be an effective deterrent to crime. Higher fences can

effectively secure parks at night and assist in enforcing curfews.

Where fences are used, it is essential that they are treated as an attractive, integral part of the park. Harsh, utilitarian designs like barbed wire should be avoided; ornamental iron and other materials which complement the park's design should be encouraged. Efforts to make the parks safe should *not* destroy the features which make them attractive environments.

- **Improved Lighting.** Lighting can be both a deterrent to crime and an attractor of crime, depending on which areas are illuminated and when lights are left on. Additional lighting would be most helpful around the recreation centers and in parking areas. Lighting might also be provided at a limited number of basketball courts, ballfields and tennis courts where evening staff are available or where programmed activities occur.
- **Traffic Control.** Bollards, barricades, and other devices can be used to prevent vehicles from using parking lots and roadways within the parks after hours. Such devices may also be effective in dealing with security problems on park perimeter streets.
- **Burglar Alarms.** The City recently installed burglar alarms in most of the recreation centers. These have been very effective in reducing vandalism during the evening and early morning hours. The centers without alarms should be equipped as soon as possible.
- **Emergency Call Boxes.** To discourage the use of pay telephones for illicit purposes, most Oakland parks do not have public phones. This creates potential problems for patrons in trouble as well as park users who may require medical assistance. Emergency call boxes similar to those found along freeways would provide a quick way to reach the police directly.
- **Signage.** Some of the more common offenses in parks are local ordinance infractions, such as drinking, dog walking, and curfew violations. These violations might be curbed if there were more prominent signs indicating that these activities are

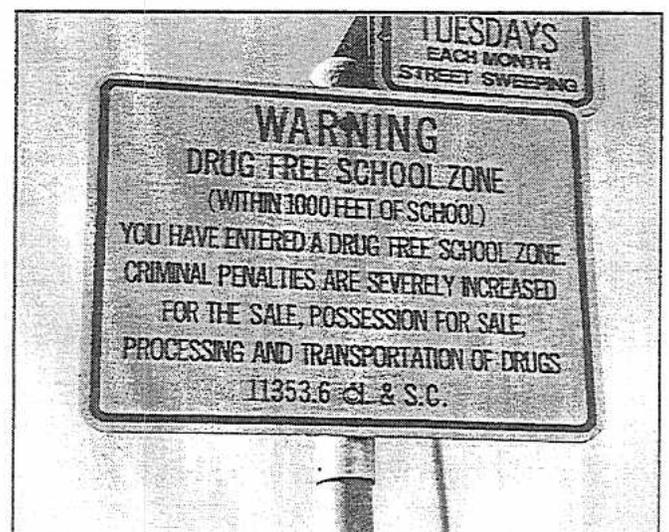
illegal. Information on park ordinances might also be posted at recreation centers or in park kiosks.

- **Vandal-resistant Design.** While totally "vandal proof" facilities may be impossible, some facilities are definitely more vandal resistant than others. For instance, concrete block restrooms meet the test of time much better than wood-frame restrooms. Pad-mounted aggregate garbage cans are more difficult to tip over than cardboard cans. Some surfaces are more resistant to graffiti than others. Lighting and irrigation systems should be similarly designed to discourage or obstruct vandalism.

ACTION REC-5.2-1: DESIGNATION OF DRUG-FREE ZONES

Explore the possibility of designating all Oakland parks as "Drug-Free" and "Weapon-Free" Zones.

This action would make the penalty for sale or possession of narcotics or weapons in the parks more serious than elsewhere. This is already being done around public schools.



The "drug free zones" around Oakland schools might be expanded to include City parks.

ACTION REC-5.2.2: DESIGN REVIEW BY OFD AND RANGER UNIT

On an on-going basis, involve the Ranger Unit and the Oakland Fire Department in the review of major planned park improvements and provide them with opportunities to suggest modifications which could improve public safety.

POLICY REC-5.3: LAW ENFORCEMENT

Improve law enforcement at Oakland's parks through a combination of new rangers, reserve officers, neighborhood watch groups, coordination with East Bay Regional Park District rangers, and better communication between enforcement officers and neighborhood residents.

Currently the Ranger Unit has 9 full-time and 6 part-time positions. Resources have been cut significantly in the post-Prop 13 era, despite an expanding number of parks and the more serious nature of park crime. The Unit is presently recruiting volunteer reserves to address the need for additional personnel.

The Ranger Unit has indicated that an additional 10 to 14 full-time staff positions are needed and that 24-hour patrolling would be beneficial to provide better enforcement of park curfews. The need for additional personnel has been echoed by park users and by recreation center staff. The visible presence of "beat officers" can go a long way to establish a higher level of comfort among both staff and park patrons.

POLICY REC-5.4: CIVIC RESPONSIBILITY

Promote civic responsibility among residents in the care of Oakland's parks and encourage broad community participation in making parks safer.

The emphasis here is on pride of ownership and recognition that parks belong to everyone. Neighborhood watch and "adopt a park" programs should be promoted

as a means of increasing neighborhood awareness and support for parks as well as reducing crime, litter and vandalism. Residents can also become involved in the planning process through the Recreation Advisory Councils, public hearings, and community meetings.

ACTION REC-5.4.1: TAKE BACK THE PARK EFFORTS

Support neighborhood "take back the park" efforts.

ACTION REC-5.4.2: GRAFFITI AND LITTER ABATEMENT

Maintain graffiti and litter abatement programs.

The City should continue its efforts at graffiti removal and litter abatement. Quick responses to graffiti are essential to convey the message that the City will not tolerate the degradation of its parks.

POLICY REC-5.5: HAZARDOUS CONDITIONS

Reduce hazards to park users resulting from hazardous equipment, building materials, or soil conditions.

Building and park maintenance should minimize the use of hazardous materials, with chemicals and other treatments applied only by certified trained personnel. With the assistance of appropriate County, State, and federal agencies, the City will continue efforts to abate any problems resulting from past use of hazardous materials like lead and asbestos in park buildings.

Efforts should also be made to ensure the safety of patrons using play apparatus, sandboxes, ballfields, and other park facilities which may be in poor condition. Some of the parks contain outdated or vandalized play apparatus and hardscape surfaces that may be inadequate to cushion falls. Likewise, some of the ballfields are badly rutted and some of the hardcourts are uneven or

cracked. Maintenance and renovation are needed to reduce the risk of accidents.

Soil toxicity would be most likely to occur where parks have been developed on sites once used for industry or fuel storage; along freeways where high levels of airborne lead may have settled in the soil; where lead paint on buildings formerly on park sites may have entered the soil; and where fill imported to a site (for berms, etc.) may contain hazardous materials. The City does not currently have a testing and monitoring program for toxics at its parks.

ACTION REC-5.5.1: ASSESSMENT OF PLAY EQUIPMENT HAZARDS

Prepare a hazard assessment of all play equipment in City parks comparable to the assessment recently prepared by the Oakland Unified School District.

The assessment should include a cost estimate for the replacement of any hazardous equipment identified and a strategy for obtaining the funds needed to abate the hazards.

ACTION REC-5.5.2: ASSESSMENT OF SOIL TOXICITY

Prepare a list of those parks which are most likely to contain soil toxicity problems. Perform soil testing at the sites identified where remediation is required.

It may be appropriate to perform some testing at certain sites where problems are suspected or have been reported. A larger scale program would be beyond the ability of the city to mitigate without state or federal assistance.

OBJECTIVE REC-6: JOINT USE OF RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

To forge partnerships between the City, the Oakland Unified School District, and other agencies so that the joint use of facilities is maximized.

Partnerships between the different providers of recreational services in Oakland will be strongly supported. Coordination between the City and the Oakland Unified School District (OUSD) has already enabled more facilities to become available to Oakland residents at a relatively low cost. Rather than building redundant facilities, or facilities which are only used during school hours, Oakland's parks and schools have a history of collaborating to make the most of each other's resources. Four of the city's six public swimming pools are next to high schools and about 30 of the public schools have playgrounds that are open and staffed by OPR after school and during the summer. Many of the schools (Garfield, Bella Vista, etc.) adjoin neighborhood parks and use the parks' fields and facilities for school programs.

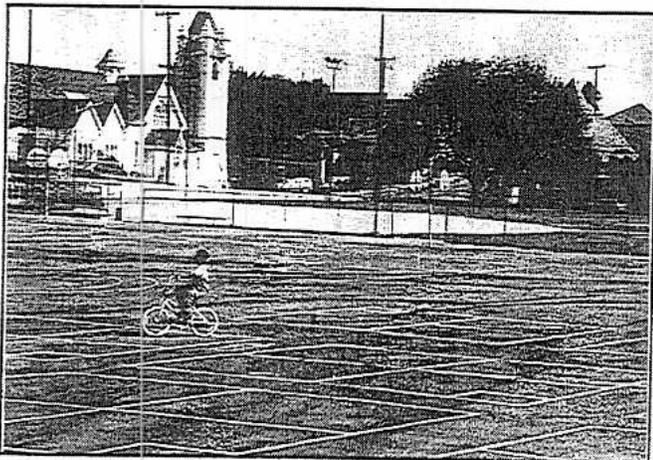
Partnerships and joint use agreements with other agencies will also be encouraged. Agreements with the Peralta Colleges can improve access to athletic fields and tennis courts in neighborhoods lacking these facilities. Coordination with the Port of Oakland can help achieve shoreline access, Bay Trail construction, and possibly more waterfront parks. Partnerships with EBMUD can enhance linkages to regional open spaces, while cooperation with Alameda County Flood Control is essential for creek conservation and restoration programs.

POLICY REC-6.1: JOINT USE AGREEMENTS

Promote joint use agreements and similar arrangements between the City, the Oakland Unified School District, and other public agencies to maximize the use of school and other non-park recreational facilities during non-school hours.

An Agreement for Joint Use of Facilities was entered into by the City and the OUSD in March 1993. The intent of the joint use agreement was to make open space and recreational areas available to more residents, particularly in areas where neighborhood parks are less accessible or unavailable. The agreement establishes a *Joint Use Committee*, which coordinates scheduling of facilities and maintenance agreements. It also describes the conditions for joint use, sets priorities for user groups, and addresses funding. The new partnership has been accompanied by pilot After-School programs run by the Office of Parks and Recreation.

An important goal of the joint use agreement is to keep all schoolyards open during daylight hours after school. This includes the use of indoor facilities such as gymnasiums. There has been improved cooperation by school principals to accommodate the playground programs offered by the OPR, and a new agreement gives the OPR responsibility for all schoolyards after school hours.



The neighborhood park at Franklin School includes a paved schoolyard and a City-owned ballfield and recreation center.

ACTION REC-6.1.1: CITY/ SCHOOLS JOINT USE AGREEMENT

Regularly review the joint use agreement between the City and the Oakland Unified School District to respond to opportunities for joint use of facilities and grounds.

The biggest concern at this juncture is the lack of funding for After-School program staffing. It was initially hoped that \$5 million would be earmarked for After-School activities, but so far only \$250,000 has been made available. This makes it all the more necessary to put an emphasis on volunteer playground staffers and to be selective in which schools have programs. An emphasis should be placed on the junior high schools, since they have more extensive facilities, and on those schools in areas which are underserved by neighborhood and community parks.

ACTION REC-6.1.2: PERALTA COLLEGE JOINT USE AGREEMENT

Investigate new joint use agreements with the Peralta College District to ensure the continued availability of their recreational facilities for community use.

Coordination between the City and the Peralta College District should be encouraged. Increased access to playfields, gymnasiums, and fitness facilities by the community at large has been explored in the past and will continue to be pursued. A written agreement between the College District and the Office of Parks and Recreation, specifying facility usage, staffing, and maintenance conditions, would be helpful.

POLICY REC-6.2: PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS

Encourage "public private partnerships" as a means of providing new recreational facilities on privately-owned sites. Promote joint use partnerships with local churches, private recreational service providers, and local non-profits.

The concept of "joint use" should be expanded from schools to the private sector, churches, social service providers, and local non-profits. Because these groups already provide a great deal of recreational services to Oakland residents, they must be regarded as an important community resource. Establishments like the East Oakland Youth Development Center, St. Elizabeth's Church, and the YMCA are invaluable in supplementing the city's recreation programs.

The City will coordinate its programs and facility planning efforts with non-profits and other groups to maximize its own effectiveness. The use of non-City recreational facilities for City-sponsored programs and activities should be pursued. In such cases, the focus should be on areas with limited access to neighborhood and community parks.

The possibility may also exist to build creative partnerships with other public agencies and with the private sector to help meet local recreational needs. For instance, the City might become a joint venture partner in a private recreational development meeting the needs of lower income households in areas lacking neighborhood parks. The City could also underwrite land costs or provide redevelopment assistance to the private sector to assist in creating new recreational facilities. In such cases, priority should be placed on facilities that would serve lower income households in areas without comparable facilities.

ACTION REC-6.2.1: EAST OAKLAND SWIM AND DIVING CENTER

Study the feasibility of a joint venture partnership with a non-profit or private entity in the development of an East Oakland Swim and Diving Center.

POLICY REC-6.3: USE OF SURPLUS OR UNDERUTILIZED PROPERTIES

In areas where park deficiencies exist, pursue recreational use of open space at surplus schools, military bases, utility and watershed properties, and transmission and transportation corridors. Recreational uses in such locations should not conflict with the functional use of the property and should be compatible with prevailing environmental conditions.

Education Code Section 39390 (the Naylor Act) allows cities to buy surplus school district properties at 25 percent of market value. Under this act, the City could buy the open space at Clawson School, Woodland School, Dag Hammerjskold School, and other surplus OUSD properties at well below the price of comparable vacant land nearby. Surplus schools usually provide excellent sites for new neighborhood parks since they already contain recreational open space and are usually on level sites in residential areas. They may also be in areas that are grossly deficient in park acreage.

Similarly, the Fleet Industrial Supply Center, the Oakland Army Base, and the Naval Hospital each contain recreational areas, including playfields, hardcourts, and children's play equipment. Closure of the Naval Hospital will create an opportunity for a community-scale park within the site boundaries. Similar prospects exist at the other bases if and when they are converted (*see also Open Space policies under Objectives OS-2 and OS-3*).

As mentioned in the Open Space Chapter, cooperative efforts with EBMUD, Caltrans, and PG&E should also be explored. Recreational facilities like tot lots and trails can be accommodated on some reservoir and transmission line sites with minimal impact and expense. Joint use agreements would be especially helpful in areas where there is little vacant land available for new parks.

HUMAN RESOURCES

GOAL REC-3: RECREATIONAL SERVICES WHICH FULLY UTILIZE HUMAN RESOURCES AND PROMOTE PERSONAL GROWTH, CELEBRATE OAKLAND'S CULTURAL DIVERSITY, AND SERVE ALL COMMUNITIES EQUITABLY.

OBJECTIVE REC-7: RECREATION PROGRAMS

To provide a broad and basic array of programs which meet the athletic, social, educational, and cultural needs of Oakland residents and workers.

POLICY REC-7.1: PROGRAM DIVERSITY

Provide diverse recreational activities for all ages, with a progression of programs from youth to adulthood. Equitably distribute programs throughout all Oakland neighborhoods.

This policy emphasizes the importance of diversity and equity in recreational programming. The City should strive to provide balanced services and assistance to the entire community. At the same time, its programs should accommodate a range of specialized programs, such as aquatics, tennis, and equestrian events. Programs should be structured to eliminate the financial and cultural barriers which prevent some Oaklanders from access to these services. For instance, fees should be set with consideration given to the ability of patrons to pay and informational materials should be printed in non-English languages where appropriate.

The OSCAR Resident Survey and Needs Assessments should be used to provide guidance in determining where program improvements are needed. The survey indicated a significant unmet need for aquatic programs, especially in East Oakland where no public swimming pool exists. There is a citywide unmet need for after-school programs, particularly at the junior high or middle school levels. The San Antonio-Fruitvale, Central East Oakland, and

Elmhurst areas have unmet needs for cultural arts programs comparable to those offered at Studio One in North Oakland. Based on the resident survey, there are also unmet needs for organized basketball programs, tennis programs, health and fitness programs (including organized walks), and baseball or softball programs in lower income communities.

ACTION REC-7.1.1: RESPONDING TO UNMET NEEDS

On an on-going basis, explore ways to improve service delivery and respond to unmet community needs.

The following specific goals should be pursued:

- Additional programs comparable to those offered at "Studio One" should be provided from a location in East Oakland by 1997.
- Participation in aquatics and boating should be increased, paying particular attention to programs which reach lower income households.
- Continued support should be provided for After-School programs, particularly at the junior high level. Possible ways to increase funding for such programs should be explored.
- New funding sources, including user fees, to reduce these and other program deficiencies should be explored.

Additional program goals are included under other policies in this chapter.

ACTION REC-7.1.2: STAFF PROVISIONS

Establish minimum acceptable staffing requirements to carry out the City's recreation program goals, and do not allow staff levels to fall below these requirements.

This action requires the continued commitment of public funds to staff the recreation centers. In the event future General Fund allocations are reduced, the City will make a concerted effort to explore new funding sources. In the event reductions are unavoidable, they should be achieved equitably and should avoid impacts on areas where other alternatives for recreation are most limited.

Recreation Center staff should provide supervision and leadership for patrons, particularly children and teens, and should be trained to be sensitive and responsive to the needs of different cultural groups and target populations. Staff also should be trained in first aid, fitness, and other skills which enable them to do their jobs most effectively.

POLICY REC-7.2: COORDINATION WITH OTHER SERVICE PROVIDERS

Coordinate with other service providers, including the Oakland Unified School District, to maximize the effectiveness of service delivery and minimize duplication of efforts.

The Office of Parks and Recreation will work with other City of Oakland departments, local non-profits, community groups, adjacent cities, churches, schools, the Regional Park District, and private recreation providers to make sure that their efforts are not redundant or duplicative. Where appropriate, the City will facilitate partnerships which increase recreational opportunities and will encourage private investment in the development and operation of recreational facilities which serve a public need.

ACTION REC-7.2.1: AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAMS

Strive to provide After School programs in every junior high or middle school in the City by the year 2000. Explore funding sources to expand the After School program.

Just as there are opportunities to share school and park facilities (see Policy REC-6.1), there are also opportunities to collaborate in educational and recreational programming. School programs like intramural sports and fitness have a strong recreational component, while park programs like arts and music have an educational component. There are opportunities for school-park partnerships in such areas as vocational training and skills training in areas like home repair, first aid, and consumer education.

POLICY REC-7.3: REDUCTION OF PUBLIC COSTS

Promote volunteer and private sector involvement in recreational service delivery a means of reducing public costs. To this end, encourage local employers to develop programs which meet the recreational needs of persons working in Oakland.

Although funding for recreational programs has steadily eroded since the 1970s, catastrophic cuts in service delivery have been avoided through the contributions of volunteers. The City has solicited and encouraged volunteers to supervise and lead numerous recreational activities and to participate in park maintenance, clean-up, and planting.

Groups like Volunteers for Oakland, the advisory councils (Boating, Aquatics, etc.), and the athletic leagues (Babe Ruth Little League, etc.) have made invaluable contributions to the city's recreational programs and will continue to do so in the future. Volunteers for Oakland should continue to solicit the assistance of Oakland residents in leading recreational programs and sporting activities.

The City will also encourage local employers to provide facilities and programs which further meet recreational needs. Employer programs could include morning fitness or aerobics, luncheon jogs or walks, and after-work softball, baseball, or volleyball games. As funding permits, the City will provide technical assistance to help local employers design and implement such programs.

POLICY REC-7.4: ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FOR YOUTH

Broaden the exposure of young people to Oakland's environment through programs and interpretive nature facilities in the City's parks.

The City will promote opportunities for young people to learn more about conservation and natural resources in the city. This could include school curricula, brochures, exhibits, videos, printed materials, and special programs. The educational programs offered by the Aquatic Habitat Institute and the on-going displays at the Oakland Museum are excellent examples of how public awareness of urban natural resources can be enhanced. Increased awareness can also be achieved through interpretive trails, nature centers, and other facilities in or adjacent to natural resource areas. Field trips (to the zoo, San Leandro Bay, etc.) should continue to be encouraged as a way of broadening residents' exposure to local resources. Park rangers should be regarded as an important resource in this regard, acting as interpreters, conservationists, and educators at open space areas.

ACTION REC-7.4.1: URBAN NATURALIST VOLUNTEER PROGRAM

Pursue formation of an urban naturalist volunteer program, wherein local conservation professionals and interest group members provide outreach at local recreation centers, schools, and parks.

ACTION REC-7.4.2: DEVELOPMENT OF NATURE TRAILS

Develop nature trails at public natural resource areas such as Claremont Canyon, Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline, Beaconsfield Canyon, Glenn Daniel/King Estate, Knowland Park, Leona Regional Open Space, and the UC Hill property.

Where appropriate, self-guided interpretive trails should be used as a means of showcasing natural features in Oakland's parks. Such trails are already in place at San Leandro Bay and outside the city limits at Sibley and Huckleberry Parks. The potential for additional interpretive trails exists, particularly along creeks in flatland parks, in large open spaces like Glenn Daniel/King Estate and Claremont Canyon, and even at Lake Merritt.

ACTION REC-7.4.3: RE-USE OF CHABOT OBSERVATORY

After it is vacated, re-use the Chabot Observatory with a use promoting environmental education.

The Observatory site on Mountain Boulevard will be vacated after a new observatory is built near Skyline Drive. Serious consideration should be given to the reuse of the 6.7-acre site for a land use combining recreation and environmental education.



POLICY REC-7.5: MULTI-CULTURALISM

Design recreational services which respond to the many cultures, ethnic groups, and language groups represented in Oakland. Design recreational programs to reflect the specific needs of Oakland neighborhoods and the values and priorities of local residents.

In many neighborhoods, the city faces the challenge of adapting its services to reflect the customs and values of new populations. In other neighborhoods, the challenge is to adapt services to the needs of existing groups that have only recently become empowered. At community meetings held throughout the OSCAR Update participants voiced their interest in new park elements and programs celebrating African, Mexican, Central American, Southeast Asian, and Chinese heritage.

According to the Community Development boards representing Oakland's most ethnically diverse neighborhoods, there is a particular need to improve awareness of parks and recreation centers among non-English speaking residents. Public relations can be improved by printing brochures and flyers on programs, hours of operation, and directions to local parks and recreation centers in Spanish, Chinese, Vietnamese, Cambodian, and other languages.

It is also important that recreation center staff have the knowledge and background to respond appropriately to cultural differences. Hiring and training of employees should emphasize an understanding of the needs of the populations served. The use of multi-lingual volunteers can be especially helpful in making programs more accessible and meaningful to the non-English speaking community. Public opinion surveys, meetings, evaluation forms, staff input, Recreation Advisory Council input and demographic data can also be helpful in coming up with user profiles and evaluating how recreational needs change over time.

ACTION REC-7.5.1: ADVOCACY GROUP LIAISON

On an on-going basis, meet with agencies and organizations serving non-English speaking populations to explore ways to improve recreational service delivery to these populations. Encourage the City's 25 Recreation Advisory Councils to provide outreach to the City's diverse ethnic communities.

The Office of Parks and Recreation will work with those agencies and organizations serving various cultural and ethnic groups to craft appropriate recreational programs and services. Programs should be structured based on information on the hobbies, sports and leisure activities of various groups, as determined through interviews, surveys, and anecdotal information.

ACTION REC-7.5.2: FAIRS AND FESTIVALS

Sponsor festivals, special events, and visitor programs that reflect Oakland's cultural diversity and neighborhoods and that foster community identity, stability, and cohesion.

Recreation-oriented festivals provide an opportunity for residents and visitors to learn about Oakland's heritage and culture. This includes events like "Festival at the Lake" celebrating cultural diversity, and events like "Cinco de Mayo" and "Juneteenth" which are oriented to particular cultures.

POLICY REC-7.6: RECOGNITION OF LOCAL HISTORY

Promote programs, events, and markers at local parks which increase public awareness of local history and provide a sense of continuity with the past.

The City should promote awareness and recognition of Oakland's history through its parks. This can be achieved through organized programs and events in historic parks, walking tours and self-guided tours, articles and other printed media, and the use of plaques, markers, and public art commemorating historic events or sites. Plaques and markers also might be used to identify parks where famous local athletes once practiced or elements of natural history, such as the location of the original shoreline.

A special effort should be made to relate local ethnic neighborhood history through interpretive efforts and programs in Oakland's parks. This could be achieved through displays and exhibits within park buildings as well as through park planning and design.

ACTION REC-7.6.1: RENAMING OF OAKLAND PARKS OR PARK FEATURES

Rename Oakland parks where appropriate to commemorate local history and culture, or in honor of certain individuals who made a significant contribution to the community or the park.

OBJECTIVE REC-8: SPECIAL RECREATIONAL NEEDS

To promote access to recreational services among residents with physical or financial hardships and others with special needs.

The Office of Parks and Recreation provides a full range of recreational services to a broad spectrum of the population. Certain groups, including young children, teens, seniors, disabled persons, lower income households, and homeless persons have special needs which require a level of effort above that required for the population at large.

POLICY REC-8.1: YOUNG CHILDREN

Place special emphasis in recreational programming on the needs of young children, particularly "latch key" children and children from single parent households.

The Office of Parks and Recreation will continue to work with organizations like Headstart to coordinate the provision of recreational services and day care. Special efforts will be made to meet the needs of children with no other after-school supervision.



POLICY REC-8.2: TEENS

Use recreational programming to promote self-esteem, responsibility, leadership, development, and employability among Oakland teens.

Over the course of the OSCAR update, teens generally expressed the opinion that recreational programs and facilities were geared too heavily towards young children and adults, and that their needs were not being fully considered. Adequate recreational opportunities should be provided for all youth, particularly youth who are "at risk" of high school dropout, unemployment, gang involvement, or future health or behavior problems. Recreational programs should encourage youth leadership, fundraising, teamwork, and career guidance as well as promoting health and fitness. Drug abuse prevention, health services, environmental education, and employment counseling can be integrated with recreational programs to maximize the effectiveness of the programs. The new After-School programs offered at some of the junior high and middle schools have addressed these needs to some extent, but require greater financial support.

The Office of Parks and Recreation has already begun to implement this policy. It recently established eight teen centers, including sites at the Alice Arts Center, and at the recreation centers in Arroyo Viejo, Brookfield, DeFremery, Montclair (Jay VerLee), Golden Gate, Lincoln Square, and Sanborn Parks. A Citywide Teen Advisory Council also has been created to assist the OPR in developing teen center programs and services.

ACTION REC-8.2.1: NEEDS ASSESSMENT FOR TEENS

Conduct a survey of Oakland teens to determine their preferences in recreation programming. Monitor participation rates in existing programs and compare to the survey results to determine where improvements might be made.

The survey could be designed by students at UC Berkeley or another local college or university and could be administered and tabulated by student volunteers under city supervision.

POLICY REC-8.3: SENIOR CITIZENS

Provide quality recreational service delivery to senior citizens through collaborative efforts by the City, senior housing providers, and senior citizen groups and organizations.

The Office of Aging coordinates the provision of services to Oakland's 45,000 senior citizens. Services are delivered from senior centers, multi-purpose centers, libraries, and recreation centers in neighborhoods throughout the city. The City's "Comprehensive Plan for Seniors" (1987) guides senior-oriented programs, including recreational programs provided by the Office of Parks and Recreation. Activities include dancing, cards, games, arts and crafts, dinners, community service projects, music, entertainment, holiday celebrations, and special events.

The Office of Parks and Recreation will continue to work with the Office of Aging in implementing the Comprehensive Plan's recommendations. These include improving access to recreation centers, constructing three new multi-purpose centers with Measure K funds, and providing outreach and special programs in senior housing areas. Each multi-purpose center will serve as a focal point for senior service delivery. In areas where there are no centers, the Office of Parks and Recreation will work with the senior population to ensure that quality services are made available.

ACTION REC-8.3.1: COMPREHENSIVE PLAN FOR SENIORS

Implement the "Comprehensive Plan for Seniors" prepared by the Office of Aging.

POLICY REC-8.4: DISABLED PERSONS

Improve access to recreational services for persons with disabilities. Develop recreational programs which are specifically oriented to the needs of disabled persons, while at the same time removing barriers for disabled persons in "mainstream" recreational programs.

OPR will continue to offer programs which are designed to meet the needs of disabled persons, including specialized aquatics, boating, and hiking programs. At the same time, the City will endeavor to make all of its programs more accessible to persons with disabilities and to eliminate barriers to the use and enjoyment of its facilities.

Rehabilitation of park facilities will include updating the facilities to meet ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) standards wherever feasible.

Under the ADA, new construction or modifications to existing improvements must provide:

- access to sanitary and convenience facilities, such as restrooms and telephones;
- access between parking and facility areas; and
- resilient flooring

Public facilities are subject to barrier-free design standards specified in the Americans with Disabilities Act Accessibility Guidelines, the Uniform Federal Accessibility Standards, and State Title 24. Within parks, these standards apply to such facilities as recreation buildings, picnic tables, trails, drinking fountains, and play apparatus.

ACTION REC-8.4.1: RETROFITTING OF FACILITIES

Continue Office of Parks and Recreation efforts to retrofit facilities for disabled access, placing first priority on facilities in underserved areas and facilities with large numbers of disabled users.

Most park facilities were built long before the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and are not wheelchair accessible. The Office of Parks and Recreation is in the process of updating its facilities to meet ADA requirements.

An ADA Survey, evaluating each city facility for its compliance, was conducted in Oakland in 1993 by the Affirmative Action Division of the City Manager's Office. The Division is developing a transition plan to meet federal and state standards within each city department. Retrofitting of existing facilities is constrained by the current city budget and will be accomplished over many years. The OPR will continue its program of retrofitting facilities, placing first priority on facilities in underserved areas and on facilities with large numbers of disabled users.

The City is working to retrofit its existing parks in such a way that at least one of each type of facility is accessible at some location in the city. In other words, it may be infeasible to retrofit all six swimming pools at this time, but at least one will be made accessible in the short term.

POLICY REC-8.5: LOW INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

Give special consideration in service delivery to groups with limited ability to provide for themselves either through lack of income or other socio-economic factors.

Some 16 percent of Oakland households were below the poverty level in 1990. These households (as well as many other households with incomes marginally above the poverty level) have very little discretionary income for

recreation. Recreational services must be provided at little or no cost to be accessible. The City should explore the use of reduced and/or exempted fees in instances where the ability to pay would be a significant barrier to access recreational services.

POLICY REC-8.6: HOMELESSNESS

Promote a humane response to homelessness in the City's parks, considering the needs of homeless park residents and working with those residents to forge effective solutions.

Without sufficient emergency shelter space and transitional housing, some of the city's parks have become refuges for the homeless. Most parks at least have benches and some vegetative cover, which make them more hospitable than doorways or sidewalks. Many have restrooms and covered shelters. Some have an active social scene, with regular card games or places to converse, and others are close to support services such as shelters or food banks.

The dilemma of homelessness is that it contributes to negative perceptions of parks but is also an inevitable byproduct of social service cuts and the shortage of low-cost housing in the city. On the one hand, vagrancy laws effectively make being homeless a crime. On the other hand, the resources do not exist to adequately house and provide social services for everyone.

Parks have become a resource for persons with no place else to go. The City has begun to develop a response to homelessness in parks, proposing a limited level of social services in Lafayette Square. The intent is to encourage shared use of the park, not just by the homeless but also by residents of the surrounding area and even by downtown office workers. Similar efforts might be tried in Jefferson Square, Peralta Park, and other parks with a visible homeless population.

POLICY REC-8.7: TRANSIT-DEPENDENT POPULATIONS

Improve access to parks and recreational services for adults without access to automobiles.

Currently, 90 percent of Oakland's parks are less than three blocks from an AC transit stop. Bus stops have been located immediately adjacent to the most popular city parks, such as Lakeside, Dimond, Mosswood, and San Antonio. However, reaching the bus lines which stop at these parks may require one or more transfers from any given neighborhood.

Probably the most serious transit deficiency is the lack of service between flatland neighborhoods and the regional open spaces. Access without a car is very difficult, particularly for families with children. Improved trail connections between the flatlands and the hills could address the situation somewhat, but would still make it difficult for persons who are not inclined to make the two or three mile hike into the hills. Regular bus service would be prohibitively expensive, but could be explored on a weekends- only or demand-responsive basis.

ACTION REC-8.7.1: INFORMATION AT BART STATIONS

Provide signs or directional information to community and region-serving parks on maps and kiosks at Oakland's BART Stations.

ACTION REC-8.7.2: IMPROVED TRANSIT SERVICE TO REGIONAL PARKS

Work with East Bay Regional Park District and AC Transit to develop a joint operating plan for improved weekend and summer weekday shuttle bus service between flatland neighborhoods, Redwood Regional Park, Joaquin Miller Park, and Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline.

The EBRPD has already made progress in this regard with their "Parks Express" programs providing direct transit service to regional parks, "campership" programs for single parent and lower income families, and increased accessibility to park facilities for disabled persons.

ACTION REC-8.7.3: TRANSIT BROCHURE

Develop a flyer showing how to get to each Oakland park using public transit. Make the flyer available at the recreation centers, schools, City offices, public libraries, and City and regional park facilities.

Flyers on public transportation should be prepared and made available to the general public. Such information might be included in the "Fun Times" brochures produced by the Office of Parks and Recreation, in the program guides printed at each Recreation Center, and on AC Transit route maps.

OBJECTIVE REC-9: COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

To strengthen community involvement and participation in recreational service delivery while increasing community use of park facilities and programs.

The participation and involvement of Oakland residents should be sought in the planning of all park space and the structuring of all recreation programs. An interactive planning process is needed to respond to the needs of different areas and effectively deal with local problems and concerns. Public involvement is also critical to gain the support necessary to increase (and in some cases even to maintain) basic services.

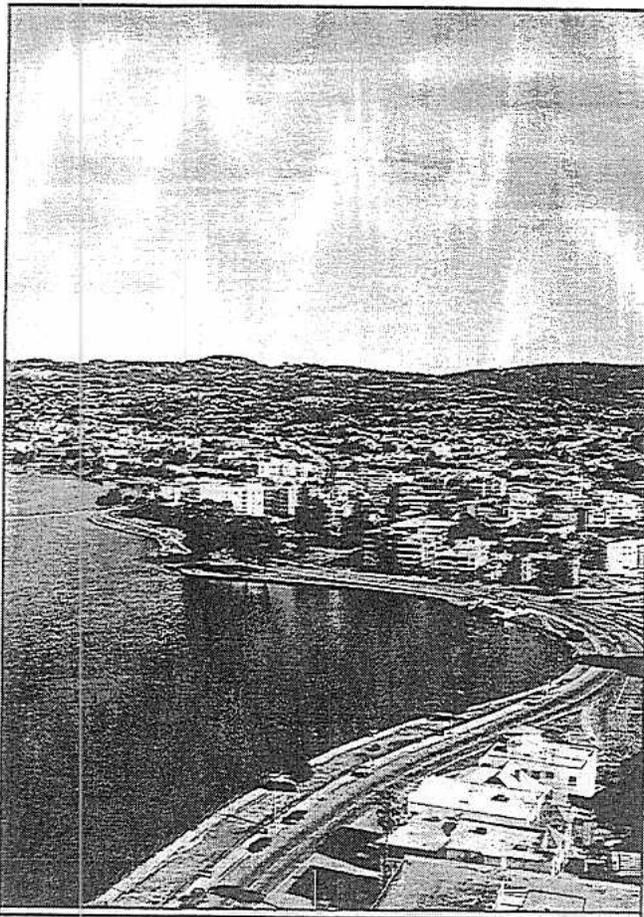
A number of policies are presented here affirming the city's commitment to public involvement. Policies in earlier chapters (addressing park zoning and procedures for changes in park use) describe further opportunities for public input.

POLICY REC-9.1: RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCILS

Use the Recreation Advisory Councils (RACs) as the primary means of public involvement at the neighborhood level.

Most of the recreation centers in Oakland have Recreation Advisory Councils (RACs) which provide direction on park management and recreational programming. There are also advisory councils dealing with specialized activities, such as aquatics. RAC members are local residents who act as liaisons between their neighborhoods (or interest group) and Office of Parks and Recreation (OPR) staff. They relay neighborhood or group concerns to the City and ensure that OPR decisions respond to local needs and interests. The operating manual for the RACs was revised in 1992 to establish clear operating policies, duties, and responsibilities for all members.

Although the advisory councils are an important vehicle for public input, awareness of their role (and even their existence in some cases) is fairly low. RAC visibility should be increased. Meeting dates and times should be well publicized. Publicity and active outreach by Council members also should be encouraged. Better links to Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs), Community Development boards, and other community organizations would be helpful. In some cases, new RACs may be needed to reflect emerging areas of interest such as community gardening.



ACTION REC-9.1.1: RECREATION ADVISORY COUNCIL COVERAGE FOR UNREPRESENTED PARKS

Consider creating additional Recreation Advisory Councils to serve parks that are not currently represented, or expanding the role of existing councils to include multiple parks.

Most of Oakland's neighborhood parks, special use parks, mini-parks, and athletic field parks are not represented by advisory councils. Consideration should be given to creating new advisory councils to shape policy decisions in some of these parks. Alternately, the role of existing councils could be expanded to include several parks within each community. In other words, the DeFremery Advisory Council might provide guidance on Lowell Park, Marston Campbell Park, and other parks in West Oakland. Another possibility would be for existing neighborhood groups to create subcommittees specifically dealing with park and open space issues. This has already happened in Rockridge and in West Oakland.

POLICY REC-9.2: COMMUNITY RELATIONS

Promote interaction between park and recreation staff, the Recreation Advisory Councils, school staff, the general public, volunteers, and others in the community who wish to contribute to park improvement efforts.

Communication between staff and local residents and businesses should be encouraged to increase pride of ownership in local parks and improve park safety and upkeep. This is a basic step to make sure that parks remain a focal point of community life and source of community spirit. Staff should work with local residents in organizing special events and programs, providing information and referral services, and determining what steps are necessary to improve service and community relations.

ACTION REC-9.2.1: OUTREACH BY RECREATION CENTER STAFF

Encourage recreation center staff to meet with neighborhood groups, businesses, organizations, and residents in the areas surrounding their parks to foster better communication, cooperation, and support.

POLICY REC-9.3: INVOLVEMENT OF NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS

Promote the involvement of neighborhood groups in park beautification, crime prevention, community gardening, park construction and maintenance, tree planting, creek restoration, and other activities which build pride and stewardship in the local park system.

The City will promote neighborhood and community park clean-ups, tree plantings, and other measures which promote pride of ownership. Resident participation in the construction and maintenance of play equipment, landscaping, and other facilities can reduce vandalism as well as increase park usage. This policy has proven to be effective at locations like Courtland Creek (where plum trees were planted and "adopted" by local youth) and Rainbow Recreation Center (where Seminary Creek was recently cleaned by local residents). It is also positively reflected in the ongoing work of the East Bay Youth Conservation Corps.

The proposed zoning of Oakland's parks will establish a formal means of public notification and a forum for participation in park land use decisions. Park master planning will provide another opportunity for the community to shape the appearance of their parks. Development of any park master plan must involve widely publicized community meetings. Park planners should also work with park users, including children and teens, in the planning of park spaces. The City should coordinate its efforts with local schools to involve children in park planning, design, and equipment selection.

ACTION REC-9.3.1: INVOLVEMENT OF LOCAL ARTISANS

Incorporate the diverse skills of Oakland artists and craftspersons in the design and planning of public open spaces.

There are hundreds of artists and craftspeople in Oakland that could participate in maintaining and beautifying the city's public spaces. While the city has a public arts program to capitalize on these resources, there may be additional opportunities to involve the community in designing, renovating, and building recreational facilities. In addition to the sculptors and painters traditionally involved in creating public art, there are metalworkers, woodworkers, glassworkers, landscape architects, and other artisans who can contribute to park improvements. Their participation should be encouraged through design competitions, exhibitions, volunteer programs, and other means.

POLICY REC-9.4: USE OF MEDIA

Use all forms of media, including printed materials, video, telecommunications, and computers, to increase patronage at Oakland's parks.

The OSCAR Resident Survey indicated that a majority of Oakland residents were not aware where their local parks were located, what facilities existed in those parks, what programs were available, and how they could participate in park planning and program development. Despite the City's publication of the "Fun Times" insert to the Oakland Tribune, announcements in newspapers and flyers, and broadcasts on radio and community access television, the message is still not reaching many residents. Additional advertising and outreach is needed, particularly in the promotion of the neighborhood-serving parks.

ACTION REC-9.4.1: MEDIA MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

Develop a media management program to increase awareness of local park issues and services.

The program should consist of the following components:

- On-going publicity of Recreation Advisory Council meeting dates and times through the neighborhood newsletters and other local papers.
 - Coordination with neighborhood newsletter editors (and the City's "Intercom") to publish a series of articles highlighting parks within Oakland neighborhoods. The articles could describe the history of each park, existing facilities and programs, and relevant planning issues.
 - Coordination with the Montclair, Oakland Tribune, and Oakland Post to present a series of articles on "Oakland's hidden parks" or "natural wonders." The topic might become a regular weekly feature.
 - Development of promotional materials aimed specifically at children, using creative word and picture games to tell them about their neighborhood or community parks.
 - Development of printed brochures or flyers for Oakland's community-serving and region-serving parks, similar to the brochures for each park in the East Bay Regional Park system.
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ACTION REC-9.4.2: FUNDING SOURCES FOR PUBLICITY

Solicit corporate support, grants, advertising sales, and donations to offset the costs of promotional materials and efforts.

ACTION REC-9.4.3: LEISURE REFERRAL SERVICE

Establish a program for leisure referral and information on the Citynet information system. Explore expanding the system to the Internet.

The Office of Parks and Recreation has considered implementing a computerized leisure referral service system for more than a decade. When first conceived, the system was to consist of a computerized data base on all parks and park services, including recreational facilities operated by quasi-public and private organizations. The data base was to be located in OPR's main office, where a telephone operator would access information when calls were received.

Today, new technology could create a much more sophisticated and accessible information system. The advent of computer bulletin boards and touch-tone telephone menus makes it possible to make basic information on parks and leisure services available to thousands of Oakland households. The data base should be updated twice a year and should contain current information on park location, facilities, and programs. The data base should be networked to all Oakland libraries, schools, and neighborhood centers, and possibly to on-line subscribers.

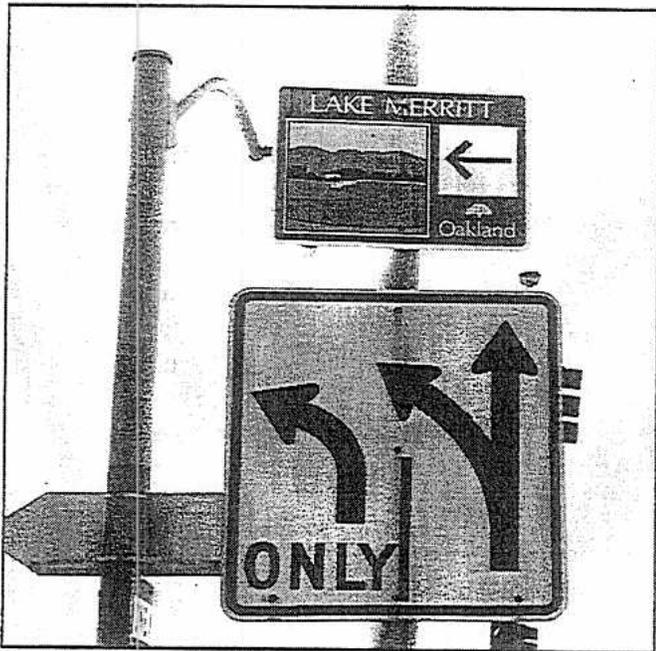
ACTION REC-9.4.4: PARK VISIBILITY AND NAME RECOGNITION

Improve park visibility and name recognition by funding improvements for signage, orientation markers, and park site maps.

Oakland's parks are not consistently marked or signed. There are occasional directional signs to the East Bay Regional Parks but signs from major trafficways to city parks are absent. This is problematic for parks without frontage on a major street, such as Arroyo Viejo and Raimondi Field. Such parks are invisible to many potential users.

Other parks have no signage on-site or have had their signs vandalized or obscured by shrubs. New signs or sign maintenance may be needed in such locations.

A citywide effort to improve signage is recommended. Capital improvement programming for the next five years should include regular allocations to improve directional signs, create map boards, mark trailheads, and refurbish park identification signs. The assistance of local artisans should be solicited in the design of signs, while community residents might assist in sign installation and landscaping.



Signs like these can direct visitors while improving the image and visibility of Oakland's parks.

FUNDING

OBJECTIVE REC-10: FUNDING

To stabilize existing funding sources, develop new funding sources, and effectively manage park expenses.

The lack of funding is probably the most pervasive issue confronting park services in Oakland today. Before the City can reduce the deficiencies identified in this Element, existing funding sources must be stabilized and secured. New funding sources and cost-reduction measures are needed before substantial new parks or park facilities can be developed. Vigilant management of operations, pursuit of grants and other alternative funding sources, new public/private partnerships, and a growing emphasis on "market-driven" services are essential.

The following policies should provide guidance in funding park services:



POLICY REC-10.1: GENERAL FUND SUPPORT

Continue to provide General Fund support for park and recreational services, acknowledging the importance of these services to the quality of life in Oakland.

Although a number of new funding sources are proposed, the Office of Parks and Recreation will continue to rely on ad valorem taxes (i.e.; the General Fund) for basic support. In the annual budgeting process, park programs, maintenance, and operations should be recognized as fundamental city services. Cost-reduction measures should strive towards more efficient operation rather than elimination of essential services.

ACTION REC-10.1.1: ACCOUNTING IMPROVEMENTS AND FUNDING STRATEGIES REPORT

Improve the City's financial data base and accounting system to determine appropriate general fund allocations and the need for other funding sources. Prepare a Parks Funding Strategies Report which investigates what resources might be available to meet Office of Parks and Recreation needs through 2005.

The Offices of Parks and Recreation and City Budget Office should implement this policy by improving the Financial Management System so that revenues and expenditures can be tracked more closely and more clearly. Consideration should be given to producing an Annual Report which identifies specific revenue sources and explains how revenues were spent. In an effort to improve cost recovery, the Offices should also identify potential new revenue-generating park services within the city, as well as potential new funding sources.

POLICY REC-10.2: PARKLAND DEDICATION AND IMPACT FEE

To the extent permitted by law, require recreational needs created by future growth to be offset by resources contributed by that growth. In other words, require mandatory land dedication for large scale residential development and establish a park impact fee for smaller-scale residential development, including individual new dwelling units. Calculate the dedication or fee requirement based on a standard of four acres of local-serving parkland per 1,000 residents.

Over the years, the citizens of Oakland have contributed their tax dollars to create a first class park system. As new development has occurred, demands on these facilities and the need for additional services has increased. This policy directs that appropriate fees be enacted to ensure that new populations contribute to and maintain the service level of the system.

One way of acquiring open space to meet the City's needs is to use California Government Code Section 66477, the Quimby Act. This law allows cities to require builders of residential subdivisions to dedicate land for parks and recreation areas or to pay an in lieu fee to the city. The Subdivision Map Act also authorizes cities to require dedication of park improvements or payment of in-lieu fees for park and recreational facilities (as a condition of subdivision approval).

Oakland is one of the only cities in the Bay Area that does not currently have a Quimby Act requirement. The great deficiencies in park acreage and the potential for new development and redevelopment create a compelling argument for changing this situation. The Association of Bay Area Governments projects that Oakland could gain more than 25,000 new residents by the year 2010. Park standards suggest that about 100 acres of parkland will be needed to meet the recreational needs of the new residents alone.

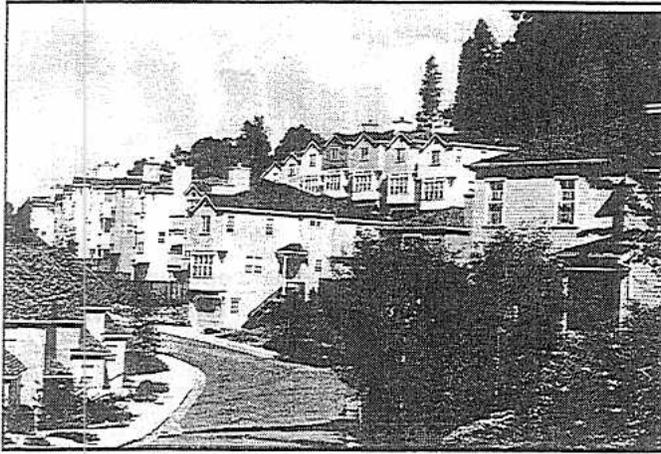
The amount of land dedicated or money collected should be based on the size of the project. The goal should be an equivalent of 4 acres of additional local-serving (e.g., active recreation) parkland per 1,000 residents. The requirement *excludes* land which is set aside as conservation easements, utility easements, medians, etc., since such areas do not meet the need for active recreation.

The choice to dedicate land on-site or pay an in-lieu fee will depend on the size and location of the site being developed and the estimated population of the development. On-site dedication is most appropriate for large, level sites located in areas deficient in neighborhood and community parks. In-lieu/ impact fees are most appropriate for:

- properties in areas where the money would be better spent expanding an existing substandard park or upgrading facilities or equipment at a local park; and
- sites that are too small to accommodate a useful neighborhood park.
- individual residences

If in-lieu fees are collected, revenues must be spent on improvements which benefit residents of the development (either new facilities or expansion of existing facilities). Quimby Act revenues may not be spent on regular maintenance, or on improvement of parks in other parts of Oakland.

At this time, a dedication requirement or impact fee for *non-residential* development is not proposed. Such fees are allowed in California, provided that a strong connection is demonstrated between the development, the need for parkland, and the way the fee is spent.



New housing in Oakland increases the demand for park facilities. Most communities in California have park impact fees to meet this demand.

ACTION REC-10.2.1: ADOPTION OF QUIMBY ACT FEE

Adopt an ordinance authorizing a Quimby Act parkland dedication and in-lieu/impact fee requirement. Prior to adoption, perform the necessary fiscal studies to determine the dollar amount of park impact fees to be charged for single family and multi-family dwellings. Following adoption, prioritize the expenditure of in-lieu fees collected from new development to ensure that the fees are spent in the appropriate areas.

The park impact fee would most likely be charged on all permits for new single and multi-family housing units issued in the city. Proceeds could cover both land acquisition costs (including the costs of expanding existing parks), and capital improvement costs. Prior to its adoption, the City will need to determine the cost of providing park services to a new dwelling unit and the way in which fees will be calculated. Fees could be structured so that a single family unit paid more than a multi-family unit. Fees could also be structured so that units with more bedrooms paid higher amounts. Typical Quimby Act fees in surrounding cities are typically between \$1,000 and \$3,000 per unit. Allowances for fee waivers or reductions (for affordable housing units, etc.) would be made in the adopting legislation.

The funds collected would be spent on specific projects serving the area where the unit was added. Provisions of the Quimby Act should be researched to determine if improvements serving the entire city (e.g., renovations at Lakeside Park, Joaquin Miller Park, Estuary Park, etc.) are eligible.

POLICY REC-10.3: EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT BENEFITS

Work with the East Bay Regional Park District to ensure that Oakland receives an equitable share of benefits from the District, including improved access between Oakland neighborhoods and the hill and shoreline parks.

Oakland contributes about 20 percent of the EBRPD's revenues. Because the District already has extensive landholdings in the East Bay Hills, and because the Oakland service area is growing less rapidly and is less immediately threatened by urbanization than southern Alameda and eastern Contra Costa Counties, the EBRPD has focused its land acquisition program on other parts of its service area. While it is true that Oakland does enjoy many benefits from its regional parks, most of the parks are located in the most affluent parts of the city. Many lower income Oakland households receive limited benefits from the regional park system.

This policy supports the expenditure of a greater share of regional park dollars on improvements within Oakland, particularly on improving connections between flatland neighborhoods and the hills and shoreline. Regional park dollars could be directed towards trail and linear park projects in Oakland, improvements to Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline on San Leandro Bay, outreach to flatland neighborhoods, and other means of making its parks more accessible to Oakland residents.

The City will also urge the EBRPD to expand the programs and services available to Oakland residents, especially in ways that will reduce deficiencies in flatland neighborhoods and meet the needs of lower income households. EBRPD will be encouraged to invest more

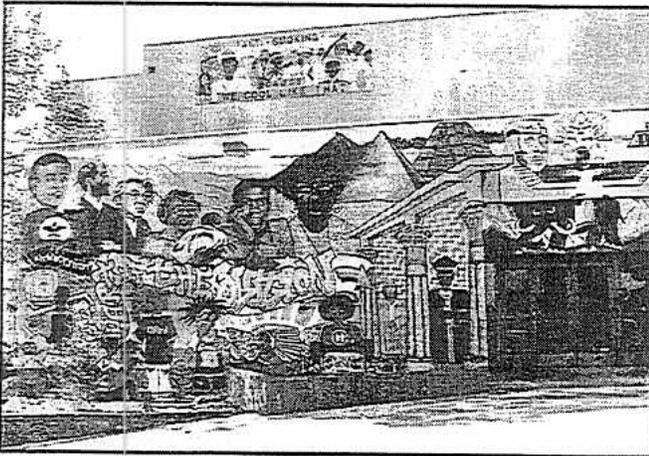
of its resources in these areas directly, and to improve access to regional park programs from these areas.

ACTION REC-10.3.1: ACCESS AND FACILITIES AT MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. SHORELINE

Participate in the update of the Land Use and Development Plan for Martin Luther King, Jr. Regional Shoreline, encouraging the East Bay Regional Park District to develop new recreational facilities on appropriate upland sites and to improve connections between this shoreline park and Central East Oakland neighborhoods.

ACTION REC-10.3.2: DUNSMUIR RIDGE

To the extent permitted by law, work with landowners and the East Bay Regional Park District to maximize the open space potential of Dunsmuir Ridge and other sensitive open space lands.



The East Oakland Youth Development Center is operated by a non-profit organization with City Assistance. Similar arrangements might be used to provide other park services.

POLICY REC-10.4: PRIVATE SECTOR PROVISION OF PUBLIC SERVICES

Promote and support partnerships with the non-profit and private sectors in the development and operation of facilities which serve a public recreational need. Where financially feasible, consider joint financing and operating agreements for recreational facilities with other public and private agencies.

The City should explore opportunities for public/private partnerships to meet recreational needs. This could include public assistance (donations of surplus city land, block grants, etc.) for the development of private recreational facilities that are open to the general public where such uses fill a niche not filled by the City, provide services affordable to lower income households, and are located in areas that are underserved by such facilities. Typical uses might include swimming and diving centers, bowling alleys, skating rinks, and gymnasiums, among others. This approach has already been used to fund and operate the East Oakland Youth Development Center and to finance the new downtown ice rink.

The City should also explore the concept of new "Enterprise Parks" to offset its recreational deficiencies. Such parks would essentially operate like private businesses and would have their operating costs covered by revenue-generating activities or facilities on the site. This is basically the concept used for the golf courses and the zoo. New parks with facilities like swimming pools and tennis courts could operate similarly. The downside of such facilities is that full cost recovery may require user fees that are not affordable to lower income households.

POLICY REC-10.5: OTHER LOCAL FUNDING SOURCES

Promote the use of other local funding sources, including tax increment financing, assessment districts, and general obligation and revenue bonds, to produce the revenue necessary for park improvement and operation.

ACTION REC-10.5.1: USE OF TAX INCREMENT FUNDS

Within designated redevelopment areas, use tax increment funds for park, plaza, and open space improvements which promote the overall goals of the redevelopment agency.

Most of downtown Oakland and about 6,000 acres near the Coliseum have been designated as redevelopment areas. This designation can assist in the financing of a wide range of front-end capital improvements which in turn help spur redevelopment activity. Improvements are paid for through tax increments that accrue as the value of land and buildings within the area increases. A wide range of park and open space improvements are eligible for tax increment financing, including street trees, landscaping, street lights, new open spaces, and refurbished park facilities.

ACTION REC-10.5.2: SPECIAL ASSESSMENTS AND ASSESSMENT DISTRICTS

Use special assessments where feasible and necessary to ensure that park operations and maintenance can be carried out effectively and without service reductions. For any assessment, provide an annual report to the City Council indicating precisely how funds are expended.

Since the imposition of Proposition 13 in the late 1970s, local governments throughout California have used special assessments to supplement the General Fund in providing park services. Assessment Districts (including

flat parcel taxes and taxes based on specific criteria, such as lot area) may be created by two-thirds voter approval within a designated area of benefit. Such districts are useful in funding services that are unique to specific areas, such as Oakland's Fire Suppression District in the hill area.

The Mello Roos Community Facilities Act of 1982 (Govt Code 53311 through 53365.7) also allows local governments to levy a special tax after approval by the voters. Mello Roos funds may be used to finance special tax bonds, but rather than paying an annual assessment to the city, property owners pay through a community facilities district. Where there are more than 12 persons residing in a proposed District, its creation requires two-thirds voter approval. Because of this requirement, Mello-Roos districts are usually used in newly developing areas and would have limited applicability in Oakland.

Landscaping and Lighting Assessment Districts (LLAD) provide a flexible method for financing park acquisition, development, and maintenance. Since the State legislature gave cities the authority to create LLADs in 1972, they have been used throughout California to acquire, develop, operate, and maintain parkland; enhance parks, medians, sidewalks, street trees; and develop and maintain street lighting. Such a district can be created by a majority vote of the City Council and remains in effect unless a majority of voters protest. Oakland adopted a LLAD in 1988 and today it contributes \$12 million a year towards the maintenance of parks, park buildings, street trees, and landscaping, and \$3,000,000 for street lighting. Continuation of this funding source is imperative to avoid reductions in these services.

ACTION REC-10.5.3: GENERAL OBLIGATION AND REVENUE BONDS

Support the use of local general obligation and revenue bonds for park improvements and rehabilitation, and the passage of State bond measures which would provide significant benefits to Oakland.

Subject to the required two-thirds voter approval, the City will support the use of park bonds which provide direct benefits to Oakland. General obligation bonds such as Measure K (approved in 1990 by 70 percent of Oakland voters) offer the opportunity to finance packages of large scale improvements such as park renovation, new facilities, and land acquisition. The bonds involve long-term borrowing secured by the general credit and taxing powers of the city. Bond proceeds are traditionally used for capital improvements and are repaid through property taxes.

Revenue Bonds may also be considered for park improvements, but are likely to have more limited applicability. These bonds are supported by revenue generated from the projects they finance (stadiums, etc.). Usually they do not require voter approval, but they do require facilities which generate sufficient revenue to pay off the bonds.

POLICY REC-10.6: GIFTS AND GRANTS

Promote gifts and donations of land, cash, services, and equipment from business, individuals, and community groups. Aggressively pursue public and private grants, making the maximum use of non-local funds to acquire and develop parkland and park facilities.

Oakland will actively encourage efforts to solicit funds from industry and private sources to improve and maintain open space. Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation (FOPR) should continue its role as an umbrella organization for park interest groups and should continue its advocacy, educational, and fundraising efforts. FOPR was formed to create a central donation

fund to support parks and recreation in Oakland. During the last two years alone, "Friends" has participated in or directed the renovation of 10 tot lots, Montclair Pond, the Woodminster Cascades, and City Stables. The group served as fiscal custodian for renovation of several baseball and soccer fields and is currently negotiating a contract with the City to replace the Oakland Raiders practice field with new and renovated baseball and soccer fields.

Because "Friends" is a non-profit corporation, donors can deduct their contributions from their income taxes and the group can seek donations from many organizations which cannot offer grants directly to public agencies. The City will continue to support and provide staff assistance to FOPR.

Additional support should also be provided through "Volunteers for Oakland." This group coordinates and places Oakland residents interested in community service. Voluntary contributions of cash, services, and materials by local citizens or businesses (including nurseries, lumber yards, woodworkers, etc.) also can go a long way towards enhancing open space in underserved areas. The city also will encourage the donation of private property to serve as public parkland. This value of such donations for the owner (tax benefits, etc.) should be publicized.

Grant funding sources include Community Development Block Grants (CDBG), Intersurface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA) Grants, gas tax funds, and Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants, among others. CDBG funds are especially useful in assisting lower and moderate income areas. ISTEA grants can be used for bikeway and pedestrian improvements and for park projects that are linked to local transportation improvements. Likewise, gas tax funds can be used for landscaping, bikeways, and other transportation facilities with a recreational function. LWCF grants are administered through the State Department of Parks and Recreation and can provide assistance for sites of regional importance. State and federal funds may also be available for specific types of projects like creek restoration and habitat enhancement. Various programs and grants are also offered by non-profit groups such as the Nature Conservancy, the Trust for Public Land, and the Ford Foundation.

Another approach is to pursue multi-purpose or multi-jurisdictional projects which involve the use of matching funds by other agencies. This could include improvements along flood control channels (ACFCD), the shoreline (developed jointly with the Port), and facilities developed jointly with the Regional Park District.

To better serve areas of high need, the OPR should maintain data which documents Oakland's eligibility for government grants. This includes the "needs assessment" data included in the OSCAR Element. Figures on park and recreational resources and deficiencies should be updated each year to reflect new projects. Estimates of recreation demand should be adjusted as new population data becomes available.

ACTION REC-10.6.1: JOINT VENTURE WITH OAKLAND HOUSING AUTHORITY

Work collaboratively with the Oakland Housing Authority (OHA) to pursue federal funds for the improvement of parks that are proximate to OHA properties, particularly Lockwood/ Coliseum Gardens.

This 5-acre park on 66th Avenue is underutilized and is located in an area with substantial park deficiencies. Federal (HUD) funds may be available for capital improvements, since the project would primarily benefit residents of nearby San Antonio Villa and Lockwood Gardens public housing.

POLICY REC-10.7: LEGISLATION FOR PARK FUNDING

Promote legislation at the State and national level which enhances the availability of funds for development, maintenance, and operation of parks.

This legislation could include increases in the amount of gas tax funding that can be used for bikeways and landscaping, or changes which facilitate the acquisition of parts of surplus military bases for parks. Legislative changes could also provide new incentives for landowners to conserve property as open space or dedicate parkland to the city. State and national legislation might also be effective in providing more local assistance to cities in the operation and maintenance of their parks.

POLICY REC-10.8: FEE-SUPPORTED, MARKET-RESPONSIVE SERVICE EMPHASIS

Emphasize fee-supported and market-responsive services. Evaluate fees periodically to determine whether they should be modified for inflation, rising costs, market demand, and other factors. Set fee schedules to make allowances for residents with limited ability to pay and to take into consideration such factors as residency within the City of Oakland (higher fees might be charged for non-residents).

User fees at such facilities as golf courses, swimming pools, and the Oakland Zoo partially offset the cost of operating and maintaining the facilities. In most cases, the fees are nominal and do not nearly cover operating expenses. Fees should be evaluated regularly to ensure that they are adequate for the services provided. At the same time, the goal of keeping recreational services affordable to all Oakland residents should be kept in mind. To the extent feasible, fees should be structured to provide discounts for families, seniors, children, and others with limited discretionary income.

