

PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION

Adopted in entirety by Resolution 2002-56 on October 28, 2002
Amended in part by Resolution 2008-36 on July 28, 2008

PURPOSE

This chapter addresses the City's existing and future requirements for parks, trails and recreation facilities. It emphasizes coordination with other jurisdictions such as the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), along with City programs to achieve a high quality of City facilities. It provides a policy framework through which we can continue to provide a diversity of recreation opportunities for our community.

REGIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES

Lafayette is fortunate to be surrounded by three large regional facilities:

1. Lafayette Reservoir, located in the southwest corner of the City, is operated by the East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and provides a trails system, boat rental, fishing, picnic facilities, group camping and biking.
2. Briones Regional Park, located north of the City limits, is operated by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) and provides hiking, equestrian, and picnic facilities.
3. Las Trampas Regional Wilderness, located southeast of the City, is also operated by the EBRPD, and provides hiking, equestrian and picnic facilities.

These regionally managed lands provide large areas of open space that are easily accessible to Lafayette residents. They constitute a major part of the beautiful natural setting of the City. However, the lands are only partially linked to each other and public access is limited. Publicly owned parcels along Lafayette Ridge and along Burton Ridge are not contiguous and are accessible only by foot from EBRPD and Lafayette City trails. The City's *Master Trails Plan*, on file at the City offices and at the Parks and Recreation Department, shows several existing and proposed trails to open space areas.

LAFAYETTE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

The City's park system is made up of three types of facilities: a community center, community parks and neighborhood parks.

COMMUNITY CENTER

Lafayette Community Center: The Lafayette Community Center, 500 St. Mary's Road, is well used by the community and serves as a community gathering place. It provides rooms for community meetings and classes, a large event space, an outdoor roller hockey rink in the parking lot and a fenced tot play area. Lafayette's City Council, commissions and committees utilize the facility for meetings, and the offices of the Parks and Recreation Department are housed there. The facility is also available for rental and is largely self-supporting.

COMMUNITY PARKS

Buckeye Fields: This 11.5 acre park has many oak and buckeye trees on the site. The two baseball fields are primarily used by Lafayette Little League during the baseball season pursuant to a lease with the City. A plaza and concession/restroom building are located behind the fields near the road. The meeting building is used by a number of community organizations. The paved parking lot provides year round use. (*Reso. 2008-36, 2008*)

Lafayette Community Park: The Lafayette Community Park, 480 St. Mary's Road, is only partially developed, with a City approved Master Plan to guide further development. Under the Master Plan, 70% of the park will remain in its natural state, preserving riparian habitat, oak woodlands, and the scenic value of the park. Trails will allow access to these nature areas. The southern portion of the park contains the active recreation areas and consists of two high-quality baseball and soccer fields, a children's play area, group picnic facilities and a parking lot for about 81 vehicles, which also serves as a park-and-ride lot.

Murray Lane Park Land: The 2.18 acre site is adjacent to the Lafayette Community Park and provides an important trail connection. The property contains a heritage oak on the southern end. There are plans to install a meandering crushed rock pathway, benches and landscaping. (*Reso. 2008-36, 2008*)

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Brook Street Park: Located at the corner of Brook Street and East Street, this park consists of a small play area for children and neighborhood picnic facilities.

Leigh Creekside Park: Located at the corner of Moraga Boulevard and 4th Street, this park is within walking distance of the Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail and adjacent to Las Trampas Creek. By design, Leigh Creekside Park has passive recreation uses including picnic facilities. This neighborhood park was acquired using State funds and funds raised by the immediate neighborhood.

Mildred Lane Park: Located at the end of South Lucille, this park provides a small nature observation area serving the local residents.

TABLE 1 - LAFAYETTE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

Facility	Map Key	Gross Acres	Developed Acres		Existing Recreation and Park Facilities	Proposed Recreation and Park Facilities
			Now	Planned		
Lafayette Community Center	A	8.2	7.5	8.0	Recreation class rooms, Friends of the Lafayette Library, League of Women Voters, meeting rooms, kitchen, tot play area, patio, native garden, Petanque court and roller hockey area	Storage room, additional restrooms, and other amenities
Lafayette Community Park	B	68.0	~6.0	~20.0	Baseball and soccer fields, equipment storage, children's play area, trails, scenic and natural areas, group picnic area, bridges, restroom.	North end improvements including family picnic sites, restrooms, multi-use trails, nature areas, open lawn play areas, other active recreational uses. A wetland nature area is proposed for the central area and a trails system throughout the park.
Buckeye Fields	C	11.5	8.5	8.5	Baseball fields, meeting room and picnic area	Master Plan calls for relocation of baseball fields, soccer fields and a concession facility.
Brook Street Park	D	0.38	0.38	0	Children's play equipment and picnic facilities	Complete
Leigh Creekside Park	E	0.6	0.6	0	Nature study and picnicking	Complete
Mildred Lane Park	F	0.10	0.10	0.10	Nature observation bench and native landscaping	Complete
Murray Lane Park Land	G	2.18			None	Trail
Total Existing Acreage		90.96	23.08	36.1		
Acreage Required to meet standard of 5 acres per 1000		135.00	---	---		
Acreage Deficit		(44.04)	---	---		

SOURCE: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT AND THE PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT, CITY OF LAFAYETTE, 1998

(RESO. 2008-36, 2008)

TRAILS

Trails offer scenic views, commute alternatives and recreational opportunities. Lafayette has an extensive system of trails provided by the City, the East Bay Regional Park District, and the East Bay Municipal Utilities District.

The Lafayette-Moraga Regional Trail – the first "rails to trail" conversion of its kind (dedicated 1978) - is maintained by the East Bay Regional Parks District and extends southward from the trail head at Olympic Boulevard and Reliez Station Road to the Town of Moraga. The East Bay Municipal Utility District maintains an extensive network of trails adjacent to the Lafayette Reservoir. The City maintains a number of neighborhood trails including the Walter Costa Trail, the Petar Jakovina Trail, the Silver Springs Loop, the Springhill Valley Trail, The Moraga Road to the Reservoir Trail and the Rohrer Drive Trail.

The existing trails, although primarily for hiking, allow for some cycling and equestrian use. This system could be enhanced with additional connections. The *Lafayette Master Trails Plan* on file at the City offices and the Parks and Recreation Department shows the complete system with additional connections.

The trails system as shown on the *Lafayette Master Trails Plan* provides access to public places and to scenic vistas that represent a significant natural amenity to the community. Where feasible, the proposed trails interconnect, providing a continuous trails system.

Refer to the Circulation Chapter for a discussion of bikeways and walkways.

PLANNING FOR FUTURE PARKS, TRAILS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

According to the standard of five acres for each one thousand persons, the City presently has a shortage of about 46 acres of parkland. While new development (i.e., subdivisions) will be required to supply parkland up to this ratio, this cannot address the entire deficit. The City recognizes that it must continue to identify specific recreation needs, possible park and trail locations, and appropriate funding sources. Previous planning efforts for individual park facilities have underscored the need for a comprehensive, city-wide park plan. (*Reso. 2008-36, 2008*)

As Lafayette's demographics change, there will be increased demand for certain recreation facilities. In recent years, the number of school-age children has grown and population trends point to further growth in the youth segment. Meanwhile, past public school closures (Ellis, Burton, Montecito and Vallecito Schools) have reduced the number and type of recreation facilities. Consequently, the City's playing fields are now used to capacity by organized sport groups, such as the Lafayette Moraga Youth Association (LMYA), the Lafayette Moraga Soccer Club (LMSC), and the Lafayette Little League. This demand is only expected to increase. The City has concluded that for the time horizon of this plan, there will be a persistent need for additional playing fields for soccer, baseball, roller hockey and lacrosse. Map IV-1: *Parks and Recreation Facilities* shows recommended general locations for additional parkland and recreation facilities.

The City lacks adequate funds for all needed parks, trails and recreation improvements identified in this Plan, including the acquisition of additional parkland. Funding to date has come from grants, gifts, parkland dedication fees and bond measures. Acquisition and development of future parks are also expected to rely on outside funding sources. The City will continue to work

with the EBRPD to acquire open space and trail easements for Lafayette Ridge and Burton Ridge, and to acquire any suitable lands that may unexpectedly become available over time. While pursuing its planned development of parklands, the City should capitalize on unanticipated opportunities when they arise.

GOALS, POLICIES AND PROGRAMS

Goal P-1 Provide an attractive system of parks, trails and recreation facilities throughout the City to meet the needs and interests of all ages and capabilities.

Policy P-1.1 Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan: Existing and future parks, trails and recreation facilities will be acquired and designed in accordance with a comprehensive, community-wide vision. *Trails Master Plan was updated in 2006. (Reso. 2008-36, 2008)*

Program P-1.1.1: Prepare and adopt a *Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan*.

The Parks, Trails and Recreation Master Plan will include standards for parks, trails and recreation facilities. The Plan will address the need for active and passive recreation facilities and the distribution of facilities throughout the City. It will build on the Lafayette Master Trails Plan (adopted in 1983), the Community Center Master Plan (adopted in 1984), the Community Park Master Plan (adopted in 1988), and the 711 St. Mary's Road Park and Recreation Master Plan (adopted in 1991).

Program P-1.1.2: Actively solicit public participation in the selection and design of, and facilities planning for, existing and future parks, trails and recreation facilities.

Program P-1.1.3: Work with other public and private agencies and groups to acquire, develop, operate, and maintain parks, trails and recreation facilities.

Program 1.1.4: Seek to acquire and develop neighborhood parks throughout the city, and particularly in those areas and neighborhoods that are comparatively underserved by parks.

Policy P-1.2 Park Planning and Design: Develop a system of high quality, well designed parks and recreation facilities that take advantage of the City's semi-rural character.

(See Map IV-1: Park, Trails and Recreation Facilities.)

Program P-1.2.1: Plan parks subject to the following criteria:

- a) distribution of parks and/or open space areas on a neighborhood basis
- b) natural setting and scenic beauty
- c) relationship to the existing and proposed parks and trails
- d) natural resource protection
- e) recreational opportunities
- f) operating and maintenance costs

g) accessibility of the park to pedestrians and cyclists

Program P-1.2.2: Ensure that the development and maintenance of parks and public recreation facilities are consistent with the goals and policies related to visual impact contained in the *Land Use and Open Space Chapters*.

Policy P-1.3 Parkland Standard: Provide parks and recreation facilities in accordance with standards and practices appropriate to a semi-rural and largely built-out residential community.

Program P-1.3.1: Use the standard of up to five acres of parkland per 1,000 residents for the dedication, acquisition, and improvement of parkland pursuant to the provisions of the Quimby Act. (Government Code §66477) (*Reso. 2008-36, 2008*)

Program P-1.3.2: Maintain a separate fund for the collection and accounting of Parkland Dedication in lieu fees as required by the Quimby Act.

Program P-1.3.3: Conduct a thorough analysis of geoseismic and other related potential hazards before City acceptance of dedications of land for park or open space. Identified hazards shall be fully repaired and/or financial protection provided to the City for liability before acceptance of land.

Policy P-1.4 Operate, Maintain and Improve Facilities: Operate, maintain and improve facilities, as needed, to achieve high-quality and good design.

Program P-1.4.1: Prepare an annual report to the City Council on the status of acquisition and improvement of parks, trails and recreation facilities. The report shall include a list of existing and proposed projects, associated costs and sources of funding. The report should also identify what additional actions may be necessary to implement the policies of this chapter.

Program P-1.4.2: Include expansion and improvement of the City's parks, trails and recreation facilities in the Capital Improvement Program.

Policy P-1.5 Fund Operation, Maintenance and Improvements: Fund operation, maintenance and improvements for parks, trails and recreation facilities through a variety of funding mechanisms outside the General Fund.

Program P-1.5.1: Outline in the *Parks and Recreation Master Plan* potential sources and strategies for funding capital projects and for acquiring, operating and maintaining recreation facilities, parks, and trails.

Goal P-2 Provide recreational, educational, and cultural programs to meet the needs and interests of all age groups.

Policy P-2.1 Community Center: Maintain the Community Center as a multi-use facility available for recreational, educational, and cultural programs and civic and community activities.

Policy P-2.2 Locate programs throughout the community: Locate recreational, educational and cultural programs throughout the community to provide convenient access and local support.

Program P-2.2.1: Work with school districts, civic organizations, and business groups to provide additional programs throughout the community to serve community needs and interests.

Goal P-3 *Implement the Lafayette Master Trails Plan.*

Policy P-3.1 Complete the Trail System: Complete the trail system as shown on the *Lafayette Master Trails Plan* on file at the City offices and the Parks and Recreation Department.

Program P-3.1.1: Work with the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD), Contra Costa County, adjacent cities, regional trail groups and other public agencies on trail planning issues.

Program P-3.1.2: Construct trails according to the standards established by the *California Trails Manual* and EBRPD standards.

Program P-3.1.3: Incorporate trails development in the City's Capital Improvement Program (CIP).

Program P-3.1.4: Where development is proposed on a parcel that includes a planned or proposed trail as shown on the *Lafayette Master Trails Plan*, the applicant shall be required to provide an easement or dedicate public right-of-way that can be used to construct a public trail per the *Lafayette Master Trails Plan*.

Program P-3.1.5: Require easement surveying and permanent marking as a condition of approval.

Program P-3.1.6: Periodically review and update the *Lafayette Master Trails Plan*.

Policy P-3.2 Design of Trails: Locate and design trail routes to the following criteria:

- a) Emphasis on scenic qualities
- b) Use and enjoyment by neighborhoods and City residents
- c) Connection with local and regional open space areas, parks, points of interest, and community facilities

Policy P-3.3 Local Use: Encourage residents to use the trail system.

Program P-3.3.1: Continue to prepare, update and distribute maps of neighborhood trails for local use.