

#### 4. RECOMMENDATIONS

This portion of the Master Plan presents recommendations for implementing the vision for a future parks, recreation, and open space system. Recommendations address the following areas:

- Recreation Facilities
- Recreation Programs
- Staffing and Operations

#### RECREATION FACILITIES

To maintain Grass Valley's existing level of community livability and balance anticipated growth, existing parks should be renovated and new parks should be developed. These recreation resources should be distributed equitably throughout the community to provide access to all residents.

Parks, recreation facilities, and open spaces provide many important benefits to a community.

These benefits include:

- Enhancing community livability;
- Fostering a sense of community by providing space for community social events;
- Building community pride;
- Protecting natural resources and open space for future generations;
- Providing access to recreation opportunities for residents of all ages;
- Providing opportunities for environmental education; and
- Providing trail connections that link park facilities, neighborhoods, schools, and other community facilities.

Recommendations for recreation facilities address developed and undeveloped parks, trails, and future annexation areas. A master plan map synthesizing all recommendations is presented in figure 4.

#### Park Recommendations

Each park was evaluated for potential improvements and necessary modifications based on the needs of the community, existing inventory, and the size and topography of space available for new parks. After the first community workshop, a series of conceptual plans were created for the developed and undeveloped park sites based on the public's comments and the inventory. These plans were presented to the community for feedback. The revised plans and tables were presented to the City Council, Parks and Recreation Commission, and the Planning Commission at a public meeting to set development priorities. Recommendations were identified for the following developed and undeveloped parks:

#### Developed Parks

- Elizabeth Daniels Plaza
- Dow Alexander
- Minnie
- Memorial
- Condon
- Glen Jones Park

#### Undeveloped Parks

- Morgan Ranch
- Mulcahy Field

The maps and tables provided in Appendix B describe recommended improvements or enhancements to these parks. On Glen Jones Park, only minor trail improvements are proposed, and no map is provided.

#### TRAILS

Creating a network of pedestrian and bicycle trails is a high priority of the General Plan. Numerous trail systems have been proposed, but the only formal trails implemented are those in the Empire Mine State

Park and Litton Trail. This Master Plan proposes that the City of Grass Valley develop a detailed Trails Master Plan and Design Guidelines. This trail system will provide the framework for the development of a recreational and functional greenway system safely linking recreational, educational, and employment sites.

The Trail Master Plan will include trail design guidelines for all future development areas as a required component of the development agreement. These include sidewalks, separated bike and pedestrian paths and trails, and an on-street bike path system.

The trail design guidelines will define types of paths/trails to be used, suggest developments or activity areas are to be linked, recommend ways to use the trail system to limit the number of street crossings for pedestrians and bikes, identify amenities, and be accessible from major destinations, such as schools, parks, shopping, residential areas. Bike lanes should be provided on all new roads and streets (excluding freeways and expressways). Preliminary guidelines are included in Table 10.

The following are features of the Grass Valley Trail Network (Figure 2):

- Provides linkages between neighborhoods, recreation areas and parks, commercial, employment and cultural centers.
  - Identifies extensions and dedications to be required in future annexation areas. Serves pedestrians, bicyclists, and equestrians.
  - Formalizes the proposed trail system for Condon Park, and provides connections to nearby schools, parks and neighborhoods.
  - Establishes trails/linear parkways along waterways, including Wolf Creek, Little Wolf Creek, South Wolf Creek, and Nevada Irrigation District canals.
  - Connects to existing and proposed external trail networks, including Empire Mine State Park trails
- Develops a detailed Trails Master Plan for the City of Grass Valley and the contiguous Planning Area, including the four development areas of Loma Rica, North Star, Kenny Ranch, and Glenbrook.

### **Wolf Creek Corridor**

Towns and cities have often used their waterways to provide recreational opportunities, panoramic scenes, and comfortable resting-places for urban inhabitants. Wolf Creek corridor provides Grass Valley with these same opportunities (Figure 3).

By incorporating the Wolf Creek corridor into this Master Plan, the community can begin to determine how the corridor will be treated. Wolf Creek is the primary drainage corridor for the Grass Valley area. As stated in the General Plan, stream corridors are high priority area for conservation efforts and open space preservation. Flood prevention and protection justify the managing flood prone areas of stream corridors. Preserving flood plains as open space will not only provide protection for property, it will also preserve the riparian zones and provide relief from urban development.

Wolf Creek runs from east to southwest for approximately 15 miles through the primary planning area. Portions of the creek have been put into culverts to accommodate road crossings and buildings. Other sections have been sandwiched between roadways and urban development that either severely limits or prohibits public access entirely.

As an open space and trail system, the Wolf Creek Corridor is divided into three major areas: the urban stream corridor, the suburban corridor, and the rural (or undeveloped) corridor.

### **THE URBAN CREEK**

This creek section is located in the older part of downtown Grass Valley, and it is the most constrained. The banks are steep, buildings are built over the flood plain, there is no public access to the creek, and a portion is underground. The development of this creek section will be the most problematic, but may create a unique and economically viable community asset. A similar condition exists in San Luis Obispo. Portions of the San Luis Creek have been opened up, and incorporated into a rich, urban experience. The creek is an urban promenade with shops, restaurants, galleries, and inns located along its edge. In Texas, San Antonio's beautiful Paseo del Rio trail turned a forgotten stream into the city's greatest attraction.

**The vision for the urban section of Wolf Creek is to:**

- Open the view and access to Wolf Creek
- Create an urban promenade with public access
- Create an asset for restaurants, inns, galleries, shops to use the creek as borrowed landscape.
- Provide flood protection by stabilizing banks
- Provide adequate building setbacks to limit flood damage

**Design Guidelines for the Urban Creek include:**

- Contain the creek edges, providing a stable bank for walkways and other pedestrian amenities.
- Provide a minimum 8 foot in walkway width.
- Provide access to the promenade for individual shops and businesses.
- Provide public access to the promenade at the ends and in several places along the walk.
- Secure ownership or easements to the Wolf Creek Promenade on both sides of the creek for the City of Grass Valley.
- Reflect the local building materials in creek wall treatment.
- Pedestrian lighting and site amenities to reflect the City's standards for the historic down town.
- Make the promenade ADA accessible.

***THE SUBURBAN CREEKWAY***

This section of Wolf Creek includes the less densely built areas of Grass Valley, between the downtown area and the undeveloped sections. This includes subdivisions and commercial zones where there is opportunity to provide greater setbacks. The goals for the suburban creekway experience are to:

- Integrate Wolf Creek with the surrounding developments
- Provide a bike and pedestrian link to the surrounding neighborhoods, shopping centers, schools, bike trails and sidewalks, and parks
- Treat the creekway as a linear, natural park with a modest amount of improvements
- Limit the number of street crossings for bikes and pedestrians
- Maintain the existing natural character of the creekway

**Design Guidelines for the Suburban Creekway include:**

- Keep the existing native trees and plants
- Remove noxious and exotic plant material
- The trail is to be ADA accessible. The paving surface can be native dirt with a polyresinous binder, asphalt, or concrete. The paving surface may vary throughout this portion.
- The width of the creekway will vary depending on existing built properties, grades and flood zones. Where possible setbacks from the creek bank should be a minimum of 25 feet, and up to 50 feet, on both sides.
- Acquire ownership or easements within the creekway boundaries (City or County),
- Trails can be located on one or both sides
- Provide footbridges other connections to link developments on both sides of the creek
- Provide signage with general use instruction for the public (e.g., dog etiquette, trail etiquette, poison oak and snake information, the role of the creek in flood protection, location maps).
- Provide trash cans and trailheads and bridges
- Limit lighting based on needs of the surrounding properties

***RURAL CREEKWAY***

The eastern section of Wolf Creek, along Idaho-Maryland Road and the Loma Rica development, and the area south of the Pelton Wheel, typify the rural creekway. The creek is not constrained by development, the flood plain is wide and relatively shallow, and the vegetation ranges from forest to meadow. This section of the creekway provides the most opportunity for a natural experience along an informal trail system. The goals for this section of creekway are to:

- Provide opportunities to interact with nature--fish, observe wildlife
- Maintain the natural flood plain system
- Provide trail links to other trail systems within the City and the County

**Design Guidelines for the Urban Creekway include:**

- Setbacks to be 5 feet to 100 feet on both sides of the creek
- Footpath to be a minimum of 8 feet wide
- Surfacing for the footpath to be compacted soil, or native soil mixed with a poly-resinous material
- Provide a separate trail for horses
- Entire path to be ADA accessible
- Trail heads to be clearly marked.
- Signage to include general use instructions for the public (e.g., trail etiquette, dog etiquette, poison oak and snake information, location maps)
- Provide trash cans at trail heads and periodic intervals

For the Wolf Creek Corridor to become a reality, several issues and situations need immediate investigation. It is recommended that a committee be formed to develop the Wolf Creek Corridor Plan, which includes Wolf Creek, the South Fork and Little Wolf Creek.

**Issues to be investigated include:**

- Ownership of the creek to the centerline
- Coordination with Nevada County Trails Plan
- Easements and dedications
- Funding sources for implementation of the Wolf Creek Corridor Plan
- Access to the creek
- How is the creek being treated in developments currently in the approval process and what opportunities are there to re-evaluate these plans
- Correction of City water quality issues
- How to engage the community in the process
- Where are the most feasible opportunities to begin implementation
- How to incorporate the schools in the process
- How have other cities incorporated their creeks into a public trail system
- Trailhead at end of Freeman Lane

**Two trail components that can be implemented or improved now include:**

- Formalizing the trails within Condon Park and connecting the Condon trails to the surrounding community sidewalks, schools, and neighborhoods.
- Creating a trail connection from Memorial Park to the Empire Mine Trail at Race Street.

**FUTURE ADDITIONS**

As discussed in the previous chapters, Grass Valley has entered agreements to annex properties into its incorporated area, including Loma Rica, North Star, Glenbrook, Kenny Ranch, and Bear River Mill. These properties include new recreational facilities as part of their development plans. Within these properties the City has the opportunity to define and guide the type and location of parkland, open space and trails/bikeways so that they become an integrated component of the Grass Valley parks and recreation system.

Grass Valley has two existing museums - the Video Museum and the Pelton Mining Museum. These museums are located in existing parks. Proposed additions to the park and recreation mix include the addition of two new museums and a community center. However, there is no room to add a Carriage and a Fire Engine Museum at any existing parks. The recommendation is to create one site for both, either at the

Fairgrounds or in downtown Grass Valley. These museums would be of regional interest, and would require a large facility to house them.

Proposed locations for the multi-generational community center and gymnasium include the Hennessey School site, centrally located in Grass Valley, or the Loma Rica or North Star developments. Table 11 lists the Master Plan recommendations for these properties. The community center will draw from the entire western Nevada County area. As a consequence, there will be numerous physical and programming issues to address. The addition of a community center as a resource for the parks and recreation program is a long-term venture of high priority for the community, and may require the development of several funding sources, including bonds, grants, and corporate sponsorship. Some components of the facility include:

- Indoor Pool
- Gymnasium
- Flexible meeting room space
- Commercial kitchen
- Stage
- Indoor volleyball court
- Community garden
- Large multi-purpose rooms
- Water feature

Now that a Parks and Recreation Master Plan is adopted by the City, the conceptual plans for the future annexation areas should be reviewed as soon as possible so that any adjustments can now be made. These developments should be reviewed for:

- Trail and bike path connections
- Suitability of proposed open space/park locations based on this plan and parkland definitions
- Active recreation opportunities
- Water way setbacks and trail system
- Preservation of special features (historical, natural, built) that can be incorporated into the park system

Table 11 summarizes recommendations for parks and open space, and museums and community centres. The recommendations are prioritized (high, medium, and low) and project timing is noted (ie. short or long term)

**Table 11: Future Additions to Parks and Recreation System**

Recommendations	Timing		Priority		
	L	S	H	M	L
<b>Parks and Open Space</b>					
Loma Rica: 50 acres- Lake MacBoyle, active recreation, equestrian trail, trails: 150 acres of open space designation		x	x		
Glenbrook: 4 acres - 'Lake Olympia' area, trail and park		x	x		
North Star: 6 acres - Julia Morgan House and passive park	x				
Kenny Ranch: 8 acres - trail, wildflower habitat	x				
Bear River Mill - potential area for field space	x				
<b>Museums and Community Buildings</b>					
Locate museums at one location. Possible locations are: downtown, at the County Fairground, Fire Engine Museum, Carriage Museum, other?	x			x	
Multi-Generational Community Center and Gym. Possible locations are: Hennessey School and Loma Rica	x		x		

Timing: L = long-term / S=short-term

Priority: H = high / M = medium / L = low

## MASTER PLAN MAP

The Master Plan Map illustrates Grass Valley's existing parks and open space, and the Master plan recommendations for facility improvements. The current needs can be partially met with the addition of two soccer fields at Mulcahy Field and one ball field at Condon Park, and one tennis court at Memorial Park. However, additional field space will be needed to meet the needs in 20 years. These acres can be identified within new developments coming on line.

The proposed neighborhood and community park locations are not specific. On the map they are generally located in areas where park facilities do not exist. Their exact placement will depend on existing development. To increase available field space, the neighborhood and community parks can be located adjacent to school sites.

- The Neighborhood Parks serve a 1/2 mile radius.
- Community Parks serve a 1 mile radius, and may encompass neighborhood parks.
- Special features are existing park elements with unique qualities, such as the Julia Morgan House and Lake Olympia.
- The Julia Morgan House has been severely vandalized, but may be worth restoring. When restored, it can serve as a historic community building, generate revenue, and be the focal point of the proposed community park.
- Lake Olympia is also a historic site. now drained, this area can be developed as a neighborhood park.
- Loma Rica has several features that would greatly enhance the park system. The existing equestrian trail along Wolf Creek can remain. A community center can be located where the stables and barn are now. The natural bowl area behind the barns may be suitable for concerts and active play. Lake MacBoyle is already a beautiful recreation area and should remain so.

### The Master Plan Map includes:

- *Special Facilities:* These are shown as a star in unincorporated areas. These features may be included in future park areas.
- *Pocket Parks /Neighborhood Parks:* Existing park locations are labeled N. These include the city owned, but as of yet undeveloped, Morgan Ranch park site. Proposed parks are labeled with a striped N. Exact location for the proposed parks have not yet been determined.
- *Community Parks:* Existing Community Park is labeled C. This includes the city owned, but as of yet undeveloped, Mulcahy field site. Proposed Community Parks are labeled with a striped C. Exact locations for proposed community parks have not yet been determined.
- *Regional Parks:* Existing Regional Parks are labeled R. No new regional parks are proposed.
- *Trails:* Proposed trails are shown as a thin, dashed, black line.
- *Sidewalk Trails:* Proposed locations are shown as a thin, solid, black line.
- *Waterways:* Waterways are shown as a thick gray line. These can be linear parkways with trails.
- *Schools:* Schools are shown as an S.
- *Other existing recreation or open space facilities:* Golf course and driving range, Nevada County Fairgrounds, and Kidder Cemetery are shown as a hatch pattern on the map.
- *City Boundary:* The City Boundary is shown as a wide solid line.

- Planning Area Boundary: The Planning Area Boundary is shown as a wide dashed black line.

### **RECREATION PROGRAMS**

Grass Valley relies on a number of non-profit organizations to provide most of its recreation programs. Recreation programs provide accessible, diverse activities - both programmed and unprogrammed - for people of all ages and abilities. The benefits of recreation programs include:

- Providing positive activities for youth;
- Building a sense of community;
- Enhancing appreciation of the environment;
- Contributing to strong families; and
- Encouraging tolerance and respect for people with different abilities and backgrounds.

Currently, most recreation programs focus on active sports. Additional programs will be needed to accommodate future community growth and meet the needs and interests of residents.

### **Recreation Program Recommendations**

- Review the fee schedule for facility use.
- Clarify maintenance arrangements and fees with non-profit organizations in Memoranda of Understanding.
- Develop a compensation agreement for non-city residents use of Grass Valley parks and services.
- Review the current practice of non-profit organizations as sole providers of recreation programs every five years.
- Collect user data from non-profit user groups for development of Capital Improvements Program budgets, staffing needs, and program development.
- Coordinate with Nevada County on recreation programming needs, space and resource allocation, fees, maintenance, etc.

### **MANAGEMENT**

Grass Valley will be faced with managing more parkland and additional recreation programs as the population of the city increases. To effectively manage these community resources, tools and resources should be developed to guide the design and management of park facilities. Public information, community involvement, and joint use agreements should be implemented. As the park and recreation programs grow, the City may need to create a Parks Division under either the Planning Department or the Public Works Department.

### **MAINTENANCE AND STAFFING**

The planning team met with the City Maintenance Staff to get their perspective on how the City can meet the needs of the community and ensure a healthy and attractive park and open space system. Currently, the Public Works staff provides park maintenance. As the park system grows, it may become more efficient to assign personnel specifically to park maintenance. Of special concern is the increased workload of parks and maintenance staff. Park maintenance staffing levels are now at twenty acres per full time staff (FTE). In addition to maintaining parklands and recreation facilities, staff is also responsible for the maintenance of several other City facilities, such as City Hall, the Police Departments, Quartz marker, downtown planters,

Kidder Cemetery, and the Corporation Yard. Other demands on staff time include park renovations and improvements, training, and response to citizen complaints. The current staff is maintaining 91.1 developed acres and 16.9 undeveloped acres of parkland. This is an average of 19.6 acres/FTE. When Mulcahy Field and the additional 1/2 acres at Minnie Park are developed, the maintenance demands will increase by another FTE. These figures are based on maintaining the parks at their existing levels of service. Other cities in the region use an average of 15 acres per FTE as a guideline for park maintenance.

### Recommendations

- Review current maintenance standards and modify them to reflect changing requirements and program additions.
- Develop staffing needs based on revised maintenance standards.
- Included in the twenty acres per FTE are large areas of Condon Park that now require minimal attention (it's more like open space). If the suggested improvements are installed at Condon Park then that newly developed acreage needs to be calculated into the developed acreage when developing staffing levels.
- Develop detailed maintenance specifications for use by volunteer and non-profit organizations. This can help offset some maintenance costs.

**Table 12: Staffing and Operations**

Recommendation	Timing		Priority		
	L	S	H	M	L
Review maintenance standards		x	x		
Add 50% time FTE for current maintenance needs. When Minnie and Mulcahy Fields are built, hire additional maintenance FTE		x	x		
Use maintenance standards to determine future staffing needs		x	x		
Hire/contract for grant writer		x		x	
Keep park operations in current organizational structure. Create separate Parks and Recreation division within Engineering or Planning Department as system expands		x	x		

Timing: L = long-term / S=short-term

Priority: H = high / M = medium / L = low

**Table 13: Recommended Maintenance Standards**

Type of Facility	Maintenance Standard	Benefits	Level of Use	Responsibility
<b>Urban Plaza</b>	Frequent to very frequent – NRPA Mode III	Maintains appearance and functional use Supports public safety	Moderate to low	Parks Volunteers
<b>Neighborhood Park</b>	Very Frequent-- NRPA Mode I	Maintains appearance and functional use Supports public safety	High	Parks Business Partners
<b>Community and Regional Park</b>	<i>Developed areas</i> Very frequent-- NRPA Mode II <i>Natural areas</i> Periodic NRPA Mode IV	Maintains appearance and functional use Supports public safety <i>Natural areas:</i> Supports the natural character of the area	High	Parks Volunteers
<b>Open Space</b>	Periodic-- NRPA Mode IV	Supports the natural character of the area Maintains functional use of facilities Maintains viewsheds Provides fire mitigation	Moderate to low	Parks Volunteers

<b>Trails and Connectors</b>	Frequent to periodic <i>Open space trails</i> - - NRPA Mode IV <i>Multi-use hard surfaced trails</i> NRPA Mode III	Supports the natural character of the area Maintains functional use of facilities Provides fire mitigation  Eliminates hazards	Moderate to high	Parks Volunteers
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