



Chapter

11

PARKS AND RECREATION

A place where all citizens enjoy opportunities to thrive in a safe, healthy, and productive community.
- The Tuolumne County Vision

Introduction

Parks provide a place for friendly social contact by furnishing providing a gathering place for families, co-workers, retired persons, parents with young children and many others. Parks are a place for community gatherings that enhance civic pride while preserving green spaces which provide a visual contrast with more urbanized surroundings.

Within Tuolumne County are a myriad of recreational opportunities for the public provided by State and Federal agencies, the City of Sonora, Don Pedro Recreation Agency, community-based recreation and park districts and community services districts as well as the County of Tuolumne. Other recreational facilities are provided by homeowners associations, private businesses and enterprises. The County's role in providing and promoting the provision of park facilities is focused on recreational opportunities of a regional nature, such as the Standard Park sports complex, in recognition of the recreational amenities provided on a community level by the existing park and recreation districts and community services districts. The County also has a responsibility to promote the provision of adequate park and recreation facilities in new communities and to serve the residents of new housing developments in existing communities.

Purpose
Adequate, accessible recreational facilities are important to the social, psychological and physical well-being of its residents, provides economic opportunities for business and furthers the goals of other elements of the General Plan.

Overarching Vision

OAV1. Promote development in Tuolumne County that reflects the values and vision of the community and implement the latest legal, statutory, scientific, and technical changes and advances.

OAV2. Achieve, enable and preserve maximum flexibility within the constraints of state and federal law and an ever-evolving legal, cultural and environmental landscape.

OAV3. Recognize that the County has a unique role to collaborate with special districts/stakeholders within the County to promote the delivery of efficient and cost effective public services.



GOAL 11A:

Provide an adequate supply and equitable distribution of recreation facilities for residents based on existing and projected population and the results of community needs surveys.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 11.A.1: Acquire and develop recreation facilities to fulfill the County's projected unmet need based on a goal of 5 acres of recreational facilities per 1,000 residents.

Implementation Programs

11.A.a - Maintain and update the Recreation Master Plan which describes the general location for regional recreation facilities, provides conceptual designs for future parks and recreational facilities, identifies desired recreational trails, estimates costs of construction, identifies potential funding sources, identifies potential management agencies and provides the rationale establishing the need for recreational facilities in Tuolumne County.

11.A.b - Acquire land and construct new parks according to the priorities established, the needs identified and within the general locations shown in the Recreation Master Plan.

11.A.c - Update the database of existing recreational facilities on the County's Geographic Information System (GIS) whenever new facilities are constructed. The database shall include, at a minimum, the location, acreage, and description for all public and private recreational facilities.

11.A.d - Distribute a recreational needs assessment survey inviting comment on the adequacy and level of use of existing facilities and need for new facilities to the local, state and federal agencies, local media, and interested stakeholders on a periodic basis.

11.A.e - Maintain the amount of acreage devoted to the County of Tuolumne's regional recreational facilities by establishing a program for replacing any regional parkland that may be eliminated in the future. Such a program should establish guidelines for selecting sites for relocation of the facilities, setting time frames for replacement and identify possible funding mechanisms for such relocation and replacement.

11.A.f - Address recreational needs of new identified communities and community plans through a recreation plan to be approved in conjunction with approvals for new communities and community plans which includes the following:

- Recommendations for the amount of acreage needed to serve the population of the new community or within the community plan's boundaries using a minimum standard of 5 acres/1,000 population.
- Recommendations for the locations and alternative locations for park sites within the boundaries based on projected acreage needs.
- Appropriate zoning to facilitate future dedication/development of identified park sites.



- Recommendations for maintaining proposed recreation facilities, including maintenance districts.
- Identification of potential routes for trails to link new towns or communities into the County-wide trail system.

GOAL 11B:

Acquire, develop and manage recreational lands according to principles which protect private property rights, maximize cost efficiency, promote accessibility by all residents, advocate safety, and encourage public participation.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 11.B.1: Ensure professional design of new facilities, acquisition of adequate levels of insurance, and adoption of long-term maintenance plans for new facilities.

Implementation Programs

11.B.a - Avoid impinging on private property rights whenever possible by locating new recreational facilities on publicly-owned lands whenever feasible and encourage cooperation from private property owners by providing compensation to and indemnification from liability for willing sellers when the acquisition of private property is necessary.

11.B.b - Prepare a sample recreation easement detailing the rights and restrictions of the public to use trails over private property, detailing methods for screening private property from public trail use and addressing indemnification of private property owners.

11.B.c - Encourage the private development and maintenance of trails of all kinds, including equestrian facilities, within private subdivisions. Recognize that the provision of equestrian trails should be the choice of the developer of new residential subdivisions and that choice should include responsibility for maintenance of those trails by future property owners; as such, discontinue the County's acceptance of equestrian trail easements within private subdivisions and discontinue requiring such easements as a condition of project approval. The County will continue to consider accepting easements for future equestrian trails outside of new residential subdivisions to serve public needs.

11.B.d - Evaluate alternatives to maintaining liability coverage for public parks and indemnification of private property owners.

Policy 11.B.2: Target lands for proposed facilities within the Recreation Master Plan that require minimal grading with topography consistent, where feasible, with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In addition, emphasize sites which feature mature vegetation and would require minimal additional landscaping. Proposed facility locations should be adjacent to existing or anticipated population centers for convenient access by residents of those areas and to provide for efficient use of existing infrastructure.

Policy 11.B.3: Create convenient and safe opportunities for physical activity for residents of all ages and income levels.



Policy 11.B.4: Give preference to locating new recreational facilities in areas where high levels of community support and interest are expressed.

Implementation Program

11.B.e - Solicit input from the people to be served by a new recreational facility to gauge interest prior to allocating funding to acquire and/or construct new facilities. Identify local organizations interested in adopting parks for maintenance and identify volunteers to assist permanent staff with construction and maintenance of facilities.

Policy 11.B.5: Investigate the feasibility of forming a regional recreation district to organize and conduct recreation programs; establish systems of recreation and recreation centers; and to acquire, construct, maintain and operate recreation centers within the district. The intent of the formation of such a district would be to provide for public recreational facilities of a regional nature that are located outside of the identified communities. Any proposed regional recreation district would not include the areas lying within the jurisdictional boundaries of existing recreation and park districts or community services districts which provide public recreational facilities unless those districts choose to participate in the regional recreation district.

Policy 11.B.6: Construct trails for bicycle, pedestrian and, where feasible, equestrian use linking the County's major population centers with other local, state and federal recreational facilities, significant open space areas, libraries, schools, neighborhoods, public facilities and other destination points. Acquisition and construction shall be in accordance with the priorities established, the needs identified and within the general locations shown in the Tuolumne County Recreation Master Plan in coordination with the Tuolumne County Regional Transportation Plan Non-motorized Element (RTP) and General Plan Transportation Element.

Implementation Programs

11.B.f - Promote the development of non-motorized trails along streams, rivers and ditches to encourage walking and bicycling.

11.B.g - Encourage the dedication and installation of multi-use non-motorized trails in new development proposals. Allow subdivisions to construct portion(s) of adopted bicycle/pedestrian routes to fulfill the recreation requirements. The construction of any such routes shall count toward the required on-site recreational facilities pursuant to Government Code Section 66477.

Policy 11.B.7: Permit recreational uses in flood zones if it can be demonstrated that the recreational use will not cause additional flooding, increase the potential for flood damage, or increase health and safety risks.

Implementation Program

11.B.h - To provide recreational use in water resource areas, continue to conditionally permit, in the O (Open Space) and O-1 (Open Space -1) zoning districts, recreational uses where such uses do not adversely impact water resources, such as beaches, picnic areas, non-motorized pedestrian and equestrian trails and other recreational uses.



Policy 11.B.8: Provide reasonable public access to public waterways, lakes and reservoirs in compliance with State statutes while protecting private property rights and maintaining the biological, scenic and historical integrity of these features and lands adjacent to these features.

Implementation Program

11.B.i - Develop a program to identify public waterways, lakes and reservoirs that do not already provide reasonable public access, but which are required to provide such access pursuant to State statutes. The program should include provisions for identifying which bodies of water require public access, identification of reasonable access points to these water bodies and procedures for providing such access.

GOAL 11C: Cooperate with other public agencies and private enterprise to provide park and recreation facilities. (formerly 8.B)

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 11.C.1: Promote the sharing of recreational facilities between the County and the public schools by coordinating with the schools in master planning new recreational facilities and exploring opportunities to share the costs of acquisition, construction, maintenance and administration of such facilities. Where feasible, link the recreational facilities provided by schools to those offered by the County and other agencies providing public recreational facilities through a regional trail system.

Implementation Programs

11.C.a - Encourage joint-use agreements of school and park facilities, and access to trails and recreational opportunities, especially in communities that suffer from a disproportionate lack of recreational facilities.

11.C.b - Encourage the joint use of school and park facilities to provide more efficient educational and recreational services and minimize the duplication of such facilities and services.

Policy 11.C.2: Locate new park facilities and trail routes on or adjacent to publicly owned property, where feasible, to minimize the cost of acquiring and maintaining new facilities and to minimize potential conflicts associated with acquiring privately-owned property for public facilities.

Implementation Program

11.C.c - Target the acquisition of available public lands for the location of new parks and target public rights-of-way for locating new trails within the regional trail system using the Recreation Master Plan as a guide.

Policy 11.C.3: Encourage and support, in conjunction with local agencies, the development of facilities that are family oriented community centers designed to encourage family values and participation.



- Policy 11.C.4:** Coordinate review of the Recreation Master Plan and Parks and Recreation Element of the General Plan and updates to those documents with the City of Sonora, public schools, park and recreation districts, community services districts and other providers of public recreation facilities to promote and facilitate coordination in the planning of new parks and recreational facilities within the County.
- Policy 11.C.5:** Consider establishing a committee of private and public members appointed by the Board of Supervisors to review needs and proposals that may impact recreation in the County, to make recommendations to the Board and its Planning Commissions and committees.
- Policy 11.C.6:** Coordinate with and provide incentives to private industry and commercial businesses to help attain maximum use and minimum duplication in the cost of park and recreation facilities.

GOAL 11D: Further the goals of other General Plan elements in the acquisition and development of lands for recreational facilities and opportunities. (formerly 8.C)

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

- Policy 11.D.1:** Identify existing public parks and recreational facilities on the land use diagrams of the General Plan to facilitate planning compatible land uses near these facilities, planning trails to link such facilities and identifying locations for new parks and recreational facilities. This information will be utilized in updating the Recreation Master Plan for regional recreational facilities to meet the needs of the County's population as it continues to grow.
- Policy 11.D.2:** Amend the Tuolumne County Zoning Ordinance to include bicycle rental facilities and other such facilities as permitted uses within Commercial and Recreational zoning districts to facilitate and encourage use of the County's regional trail system.
- Policy 11.D.3:** Encourage parks and recreational opportunities in proximity to neighborhoods to promote physical activity and increase access to facilities.
- Policy 11.D.4:** Develop plans for recreational trails which target routes that link the County's major population centers with other local, State and Federal recreational facilities, significant open areas, libraries, schools, neighborhoods, public facilities and other destination points for greatest consistency with trail routes identified in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP), the Recreation Master Plan, and Transportation Element. Grant applications for facilities under the RTP should be coordinated with grant applications for recreational trails. Updates of both the RTP's non-motorized element and the Recreation Master Plan should be coordinated for consistency.

Implementation Programs

- 11.D.a** -Design bicycle and pedestrian transportation routes that can be integrated into the recreational routes designated in the Tuolumne County Recreation Master Plan.



11.D.b - Encourage and support a multimodal use of the Sierra Railroad right-of-way between Standard and Oakdale for development of a pedestrian, equestrian and bicycle trail. Balance pedestrian, bicycle and road safety needs with railroad infrastructure.

11.D.c - Maintain, periodically update and implement the Tuolumne County Bikeways and Trails Plan, which addresses a complete bicycle and pedestrian network to serve the needs of the County. This active transportation network should include roadways parallel to regional facilities so that the regional roadway system can function effectively and efficiently. Seek funding for this network from a combination of sources, such as new development and Federal and State funding programs.

GOAL 11E: Address the impacts of new development on the County's recreational facilities.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 11.E.1: Maintain and update, as necessary, the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code sections pertaining to land dedications and/or payment of in-lieu fees for new development's contribution to providing recreational facilities consistent with Government Code Section 66477.

Implementation Programs

11.E.a - Establish standards in the Tuolumne County Ordinance Code for the provision of open areas and recreational facilities for new residential development consisting of five or more dwelling units. Review and update, as needed, existing requirements for open areas and recreation facilities for multi-family housing development in the County Ordinance Code.

11.E.b - Require new residential development of five or more units to participate in the provision of recreational facilities for their residents as follows:

- a. For multi-family housing developments, such as apartments, or mobile home parks, recreational facilities shall be provided on site.
- b. For residential subdivisions, the subdivider shall have the option to provide recreational facilities on site, pay an in-lieu recreation fee or dedicate land for public recreational facilities in accordance with Government Code 66477. Any such fees collected may be used for the acquisition, construction and maintenance of recreational facilities.

GOAL 11F: Develop a broad-based financing program with a wide variety of revenue sources which equitably distributes and/or reduces the cost of providing new recreation facilities.

POLICIES & IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMS

Policy 11.F.1: Distribute the cost of providing and maintaining new recreational facilities to visitors and County residents.



Implementation Programs

11.F.a - Update existing ordinances establishing user fees at public recreation facilities. Fees generated shall be used for acquisition, construction and maintenance of recreational facilities.

11.F.b - Investigate the feasibility of forming assessment districts for the purpose of financing the installation, construction and maintenance of landscaping, park and recreational improvements and for the purchase of land for improvements related to parks, lighting and landscaping.

11.F.c - Consider selling surplus public lands and vacant public lands that are too small to be developed into meaningful recreational facilities or are not in propitious locations, to finance larger, more functional, recreational facilities serving the same population.

11.F.d - Continue to explore funding sources, such as grants and bond acts for acquisition, development and/or maintenance of recreational facilities.

11.F.e - Encourage community groups to "Adopt-A-Park" for maintenance of parks and recreational facilities.