

Town of Portola Valley General Plan

Recreation Element

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Recreation Element

Introduction

- 2300 The recreation element provides guidelines for meeting the recreational needs of the town. In the most comprehensive sense, recreation starts within the home and extends through community facilities and on to wider areas. This recreation element is concerned with lands within the town that can provide recreation opportunities for use and enjoyment by town residents.
- 2301 Recreation areas include parks, athletic fields and the town center. Scenic corridors, greenways and open space preserves provide for limited recreation and are addressed in the Open Space Element. Schools and the town library are referenced here because of their importance as recreational facilities, although they are already mentioned for their primary uses in the land use element of the general plan.
- 2302 Trails and paths are major recreation facilities and are described in detail in the trails and paths element.
- 2303 Those portions of the recreation element that can be represented graphically are shown on the comprehensive plan diagram, Part 5. The recreation proposals shown on the diagram are general and are not meant to portray precise locations. They are intended, however, to provide a guide for future specific actions in carrying out the plan.

Definitions

- 2304 **Neighborhood Parks** are local parks developed to meet the recreation needs of the local neighborhood.

Community Parks provide space for specialized activities which attract residents from the entire town. The size of the park depends upon the activities to be accommodated and the desired character of the park. Small sites are appropriate

in intensively developed areas, particularly where the park functions as a part of a larger complex of community serving recreation facilities. Appropriate facilities include such items as community buildings, tennis courts, tot lots and athletic fields.

Regional Parks and Private Regional Facilities are scenic areas of sufficient size to serve at least the Midpeninsula Area and are served by major circulation facilities. They are also on or near the boundaries of the planning area and thus can be reached without the necessity of traveling through the town of Portola Valley, although, where necessary, additional access points in the town are appropriate under suitable conditions. These areas are important regional resources because of their intrinsic natural qualities.

Institutions include public and private schools that provide fields and other recreation facilities.

Objectives

- 2305
1. To provide appropriate park, recreation and open space areas serving major parts of the planning area, and neighborhoods and designed so as to minimize the impact of excessive use upon the valley.
 2. To allow for regional use of scenic resources that are unique in the Midpeninsula and so located as to not conflict with the primary residential function of the town.

Principles

- 2306
1. Parks should be designed and located to enhance the quality of living for local residents.
 2. Public school recreation facilities should be available for neighborhood use. For those areas not conveniently served by a neighborhood school, a neighborhood park, or neighborhood open space preserve should be provided.
 3. Community recreation needs should be met in park and recreation areas specifically adapted to local needs and interests.
 4. (For principles relating to building scale, size and landscaping see the general principles section for the land use element.)

5. If automobile access is necessary to a park, recreation area or open space preserve, the location and design of the parking area should minimize the impact of traffic and parking on nearby residences.
6. Link recreation areas by trails whenever feasible.

Standards

- 2307
1. All residential areas should be served by a public park within a distance of 1/4 to 1/2 mile.
 2. The requirement of 1. above may be met by a park, open space preserve, a portion of a greenway or scenic corridor, a public school with playground, or a combination of these. In established areas where this requirement cannot be met, efforts should be made to provide public trails leading to at least one of these areas.
 3. Where possible, the acreage in parks, open space preserves and portions of greenways or scenic corridors serving residential areas should be not less than five percent of the total acreage of the residential areas served. For example, a 400 acre residential development should be served by no less than 20 acres of public park of the classes enumerated above.

Description

- 2308 Extensive parks and open space preserves are proposed. Each proposal is based upon the natural resources of the planning area and related to the needs of residents. Specific recommendations are made for community parks, community open space preserves, neighborhood parks, neighborhood open space preserves, the Alpine Scenic Corridor, greenways, the Skyline Scenic Corridor, regional parks and private regional facilities. Also, institutions, local shopping and service centers, the town center, trails and paths and residential open space preserves are referenced because of their role in meeting recreation needs of the town. (For more information regarding open space preserves and scenic corridors see the open space element. For more information on trails and paths see the trails and paths element.)
- 2309 Major parks and recreation areas for the planning area are shown on the comprehensive plan diagram.
- 2310 Each park or recreation area is located so that its normal use will not interfere with adjoining uses or disturb the tranquillity of neighboring areas. Recreation areas

within the town are served by access routes designed to minimize infringement of privacy of town residents.

Neighborhood Parks

2311 Two neighborhood parks are shown, one is in Ladera and the other is on Sand Hill Road.

Community Parks

2312 The town center is shown as including a community park (see “Other Institutional Uses” in the land use element). A variety of outdoor recreation uses exist and should continue, including but not limited to tennis, playing fields, and the little people’s park. The location and size of the site makes it appropriate for community use.

2313 The Triangle Green Park at the intersection of Alpine and Portola Roads serves the community as a gathering spot, a place to stop and rest and as a visual entrance feature to the valley.

2314 Ford Park, across from Westridge Drive and within the Alpine Scenic Corridor, includes a little league baseball diamond, parking, trails and paths, and extensive natural areas for non-intensive recreation. The natural quality of much of this park is important in providing a natural setting when entering Portola Valley from the north.

2315 Rossotti Field, south of Arastradero Road and within the Alpine Scenic Corridor, is developed for soccer with ancillary parking. Planting and development should enhance the natural environment between Alpine Road and Los Trancos Creek.

Regional Parks and Private Regional Facilities

2316 Existing facilities serving largely the Midpeninsula Area include the Stanford Golf Course.

2317 The Palo Alto Foothill Park is presently reserved by the City of Palo Alto for the use of residents of the city only. For the Portola Valley area, however, the park provides an important open space. The town should work with Palo Alto to facilitate expanded public access.

2318 The existing Family Farm private club provides a regional resource for a relatively few people and infrequent use, but is an important open space.

2319 The Windy Hill Open Space Preserve, owned by the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District, provides an extensive open space and trail system with opportunities

for nature study as well as cycling, equestrians, hikers and scenic enjoyment. (See also Section 2212 of the open space element.)

- 2320 The Alpine Tennis and Swim Club and local equestrian centers provide recreation for many town residents, residents in the town's sphere of influence as well as some living at a greater distance.

Institutions

- 2321 The elementary and intermediate schools in the town have important recreation facilities and should be fully utilized in recreation programs. Similarly, the athletic facilities of the Priory school are of great importance to the town and should be scheduled for use by town groups without creating adverse impact on the surrounding residential areas. If additional elementary or intermediate schools are needed to serve the town, they should be developed to serve community recreation needs and might include some features that could be jointly financed by the town and the school district.
- 2322 The existing three churches and any additional churches that might locate in the town should be encouraged to make facilities available to community groups for meetings. It is assumed, however, that the major activities at the churches will continue to be for the members of the church.
- 2323 The library provides for recreational reading and includes space for small meetings and displays.

Local Shopping and Service Centers

- 2324 The commercial centers provide some recreation potential. The uses in the centers and the designs should consider the possibility of providing acceptable recreation for youths. Shopping centers, if properly designed, can be attractive places for walking about and for special events of various sorts.

Trails and Paths

- 2325 The trails and paths are in themselves important recreation facilities. A very extensive system is proposed which provides access from residential areas to recreation facilities at schools, parks, etc., and between residential areas. The system provides pleasant routes for recreational travel through particularly scenic portions of the town. (See the trails and paths element.)

General Plan Diagram

- 2326 Delete from the legend "OTHER COMMUNITY."

Recreation Element Appendix 1: Implementation of the Recreation Element

Actions to date:

1. The subdivision ordinance has been amended to require dedication of land for park and recreation purposes consistent with provisions of the State Subdivision Map Act.
2. The town has acquired the town center, Ford Field and the soccer field on Alpine Road. The latter two are community parks while the town center includes community park facilities.
3. The town has acquired two neighborhood preserves, both of which are in the Portola Valley Ranch development.
4. The Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has acquired extensive open spaces as a part of the Windy Hill Open Space Preserve. This preserve provides for major hiking and nature study opportunities.

Future actions:

1. The town should continue to apply its subdivision requirements with respect to the dedication of park and recreation areas.
2. The town should continue to use the planned community and planned unit development provisions of the zoning ordinance to encourage the provision of additional park and recreation areas.
3. The town should cooperate with owners of private recreation facilities to encourage the retention of such uses. If retention of such uses is not possible, the town should consider means to preserve the uses as long as they are important to the town.
4. The town should consider an acquisition program for park, recreation and open spaces that may not be achieved through the approval of developments. Such a program should be included as a part of the open space program. (See Open Space Element Appendix 2: Implementation of the Open Space Element.)