



MEMORANDUM

to **City of Davis Recreation and Park Commission**

from **Mindy Craig**

re **Facility and Parkland Standards**

date June 12, 2008

As part of the update of the Davis Parks and Facility Master Plan, MIG has evaluated community needs, analyzed demographics and growth trends and now is connecting those needs and trends to Facility needs. Standards for parkland and facilities are currently defined in the City's General Plan and reflected in the 1997 Facility Master Plan. The intent of this memo is to begin the evaluation and discussion about future City of Davis' park and facility standards, definitions and recommendations for the Plan Update.

Park Needs

The City of Davis provides an excellent array of parks and facilities to its residents. However, the city is essentially built-out and available property for additional park acreage, if available, is costly to acquire. The Community Needs Assessment clearly indicated that the primary priority for residents is additional greenbelts and open space. Our facilities analysis indicates a gap between existing level of service standards (LOS) and projected LOS given anticipated population growth. Addressing this gap and developing a reasonable approach is important to the success of the Facility Master Plan process and requires the attention of the City of Davis Parks and Recreation Commission. The standards and the expressed interests of the community need to be aligned with what is possible and practical for the City of Davis to provide as well as expand thinking about how to meet growing demands.

Below is an outline of the key issues, opportunities and potential approaches to discuss.

Parkland Level of Service (LOS) and Definitions

The Level of Service (LOS) standards are established to ensure that the community park and recreation needs of Davis residents are well served and that resources and staffing are distributed appropriately. The following is a summary of the defined LOS, current LOS and future LOS and their potential impacts on the Plan. (Table 1)

- The City of Davis General Plan set the LOS for Standard Recreation (Community Neighborhood and Mini parks) of 3.8 acres/1,000 persons.
- As indicated in Table 1, the current LOS for Standard Recreation is 3.0 acres/1,000 persons, .8 acres/1,000 below the standard (53.9 acres). If we look forward to the 2020 anticipated population, the LOS would be 1.2 acres/1,000 below (92.7 acres) the established standard.
- The current overall LOS is 18.3 acres/1,000 persons including the additional 'other' acreage listed in Table 1. This figure accounts for properties owned or managed by the Parks and General Services Department for a variety of recreational and open space needs.
- Current Quimby fees are collected based on a LOS of 5 acres/1,000 persons.
- There is no LOS standard defined for greenbelts, special use parks or open space.



Table 1: Level of Service Standards

Park Type	Current Acreage	Current LOS (Acres/1,000 Persons)	Standard (Acres/1,000 Persons)	Acres needed to meet current standard	2020 LOS (Acres/1,000 Persons)*	Acres Need to Current Standard in 2020
Population	64,606 (2006)				74,814 (2020)	
STANDARD RECREATION						
Community Parks	89.5	1.4	1.8	26.8	1.2	45.2
Neighborhood Parks	96.3	1.5	1.8	20	1.3	38.4
Mini Parks	5.8	0.1	0.2	7.1	0.1	9.2
Subtotal	191.6	3.0	3.8	53.9	2.6	92.7
OTHER						
Regional and Special Use	289.8	4.5	None			
Greenbelts	165.5	2.6	None			
Open Space	530.9	8.2	None			
Subtotal	986.2	15.3				
TOTAL	1,177.8	18.3				

* Assumes no increase in current parkland acreage

- In addition to LOS standards, the General Plan provides guidelines for the relative location of parks. This additional standard directs:
 - There should be a community park within 1.5 miles of all dwelling units and;
 - There should be a neighborhood park within 3/8 mile of all dwelling units.

As displayed in the following map, Community and Neighborhood Park Service Areas, virtually all dwelling units in the city are within 1.5 mile of a community park with the exception of the easternmost portions of South Davis. There are a few areas of town, particularly in East and Central Davis, that are not within 3/8 of a mile of a neighborhood park.

Projected Shortage

The current shortfall of 53.9 acres and projected shortfall of 92.7 acres, as well as the spatial gap in neighborhood parks identified in the map, can be addressed through a variety of methods including reclassifying parks, expanding park types and refining parkland standards.

As Table 1 indicates, the LOS will fall to 2.6 acres/1,000 persons in 2020 if no additional park land is added to the current inventory, and the population grows to 74,814. Maintaining a LOS of 3.8 acres/1,000 persons will require an additional 92.7 acres of Community, Neighborhood or Mini Parks). *Additional acreage added to the inventory by a sports complex will not reduce this deficit as that acreage will be classified as Regional and Special Use which is not counted in this calculation.*

Furthermore, locating additional resources in a spatially strategic manner will ensure an equitable distribution of park and facilities resources throughout Davis. In Table 2, below, Level of Service by Park Planning Area,



indicate that East Davis, South Davis and Central Davis have the lowest level of service in terms of park acreage/1,000 persons.

Table 2: Level of Service by Park Planning Area

Park Type		Davis	West Davis	Central Davis	North Central Davis	East Davis	East Davis Mace	South Davis
# of Parks	Mini Park	8	1	3		2		2
	Neighborhood Park	17	2	5	3	2	2	3
	Community Park	5	1	2			1	1
Total # of Parks (excluding golf course)		30	4	10	3	4	3	6
Acres	Mini Park	5.8	1.4	2.4		0.8		1.2
	Neighborhood Park	96.3	9.1	31.7	12.7	18.1	11.7	13.0
	Community Park	89.5	15.8	35.2			23.0	15.5
Total Standard Recreation Acreage		191.6	26.3	69.3	12.7	18.9	34.7	29.7
2006 Planning Area Population**		64,606	7,831	25,805	1,778	12,875	4,152	12,165
Planning Area LOS (park Acres/1,000 residents)		3.0	3.4	2.7	7.1	1.5	8.4	2.4

*** Planning Area populations are estimated from 2000 data and increased by percentage of overall city growth. This number needs to be confirmed/refined.*

Park Classification

During the Parks and Facilities Master Plan Update, MIG and City of Davis staff has reclassified some Davis parks to more accurately reflect their function. Playfields Park has moved from the Community Park category to the Regional and Special Use category. Slide Hill Park has moved from the Community Park to Neighborhood Park category. In addition, the Other Parks category has been dropped. A complete list of current park classifications and acreage is included as an appendix to this memo.

Potential Actions

Reclassify Greenbelts as Standard Recreation

Greenbelts are a significant parkland resource that Davis residents highly value. In addition to providing non-motorized connections throughout the city, the greenbelts provide additional spaces for active and passive recreational uses. Reclassifying some or all of the greenbelts under the Standard Recreation category is one way to increase the current LOS and better reflect the high level of service Davis provides.

Parkland Definitions

As varying park types satisfy different parkland needs, it is helpful to review the current definition of Davis park types. Parkland definitions from the Davis General Plan are included as an appendix to this memo for review. The park types include:

- Community Parks
- Neighborhood Parks
- Mini Parks
- Special Use Parks
- Neighborhood Greenbelts



- Open Space
- Other Parks

Formalize Regional and Special Use Definition

Develop an updated definition of Regional and Special Use Park for inclusion in upcoming General Plan update. The Current Special Use definition reads as follows:

Are not defined by size. They are designed and maintained to meet designated community needs. Park amenities may be specialized. Park location and design should minimize impacts to surrounding land uses.

The newly proposed category would include the following parks: Civic Center Ball Fields, Davis Municipal Golf Course, Little League Park, Playfields Park and Toad Hollow Dog Park.

Proposed Regional and Special Use definition:

Regional and Special Use areas are unique facilities that serve Davis residents and attract visitors from throughout the region. They are freestanding specialized use facilities such as community centers, aquatic centers, sports complexes, community gardens, golf courses, historic areas, or dog parks. Since special use areas vary widely in function there are no minimum sizes, but special use areas must be large enough to accommodate the intended use. Support facilities such as parking and restrooms are often included.

Improve Neighborhood Greenbelt Definition

Current General Plan Neighborhood Greenbelt definition does not accurately reflect the value these resources provide to the community in terms of recreation and community connectivity. The current Neighborhood Greenbelt definition reads as follows:

Are linear parcels inside of development areas that are undeveloped and landscaped, and which are used for recreation and non-motorized transportation.

Proposed Neighborhood Greenbelt definition:

Neighborhood Greenbelts are linear parcels located throughout Davis that are undeveloped and landscaped, which are used for recreation and non-motorized transportation, providing public access and connections to parks and Davis neighborhoods. Greenbelts sometimes include viewpoints, seating areas, and interpretive displays and can support passive and limited active recreational activity.

Facility and Amenity Standards



The facility and amenity standard table provided details both existing and proposed standards, identifying deficiencies and those standards that are met. A number of new standards have been proposed and are italicized in the table, including:

Lighted facilities

Lighted facilities are identified with a proposed standard. As demand for active field space increases, lighted facilities provide an opportunity to increase the amount of ‘playable’ hours that an field space can support.

Social Gathering Areas

Public involvement efforts in support of the Parks and Facilities Master Plan Update revealed strong community interest in the social gathering areas. Standards have been created to support the development of these amenity types:

- Amphitheater
- Plaza/ Community Gathering area
- Reservable Picnic Areas
- Playgrounds

Dog Areas

Dog parks such as Toad Hollow Park and dog exercise areas are valued component of the parks system. Identification of a standard will allow the department to strategically plan for additional dog facilities as needed.

- Dog Parks
- Dog Exercise Areas

Additional Park Types

The City of Davis has always been an innovator, and today’s parkland shortage requires a fresh look at how to count and classify parks. Spaces such as the E, G, and H Plazas and the SP Depot/Brinley Plaza provide social value to the community, fostering activity on small parcels of property. Innovative uses of available land are a hallmark of forward-thinking cities and articulating this effort through a standard will ensure that these types of uses are considered in the future. While not adding significant additional acreage to the parkland inventory of Davis, plazas are highly used and valued by the community.

Another possible innovation is to look to a broader concept of streets as a community recreation asset. Increasingly, the idea of developing streets that serve humans rather than cars – Complete Streets/Livable Streets - is being explored as a way to make safer cities, more accessible connections, and expanded resources for the public realm. Davis already has a strong set of bike paths and greenways. Re-conceiving street design as a way to expand the public realm through traffic calming devices – alternative pavement, lane management, the hierarchy of uses and the like – is just one method to reclaim streets for use by people. This concept is appropriate for quiet residential areas to more dense urban areas where there are fewer parks. In the appendices, we have included several articles regarding this concept for consideration.