

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

With a consultant team in place, the City of Ontario began working on a Comprehensive Park and Recreation Master Plan in March 2000. The Plan was to address only recreation facilities and parks located within the City's boundaries as noted in October 1999. Parks and recreation facilities planned for the recently annexed Sphere of Influence, the New Model Colony, was handled as a separate study, and adopted as an Element of the General Plan for the New Model Colony.

An inventory of parks and recreation facilities within the City provides staff with a snap shot of what recreation facilities and parks are available today. The Master Plan suggests strategies and policies to meet the community's recreation needs through a variety of methods. Improvements to existing facilities as well as possible development of new facilities are proposed. The Plan also looks at current recreation programs and services and suggests ways to respond to community needs. Recommendations for maximizing the City's ability to capitalize on acquiring parkland and developer fees are also discussed.

The Plan should provide City Council and staff with guidelines and options to provide additional facilities and services to better serve the community's growing recreation and park needs. Section One of the text provides more detail concerning the background, purpose and history of the process.

### **Methodology**

A comprehensive effort was made to obtain information to serve as the basis for this document. With the assistance of City staff, an inventory of parks and recreation facilities located within the City were developed. The inventory lists recreation facilities on local school sites as well as City parks.

Meetings with City staff and interviews with local nonprofit recreation service providers gave the consultant team insights concerning recreation facilities and programs. Detailed survey questionnaires were distributed to City Council, Recreation and Parks Commissioners, and community organizations. This provided data concerning recreation program and facility needs from those most intimately involved in the community. Field and facility use information was obtained from the various community sport groups responding to a survey identifying participation numbers and actual field uses and needs. Three public workshops allowed residents to participate in the study and provide input.

More than three hundred residents participated in a random telephone survey that asked questions concerning parks and recreation programs and facilities. Interviews were conducted in July 2000. This information was largely used to develop the Needs and Demand Analysis as well as to provide additional data for the consultant team.

A more detailed explanation of the methodology and other documentation used to develop the Plan can be reviewed in Section Five.

## **Inventory of Park and Recreation Facilities**

Ontario has 195 acres of developed parkland. Additional open space and recreation facilities are leased from other agencies. Fifteen neighborhood parks ranging in size from one acre to 10 acres and five community parks, eleven to forty-three acres make up the City's park system. A regulation eighteen hole and a pitch 'n putt golf course are also part of the City's recreation facility inventory.

A variety of recreation buildings serve the community. Neighborhood community centers are located at four parks. The Multi Purpose Center located at the City Hall Complex has recently been designated as the City's Senior Center. A 4,300 square foot expansion and renovation is designed and funded, with construction scheduled fall 2001. A new teen center is proposed for De Anza Park to be constructed next fiscal year. The Armstrong Center, which provides office space for the Recreation Department staff, also hosts a variety of programs. Leased space at a church located in northeastern Ontario currently houses the City's teen program.

In addition to sports facilities, outdoor amenities available to the community include bandstands on the Euclid Avenue Parkway and De Anza Park. The community pools, while in some cases too small to handle competitive swim programs or function as a full municipal pool, do provide learn to swim lessons and some recreational swimming. Tables 2-1 to 2-2 show the number and types of facilities located on City community and neighborhood parks.

Also listed in the Plan are recreation facilities located at City schools. Four elementary school districts and one union high school district serve the City. Joint-use agreements are in place with each district. Tables 2-3 to 2-7 recreation facilities located on elementary, middle and high school sites within the City.

## **Recreation Programs, Activities and Services**

The City requested that recreation programs and services be addressed separately as part of the Master Plan study. A list of current recreation programs and services, an analysis of recreation activities offered in the community and suggestions to enhance service to the community are included in Section Three.

A variety of programs and services are available to the community. The City, local businesses, nonprofit groups and agencies provide recreation activities to residents. The YMCA, AYSO, National Junior Basketball, Chambers of Commerce and the like, also provide recreation programs and services.

Neighborhood community center programs are very popular. With the City so economically and culturally diverse, this allows staff to provide programs that meet the expressed recreation needs of a particular neighborhood. Each existing community center should be reviewed architecturally to determine if renovations/additions could be economically made to improve the ability to provide services.

Active sports programs and swimming are the most popular organized activities. Picnicking and more passive uses were also noted as very important.

The Master Plan process identified major issues concerning park facilities and recreation programs. Some of the concerns included the upkeep and renovation of older facilities as well as making them safe for nighttime uses. A lack of facilities was noted that included lighted outdoor sports fields, competitive swimming pools and skating/skateboard facilities. Additional needs were tied to having more passive recreation facilities such as trails and large picnic areas.

Family focused events and citywide special activities are very popular. Staff has done an excellent job providing activities that promote a sense of community pride.

Detailed recommendations for implementing the program section of the Master Plan are included in Section Three.

### **Park Dedication Ordinance**

As one of the Master Plan goals the City asked that the current in-lieu fees and parkland dedication policies be reviewed and revised. Section Four summarizes the methodology and process for updating the City's Park Dedication or Quimby Ordinance and Park In-lieu Fee Resolution. The actual report, suggested resolution and ordinance for adoption, and data used to develop recommendations are included in Appendix A of the Plan. Implementation will be considered as part of this comprehensive development fee study currently in progress.

### **Demand and Needs Analysis**

Section Five of the Plan discusses the various methods and tools used to identify the community's recreation program and facility needs. The Needs and Demand Analysis show the demand for recreation programs and facilities by the residents of Ontario. Based on supply and demand as well as population ratios (acres per one thousand residents), and referenced to the results of the research tools used in obtaining information for the study, this guarantees that the needs assessment reflects the character of the community. A detailed summary of the process and the tables showing the analysis are in Section Five.

The City of Ontario's current population is approximately 158,100. It is expected, at build-out, to reach a population of 165,000. Current facility deficits show a shortage in sports fields for soccer, baseball and softball, especially game or tournament quality. Other facility needs identified included tennis courts, picnic tables, tot lots, swimming pools, indoor basketball courts, skating facilities for roller hockey and skateboarding, public fitness facility and indoor program spaces for classes and senior citizens' activities.

Tables 5-5 through 5-6 at the end of the Section show facility needs to build-out, changes in demand, standards for development and deficits/surpluses of facilities projected in the future. The complete questionnaire and telephone survey report can be reviewed in Appendix B.

## **Implementation**

The Action or Implementation Plan is addressed in Section Six. The Section suggests policies and goals to help the City develop and improve adequate recreation facilities for the community. Park and facility standards are recommended as well. Tables 6-1 through 6-3 show development standards for community, neighborhood and special use parks. Also identified and discussed in the Section are vacant land and acquisition opportunities.

A major emphasis on improving existing facilities as well as developing new facilities on existing parks is focused on in the Plan. The concept of providing neighborhood centers to provide a focal point and activity centers are discussed. The use of existing resources like school and vacant industrial or commercial properties to provide activity space should also be explored.

New development priorities include the completion of the sports/soccer complex, improvements to the Senior Center and a new teen center at De Anza Park. City staff should continue to plan for the development of adult softball/tournament and aquatic complexes.

## **Capital Improvement Plan**

Section Seven recommends both long term and short-term capital improvements. Suggestions for capital funding sources for each project are included.

A more detailed list of Capital Improvements is listed in Section Seven in Tables 7-1 to 7-4.