

ActivateSJ Strategic Plan

2019

City of San José Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services

Draft – May 20, 2019

The Department is nearing completion of Phase I Outreach, which involved sharing portions of the draft strategic plan at community meetings. During Phase II Outreach, an initial draft of the document will be presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission, the Neighborhoods Commission, our foundations and partners, and the Greenprint Update Steering Committee in June 2019. Prior to Phase III Outreach, comments from the Phase II Outreach will be incorporated and the document will undergo professional editing and graphic layout. The final draft document will then become available for public comments in July 2019. All Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services staff will have the opportunity to review the draft document during both Phase II and Phase III Outreach. Upon reflection and incorporation of public and staff comments, the document will be finalized and presented to City Council for approval in fall 2019.

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Placeholder

DRAFT

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to ActivateSJ. This ambitious strategic plan will ensure that over the next 20 years our neighborhood parks are a favorite and nearby destination, our regional parks represent the best of San José, our community centers are true hubs for community life, and that we continue to provide safer, cleaner neighborhoods.

As a result of community and staff outreach, we refined our mission and vision and established guiding principles to provide focus and clarity to our work. Through community input, we identified guiding principles that will frame our day-to-day work and champion future project and program delivery.

OUR VISION - Healthy Communities that Inspire Belonging.

OUR MISSION - Connecting People through Parks, Recreation and Services for an Active San José.

Our Guiding Principles

Public Life	Public spaces for a fun and healthy San José
Identity	A premier system of parks, recreation and neighborhood services
Equity & Access	Welcoming all ages, neighborhoods and abilities
Nature	Protect, preserve and promote
Stewardship	Take care of what we have and move forward

ActivateSJ offers a vision of a Department that is adaptable and able to meet our future challenges while serving our community. The plan is a final product and has been written as a tool to guide our future work. We know that our community will change, perhaps dramatically, over the course of a 20-year period so we will provide updates every five years. We will evaluate our progress against our benchmarks, measure our success, and refine or adjust our benchmarks to meet the changing needs of our community.

The result is a new kind of plan. That plan is ActivateSJ.

1. PUBLIC LIFE

PUBLIC SPACES FOR A FUN AND HEALTHY SAN JOSE

Connect people to people

Connect people to places

Provide opportunities for active living

Provide fun places to play

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WHY PUBLIC LIFE?

San Joséans value community and connection. Strengthening neighborhood vitality is core to San José's vision. Our activation events are well received and residents frequently ask for more. But great cities also focus on everyday life, offering opportunities in every neighborhood for people to connect.

WHERE WE ARE

Viva CalleSJ is our flagship one-day open streets event and continues to grow each year. It brings together over 125,000 people. In 2019, for the first time, we will hold two Viva CalleSJ events in one year. Viva CalleSJ encourages people to slow their pace to walk, bike, skate, and play throughout the City. Regardless of scale, public life events can break neighborhood barriers and bring disparate communities together.

Plaza de Cesar Chavez Park is a focal point downtown and is the site for events and activities throughout the year. The Guadalupe River Park's open space vendors draw large audiences, and walks and marathons fill its trail system. Similar activations at St. James Park create a thriving downtown core.

Outside of downtown, regional parks like Lake Almaden draw episodic, large scale events, while the Viva Parks Neighborhoods series provides opportunities for people to connect at their local neighborhood park. Last summer, over 9,000 neighbors joined together to activate 17 different parks. Community centers host the *Neighbor Nights* series to support neighborhood interaction.

Each year, over a million people attend events offered by PRNS and private vendors at San José parks. With opportunities for picnic sites, sports field reservations and exercise classes, we provide multiple opportunities for the community to connect. Over 50,000 people access close to 4,000 classes at our community centers, and approximately 88% of San José residents have visited a San Jose park in the past year¹.

Our system provides recreational opportunities for current and prospective employees. Every year residents enjoy access to reduced or no-cost recreational opportunities (estimated at \$51.2 million), and our open space, clean air and water, and abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation often attract skilled workers to San José².

Public life plays an integral role in boosting our economy. Approximately 7.7% of people who visit San José come to see our parks, trails and community centers. By visiting our amenities and joining our events, visitors contribute \$120 million annually to the local economy and generate close to \$5 million in local tax revenues³.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

We will connect San José's unique and diverse neighborhoods. We will activate spaces for a vibrant public life, but will also develop spaces that accommodate everyday activities. We will be the first choice

¹ City of San Jose – Annual Report on City Services 2017-18

² The Trust for Public Land, *The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California* (2016).

³ The Trust for Public Land, *The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California* (2016).

for community members seeking a fun and active lifestyle, whether that means participating in a community center program or sharing a park bench with a friend.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Increased focus on how we design and arrange our spaces is needed to enhance everyday activities. This may include opportunities for coffee shops, beer gardens or night markets. Or it may mean designing spaces that invite the community to gather for events that are important for them, without the influence of vendors. Connecting people to places means providing spaces where the community feels welcome. As we continue to envision these uses of our facilities, there are policy changes to consider, including those around alcohol and how and when vendors might use our public spaces.

We must design spaces that can sustain the impacts of events and still serve daily users. San José lacks large-scale and flexible festival sites, especially in the downtown area. Events that do occur can often place stress on our park facilities and limit their use for months afterward.

Sustained improvement in our Public Life will require sustained efforts. These efforts will require coordination with various city departments and partners and PRNS is the natural leader for this coordination.

We know that 42% of our city's 1,050,000 residents have used a recreation or community center within the past year.⁴ We have heard that our services are valued, but that we could be better at telling our story.

The results of recent intergenerational program offerings have inspired us. We must broaden our programs and connect our youth and older adults to the many services available at our hub community centers. We recognize we cannot achieve this by ourselves; together, with our partners we can offer a holistic recreation experience for all generations.

MOVING FORWARD

We aspire to:

Connect our diverse neighborhoods to strengthen San José pride and unity

Develop spaces that build bridges and transcend neighborhood boundaries

Provide opportunities to connect and play

Provide safe places for people to gather, create memories and make friends

⁴ City of San José – Annual Report on City Services 2017-18

2. IDENTITY

A PREMIER SYSTEM OF PARKS, RECREATION AND NEIGHBORHOOD SERVICES

Great places to visit, play and celebrate our cultures

Leaders in parks, recreation and neighborhood services

One of the nation's healthiest cities

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WHY IDENTITY?

San Joséans want to welcome people to a city that is instantly recognizable by its venues and events. At the same time, preserving and protecting the unique character of individual neighborhoods cannot be ignored as the city grows and develops. The City's General Plan calls for San José to possess a stronger identity, and the parks and recreation system offers some of the best opportunities for that identity.

WHERE WE ARE

San José has over 200 parks that provide neighborhood, community and regional recreational opportunities. Alum Rock Park has its history, Guadalupe River Park and Gardens has its central location and scale, Happy Hollow Park & Zoo offers unique education and play opportunities, and the San José Municipal Rose Garden is known for its beautiful precision.

The City's 11 hub community centers and 39 re-use buildings offer recreational programs and community services within structures of varying quality. At our community centers, we provide inclusive and high quality programs and services. From early childhood to active aging, we serve the whole community. Our intervention programs serve youth and young adults, providing life-changing educational and recreational opportunities. Thanks to the efforts of our PRNS team and our community partners, San José has achieved the World Health Organization's (WHO) designation of an Age Friendly City. This designation signals San José's commitment to provide physical and social environments that promote healthy aging.

With over 61 miles of trails, we are well on our way to building one of the nation's largest urban trail networks. Our trail network welcomes users with "gateway" features reinforcing each trail system's identity. By weaving through all areas of the City, our trails unite our community. Realizing the goal of the 2000 Greenprint to build 100 miles of trail is within striking distance.

A vital part of our identity is our PRNS workforce. We have five key and distinct divisions within our Department: The Administrative Services Division, the Capital Improvement Program, the Office of Communications, the Parks Division, and the Recreation and Community Services Division. Identity means investing in our PRNS team and ensuring we are equipped to be nationally recognized leaders in our profession.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

We will contribute to the City's identity by creating memorable destinations, enhancing neighborhood connections, and providing quality programs that promote a healthy lifestyle. We will celebrate the diversity, culture and history that strengthen San José. By investing in our PRNS team, we will welcome innovation and new approaches to best serve our San José community.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

San Jose's suburban character is transitioning to a more urban form, with taller buildings, denser housing options and smaller park sites. This is particularly evident in our downtown core, where high rise development has created interest in iconic destinations. We recognize that downtown needs to be a focal point for visitors, but we must simultaneously invest in public spaces in all areas of San José. The urban village planning currently underway will establish distinct neighborhoods that need open spaces.

We need to look at our parks and recreation system holistically, identifying existing resources and assets within various regions – North San Jose, for example – and outline a plan that identifies and allocates future park needs and ensures our facilities reflect the history of the neighborhood while meeting the changing needs of the community.

Securing well-sized spaces, can be challenging given land cost and availability. Strategically planning the location of new parks to ensure all our residents have access to outdoor space is critical and we must maintain its role in community planning to ensure park acquisition is prioritized. Increasing urbanization may, in some cases, necessitate embracing the concept of smaller spaces, so called “pocket parks” to provide quality spaces for our community.

Creation of a memorable parks system will require attention to design details that embrace San José’s history and culture. The WHO Age Friendly designation encourages the development of standards for design and programming that meet the needs of the growing population of aging adults. As we expand our reputation for innovative programming and facilities, we need to develop the communications resources that tell our story.

We cannot ignore that the presence of unhoused community members has impacted our parks, community centers and trail network. Our parks and trails serve as de facto encampment sites, with maintenance staff addressing cleanliness in ways that exceed requirements of normal park operations. Use of our community centers as overnight warming locations and their parking lots as safe parking sites has generated safety concerns from staff and community members alike. We believe wholeheartedly that our facilities must serve all members of our community, but our inability to meet the specialized needs of the unhoused impacts our Department’s identity.

MOVING FORWARD

We aspire to:

Welcome and celebrate San Jose’s diversity, culture and history

Create memorable and iconic destinations that provide exceptional experiences

Develop and cultivate a workforce that reflects the community we serve

Embrace the innovative spirit of San José to serve the community

Advance our reputation as one of the nation’s healthiest cities

3. EQUITY & ACCESS

WELCOMING ALL AGES, NEIGHBORHOODS AND ABILITIES

Include the community in decisions

Provide quality, affordable programs for all

Promote healthy communities

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WHY EQUITY AND ACCESS?

San Joséan's, – no matter the color of their skin, age, income, or ability – want their lives and neighborhoods great. Access to the opportunities offered by a robust parks and recreation system improves health and wellness and connects people to places and to each other.

WHERE WE ARE

San José is home to a diverse and vibrant population that is experiencing the challenges of an increasingly densified community, struggling with growing income disparity and unhoused population. A recent report on City Services shows we are 36% Asian, 32% Hispanic/Latino, 26% White, and 3% African-American. And, 58% of residents speak a language other than English at home and 25 % speak English less than 'very well.' About 17% of San José residents are not U.S. citizens⁵. The high cost of living in our area means that many families and older adults struggle to find housing or meet their daily living expenses.

Through programs like Project Hope, we facilitate neighborhood development and leadership. Our Mayor's Gang Prevention Task Force is a national model for youth intervention services. Together, with our committed volunteers, our Anti-Graffiti / Anti-Litter team fights blight through the removal of an estimated two million square feet of graffiti and 4,000 cubic yards of litter each year. Therapeutic services provide opportunities for adults with cognitive disabilities and those with mental illness. Our community centers serve as shelters and safe parking for our community members in need.

Our 11 hub community centers are intended to serve the needs of large regions of the city at one location. This hub community center model does not meet the needs of residents that are transit-dependent or low-income. These residents are not isolated to specific zip codes. There is need throughout our city. Our scholarship program awards over one million dollars annually to low-income families, but demand routinely outpaces available funding.

Currently, we have access to more than 40 non-profit organizations through our Administrative Services Division's Strategic Partnership Unit. The team funds organizations who work with seniors, at-risk youth and their families in neighborhoods where health and social inequities affect the quality of life.

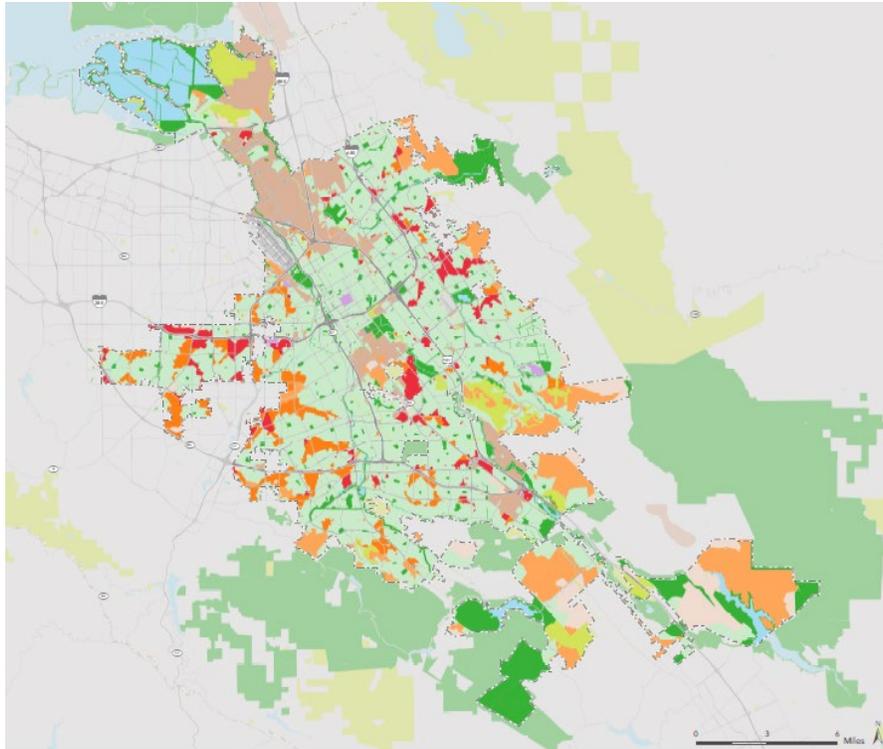
Lowering from number 27 in 2018, we are now the 33rd best Park City per the Trust for Public Lands survey of the 100 largest cities. Over 3/4 of San Jose residents have good access to parks based on a 10-minute walk to a park. Yet, there are several areas that have a *Very High Level of Park Need* (metric set by Trust for Public Land)⁶.

We work hard to engage all our communities in meaningful and authentic ways as we develop new programs and design new facilities. In 2018, PRNS staff attended or hosted approximately 65 community meetings to discuss new programs, parks and initiatives. This is in addition to sharing over 4,600 social media posts through our 30 social media channels.

We have begun the journey towards equity, but we recognize that we have a long way to go. An Equity Metrics Mapping Tool is in development to identify the City's most vulnerable neighborhoods.

⁵ City of San José Annual Report on City Services 2017-18

⁶ Trust for Public Land 2019 Park Score



The Trust for Public Land 2019 *ParkScore*® index

SAN JOSE, CALIFORNIA

The Trust for Public Land *ParkScore*® index analyzes public access to existing parks and open space. The analysis incorporates a two-step approach: 1) determines where there are gaps in park availability, and 2) constructs a demographic profile to identify gaps with the most urgent need for parkland. Park gaps are based on a dynamic 1/2-mile service area (10-minute walking distance) for all parks. In this analysis, service areas use the street network to determine walkable distance - streets such as highways, freeways, and interstates are considered barriers.

Demographic profiles are based on 2018 Forecast block groups provided by Esri to determine park need for density of youth,

density of individuals in households with income less than 75% of city median income (San Jose less than \$75,000), and population density (people per acre).

The combined level of park need result shown on the large map combines the three demographic profile results and assigns the following weights:

50% = population density (people per acre)
 25% = density of youth age 19 and younger
 25% = density of individuals in households with income less than \$75,000



WHERE WE ARE HEADED

We will continue to invest in high quality programs for all ages, neighborhoods and abilities. We will ensure all residents are within a 10-minute walk to a quality park. We will develop a workforce culture that embraces and understands the value of equity. We will prioritize investments in neighborhoods of the greatest need. We will welcome and engage our San José community to partner with us for a parks, recreation and neighborhood services system that is adaptable to changing needs.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Our programs are vital to the overall well-being of our community, and we believe in the right of every person to participate in health and wellness programs. People with disabilities and learning differences, especially those who are low-income continue to need the City's support and safe, welcoming environments, and our fee based model for programs creates barriers to participation.

While the City has built a strong fabric that celebrates our diversity, we recognize there have been systemic inequities. We cannot undo the past, but we can create a more equitable future by enhancing key prevention and intervention programs and implementing policies that support increased access for

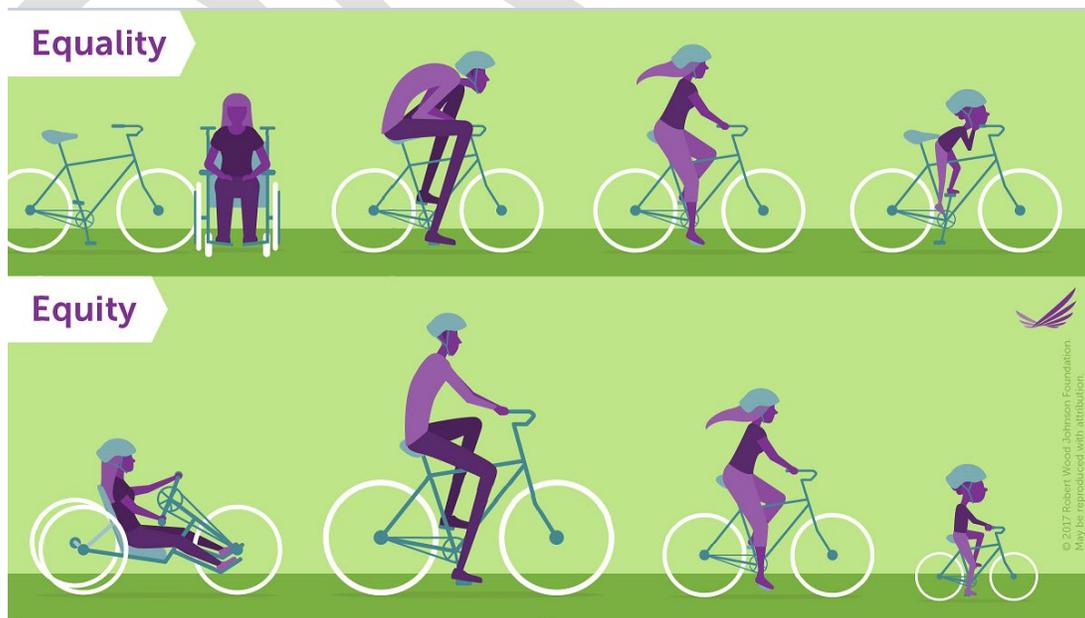
our most vulnerable populations to our system of parks, recreation programs and neighborhood services.

We are committed to the implementation of high quality programs, services and workforce development to meet the needs of a variety of age groups. The City Council’s adoption of Early Education and Expanded Learning quality standards through the Education and Digital Literacy initiative is key to producing positive results for the children of San Jose.

The expansion of our Citywide Sports Program and the increase in demand for the use of these fields is prompting an evaluation of the operating model for these essential community facilities. With Arcadia Softball Complex coming into operation in 2019 and the Police Activities League (PAL) complex formally coming under our operations and adding to our current inventory of 68 reservable fields, updated and expanded operating models may be needed.

We develop and enhance our park system by assessing Residential Development Fees and Construction & Conveyance Taxes. Our current financial model and the City’s rapid development influences the inequity in our system. The growth of high-rise residential development has provided Downtown and North San Jose with fee collections to support new park construction, while older and established neighborhoods in east, west and south San Jose see fewer developments and hence, fewer new park resources. Our financial resources, which are tied to new development and limited geographically, continue to sustain the inequitable distribution of the parks system.

We will learn from the City’s involvement in the Governing Alliance for Racial Equity (GARE) and adopt and apply equity tools to meet the needs of those most marginalized and benefit the entire City. We will train our workforce to understand the historic context of parks and recreation systems and how to address health inequities in their respective roles. We will develop and adopt authentic community engagement practices and improve our abilities to communicate in our communities’ languages.



2017 Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

MOVING FORWARD

We aspire to:

Be a trusted partner through inclusive decision-making

Provide exceptional experiences for all people in San Jose regardless of age, ability, income, or neighborhood

Improve community health in partnership with others

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4. NATURE

PROTECT, PRESERVE, AND PROMOTE

Connect all people to nature

Favor California landscapes

Provide space and resources for nature

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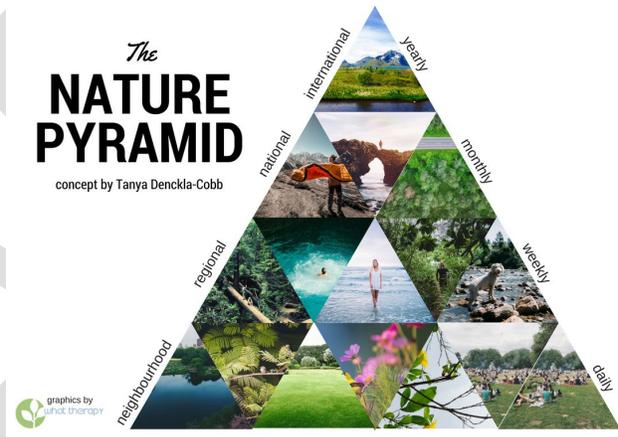
WHY NATURE?

San Joséans value nature. Access to nature and open space encourages early childhood development, reduces stress, and promotes socialization among neighbors. Supporting wildlife corridors, providing tree canopy, and sustaining our waterways can offset our human impacts to the environment. As the park provider of a rapidly urbanizing city, we must embrace our role and set our intentions around the importance of providing access to nature throughout our city.

WHERE WE ARE

San Jose is fortunate to have over 3,500 acres of parkland⁷ in our city, plus additional nearby areas managed by the county and open space authorities. Our regional parklands are important, but we cannot overlook the value of neighborhood parks. Neighborhood parks play a critical role in providing everyday access to nature.

Accessing your local or regional park can lead to increased physical activity, generating measurable health benefits. By using our parks, trails and community centers, 24,000 adult residents engaged in sufficient physical activity to receive an annual medical cost savings of \$28.3 million⁸.



The natural amenities in parks, including trees and shrubs, promote cleaner air by removing pollutants that harm human health and reducing pollution control costs by \$1.18 million each year⁹. San José Parks aid in storm water management by collecting precipitation and lowering the amount of water that enters the storm water system, providing a benefit of \$6.43 million annually¹⁰.

We have developed a pilot program for “Color Meadows” by seeding native wildflowers to encourage habitat. Our Adopt-A-Park program has coordinated with community champions to install and maintain California landscapes in parks throughout the city.

Our regional parks offer a range of nature based programming. Kelley Park offers beekeeping classes and fee based Zoo Education Programs focused on science and nature. Our Park Ranger Team, in coordination with Happy Hollow Park & Zoo and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority, lead

⁷ 2018 Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Fast Facts

⁸ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)

⁹ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)

¹⁰ The Trust for Public Land, The Economic Benefits of the Park & Recreation System in San José, California (2016)

sunset walks and a series of educational events. These free programs often attract more than 150 people per event and provide opportunities for star gazing and nature based education with the added benefit of making S'mores over a campfire. Emma Prusch Farm Park, another one of our regional destinations, offers summer camp programming and seasonal classes on the basics of farm life, caring for farm animals and gardening.

Happy Hollow Park & Zoo (HHPZ) engages 10,000 participants each year in its education program. With a focus on conservation and care for species in need, HHPZ participated in 16 species survival plans and raised \$120,000 last year under the Quarters for Conservation program.

Our trail network includes 13 miles of scenic rural trail through our Guadalupe Oak Grove Park and regional Alum Rock Park, the oldest municipal park in the state of California. The ability for the community to recreate on these trails is special and unique.

Recently celebrating its 50-year anniversary, our most unique nature based opportunity is Family Camp at Yosemite. Reaching nearly 5,000 campers each year, Family Camp affords families who might not otherwise experience the Sierra Nevada Mountains a curated, safe camping opportunity.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

We will advance the use of native landscapes to honor the natural environment. We will be creative in connecting all ages, abilities and backgrounds to nature. We will increase community awareness and education on the benefits of nature. Together, we will protect, preserve and promote nature in San José.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

Incorporating more nature into our existing parks and civic grounds by reducing hardscape, expanding the "Color Meadow" pilot program, and converting select grass areas to native landscape can provide health benefits while simultaneously enhancing bird, bee and butterfly habitat. The addition of native shrubs can frame turf "meadows" and offer a more interesting and varied landscape that draws wildlife. Under-utilized park space can create opportunities for tree planting; providing greater shade, reduced water demand and new and visually-appealing park spaces for our residents that prefer a passive, natural experience.

Our tree canopy is an amazing asset for the city, contributing to reduction in greenhouse gases in the atmosphere and reducing the impacts of climate change. Development of an urban forestry program dedicated to the park system would provide stronger management of this important resource.

Community centers, parks and Family Camp could increase their nature-based programming. For example, the community centers at Roosevelt Park and Mayfair Park are located along creek channels offering opportunities to explore the vital role rivers play as wildlife corridors. Even hiking groups, perhaps coordinated by our Park Ranger team, could offer lessons in our environment and activities like nature-based photography.

MOVING FORWARD

We aspire to:

Enhance opportunities to connect people to nature through programs, scenic facilities and open spaces

Support the community's resiliency and well-being with access to natural, recreational spaces

Reflect our native and historical California landscape to create a sense of place

Honor nature and wildlife through intentional design

Protect, preserve and promote nature for our growing city

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5. STEWARDSHIP

TAKE CARE OF WHAT WE HAVE AND MOVE FORWARD

Maintenance Matters

Always Improve

Community is part of the solution

Great community investment

Experts in our field

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WHY STEWARDSHIP?

San Joséans shared two themes as we engaged with our community - *take care of what we have* and *invest for the future*. To put our values into action, we must strive for constant improvement, finding better and more effective ways to protect the resources entrusted to our care. We will work diligently to manage expenses and evaluate revenue opportunities, while engaging partners to enhance our service delivery. The values of community partnership and excellence will guide our work as stewards of our parks, recreation and neighborhood services system.

WHERE WE ARE

Our dedicated staff work hard to serve the community. Our recreation programs offer opportunities for health and wellness across all ages and abilities. Our Neighborhood Services team engages disenfranchised community members and engages volunteers through programs like BeautifySJ. Our park maintenance teams work hard to keep our parks clean and green in the face of increasing usage as our population grows. Our whole department team works hard in service to the community and we are proud of the work we do.

The demands on our department are extensive and expectations are high. In addition to maintaining parks and community centers, offering recreation programming, and managing neighborhood serving programs like Project Hope, we serve as the “go to” department of community support in times of disaster. Our community centers serve as shelters during emergency response operations. This is true for major disasters, as well as for smaller localized events like structure fires that displace residents. Planning and staffing for these events can be daunting.

We have taken deliberate steps to support the long-term sustainability of our projects, programs and services. We use Business Intelligence System practices to identify service delivery gaps, map maintenance service areas and prioritize work orders to provide a consistent level of service across the City. Condition assessments support our department with a better understanding of our maintenance backlog and related resource needs.

Data informed decisions are advancing our ability to take strategic actions. Over the past year, our newly funded Strike Team has renovated turf, replaced irrigation and enhanced amenities at 13 parks. Thanks to recent budget additions, park condition assessment scores for 10 parks improved to reach an *Acceptable* level (a score of 3.0 out of 5.0) in 2018, dropping the number of parks below an *Acceptable* level from 63 to 53¹¹.

Our department is responsible for community and re-use centers, plus numerous restrooms, shade structures and ancillary buildings throughout the parks system. The buildings are of varying age and condition and require consistent attention. While our partners in Public Works perform the maintenance and capital improvements for these facilities, they need the coordinated efforts and support of our staff.

¹¹ Sustainable Park Maintenance Memorandum - <https://sanjose.legistar.com/LegislationDetail.aspx?ID=3862907&GUID=C9C73196-C51F-477C-80E1-6DA3AC19C92C>

Our capital team is developing systems and protocols to plan more strategically to reduce our \$341 million infrastructure backlog (as reported in March 2019). Our capital funds are the source of extensive public discourse and debate, but remain inadequate to meet the ongoing demands of our parks and recreation system. Further, as we look ahead to the future of our city we know that the Park Trust Fund is not infinite. As development peaks, revenue into the Park Trust Fund will be greatly reduced.

The \$228M Measure P Capital Improvement Bond has \$20 million remaining that is intended to be spent on soccer fields and a spending plan for this is in development. We operate and maintain 43 soccer fields and serve almost 100 leagues. With a recent addition of the Arcadia Softball Complex and the PAL Complex in the PRNS inventory, our Citywide Sports Program is expanding rapidly.

Our Department generates approximately \$31 million per year in revenue. This includes program fees (\$21,997,230), Construction & Conveyance Taxes (\$5,538,123) and grants (\$3,772,378). The revenue collected supports the City's General Fund by offsetting the costs of providing services. Cost-recovery rates are currently at 36.5%, a 63% increase since 2007 (22.4%). We have increased revenue generation by implementing annual market rate analyses, offering scholarship assistance programs, and altering services based upon customer surveys.

Our non-profit partners support us as valuable stewards of our park and recreation assets. In recent years these groups have completed initiatives like constructing a new playground at the Guadalupe River Gardens, building minor enhancements at Thousand Oaks Park, and supporting construction of new exhibits at Happy Hollow Park and Zoo. Through the efforts of these partners, we have completed important work that could not have been done with City resources alone.

The value of stewardship is reflected in equipping our staff to be leaders in our field and experts in our respective areas. This is shown through our Department's Leadership Principles: *We Are All Leaders*, we are *Service Focused*, we *Lead by Example*, we *Seek Knowledge and Ask Questions*, we *Deliver Quality Results*, we *Act Strategically*, and we *Create a Lasting Impact*. Developed by our team, these principles guide and influence our day to day work as we serve our San José community.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

We will build and equip our staff to be leaders in our field. We will be bold and forward thinking to create solutions that improve management of our assets, programs and services. We will further develop our partnerships with our community partners, and seek ways to meet the needs of our complex parks and recreation system.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

We share the community's desire to take care of what we have, yet we face challenges. Our operating budget, supported by the city's General Fund, is vulnerable to "boom and bust" cycles common to the Silicon Valley economy. Our limited capital revenue has proven inadequate to meet the demands of our aging parks and building related infrastructure. Some of our newer hub community centers will soon be about 10 years old, and our smaller centers and re-use buildings are even older than these larger hub centers. We do not have enough community center space to serve all residents in our growing city. Our infrastructure backlog is currently estimated at \$341 million.

Staffing per 10,000 residents varies greatly among California cities, and when compared, San José is among the cities with lower staffing¹². Interestingly, most other cities noted for comparison do not house Neighborhood Services within their Parks and Recreation Departments, suggesting that when comparing other California cities, our parks and recreation staffing level may be overestimated in the chart below.



Source: The Trust for Public Land: [2017 City Park Facts](#)

We have only recently returned to the staffing levels of 10 years ago, while the City’s population has grown by 14%¹³ and our service offerings have been expanding. The Project Hope program was a success when implemented in 2015. The community has requested expansion of this program every year since its inception. In the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, BeautifySJ, along with some staffing to support this growing program, will formally come under our portfolio.

Since the initial Greenprint in 2000, our parks and recreation system has grown. We have 204 Parks (a 61% growth), approximately 548,000 community center square footage (a 104% growth) and 61 Trail miles (a 144% growth)¹⁴. Contract services to sustain park sites of less than two acres have helped manage the workload, but our larger parks continue to suffer from lack of resources.

Retirements of long time, experienced staff have further contributed to challenges, as is the case in other City departments and government agencies. Engaging and training our next generation of staff is critical to the long term success of our department. We have begun this effort but much work remains, including the development and implementation of standards and norms across all our work.

¹² City of San José Annual Report on City Services 2016-17

¹³ City of San José Annual Report on City Services 2017-18

¹⁴ Department of Park, Recreation and Neighborhood Services (PRNS) 2000 Greenprint and 2018 PRNS Fast Facts Document

The proposed 2019-2020 budget includes, for the first time ever, dedicated capital program staffing to support our Public Works and our Recreation Program staff in managing our buildings. This is a step in the right direction and one that will help alleviate the burden on our recreation staff.

We have heard from our non-profit partners that the complexity of the city presents challenges that can be hard to navigate. City requirements and standards are vitally needed to protect the community's interest, but we must do better at fostering an environment where our non-profit and community partners can assist in our mission. Creating a dynamic where the community is empowered to support our programs and services in meaningful ways can only help San Jose thrive.

In recent years, we have seen increases in our staff-related resources thanks to the City Manager's Budget Office, and in the 2019-2020 Fiscal Year, the proposed budget for our Department adds one-time funding of \$7.3 million, including 48.6 positions¹⁵. Another 17.95 positions are funded ongoing. The limit-dated positions will assist our team in the short-term, but will not provide a long-term solution for staffing needs. Potential long-term solutions will require evaluation of funding sources outside of the City's General Fund.

MOVING FORWARD

We aspire to:

Treasure and enhance our existing parks, programs, community facilities and trails

Be flexible and innovative to continuously improve everything we do

Welcome and engage all members of the community to care for our spaces, resources and programs

Diversify our funding for a sustainable park and recreation system

Build, equip and recognize a workforce that takes pride in their service to the community

¹⁵ 2019-2020 City of San José Proposed Operating and Capital budget

6. THE IMPORTANCE OF FEEDBACK

WHY WE VALUE FEEDBACK?

San Joséans care about their parks and recreation system, and a robust and balanced system is built on the support of our community. Our services are only meaningful if they meet the needs of the community we serve, and we cannot understand those needs without authentic engagement. Our staff care deeply about serving the needs of the community and being part of such an impactful city department.

ActivateSJ is a strategic plan informed by the community and refined by our park and recreation professionals. The plan results from a multi-year process that engaged our residents, stakeholders, partners, City Council, and staff to define a path for a people-focused and leading Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Department.

WHERE WE ARE

ActivateSJ has been developed with significant public and staff input. The input process included community events, presentations at various City commissions, focus groups, stakeholder interviews, a trilingual survey, an interactive mapping tool, involvement of a Steering Committee, and a public comment period of our draft document. Internally, we engaged our staff through numerous meetings and surveys. We involved partner City departments through presentations and a Technical Advisory Group. The process provided us with clarity about the vision and mission of our Department. As a result, we used our findings to develop and frame the guiding principles presented in this plan.

Outreach Background

A. Community Outreach

- Mapita; a crowd-source data collection survey.
 - Over 1,440 responses.
 - Developed in multiple languages
 - Participants were encouraged to “think big” to gain insights beyond normal expectations.
 - Encouraging survey-taking occurred by reaching out in the following manner:
 - Mapita Post Cards Distribution (10 Hub Community Centers, 24 Libraries, 18 floors of City Hall)
 - Mapita Post Card Distribution (In the community; SJSU (Clark Library, Tower Hall, and Student Union, Philz Coffee Shop, Starbucks-Downtown, and "The Coffee Cart" in City Hall’s lobby.
 - Advertising of the survey via Neighborhood Newsletters, Senior Center Brochures, Guadalupe River Park Conservancy Newsletter, and the CD 3 Online Newsletter
 - Social Media: Nine Facebook pages, paid Facebook advertisement, Next Door Neighbor and Twitter (@SJParksandRec, @SanJoseTrails)
 - Mapita findings indicated:
 - Over 500 "Big Ideas" including locations for new parks, trails, recreation programs
 - 1,200 location specific barriers and challenges that must be overcome
 - Thousands of points profiling how people use existing parks, what draws them, how they get there, what they would like to see more of.

- Community-Based Steering Committee
 - 24 members
 - 7 meetings
 - Community Events
 - 26 events
 - 1 in every Council District
 - Focus Groups and Stakeholder Meetings
 - 23 meetings
 - Examples of stakeholders
 - Bicycle Pedestrian Advisory Committee
 - Neighborhood Services and Education Committee
 - Transportation and Environment Committee
 - City School Collaborative
 - Developer's Roundtable
 - Park's Foundation
 - San José Parks Advocates
 - San José School Superintendents
 - Save Our Trails
 - Sports Focus Group
 - SPUR
 - District Leadership and City of San José Commission Meetings
 - 16 meetings
 - Examples of Committee and Commission Public Meetings
 - Parks & Recreation Commission
 - Senior Commission
 - Youth Commission
 - Community and Business Survey (City wide)
 - 1,000+ responses
 - Trilingual survey (English, Spanish and Vietnamese)
- B. Department of Park, Recreation and Neighborhood Services Staff Outreach
- Department Wide Staff Surveys
 - Full time and part time staff
 - 2 surveys / 345 responses
 - Manager & Supervisor Staff Surveys
 - 2 surveys / 41 responses
 - Presentations to work groups
 - 20 meetings
 - Technical Advisory Group
 - Multiple City Departments
 - 5 meetings

Beyond ActivateSJ, from a citywide perspective, our outreach methods continue to develop and grow. Currently, outreach efforts include digital communication, advertisements, media, and community relations. We host community meetings parallel to the planning and design of a facility, park or trail. Most recently, we have developed online surveys that are distributed through all available social media channels which has greatly increased the input we receive, moving from a few people who would attend a community meeting to over 200 online responses for each project.

We are part of the daily life of the countless youth, seniors and adults who participate in our programs and services at community centers and parks. Daily interaction with residents allows us to stay current with community needs and wants. Additionally, we communicate monthly through one newsletter with our customers, and regularly survey our guests and participants regarding programs and services they have received. The current process for programmatic feedback, though invaluable, can improve. We are a Department who strives for constant improvement and staying current with new and emerging trends and the community engagement process is no exception.

WHERE WE ARE HEADED

ActivateSJ is a stream-lined and living document. We will live out our guiding principles by clearly stating goals and setting benchmarks that support our community-inspired guiding principles. The benchmark table included in this document sets measurable goals that will guide and track our progress. These benchmarks will be periodically revisited and adjusted to meet the changing needs of our city throughout the planning cycle.

In working within our department, we will operationalize the document by aligning every division's work plan to the guiding principles and supporting goals. ActivateSJ will have longevity because it will become part of our day to day work. Together, we will advance the same outcomes by aligning individual work plans, projects, programs, and services to the guiding principles.

Our staff, with support from the community has played a vital role in defining what we seek to accomplish with this plan. We will keep stakeholders informed with routine progress reports, on-line dashboards, Community Impact Reports, and an active social media presence. As an on-going practice, staff will conduct targeted surveys to gain useful and actionable data to guide development and operation of projects, programs and services.

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

We see an opportunity for growth in how we implement our engagement practices. We want to tailor our efforts to meet the needs of each particular audience and engage at every level. Through authentic engagement, we can hear the needs of our community and share a conversation on best practices and next steps for our field. We will hold two-way dialogues and not one-way messages.

San José is home to a diverse population with multiple languages. As over half of all San José residents speak a language other than English at home, we are committed to building and equipping our staff to provide translation and interpretation services to ensure all residents have an outlet to participate. Beyond the language access, we will aim to transcreate our messages so that they remain relevant and resonate with the cultures that make San Jose a vibrant city to live in. This will require resources to

assess current areas in need of improvement, training and expanding our current staff, and partnering with specialized agencies to provide these services.

MOVING FORWARD

We recognize that staff and community engagement does not end with the publication of this document. Through this strategic plan update, we have come to better understand the need for robust community engagement in our future efforts. This will include engaging deeply with all park and recreation program users. This will take time, energy and resources to meet people where they are. For example, as we develop new parks or rehabilitate existing parks, and as we change or enhance recreational programs and services we need to go beyond community presentations and social media. We will move toward face to face interactions at the point of service, i.e. the park or center. We will continue to be self-reflective and innovative to continuously improve. As the inspiration behind our guiding principles, we need you – our Department of Parks, Recreation and Neighborhood Services staff and the San José community - to join us in advancing *Public Life, Identity, Equity & Access, Nature, and Stewardship*.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Placeholder

DRAFT

ALIGNMENT WITH *ENVISION 2040* CITY OF SAN JOSÉ GENERAL PLAN

Envision 2040 Goal	Public Life	Identity	Equity & Access	Nature	Stewardship
Goal PR-1 – High Quality Facilities and Programs	PR-1.7, PR-1.11, PR-1.15	PR-1.6, PR-1.7, PR-1.16, PR-1.17	PR-1.1, PR-1.2, PR-1.3, PR-1.4, PR-1.9, PR-1.12, PR-1.14	PR-1.10	PR-1.5, PR-1.8, PR-1.13
Goal PR-2 – Contribute to a Healthful Community		PR-2.7, PR-2.10	PR-2.1, PR-2.2, PR-2.3, PR-2.4, PR-2.5, PR-2.6		PR-2.8, PR-2.9
Goal PR-3 – Provide an Equitable Park System			PR-3.1, PR-3.2, PR-3.3, PR-3.4, PR-3.5		
Goal PR-4 – Community Identity	PR-4.5	PR-4.2, PR-4.3, PR-4.4, PR-4.6	PR-4.1		
Goal PR-5 – Grand Parks		PR-5.1, PR-5.2, PR-5.3, PR-5.4, PR-5.5			
Goal PR-6 – Sustainable Parks and Recreation				PR-6.1, PR-6.2, PR-6.3, PR-6.4, PR-6.5, PR-6.6, PR-6.7, PR-6.8, PR-6.9	PR-6.2
Goal PR-7 – Interconnected Parks System	PR-7.1, PR-7.3, PR-7.4		PR-7.1, PR-7.2, PR-7.3, PR-7.4, PR-7.5		
Goal PR-8 – Fiscal Management of Parks and Recreation Resources					PR-8.1 through PR-8.20
Goal TR-1 – Balanced Transportation System			TR-1.4, TR-1.11		
Goal TR-2 – Walking and Bicycling					TR-2.15, TR-2.16
Goal TN-1 – National Model for Trail Development and Use		TN-1.1, TN-1.4, TN-1.6	TN-1.5	TN-1.2, TN-1.3	
Goal TN-2 – Trails as Transportation		TN-2.6	TN-2.1, TN-2.2, TN-2.3, TN-2.5, TN-2.8, TN-2.9, TN-2.12, TN-2.13		TN-2.4, TN-2.7, TN-2.10, TN-2.11
Goal TN-3 – Accessible, Safe, and Well-Functioning Trails			TN-3.1, TN-3.2, TN-3.3, TN-3.4, TN-3.5, TN-3.6		