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INTRODUCTION

The City of Gilroy is a growing community with a diverse population and with increasing number and type of public facilities including parks and recreational areas. It is expected that the need for parks, recreation facilities, and programs will increase as the population grows. These Guidelines were developed in collaboration with the City of Gilroy Park and Recreation Commission, the Department of Public Works and Recreation with the intent of streamlining the review and approval of proposed park facilities and amenities. This document will provide a balance between a creative design process for parks and amenities of high quality, while ensuring consistent expectations and processes. This document will also help save a great deal of time and effort on behalf of park developers and city staff since developers will know the city’s desire and expectations at the onset of the project. It is expected that this document will be updated based on feedback from users as well as new and emerging best practices in the planning, design and installation of parks and recreational facilities.

BACKGROUND

The City of Gilroy is home to 14 neighborhood and community parks, a sports park, and more than 10 miles of trails. The Parks and Recreation System Master Plan, which was approved by City Council in 2002 and later updated in September 2004, provides information on the current state of Gilroy’s recreation facilities and programs and provides a vision for the types and size of parks to be built in the city that meet existing and anticipated recreational needs of the community. While the Master Plan provides general information, it is either too dated or insufficient to be used as a guideline document for the design and construction of specific park elements and amenities.

The City of Gilroy currently does not have a formal guideline document for the design of Parks and Park amenities. The purpose of this document is to provide developers, architects and engineers with uniform and consistent guidance in the planning, design and construction of Park facilities and amenities and recreational areas. It is expected that, through the use of the guidelines and recommendations included in this document, park developers will design and construct parks and amenities with reduced maintenance requirements, improved water efficiency and energy conservation, as well as increased accessibility and utilization by all members of the community.

A previous version of these guidelines (entitled Park Design Guidelines and Standards) was presented to the Parks and Recreation Commission (PRC) in June 2016. The PRC provided input and motioned to approve and recommend the document for the City Council adoption in fall 2017. The document was then presented to the City Council at the October 2, 2017 meeting. Given that the document provided a list of recommendations and not strict standards, Council directed that the title of the document be changed to “Guidelines” and that a list of specific references be provided at the end. Council also directed staff to seek input and feedback from the development community. Based on council direction and feedback from the development community, a revised version of the original draft document has been developed and will be referred to as “Parks and Amenities Design Guidelines” for future use.
Lifecycle of New Park/Facility redevelopment/improvement project (Developer built)
PARK AND AMENITIES DESIGN GUIDELINES

To maximize park usage, create a high-functioning usable space, and maintain a uniformed appearance, the Parks and Recreation Commission, together with City staff, have prepared proposed guidelines for Council to consider enacting for future park builders. These features would encourage consistency with the Parks and Recreation Facility Classification System, identified in the Gilroy Park and Recreation System Master Plan.

Park developers are expected to design parks within the City of Gilroy which include park elements and establish an attractive, creative, and cohesive urban park setting. Park design needs to consider sustainable priorities that include compliance with park security (highly visible and lighted), safety and ADA standards, longevity and durability (vandal resistant), ease of maintenance, drought tolerant vegetation, and water saving methods intended to use the least possible amount of water. Each public park type is different and encompasses varied opportunities and constraints. The Classification System listed in Chapter 3 of the Parks and Recreation System Master Plan devises a park classification process to best serve an area’s needs. The following is a list of the types of Parks found in Gilroy:

1. **Mini-Park**: a park with limited recreation value and more green/open space (one acre or smaller
   - i.e. Butcher Park)
2. **Neighborhood Park**: a park within walking distance of residential developments (3-10 acres
   - i.e. El Roble Park)
3. **Neighborhood Park/School**: a small park immediately adjacent to schools (2-10 acres
   - i.e. Del Rey Park)
4. **Community Park**: a park larger than a neighborhood park (20 acre minimum - i.e. Christmas Hill Park)
5. **Community Park/School**: a larger park adjacent to schools. Currently there are no parks like
   this in city limits (20 acre minimum)
6. **Park Preserve**: a park that is not within City boundaries (No minimum or maximum size; depends on resource to be preserved - i.e. Uvas Creek Park Preserve)
7. **Trails/Linear Parks**: a park that features trails separated for pedestrian and bicycle use (no
   minimum or maximum size - i.e. Uvas Park Levee)
8. **Sports Park**: a park with recreational facilities for organized sports (20 acre
   minimum - i.e. Gilroy Sports Park)

As part of the project review and approval process, the City of Gilroy Parks and Recreation Commission often recommends park developers to design parks that include park elements that not only provide form and function, but also establish an attractive, creative, and
cohesive urban park setting. Park design will consider sustainable priorities (see appendix) that include compliance with park security (highly visible and lighted), safety and ADA standards, longevity and durability (vandal resistant), ease of maintenance, drought tolerant vegetation, and water saving methods intended to use the least possible amount of water.

Consideration of the park design features listed below are recommended prior to appearing before the Parks and Recreation Commission for approval. In addition to the recommendations listed below, there are sources City staff would recommend builders utilize during the designing process. It is the expectations that the design teams and the designated state licensed professional(s) will apply referenced information and prevailing industry standards for park elements.

**Drought Tolerant /Plant Use**
- Drought resistant plants are required for compatible plant palettes and with plants that have similar water needs to avoid plant failures. See References #2
- Expect water efficient landscape design that meets both state water conservation standards and the state’s Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (MWELO) regarding park irrigation and park design elements for sustainability of parks. See References #3 & #4

**Security/Visibility/Vandal Resistant**
- Park trail access gates with collapsible bollards to increase public park and trail patrols by law enforcement and other public service staff.
- Increased lighting Light Emitting Diode (LED) with vandal resistant light fixtures at park activity areas and access points.
  - Outside electrical receptacle should be programmed for best placement and include a security element.
  - Park street frontage lamps shall be double masted street lamps and poles with extended lamp arm into the park frontage.
  - Low-level motion triggered lighting at park trails to increase police visibility after dark.
- Limited use of landscape screening features for activity areas such as raised mounds, screening vegetation and closed fencing.
- Park patrol visibility for all activity areas.
- Plant selection and placement shall be made with park security and visibility in mind.
- Automatic locking door systems at all new public park restrooms

**Seating areas**
- For all Parks and trails, seating features (park benches, parapet walls, rock and landscaping features that allow for seating etc.) are required to provide relief and rest area for users. See Exhibit I.

**Outdoor fitness equipment**
- Outdoor fitness equipment and exercise amenities are recommended for neighborhood and community parks as well as long trails and pathways.
**Pathways/Bike Paths /Service-Emergency Access Park**

- Suggest concrete be used as sustainable hardscape material for future paths of travel within parks.
- It is recommended that the use of asphalt and decomposed granite (excluding off-street parking and major Class I trails) is to be avoided within parks, for access to and from active and passive urban recreation park areas.
- Accessible walkways featuring playful, curved designs instead of standard perpendicular configuration is encouraged.

**Signage**

- Park signage, including regulation signs, shall be consistent to current City of Gilroy signage. Park entry sign examples are included in this document. See Exhibit A
- Park signage is required to meet the configurations of the existing park signage. Existing park sign colors include dark green, blue and ivory colored backgrounds and narrative. Park signs with decorative features may be considered, as long as they complement the park’s natural color scheme and natural surroundings.

**Public Access/Boundaries /Fencing**

- Maximum access to public parks is best provided by public street frontages.
- The placement of park property boundaries with adjacent residential developments is discouraged.
- Site drainage would follow adjacent land use currents.
- Use of black wrought iron fencing or other brown concrete simulated wood fencing should be used for park frontage fences. Other wood and/or cable fencing will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Chain link fencing at park street frontages is prohibited.

**Playgrounds**

- Playground surfacing material should include engineered wood fiber, which meets Standard Specification for Impact Attenuation of Surface Systems Under and Around Playground Equipment, F1292 Impact Attenuation and F1951 ADA accessibility requirements. See References #5
- Earth tones and resilient playground surfacing should be considered for all playground areas at the park. Vibrant colors may be suggested, but they will be required to complement the natural color themes to be considered.
- Whenever possible, shade for playgrounds should be a priority.
- Bike racks are required. Bike racks which are decoratively designed are encouraged.
  Example: Gilroy Library bike racks which are shaped like book shelves See Exhibit B
- Pre-cast play tables and games such as checkers, chess or other similar board games could be considered. See Exhibit C
- Installation of storage lockers for recreational programing supplies, which are congruent with park theme in larger scale parks, is encouraged.
- Neighborhood outreach and input should guide focus of selected recreation
amenities/features for all ages such as pickle ball courts, bocce ball, volleyball, basketball, handball, dodge ball, ping pong, horseshoes, shuffleboard, skateboarding, rollerblading, etc.

- Accessible playground equipment should include climbing structures with progressively challenging features to engage the participation of both younger and older children.
- When possible playground equipment that is inclusive or can integrate for children with mental and physical disabilities should be provided.

**Picnic Areas**

- All picnic area tables, benches, trash receptacles and BBQ pits shall be consistent with other City of Gilroy park amenities such as color, size, quality condition and manufacturer.
- To prevent damage, park benches and low concrete walls shall be skate proof.
- Park benches should be designed in such a way which discourages stretching out and sleeping.
- A sufficient number of garbage cans should be placed in high traffic areas such as trails, walkways, playgrounds and picnic areas. (Mobile garbage cans are not permitted.) The garbage cans shall be consistent to the current ones used by City of Gilroy. See Exhibit D.
- Suggested to install water fountains with bottle filler and pet water bowl, rather than single purpose water fountains will be required. See Exhibit E.
- Sufficient dog waste bag dispensers should be located in high traffic areas such as at major park visitor or pedestrian access points and walking trails.

**Destination Amenities**

- Community Park, Sport Park and Dog Park features that would create a community-wide destination should **not** be included in a neighborhood park. Examples of these features include:
  - Restrooms
  - Off-street parking
  - Overall park night-time lighting

**Park Themes**

- Incorporate an overall theme that is relevant to the individual park setting, while also recognizing the history, values and commodities inherent to the City of Gilroy.
- Shade Trees and trellis structures are required for neighborhood and community parks and encouraged for mini-parks to provide much needed shade and protection from the sun.
- Park amenities can be personalized through design, layout and use of color to establish a coherent theme. Natural colors such as brown, beige, green, black or similar color undertones are preferred. See Exhibit F.
- Wherever possible, avoid the use of red or blue colored park themes (popular gang affiliated colors).
- Vibrant colors may be suggested, but they will be required to complement the natural color themes to be considered.
• Use of colored or textured cement in walkways, rather than basic gray concrete could be considered. Enhanced walkways and cemented areas, with features such as etched hop scotch, decorative motifs, inspirational statements or sketches may be considered. **See Exhibit G.**

• Colored tiles on walkways, facility walls, or sound walls could be installed. Murals on facility walls or sound walls are an option, but will require the necessary City of Gilroy reviews and approvals. **See Exhibit H.**
REFERENCES AND WORK CONSULTED

1. City Of Gilroy Parks & Recreation System Master Plan, September 2004

2. Drought Tolerant Plants:
   c. Sunset Western Garden, 9th edition (Oxmoor House, 2012)


4. Model Water Efficiency Landscape Ordinance (MWELO):
   http://www.water.ca.gov/wateruseefficiency/docs/MWELO09-10-09.pdf

   a. F1292 Impact Attenuation:  https://www.astm.org/Standards/F1292.htm
   b. F1951 ADA accessibility requirements:  https://www.astm.org/Standards/F1951.htm

   a. ASTM F3101 – 1:  https://www.astm.org/Standards/F3101.htm
EXHIBIT A

Entry Park Signage

Park Regulation Signage
EXHIBIT B

A bike rack can be used as public art too (Gilroy Library)
EXHIBIT C
Pre-cast play tables
EXHIBIT D
Trash receptacles (example shown)
EXHIBIT E

Water Fountains with Bottle Filler and Pet Water Bowl
EXHIBIT F

Natural colors used on park amenities (e.g. Gilroy Sports Park)
EXHIBIT G
Enhanced Walkway
EXHIBIT H

Spaces for potential community Art (e.g. Children’s Tile Art project at San Ysidro Park);
EXHIBIT I

Seating area along trails and in parks

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