

# CHAPTER 5

## Western Chula Vista Park Delivery

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## CHAPTER 5 WESTERN CHULA VISTA PARK DELIVERY

### A. Background

As identified in the General Plan, historic park development in western Chula Vista has been impacted by several factors: pre-existing park development standards that differ from current City standards; the Montgomery annexation, the Quimby Act (State legislation that applies only to new development); and Proposition 13 (state legislation limiting property tax revenues). The current citywide standard for new park development adopted in 1987 (based on the Quimby Act) provides for the dedication and development of three acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents, or the payment of in-lieu fees.

#### Pre-existing Park Development Standards:

In contrast to today's current park standard (three acres of parkland per 1,000 persons), early Chula Vista park development occurred without benefit of an identified park acreage standard. Park development was somewhat happenstance in nature. The idea of a formalized park acreage standard was described in what is believed to be the City's first Parks and Recreation Master Plan document (July 1971). The 1971 master plan described a general goal of two acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. At that point in history, the City's overall park acreage ratio was approximately 2.18 acres per 1,000 persons.



Between 1971 and 1987 the Chula Vista Municipal Code referenced the requirement for the dedication of two acres of parkland per 1,000 persons. In 1987, the City's overall park acreage ratio was approximately 3.46 acres per 1,000 persons.

In December 1987, the City Council adopted a new ordinance (No. 2243) that established the requirement for three acres of parkland per 1,000 persons (CVMC 17.10). That standard is still in place today. Development occurring prior to establishment of the three acres per 1,000 persons standard complied, albeit at a lower standard, when compared to today.

#### Montgomery Annexation:

The 1986 annexation of the Montgomery area resulted in an immediate and dramatic increase in the City's population (approximately 23,000 persons) without a corresponding proportionate increase in park acreage inventory. The annexation resulted in a reduction in the City's park acres to persons ratio. The reduction continues to impact western Chula Vista today. The City Council position paper dated September 24, 1985 (Council Resolution No. 12177) identified a Montgomery area park ratio of 0.2 acres per 1,000 Montgomery residents.

Progress to Date:

Progress toward increasing park acreage inventory in western Chula Vista, not directly related to new residential development, has been and will continue to be an ongoing process. Policy statements contained in both the 2002 and 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan support the pursuit of expanding park acreage inventories, particularly in west Chula Vista. Successes to date include the addition of Harborside Neighborhood Park (2006), Plaza de Nacion Urban Park (2007), and Orange Park (2016) adjacent to the South Chula Vista library. Although these additional resources were not specifically identified in the 2002 Parks and Recreation Master Plan, their acquisition and development is supported by Chapter 3, Policy 1.4 (*Pursue the recreational opportunities associated with public agency owned lands and utility rights-of-way*).



It should be noted that Harborside Park is a challenge to law enforcement in part because it is surrounded by institutional and big box commercial land uses. To assure safety and security in this park, thereby making the park more attractive to families, the city should consider redevelopment of the area surrounding this park in ways that enable “eyes” on the park.

Additionally, the City has acquired 20 acres of undeveloped land (Lower Sweetwater) east of the KOA campground, south of SR-54 and west of I-805 for the development of a future community park. Suitable access to the site will need to be studied. A key challenge to developing this park, however, is acquiring funding for its development.

Future Growth:

While future residential growth will result in the demand for additional parklands and recreational facilities, there will be increased challenges in securing appropriate park and recreation sites in western Chula Vista, where land is primarily built out. Unlike east Chula Vista, the lack of vacant and under-utilized parcels of land and/or competing demands and uses for land in the west represent obstacles to expanding park and recreation facility inventory.

The current design and development of D Street Park takes advantage of one opportunity to expand the public realm by transforming the west end of D Street at Woodlawn Avenue into a mini-park, providing a play structure, picnic table and shelter, and open lawn area for nearby residents to enjoy.

Developing creative strategies for delivering park and recreation facilities is essential to implementing the citywide standard for new park development. The future expansion of park acreage inventories in west Chula Vista will be the result of both new parks related to new residential growth (the Quimby Act State legislation that applies only to new development) and new parks related to continued success in finding park development opportunities similar to those discussed in the above paragraph titled “Progress to Date.”

## B. Park Delivery Framework

Citywide parkland inventory will need to expand in order to support new residential development. Increasing park inventory necessitates the acquisition of land suitable to support park development. New parkland development within the eastern territories (areas east of I-805) will continue to be acquired primarily through developer dedication of parkland. In the western portions of the City, new parkland development will be achieved through a combination of parkland dedication and the payment of parkland in-lieu fees. The collection of in-lieu fees will facilitate the purchase and development of parkland by the City. Concern exists regarding the challenge of acquiring new parkland and the cost associated with acquiring parkland in developed areas of the City, particularly western Chula Vista.

Future recreational needs in western Chula Vista can be addressed by identifying and utilizing suitable land for park development and other innovative strategies outlined below.

### Public Agency Lands:

Future park sites in western Chula Vista, as identified in the General Plan Update 2005, include the introduction of park sites on vacant or underutilized lands currently under public agency control (Policy 1.4). Public agencies control lands include parcels in the Lower Sweetwater, Rios Avenue (Recreation Area 6 in the OVRP Concept Plan), and Unified Port of San Diego Bayfront areas. Land suitable for park development that is currently under the control of public agencies affords an opportunity to utilize them as future parkland inventories. Table 5-1 summarizes the anticipated contribution of publicly controlled lands towards new residential growth in western Chula Vista.

**Table 5-1  
Existing Public Agency Lands / Future Park Sites**

| Public Agency   | Location              | Acres        |
|---|-----------------------|--------------|
| City  | Lower Sweetwater Site | 20.0         |
| City  | Rios Site             | 36.4         |
| Port District   | Bayfront              | 57.2*        |
| <b>Total</b>  |                       | <b>113.6</b> |
| <i>*Planned Bayfront park acreage not related to Bayfront park development obligation.<br/>(Source: CV Bayfront Master Plan FEIR)</i> |                       |              |

Note: Refer to Table 5-3 for future urban park sites that are also public agency land, specifically, "Civic Center Library" and "Court House" sites.

Public agencies have the ability to utilize the publicly controlled land inventories as an inducement for redevelopment. This is a potential strategy to reduce overall parkland acquisition costs within western Chula Vista where challenges of parkland acquisition exist. Public agency lands suitable for future park development account for approximately half of the future parkland inventory envisioned in the General Plan Update 2005 plus Bayfront Master Plan, thereby affording an opportunity to the City to deliver parkland at a cost basis that supports redevelopment efforts.

Underutilized and Vacant Lands:

The update to the General Plan (2005) focused primarily on the revitalization and redevelopment within the older, developed areas in the western portion of the City. Future redevelopment efforts will include reconstruction on underutilized parcels of land as well as infill development of vacant parcels. Future development of residential dwelling units will necessitate delivery of additional park and recreation facilities to serve residents. While some of the future parkland obligation will be met in the context of public agency lands (as discussed above) a portion of future park sites will represent parkland offered for dedication by developers of residential development. Additionally, residential projects of a smaller scale (typically less than 50 dwelling units), as permitted by ordinance, may meet parkland obligation through the payment of in-lieu fees. When aggregated together, the in-lieu fees provide the City with the opportunity to acquire land suitable for park purposes. Table 5-2 summarizes the anticipated contribution of future parkland resulting from the introduction of new residential units in western Chula Vista not related to public agency lands. Park acreages indicated represent goals; actual park sizes implemented are expected to vary. The sites contained in the table are also identified in the General Plan Update 2005.

**Table 5-2  
Existing Underutilized and Vacant Parcels / Future Park Sites**

| Site                  | Park Category | Acres (Estimate) |
|-----------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Beyer Way*            | Neighborhood  | 13.9             |
| Harbor View           | Neighborhood  | 10.0             |
| Civic Center Vicinity | Neighborhood  | 5.0              |
| Oxford Town           | Neighborhood  | 5.0              |
| Palomar Gateway       | Neighborhood  | 5.0              |
|                       |               |                  |
| <b>Total</b>          |               | <b>38.9</b>      |

\*Beyer Way is Recreation Area 4 in the OVRP

Underutilized Public Rights of Way:

Developing linear parks, small plazas or neighborhood trails by utilizing excess public rights of way will improve the public realm and provide safe pedestrian connections to parks and open space throughout the City.

Urban Parks:

Another strategy for delivery of future parks in western Chula Vista includes the implementation of the General Plan and Urban Core Specific Plan defined concept of urban parks. This approach is consistent with the strategy of developing parks of varying sizes that demonstrably meet defined recreational needs.

As described in Chapter 3 of this document, smaller than traditional parks, urban parks provide an opportunity to deliver park facilities in proximity to new infill housing within existing development areas such as northwest and southwest Chula Vista where parkland opportunities are limited. Urban infill development typically results in recreational needs that differ from more

traditional suburban development based recreational demands. While similar recreational activities are desired by both suburban and urban infill project dwellers, the incidence of participation differs. For instance, based on the *2006 Parks and Recreation Needs Assessment* survey, 90 percent of urban dwellers are users of open green turf areas as opposed to 80 percent of suburban dwellers. Conversely, fewer urban dwellers (30 percent) utilize tot lots as compared to suburban dwellers (41 percent). These differing needs can translate into differing park site sizes and characteristics. Challenges in land availability within existing development areas, not experienced in green-field development areas such as east Chula Vista, warrant the use of urban parks in west Chula Vista. In east Chula Vista, mini-parks and town squares may be appropriate when General Plan and/or Otay Ranch General Development Plan policies support an urban character for a project area.

Table 5-3 summarizes the anticipated contribution of urban parks toward future parkland inventory resulting from the introduction of new residential units in western Chula Vista. Park acreages indicated represent goals; actual park sizes implemented are expected to vary. The sites contained in the table are also identified in the Urban Core Specific Plan. As development progresses in the west, additional urban park sites are anticipated.

**Table 5-3  
Future Urban Park Sites Western Chula Vista**

| Site                        | Park Category | Acres (Estimate) |
|-----------------------------|---------------|------------------|
| Civic Center Library        | Urban         | 0.6              |
| Court House                 | Urban         | 1.7              |
| D St. / Woodlawn            | Urban         | 0.7              |
| H St. / 5 <sup>th</sup> St. | Urban         | 0.5              |
| H St. / Woodlawn            | Urban         | 0.5              |
| Broadway/F St.              | Urban         | 0.5              |
| H St. / CV Mall             | Urban         | 0.5              |
|                             |               |                  |
| <b>Total</b>                |               | <b>5.0</b>       |

**C. Implementation of Western Chula Vista Strategies**

Combining these three key strategies (use of public agency land inventories, directing future park development to underutilized and vacant lands, and developing a portion of future parks as urban parks) will result in approximately 157.5 acres of additional developed parkland in western Chula Vista. Additional opportunities exist for further park expansion within utility corridors, such as the Orange Park within the SDG&E right-of-way. Potential future parkland inventories within utility right-of-ways are estimated at up to 80 acres. When added all together, implementing the three key strategies along with utility right-of-way use, park acreage inventories could increase by as much as 242 acres within west Chula Vista. This amount of acreage is suitable to accommodate future residential growth anticipated under the General Plan and Bayfront Master Plan. Actual total future parkland acreage, however, is dependent on total future number of residential dwelling units realized.

In addition to the three strategies outlined above designed to increase the amount of park space and the level of park amenities between I-5 and I-805, more innovative strategies may also be employed. Each infill project in this area will be analyzed on a case-by-case basis to see if there are any ways to improve recreational opportunities within the immediate environs or the immediate neighborhood of the project. Working directly with each individual developer in these cases, staff will have flexibility to use PAD fees generated by the project for enhancing recreational opportunities for residents of the immediate environs. An alternative, where an infill development is within walking distance of an existing park, PAD fees from that development could be used to amenitize the existing park (adding picnic tables or a jogging trail, for example). This level of flexibility will add more opportunities to create more and enhanced recreational spaces in western Chula Vista, at the same time enhancing older neighborhoods in general.

#### **D. Urban Park Models**

The graphics and photographic images contained on the following pages provide conceptual examples of urban park designs. Urban parks, when designed and amenitized to address identified recreation needs, can meet a portion of the overall park and recreation need.

While the Urban Park sites described in Table 5-3 and the conceptual examples on the following pages are less than two acres in size, an urban park, could be larger if the opportunity arises for the development of a greater area of land. Due to the challenges of acquiring land in western Chula Vista as well as possible future amendments to the General Plan there may be a need for additional urban parks in western Chula Vista beyond those identified in this Plan. Specialized and unique urban development within green-field areas may warrant consideration for urban parks as meeting a portion of recreation demand. The Otay Ranch General Development Plan identifies town squares, a type of public urban park space, for many of its villages. Given the possibility of a variety of urban park sizes, the urban park models contained on the following pages range in size from one half acre to two acres.



## Urban Park Example A - (0.5 Acres)



### Primary Facilities (Minimum of two)

- Hard Court (Tennis, Basketball, Skate)
- Play Area w/Play Equipment
- Open Lawn Area (6,000 SF Minimum) (2X)

### Support Facilities (Minimum of two)

- Open Lawn Area (4,000 SF Minimum)
- Off-leash Dog Area
- Seating Area
- Picnic Tables
- Picnic Shelter
- Band Shell
- Pergola
- Community Garden

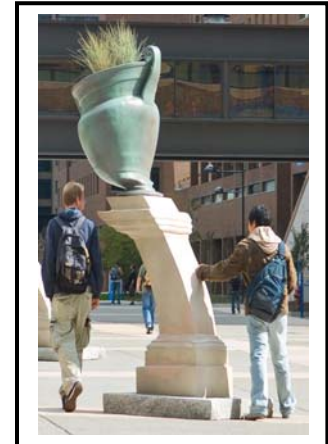
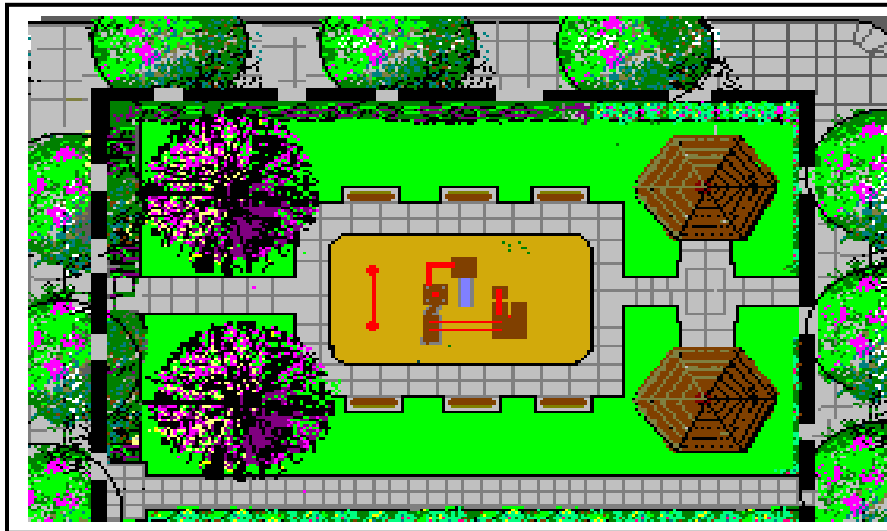
### Support Feature (Minimum of one)

- Public Art
- Water Feature
- Kiosk
- Community Garden
- Seating Wall



Note: Highlighted text denotes features contained in example park.

## Urban Park Example B - (1.0 Acre)



### Primary Facilities (Minimum of two)

- Hard Court (Tennis, Basketball, Skate)
- Play Area w/Play Equipment
- Open Lawn Area (6,000 SF Minimum)

### Support Facilities (Minimum of two)

- Open Lawn Area (4,000 SF Minimum)
- Off-leash Dog Area
- Seating Area
- Picnic Tables
- Picnic Shelter
- Band Shell
- Pergola
- Community Garden

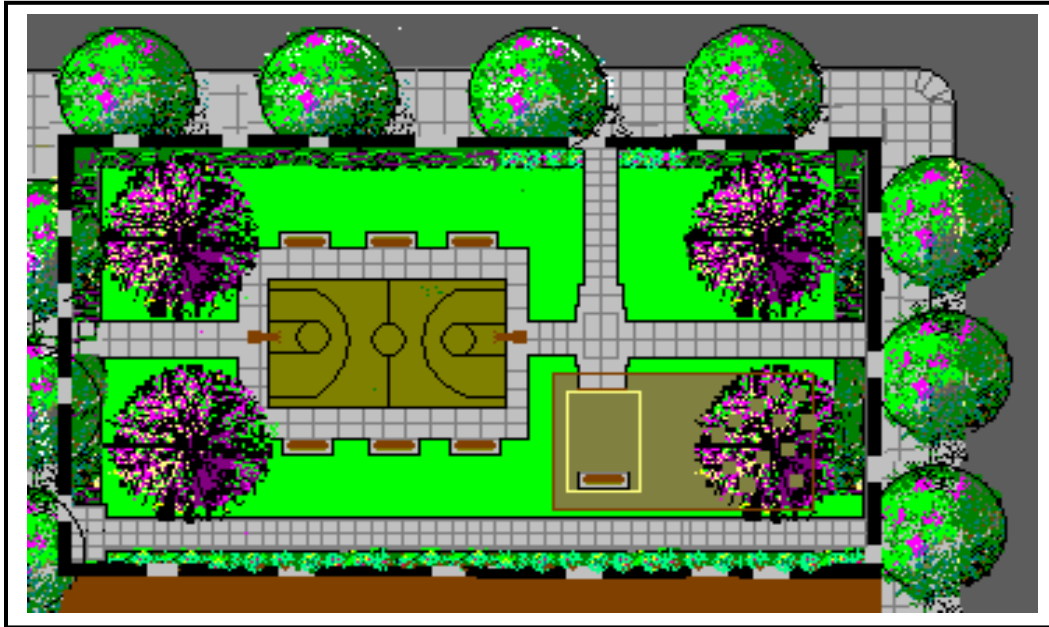
### Support Feature (Minimum of one)

- Public Art
- Water Feature
- Kiosk
- Community Garden
- Seating Walls
- Decorative Paving



Note: Highlighted text denotes features contained in example park.

## Urban Park Example C - (1.5 Acres)



### Primary Facilities (Minimum of two)

- **Hard Court** (Tennis, Basketball, Skate)
- Play Area w/Play Equipment
- **Open Lawn Area (6,000 SF Minimum)**

### Support Facilities (Minimum of two)

- Open Lawn Area (4,000 SF Minimum)
- **Off-leash Dog Area**
- **Seating Area**
- Picnic Tables
- Picnic Shelter
- Band Shell
- Pergola
- Community Garden

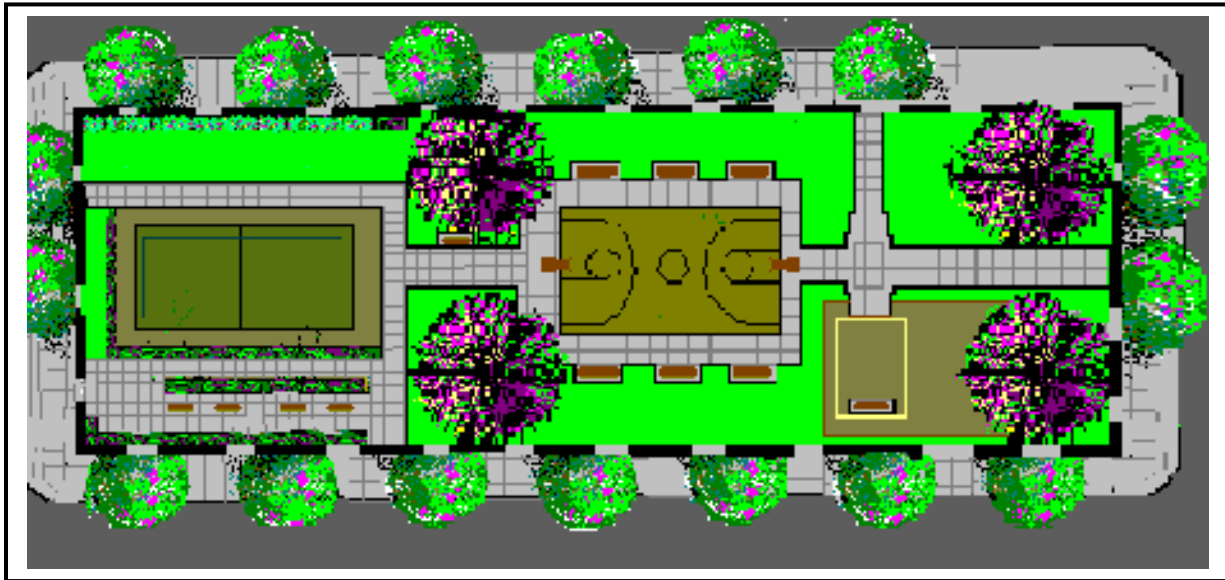
### Support Feature (Minimum of one)

- Public Art
- Water Feature
- **Kiosk**
- Community Garden
- Seating Walls



Note: **Highlighted** text denotes features contained in example park.

## Urban Park Example D - (2.0 Acres)



### Primary Facilities (Minimum of two)

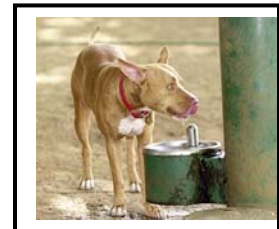
- Hard Court (Tennis, Basketball, Skate)
- Play Area w/Play Equipment
- Open Lawn Area (6,000 SF Minimum)

### Support Facilities (Minimum of two)

- Open Lawn Area (4,000 SF Minimum)
- Off-leash Dog Area
- Seating Area
- Picnic Tables
- Picnic Shelter
- Band Shell
- Pergola
- Community Garden

### Support Feature (Minimum of one)

- Public Art
- Water Feature
- Kiosk
- Community Garden
- Seating Wall
- Decorative Paving



Note: Highlighted text denotes features contained in example park.