

PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE

8

INTRODUCTION

This chapter combines the State-mandated open space element with an optional element focused on parks and recreation. Parks are one component of an open space network that also includes wetlands and wildlife refuge areas, rights-of-way such as the Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct and PG&E transmission lines, school athletic fields, salt evaporation ponds, and public and private lands. Open space defines the edges of Newark on the south and west sides and is an important part of the city's history and character. This Element provides a framework to manage open space for recreation, conservation, resource production, and public safety in the future.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element emphasizes the important role that parks play in community life. Newark's parks contribute to health and fitness, mental well-being, aesthetics, and environmental quality. They are one of the most valued aspects of the community and enrich the lives of residents of all ages. Planning for the expansion and improvement of the city's parks will be essential as Newark adds residents and workers. It will also be important to adapt existing recreational facilities and programs to respond to the city's changing demographics and to trends in leisure and sports activities. Funding for park improvements, operations, and maintenance will continue to be critical issues.

Newark's parks are supplemented by other recreational facilities, including those operated by the Newark Unified School District, Ohlone College, and the private sector. Private recreational facilities include community rooms, swimming pools, tennis courts, tot lots, and similar amenities serving individual residential developments. Newark is also home to commercial businesses offering recreational activities such as martial arts training and dance instruction, and fraternal organization facilities such as the Newark Pavilion. The City's parks are further supplemented by regional facilities beyond the city limits, including Ardenwood Historic Farm and Coyote Hills Regional Park.



The first part of this chapter provides background information on parks, recreation, and open space resources in Newark. The second part includes goals, policies, and actions guiding the use of these resources. Key topics include:

- Conservation of open space.
- Acquisition of new parkland to respond to increasing population and demand.
- Improvement of existing parkland to meet community needs and respond to recreational trends.
- The use of non-City facilities to supplement City park and recreation facilities.
- Trail improvements, including improvement of the Bay Trail and spur trails.



OPEN SPACE

State law requires that four types of open space be identified and analyzed in the General Plan. These are listed below:

- **Open Space for Recreation.** This category includes the City's park system, as well as school yards and athletic fields used for recreation. The management of these areas is the focus of this chapter and is addressed in Goals 2 and 3 at the end of the Element.
- **Open Space for the Protection of Natural Resources.** This primarily refers to public land within the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge, and wetlands on private property that will be conserved as open space. These resources are primarily addressed in the Conservation and Sustainability Element of the General Plan.
- **Open Space for the Managed Production of Resources.** This includes the Cargill salt harvesting, refining, and production lands and related salt harvesting facilities within Cargill's Newark Plant site. It also includes agricultural lands. These resources are primarily addressed in the Land Use Element and in the Economic Development Element of the General Plan.
- **Open Space for Public Health and Safety.** This includes areas where development would pose a threat to public safety due to earthquakes, landslides, flooding, aviation hazards, and similar risks. These areas are addressed in the Environmental Hazards Element. Flooding is the main safety hazard in Newark, and the open spaces set aside for this purpose are generally included in the three categories listed above. Most flood prone areas

in Newark are designated for recreation, resource production, or resource protection.

The geographic extent of land meeting the criteria above is shown on Figure LU-1 in the Land Use Element. These areas correspond to the following land use categories: Parks and Recreational Facilities, Conservation Open Space, and Salt Harvesting.

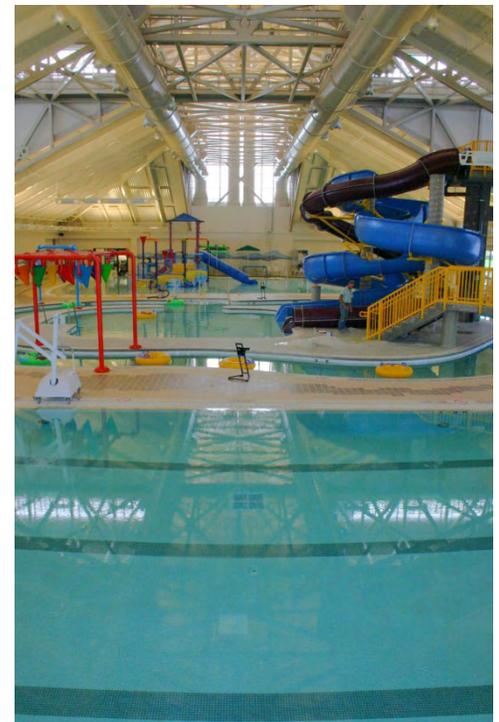
In 2013, 50 percent of Newark’s land area, or about 4,500 acres, consisted of undeveloped or non-urbanized land. Over two-thirds of this area consists of salt harvesting, refining, and production along the edge of San Francisco Bay in the south and west parts of the city. This land is expected to remain in salt harvesting, refining, and production for the duration of the planning period. The remaining one-third includes Conservation Open Space (wetlands), City parks, agricultural areas, and privately owned vacant land zoned for development. Although private vacant land is not considered “open space” using the State definition, portions of these areas will be set aside as future parks, conservation areas, and landscaped rights-of-way as development takes place. The boundaries of future open spaces within development areas will depend on detailed mapping of wetlands, site planning for new development, and negotiations between the private sector and public resource agencies.

In addition to the open spaces described above, most residential properties in Newark include front yards, back yards, and side yards. These spaces are urbanized, but they still create a sense of spaciousness, provide access to sunlight, and support habitat for birds and other wildlife. Landscaped roadway medians, rights-of-way, and lawns around public buildings also supplement the traditional open space network.

General Plan policies under Goal 1 of this Element express Newark’s commitment to conserving open space in the future. The policies recognize the different types of open space in the city, and the role these spaces play in protecting resources, supporting Newark’s economy, and shaping the city’s character.

NEWARK’S PARK SYSTEM

For the past five decades, Newark’s parks have been planned and designed according to accepted national standards for park development. In many cases, these standards are still appropriate and have been carried forward in this Plan. However, recreational needs are not constant, and the City’s ability to meet these needs has



changed over time. Newark is landlocked and has limited opportunities to develop new parks. Funding for land acquisition has become more limited, and operating budgets have become leaner. The emphasis in park planning is shifting to make better use of existing parks and providing new facilities that do not exist today. Partnerships with the private sector and other public agencies have become more important to meeting community needs.

ADOPTED PARK STANDARDS

The City of Newark uses two types of standards in park planning:

- Per capita standards, which establish the number of acres of parkland the city should have per 1,000 residents. These are generally applied on a citywide basis.
- Service area standards, which are used to ensure that all residents have easy, convenient access to a local park. These are generally applied on a neighborhood basis.

PER CAPITA STANDARDS

The per capita acreage standards are based in part on existing conditions, in part on national standards, and in part on State legislation which limits the amount of parkland the city can require developers to provide when new housing is approved. The Quimby Act was adopted by the California legislature in 1975 to allow cities to require developers to set aside land or pay impact fees of equivalent value for park improvements. Under state law, the dedication requirement ranges from up to 3.0 acres per 1,000 residents to up to 5.0 acres per 1,000 residents, depending on the amount of parkland the city currently has. The intent of the Quimby Act is to help a city retain its current ratio of park acres per 1,000 residents in the future; meaning that cities with larger existing park areas can require higher set-asides. Revenue generated through Quimby Act fees can only be used for land acquisition or capital improvements, and cannot be used for park operations or maintenance.

Newark has adopted a 3.0 acre per 1,000 resident standard for planning purposes and its Quimby Act fee is based on this ratio. Previous General Plans for the City stipulated that two-thirds of the total should be targeted for *community* parkland and one-third should be targeted for *neighborhood* parkland. The intent was to ensure that the City added both large and small parks in the future, recognizing the different function of each type of park. This division may no longer be appropriate in the



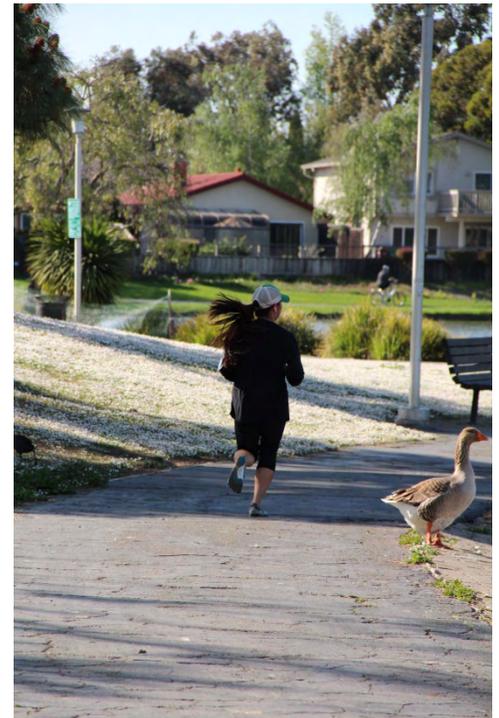
future, since the city is moving into a new era of park planning reflecting its mature, built out character and the adopted plans for its remaining large vacant tracts of land.

Chapter 16.30 of the Newark Municipal Code requires that new subdivisions include sufficient land to maintain the adopted per capita service standard, or pay a fee which will enable the city to acquire land to maintain the standard. Smaller developments typically pay the fee, since it is infeasible to provide a neighborhood park of sufficient size on-site. As of 2013, the dedication requirement or fee was based on .0102 acres (444 square feet) per single-family unit and .0072 acres (314 square feet) per multi-family unit. In 2013, these fees were \$2,998 per single-family unit and \$2,278 per multi-family unit.

SERVICE AREA STANDARDS

Like the acreage standards, the service area standards address two types of parks: neighborhood parks and community parks. The standards are defined below:

- ***Neighborhood parks*** are typically 5 to 10 acres in size and are designed to serve residents living within a ½-mile radius. Most Newark residents should be able to walk to a neighborhood park within 10 minutes of their homes. Ideally, neighborhood parks should be away from arterial streets and should be adjacent to elementary schools to enhance the joint use of the space for field sports and school activities. Significant features of a neighborhood park include fields, lawns, walkways, picnic areas, and tot lots. Other small-scale recreational facilities such as basketball courts may be acceptable. However, to minimize auto traffic and parking demand, neighborhood parks should generally not have facilities that draw residents from outside the service area.
- ***Community parks*** are typically 20 acres or larger and are designed to serve residents living within a 1- to 2-mile radius. They may also have facilities which draw residents from throughout the city. Community parks are typically located near major streets and are accessible by public transportation. Off-street parking should be provided. These parks include a larger array of facilities than neighborhood parks, potentially including tennis courts, swimming pools, lighted fields, restrooms, recreation centers, and open space for unstructured play.





OTHER PARK CATEGORIES

In addition to the two park types listed above, this General Plan introduces two additional park categories which will become part of the city's park inventory in the future:

- **Mini-parks** are typically less than one acre in size. They include small parks within residential development areas, and civic plazas and open spaces within urbanized areas. Although Newark does not have public mini-parks at this time, the General Plan recognizes the opportunity for such parks in Old Town, in the NewPark Mall area, and in new large-scale development. The service area of a mini-park is typically ½-mile or less. Mini-parks do not include private open spaces within subdivisions or multi-family complexes which are reserved for the use of residents only.
- **Special use parks** are parks associated with a unique function or facility. They include the Shirley Sisk Eucalyptus Grove, the proposed golf course (or major recreational facility) to be developed in Southwest Newark, and possible future linear parks on utility, railroad, or former road rights-of-way (e.g., the Cedar Boulevard extension). Acreage and service area standards for special use parks do not apply since they vary with the park's function.

School recreational facilities are not typically included in the 3.0 acre per 1,000 standard, although there are exceptions for facilities such as MacGregor Fields, which is subject to a long-term lease between the City and the Newark Unified School District. Similarly, public land used for resource conservation such as the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge is not counted in the recreational standard. In the event a golf course is developed in Southwest Newark, the 3.0 acre per 1,000 resident standard may need to be recalibrated, as the golf course alone could double the acreage of parkland in the city.

PARK INVENTORY

The Newark Recreation and Community Services Department operates and maintains 131 acres of City parks and several recreational facilities, as listed in Table PR-1. Of this total, 121 acres are owned by the City and 10 acres are leased from the Newark Unified School District. There are 13 parks in the city, including eight neighborhood parks, three community parks, and two special use parks. Figure PR-1 shows the location of the parks. Parks are also called out as a land use category on the General Plan Land Use Map in the Land Use Element.

TABLE PR-1 NEWARK CITY PARK INVENTORY				
Park Name	Acres	Location	Facilities	Adjacent Facilities
Neighborhood Parks				
Ash Street*	6.1	Enterprise Dr. at Filbert St.	Play structures, softball fields, basketball court, picnic facilities, horse-shoe pit	Newark Senior Center
Bridgepointe	3.5	Spruce St. at Bridgepointe Dr.	Play structures, picnic facilities	Lincoln Elementary School (8.7 acres of additional open space)
Byington	3.0	Byington Dr. at Central Av.	Play structures, picnic facilities	
Civic Center	5.1	Newark Blvd. at Civic Terrace	Play structures, basketball court, par course, picnic facilities	Newark City Hall, Newark Public Library
Lakeshore**	26.0	Lake Blvd. at Lakeshore Dr.	26-acre total includes 10 acres of lawn, paths, and par course area and a 16-acre water area with fishing and boating	
Mayhews Landing	8.3	Cherry St. at Mayhews Landing Rd.	Play structures, basketball court, picnic facilities	Graham Elementary School (5.6 acres of additional open space)
Mirabeau	6.0	Haley St. at Mirabeau Dr.	Play structures, paths, picnic facilities	Snow Elementary School (6.0 acres of additional open space)
Musick	0.8	Cedar Blvd. at Mayhews Landing Rd.	Play structures, picnic facilities	Musick Elementary School (4.4 acres of additional open space)
Subtotal	58.8			
Community Parks				
Birch Grove	12.2	Birch St. at Robertson Av.	Play structures, water feature, lighted softball field, basketball court, tennis courts, picnic facilities, restrooms	Across the street from Bunker Elementary School
Community	16.3	Cedar Blvd at Newark Blvd.	Play structures, warm-up wall, basketball and handball court, lawn, paths, tennis courts, picnic facilities, Community Center	MacGregor Alternative Education Center, MacGregor Fields (10 acres)

TABLE PR-1 NEWARK CITY PARK INVENTORY

Park Name	Acres	Location	Facilities	Adjacent Facilities
Sportsfield/ Silliman Center	29.6	Mowry Av. at Cherry St.	Lighted and non-lighted softball field, soccer fields, Family Aquatic Center, Community Activity Center, including gym- nasium, showers and locker room, aerobic/ dance studio, fitness center, teen room, children's room, community meeting room, childcare	Adjoins Ohlone College Newark Campus, Fire Station
Subtotal	58.1			
Special Use Parks				
Shirley Sisk Grove	3.2	Cedar Blvd. at NewPark Mall	Passive open space for summer concerts	
MacGregor Fields	10.5	Cedar Blvd. at Lake Blvd.	Soccer and baseball practice fields	MacGregor Alternative Education Center
Subtotal	13.7			
GRAND TOTAL	130.6			

* Excludes the acreage associated with the Newark Senior Center, which is located on an adjoining site and includes pool tables, card rooms, a computer lab, a lunchroom, meeting rooms, and social facilities.

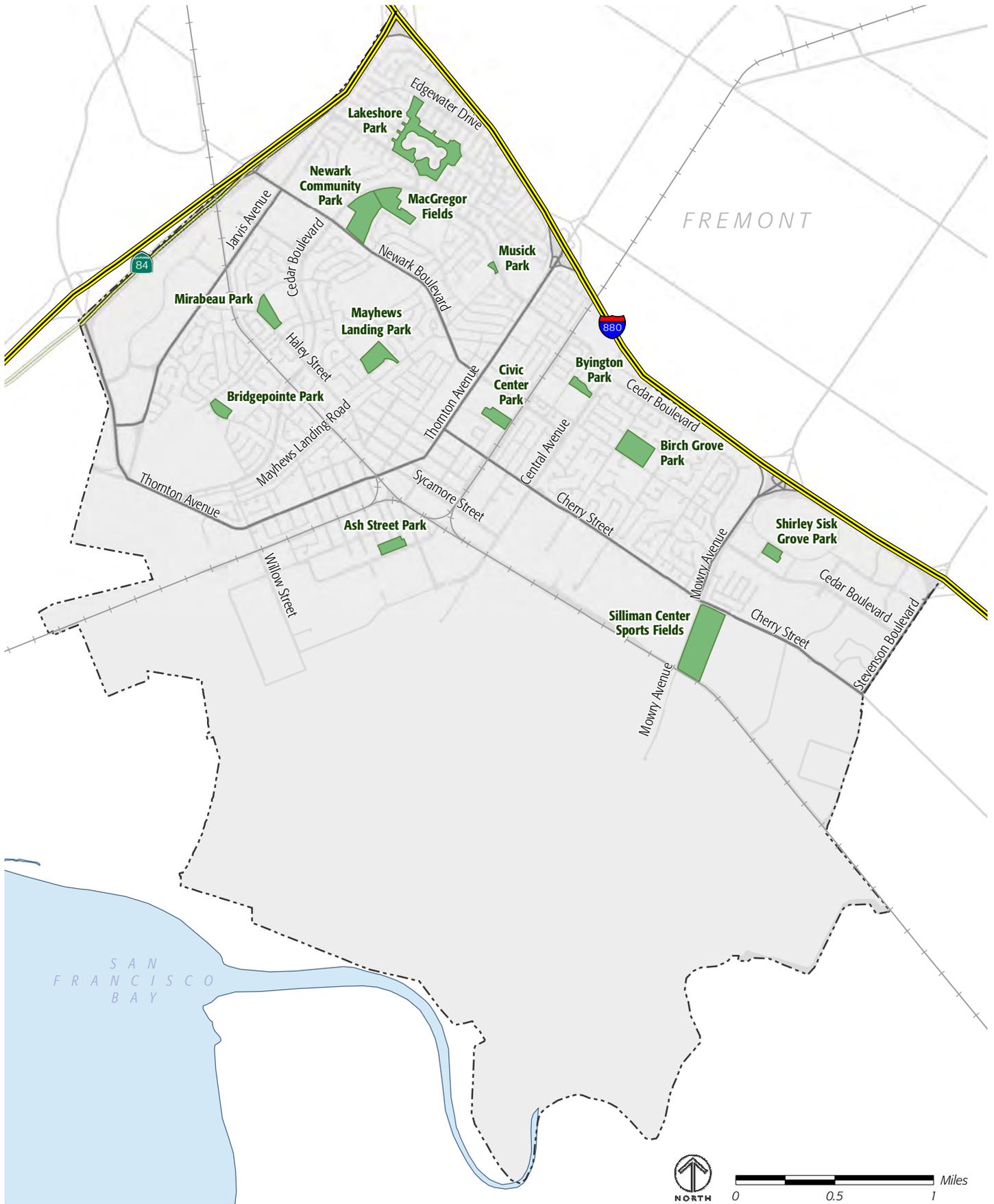
** Although Lakeshore exceeds the acreage range for a typical neighborhood park, approximately 16 acres of the 26- acre total area is water, leaving 10 acres of land.

Source: Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, 2012; City of Newark, 2012.



Based on the decennial Census count of 42,471 residents, there were 3.11 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents in 2010. The figure rises substantially if school athletic fields and play areas are added in. School field and play areas total 133.2 acres,¹ bringing the grand total to 264 acres, or about 6.23 acres per 1,000. Although the City does not own or operate school playfields, these areas are available to residents on a limited basis during non-school hours. They provide an important supplemental resource.

¹ Excluding 10.5 acres at MacGregor Fields, which is counted in the figure for City parks due to a lease agreement.



Source Data: City of Newark, 2012; The Planning Center | DC&E, 2012; Tiger Roads 2010; ESRI, 2010; FTC, 2010.

FIGURE PR-1
PARKS IN NEWARK



As indicated in Table PR-2, Newark's community parks provide an array of facilities. Springfield Park includes the Silliman Activity and Family Aquatic Center, with an indoor water park and pool, gymnasium, teen area, fitness center, dance studio, childcare center, and meeting rooms. The park also includes lighted and non-lighted play fields, serving the entire community. Newark Community Park includes 16 acres of playfields and outdoor activity space, including picnic areas and tot lots. The park also includes a community center available for private rental. Adjacent to Ash Street Park, the Newark Senior Center offers programs and activities for Newark seniors. At Lakeshore Park, a 16-acre lagoon provides opportunities for fishing and boating. Other parks in the city contain a mix of passive and active facilities, meeting the recreational needs of persons of all ages.

While the City meets its overall acreage standard for parks, some neighborhoods are better served than others. In particular, the high-density residential area southeast of NewPark Mall is more than a 1/2-mile from the nearest city park. Other residential areas may be within a 1/2-mile of parks that do not provide a complete range of services and facilities. Other areas may be within the 1/2-mile radius, but face access barriers such as railroad tracks and wide arterial streets. Policies in the General Plan express the City's continued commitment to expanding and improving access to its parks to better serve all residents.

Several new parks are planned as part of future large-scale developments. The Southwest Newark Residential and Recreational Development includes plans for a golf course or major public recreational facility. A golf course would likely be 120 acres or larger and could potentially double the City's total park acreage. The Specific Plan for Southwest Newark (formerly Areas 3 and 4) also includes an approximately 5-acre neighborhood park, to be co-located with an elementary school on the south side of Cherry Street east of Ohlone College. The park will not only serve new residents, it will remedy a park access deficiency in the residential area on the north side of Cherry Street in this area.

Two neighborhood parks are planned for the Dumbarton Transit-Oriented Development (TOD) area, including one to the east and one to the west of the future transit station. The development will also feature a linear park network, including new sections of the Bay Trail. A total of 16.3 acres of new parks are proposed in this area.

TABLE PR-2 SUMMARY OF NEWARK PARK FACILITIES												
Park	Basketball Court	Exercise Course	Handball Court	Open Turf Area	Picnic Facilities	Play Apparatus	Restrooms	Soccer Field	Softball Field	Tennis Court	Volleyball Court	Water Play Feature
Ash Street	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	
Birch Grove	✓			✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓		✓
Bridgepointe				✓	✓	✓						
Byington	✓			✓	✓	✓						
Civic Center	✓			✓	✓	✓						
Community	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓		
Lakeshore		✓		✓								
Mayhews Landing	✓			✓	✓	✓						
Mirabeau				✓	✓	✓						
Musick				✓		✓						
Shirley Sisk Grove	<i>Unimproved, no facilities</i>											
Sportsfield/Silliman							✓	✓	✓			

Source: City of Newark 2012.

OTHER RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

SCHOOL PROPERTIES

As noted above, the Newark City park system is augmented by an approximately equivalent amount of recreational open space on school property. Among the most important facilities are the 35 acres of athletic fields at Newark Memorial High School



and the 26 acres at the Junior High School. Each of these areas includes a stadium for organized school sports, such as football and track and field events. In addition, Graham, Lincoln, Musick, and Snow Elementary Schools are adjacent to City parks. This effectively increases the size of these parks, and allows for joint use opportunities for both the City and the School District. As noted earlier, MacGregor Field—adjacent to MacGregor Alternative Education Center—is owned by the School District but leased by the City.



The general public does not have access to school athletic fields and playgrounds when school is in session. However, the School Board has adopted policies regarding access to school facilities and fields during non-school hours. Supervised recreational activities may be scheduled on school properties by making prior arrangements and receiving written authorization. Fees may apply to such activities to recover direct costs. Similar arrangements may be made to use recreational facilities within the schools themselves.

REGIONAL PARKS

Newark is served by the East Bay Regional Park District, a regional park agency serving over 2.5 million residents in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Newark residents have access to a network of 65 parks comprising 113,000 acres in the two county area, with settings ranging from shoreline wetlands to mountain wilderness. There are no regional parks within the City of Newark. The closest locations are Ardenwood Historic Farm, which is adjacent to the city limits on the north side of SR 84, and Coyote Hills Regional Park, which is less than 1 mile northwest of the city limits. Ardenwood Farm is a 205-acre working farm that has been in operation since the 1850s. It provides educational programs, horse-drawn train rides, a blacksmith shop, livestock areas, and public gardens. Coyote Hills is a 978-acre preserve comprised of marshland and grassy hills. Its facilities include bicycling and hiking trails, picnic areas, and bird watching areas. Newark is also about 2 miles away from Quarry Lakes Regional Recreation Area, a 539-acre park with swimming, fishing, biking, and picnicking areas.

DON EDWARDS SAN FRANCISCO BAY NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE

The National Wildlife Refuge is a 30,000-acre area along the southern shoreline of San Francisco Bay owned and operated by the US Fish and Wildlife Service. A small portion of the Refuge is within the Newark city limits, and vehicle access to the interpretive facilities on Marshland Road is through Newark.

The Refuge is the first urban National Wildlife Refuge in the United States. Its mission is to preserve wildlife habitat from development, protect migratory birds and endangered and threatened species, and provide opportunities for outdoor recreation. Areas within the Refuge include salt ponds, salt marshes, mudflats, vernal pools, open water, and grassland. The Refuge hosts over 280 species of birds each year, including migratory birds on the Pacific Flyway. Its sloughs and marshes are home to a number of threatened and endangered plants and animals.

PRIVATE FACILITIES

The City’s park dedication ordinance allows developers to reduce the amount of their park improvement fees by up to 50 percent when they agree to provide on-site recreation amenities. Most condominium and townhome developments in Newark provide such amenities, including swimming pools and tennis courts. In some locations, the localized shortage of park acreage is offset by access to these facilities. For example, private recreational facilities at the Murieta, Waterford, NewPark Village, and Nantucket Cove developments serve the area southeast of NewPark Mall. This is an area of the city that is more than a ½-mile from the nearest neighborhood park. The City will continue to allow and encourage private recreational facilities in the future, while still working to increase public park acreage.



PROJECTIONS OF FUTURE NEEDS

Newark’s population is projected to be 60,510 by 2035. Maintaining the adopted service standard of 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents would require that the City have 181.5 acres of parkland at that time. The City presently has 131 acres and will not meet the 181.5-acre target unless it acquires more parkland in the next 20 years. As noted above, at least 21 acres will be added through new neighborhood parks in the Dumbarton TOD and Southwest Newark projects. This leaves a potential shortfall of 30 acres. The shortfall may be eliminated through development of a golf course in Southwest Newark. In the event the golf course is not developed, the City should maintain its service standard by designating sufficiently large park areas in Southwest Newark and elsewhere in the city to close the gap.

Policies in this General Plan direct the City to consider opportunities for neighborhood parks and mini-parks beyond the planned facilities at the Dumbarton TOD and in Southwest Newark. Such opportunities exist in Old Town Newark, on surplus school property, along the Hetch Hetchy Right of Way, along the vacant right-of-way reserved for the extension of Cedar Boulevard, and within new infill

development sites. For example, high-density development in the NewPark vicinity could include small pocket parks and plazas which would provide space for outdoor events, farmers markets, and community gatherings. Such spaces would introduce a new type of open space to Newark, augmenting the existing park inventory. There may also be opportunities to partner with Ohlone College, which currently has a large area of undeveloped land on its Newark campus.



Increasing park acreage is only one part of responding to future recreational needs. Newark must also respond to the need for new recreational facilities. The City has identified the need for a golf course, at least one additional lighted multi-purpose field, additional lighted tennis courts, a skate park, a BMX park, and a fenced dog play area. There is also interest in developing an ornamental garden similar to the San Jose Rose Garden, and in developing additional community gardens around the city. Gardens provide important opportunities for community building while also providing aesthetic and scientific interest. As more people use Newark's parks, the City will need to determine the need for ancillary improvements, especially restrooms and parking.

The siting of specific park improvements will require future study. Some parks, such as Birch Grove and Sportsfield Park, may have opportunities for additional features, while others are fully improved and already have an optimal balance between passive and active uses. An action program in this General Plan recommends preparation of a Parks Master Plan. Such a Plan would identify recreational needs at a citywide and neighborhood level, and develop siting and facility recommendations for individual parks.

RECREATIONAL SERVICES AND PROGRAMMING

Newark's Recreation and Community Services Department provides recreational, educational, and social programs that enrich the well-being of individuals and the community as a whole. The Department offers fitness classes for persons of all ages, youth and adult sports league activities, and community events such as a summer concert series, Family Day at the Park, and the Senior Health and Resource Fair. It also operates the Newark Senior Center, which offers programs ranging from daily lunches to field trips, recreation, transportation, and health screening.

The Recreation and Community Services Department monitors participation in its programs and consults with the community to determine activities that are in

demand. The Department has responded to demographic shifts, including the aging of the population and increased cultural diversity. Programs such as Bollywood Dance, Muy Thai, and Tai Chi are now being offered alongside traditional programs such as softball and volleyball. The growing demand for cricket, lacrosse, and other field sports activities has created the need for multi-purpose fields rather than fields designed for a single activity such as softball.

Park maintenance is handled by the Newark Public Works Department. Park features must be regularly maintained and repaired to address wear and tear and ensure the continued safety of all users. This includes replacement of irrigation systems, graffiti removal, lawn and field care, landscaping, turf replacement, and modernization of older buildings and restrooms. Funding for such improvements is limited and is allocated through the capital improvements program and ongoing expenditures in the annual budget. These costs cannot be covered by facility rentals, concessions, and program fees alone. Voter-approved bond measures, special assessments, and other sources may be explored in the future to ensure sufficient investment in the City's parks.



BAY TRAIL

In 1987, the California Senate passed legislation authorizing the Association of Bay Area Governments (ABAG) to develop a plan for a trail that circumnavigated San Francisco Bay. ABAG adopted the Bay Trail Plan in 1999. The vision is to establish a 500-mile network of biking and hiking trails that circle San Francisco and San Pablo Bays and connect the bay to nearby neighborhoods and business districts. As of 2012, about 310 miles of the Trail had been completed. The Trail provides accessible hiking, bicycling, walking, bird watching, and educational opportunities.

In the Newark area, there are several off-road and on-road trails that are considered part of the Bay Trail network. The Newark Slough Trail is a 6.5-mile off-road shared use paved loop. Most of the trail is in Fremont but a short segment traverses the Newark section of the National Wildlife Refuge. The trail is accessed via the Wildlife Refuge Visitors Center just west of the city limits. Another paved all-purpose off-road trail extends from Marshlands Road west of Thornton to a pedestrian overpass across SR 84 to Coyote Hills; this trail is in Fremont, but provides the most direct access to the shoreline from Newark. There is also a network of interpretive nature trails around the Wildlife Center Headquarters on Marshlands Road in Fremont, west of the Newark city limits.

An on-street portion of the Bay Trail extends along a loop formed by Thornton Avenue, Paseo Padre Parkway, Ardenwood Boulevard, and Jarvis Avenue. The official alignment of the trail through Newark includes on-street sections along Thornton Avenue (between SR 84 and Cherry Street) and a parallel on-street route along Willow Street and Central Avenue. The trail follows Cherry Street from Thornton to the Fremont City limits, where it continues on Boyce Road.

Improvements to the Bay Trail are proposed in the future. The City is currently considering the recommendations of a Bay Trail Study that would move the trail off-road and closer to the shoreline in a number of locations. Specifically, development of a new trail is proposed as part of the Dumbarton TOD development. This trail would connect directly to the Newark Slough Trail and form a loop on the edges of the TOD area, with a spur to the transit station itself. A trail is also proposed to loop through the Southwest Newark Residential and Recreational Project. This segment would be linked to Cherry Street on its western end and to future trail extensions near the former Durham Road Landfill in Fremont on the eastern end. The possibility of a trail along the north side of Plummer Creek between the Dumbarton TOD and Filbert Street (to the rear of industrial properties along Central Avenue) has also been explored.

Policies and actions in this Element provide guidance on improvements to the Bay Trail. The policies aim to protect wildlife, avoid conflicts with industrial operations, and ensure that trail design is sensitive to issues such as rising sea level. The City will continue to work with property owners, ABAG, the City of Fremont, and other agencies to provide improvements which enhance shoreline access while achieving these objectives.



GOALS, POLICIES, AND ACTIONS

PROTECTION OF OPEN SPACE

GOAL PR-1 Protect Newark's open space for a variety of purposes, including public recreation, the managed production of natural resources, protection of environmentally sensitive areas, aesthetics, and public safety.

POLICIES

- POLICY PR-1.1** **Public Open Space.** Protect and where possible enhance the public open space resources available within or near Newark.
- POLICY PR-1.2** **Private Open Space.** Encourage private property owners to preserve unique open space areas and natural features on their lands.
- POLICY PR-1.3** **Open Space and Community Character.** Recognize the value of open space for shaping community character and identity and defining Newark's image within the region.
- POLICY PR-1.4** **Yards and Greenery.** Provide adequate yards and landscaped areas around homes and businesses to create a sense of openness and greenery in Newark, and to enhance the beauty of the community.
- POLICY PR-1.5** **Utility Easements.** Encourage public utility agencies such as the San Francisco Water Department (Hetch Hetchy Aqueduct) and PG&E to retain their easements in open space or to improve them with linear parks or trails.
- POLICY PR-1.6** **Hillside Vistas.** Support efforts by Fremont and Union City to limit hillside development so that Newark's views of the East Bay Hills are preserved to the greatest extent possible.

ACTIONS

- ACTION PR-1.A** **Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge Expansion.** Work with willing property owners, the California Department of Fish and Game, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and the California Coastal Conservancy in the expansion of Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge and the conservation and restoration of salt marsh open spaces along San Francisco Bay. Future restoration activities should be consistent with the terms set forth in the Final Environmental Assessment – Potential Additions to San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge prepared by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- ACTION PR-1.B** **Environmental Review and Open Space.** Use the environmental review process to encourage new development to designate areas with unique vegetation, wildlife habitat, or natural resources as open space or to provide adequate mitigation for impacts to such areas.

PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND EXPANSION

GOAL PR-2 Expand and improve Newark's parks and recreational facilities to meet existing and future needs.

POLICIES

- POLICY PR-2.1** **New Neighborhood Parks.** Develop new neighborhood parks in locations where there is an existing or anticipated need.
- POLICY PR-2.2** **Parks in New Development.** Require new parks to be provided within large-scale new development. Where the provision of an on-site park is infeasible, require the payment of an in-lieu fee for parkland acquisition to serve that development.
- POLICY PR-2.3** **Park Service Standards.** Establish the following park standards to determine where and how much parkland should be provided in Newark, and to calculate the amount of in-lieu fees where appropriate:
- (a) within the city, provide at least 3.0 acres of parkland per 1,000 population. This total shall exclude wetlands and other areas that are not accessible for active or passive recreation,
 - (b) provide one neighborhood park per 5,000 population, with a park located within ½-mile of each residence, and

(c) provide one community park per 15,000 population, with a park located within 2 miles of each residence.

These standards may be adjusted to facilitate high value and unique facilities such as linear trails, dog runs, formal gardens, and indoor facilities.

POLICY PR-2.4 **Pocket Parks.** Allow a portion of the parkland dedication requirement to be met through the provision of on-site pocket parks and play lots in new development.

POLICY PR-2.5 **New Facilities in Existing Parks.** Where constraints to meeting the established park and recreation standards cannot be overcome, explore alternatives for providing additional recreational activities within existing park and recreation facilities.

POLICY PR-2.6 **Park Expansion.** Explore opportunities to expand existing parks through the acquisition of vacant or underutilized land on the perimeter.

POLICY PR-2.7 **Distinctive Park Character.** Ensure that every park and public space has its own unique character. Parks should vary in size and level of activity based on their location, natural setting, and use. Larger parks should include a mix of active and passive recreation areas to ensure that they serve a diverse range of users.

POLICY PR-2.8 **Natural Features in Parks.** Design new parks to respect and conserve important natural features. Wetlands and other environmentally sensitive areas located within park boundaries should be designated for protection and restored to the greatest extent possible.

POLICY PR-2.9 **Parks in Nearby Cities.** When evaluating the need for recreational facilities, consider the availability of public facilities in nearby cities as a factor.

ACTIONS

ACTION PR-2.A **Park Impact Fees.** Continue to implement provisions of the Quimby Act which enable the City to collect in-lieu fees for park acquisition.

ACTION PR-2.B **New Park Locations.** Develop new public parks in the neighborhoods planned for the western and southwestern edges of Newark.

- ACTION PR-2.C** **New Park Facilities.** Ensure that newly developing neighborhoods have access to a full array of recreational facilities. When determining what specific facilities should be provided in new parks, consider existing citywide deficiencies, so that all Newark residents may benefit.
- ACTION PR-2.D** **Old Town Park.** Consider opportunities for a new neighborhood park in the Old Town Newark area.
- ACTION PR-2.E** **Donations of Money and Land.** Create a mechanism through which individuals can donate money or land to the city for expansion of existing parks or the development of new parks or community facilities.
- ACTION PR-2.F** **Community Input.** Seek public input on improvements to City parks and recreation programs through user surveys, community workshops, and communication with organized recreation and neighborhood groups.
- See the Health Element for policies encouraging community gardens.*
- See also Action PR-4.A regarding joint use of school facilities for City recreation.*

PARK MANAGEMENT

GOAL PR-3 **Manage Newark's parks in a way that enhances their natural qualities, conveys a positive image of the city and its neighborhoods, and fully meets the community's recreational needs.**

POLICIES

- POLICY PR-3.1** **Facility Modernization.** Periodically modernize or upgrade existing recreational facilities to ensure that they meet the needs of the community, respond to current trends, and make a positive contribution to Newark's quality of life.
- POLICY PR-3.2** **Quality Materials.** Utilize quality materials in the construction of parks, public spaces, and recreational facilities. Park equipment and facilities should promote durability and resilience, be responsive to the Bay Area's climate, and be resistant to vandalism to the greatest extent feasible.

- POLICY PR-3.3** **Extending Facility Usefulness.** Enhance the usefulness of existing athletic fields and active play areas by providing facilities and equipment that support a wider variety of sports and activities.
- As funds allow, this could include improvements such as night lighting and the use of artificial turf to extend the hours of operation for playfields.*
- POLICY PR-3.4** **Park Safety.** Ensure that parks are designed and managed to maximize the personal safety of users, maintain the visibility of play areas, and minimize the risk of injury.
- POLICY PR-3.5** **Mitigating Off-Site Impacts.** Manage parks to reduce and mitigate the potential for adverse effects on surrounding neighborhoods, such as evening light, noise, and parking.
- POLICY PR-3.6** **Park Landscaping.** Maintain high standards for park landscaping. Include a mix of native vegetation and ornamental landscaping to enhance visual quality.
- POLICY PR-3.7** **Park Cleanliness.** Keep Newark's parks clean, well maintained, and free of litter, with an adequate number of trash receptacles and regular trash collection services.
- POLICY PR-3.8** **Park Maintenance.** Ensure the regular and systematic maintenance of park grounds and facilities. Maintenance methods should be sensitive to the environment, including pest management and weed control methods which minimize toxic chemical use.
- This should also include facilities for composting and recycling, and sprinkler and irrigation equipment that is designed to reduce maintenance and repair requirements and minimize water waste.*
- POLICY PR-3.9** **Reducing Energy Consumption.** Reduce energy consumption in parks and in recreational buildings through energy-efficient lighting, conservation and efficiency measures in park structures, and energy-conscious operating procedures in parks and recreational facilities. Wherever feasible, this should include the use of photovoltaic systems in new or rehabilitated recreation buildings.
- POLICY PR-3.10** **Volunteerism.** Encourage volunteer participation in the care and stewardship of parkland and the delivery of recreational services in Newark.

POLICY PR-3.11

Responding to Changing Needs. Provide recreational facilities and programs which meet the diverse and changing needs of Newark residents, taking into consideration such factors as the aging of the population, the mobility needs of persons with disabilities, and the city's growing cultural diversity.

POLICY PR-3.12

Special Recreational Needs. Maintain recreation programs for special user groups such as disabled persons, seniors, and teenagers.

Recreation programs for youth are particularly important and should be a key consideration in the development of new facilities and programs.

POLICY PR-3.13

Community Events. Hold communitywide events such as concerts and festivals in city parks. Such events should be carefully managed to ensure that parks are not over-programmed and that maintenance requirements are fully addressed.

POLICY PR-3.14

Financing Park Improvements. Consider the use of bond measures and similar financing programs for acquisition and improvement of park land and recreational facilities.

ACTIONS

ACTION PR-3.A

Parks Master Plan. Develop a Newark Parks Master Plan, which evaluates local park facilities against National Recreation and Park Association standards and determines the types and locations of improvements needed. A Parks Master Plan would also include use guidelines for the city's parks, and a funding plan for future improvements.

ACTION PR-3.B

Reclaimed Water Use. Continue to work toward the use of reclaimed or non-potable water for park irrigation, rather than using domestic water. As reclaimed or non-potable water infrastructure is developed, parks and public landscaping should be a top priority for new service.

ACTION PR-3.C

Sustainability in Parks. Expand sustainability practices at Newark's parks. This could include the use of bay friendly landscaping in City parks, and the expanded use of compost and mulch materials for fertilizer and landscaping.

ACTION PR-3.D **Golf Course.** Continue to pursue the development of a public golf course on the undeveloped residentially designated lands located in the southwestern part of the city. In the event a golf course is infeasible, consider development of another major public recreational feature or open space amenity in this area.

ACTION PR-3.E **Skateboard and BMX Park.** Identify potential locations, costs, and funding sources for a skateboard park and a recreational bicycle/ BMX park.

These are envisioned as two separate facilities. Sportsfield Park provides the best opportunity for a skateboard park. A location for a bicycle/BMX park would need to be determined through future study. Development of both of these facilities is contingent on funding.

ACTION PR-3.F **Birch Grove Lighting.** As funding allows, install night lighting at the Birch Grove Park tennis courts.

ACTION PR-3.G **Sportsfield Park Multi-Purpose Field.** Pursue development of lighted multi-purpose all weather turf field at Sportsfield Park.

ACTION PR-3.H **Dog Park.** Recognize the growing demand for dog play areas in the City, and pursue development of a designated dog park within the Dumbarton TOD area.

ACTION PR-3.I **ADA Compliance.** Make continued efforts to comply with all provisions of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) in the design and renovation of recreational facilities.

See also Health Element policies about facilities supporting fitness and exercise in close proximity to all residents.

NON-CITY RECREATION FACILITIES

GOAL PR-4 Maximize the benefits of non-City operated recreational facilities for Newark residents.

POLICIES

POLICY PR-4.1 **School Facility Access.** Continue working with the Newark Unified School District to develop and maintain athletic fields and recreational facilities such as pools, playgrounds, and tennis courts. Support broader public access to these facilities when school is not in session.

POLICY PR-4.2

Surplus School Sites. In the event a school site is declared surplus in an area deficient in park land, work with the School District to retain a portion of the school's existing open space, playground, or athletic field area as neighborhood parkland.

POLICY PR-4.3

Ohlone College Partnerships. Explore potential partnerships with Ohlone College to develop recreational facilities or programs on the Newark campus which may be accessed by Newark residents.

POLICY PR-4.4

Regional Parks. Support the continued acquisition and improvement of open space in southwest Alameda County by the East Bay Regional Park District to ensure that Newark residents have access to an array of natural open spaces, including hillside parks, wilderness areas, and shoreline trails.

The City supports continued enhancement of Coyote Hills Regional Park, Ardenwood Farm Agricultural Preserve, and Quarry Lakes, and access improvements which make it easier to reach these parks on foot or by bicycle.

POLICY PR-4.5

Residential Development Recreation Facilities. Encourage private residential developments to include private recreational facilities serving that development.

This could include community rooms, clubhouses, swimming pools, and other facilities intended for use by residents. Such facilities would supplement the contributions these developments are required to make to improve public parkland serving residents and the city at large.

POLICY PR-4.6

Employee Recreation. Encourage commercial office and industrial projects to provide on-site recreational facilities to serve employees.

POLICY PR-4.7

Plazas and Pocket Parks. In parts of Newark planned for more urban land uses and pedestrian-oriented development, provide for small pocket parks, plazas, and courtyards where residents, workers, shoppers, and visitors can congregate.

Such spaces could include amenities such as outdoor seating and dining areas, water features, and landscaping. Pocket parks and plazas should be designed to allow for interaction among community members and should be considered for programming with activities such as farmer's markets, lunchtime concerts, and mobile vending.

POLICY PR-4.8 **Temporary Uses.** Allow for the temporary use of vacant developable land for recreational purposes such as community gardens, art installations, and other interim activities.

POLICY PR-4.9 **Commercial Recreation.** Encourage the development of private commercial recreational facilities such as bowling alleys and health clubs which complement and enhance the facilities provided by the city.

ACTIONS

ACTION PR-4.A **Joint Use Agreements.** Develop joint use agreements and other appropriate mechanisms to facilitate public access to school playgrounds and athletic fields, and reciprocal school access to City recreation areas.

The City will make a concerted effort to improve access to school recreational facilities in the coming years. Currently, use of school grounds for recreational uses requires a specific agreement is reached with the NUSD for access to that facility. Many facilities are off-limits or difficult to access, even during non-school hours. The City will work with NUSD in the coming years to enhance joint use, and provide greater recreational opportunities and open space access for all Newark residents.

ACTION PR-4.B **Modernization of School Facilities.** Support implementation of School District capital projects which modernize or improve recreation and athletic facilities.

ACTION PR-4.C **Expanded Public Access.** Work with the Newark Unified School District to determine the feasibility of expanded public access to recreational facilities on school property such as the High School swimming pool and the tennis courts at the High School and Junior High.

TRAILS

GOAL PR-5 Improve Newark's trail system, with a focus on access to the Newark shoreline, and access between the shoreline and Newark neighborhoods.

POLICIES

- POLICY PR-5.1** **Bay Trail.** Encourage the realignment of the Bay Trail along the Newark shoreline where feasible, in support of the long-term vision of creating a continuous shoreline trail around San Francisco Bay. Pursue trails that are separated from motor vehicle traffic and pursue pedestrian crossings of railroad rights of way to allow for connections to regional open spaces without conflicts with motorized vehicles.(new)
- POLICY PR-5.2** **Spur Trails.** Provide spur trails which link the Newark section of the Bay Trail to the network of bicycle lanes and sidewalks serving the rest of the city.
- POLICY PR-5.3** **Shoreline Access.** Where feasible, align new sections of the Bay Trail as close as possible to the shoreline. Where shoreline locations are not feasible, encourage alignments that provide views to wetlands or other bay features.
- POLICY PR-5.4** **Trail Safety.** Strive for trail designs which minimize grade level street and rail crossings, and which ensure the safety and comfort of users.
- POLICY PR-5.5** **Staging Areas.** Develop strategically located parking and staging areas which provide trail access and encourage trail use.
- POLICY PR-5.6** **Land Uses Along Trails.** Consider adjacent land uses, existing operations, security, and potential operational conflicts in the alignment and design of the city's trails. Trail design should be coordinated with adjacent landowners.
- POLICY PR-5.7** **Trail Sustainability.** Consider long-term sustainability issues, such as projected sea level rise, surface durability, and the condition of levees, in the design of shoreline and wetland trail facilities.

POLICY PR-5.8 **Trail Design and the Environment.** Design trails and public access features to minimize impacts on wetlands and other sensitive habitats, including habitat fragmentation. If necessary, identify secondary alignments in the event a trail must be seasonally closed for habitat protection purposes.

ACTIONS

ACTION PR-5.A **Trail Dedication.** Encourage trail dedication and construction by developers for portions of the proposed Bay Trail and spur trails located within future development areas.

ACTION PR-5.B **Interpretive Features.** Support development of interpretive features along the Bay Trail to educate visitors about natural resources and local history.

ACTION PR-5.C **Funding for Regional Connections.** Seek regional and state funding for bridges and railroad overcrossings to facilitate regional open space integration and connection.

ACTION PR-5.D **Cedar Boulevard Extension Linear Park.** As funds allow, construct a linear park and trail on the Cedar Boulevard Extension. Crossing of the Union Pacific Railroad should be grade separated to minimize risk and noise.

ACTION PR-5.E **Public Access Requirements.** Ensure that future land use and capital improvement decisions for areas within the jurisdiction of the Bay Conservation and Development Commission (BCDC) are consistent with BCDC's public access requirements and do not preclude maximum feasible access to and along the waterfront.

