

# 7 Parks, Recreation, and Open Space

This chapter combines the state-mandated open space element with an optional element on parks and recreation. Parks are vital civic necessities and make a significant contribution to Piedmont’s quality of life. The city’s recreational programs provide activities and facilities that enrich the lives of Piedmont residents in many ways.

Although “open space” represents only 7 percent of Piedmont’s land area, it accommodates a broad range of activities. Recreation is probably the most familiar, but the city’s open spaces also include portions of Mountain View Cemetery, the Oakland Rose Garden, Tyson Lake, and East Bay Municipal Utility District land. Piedmont’s parks likewise accommodate many activities and include settings ranging from tranquil redwood groves to the bustling Piedmont Recreation Center. Some open space consists of parcels that are remnants of historical subdivisions. These parcels, including areas in Moraga Canyon, were never developed with substantial improvements and may be considered for other uses by the City Council.

The State General Plan Guidelines recognize four types of open space: (a) Open space used for the preservation of natural resources, which includes wetlands, endangered species habitat, and other environmentally sensitive areas; (b) Open space used for the managed production of resources, such as forests, fisheries, and mining areas; (c) Open space for outdoor recreation; and (d) Open space for public health and safety, such as flood plains and earthquake zones. Most of the open space in Piedmont falls in the third category on this list and consists of city parks.

The Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Element addresses the following topics:

- Park planning and management
- Park operations and maintenance
- Recreational programming
- Joint use of City and School District recreational facilities

# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



*Piedmont Park is the site of major community events such as the annual Harvest Festival.*

## PARKS

### City Parks

Table 7-1 presents a list of parks in Piedmont. Figure 7-1 shows this information graphically. Piedmont has about 59 acres of parkland, for a ratio of 5.4 acres per 1,000 residents, excluding regional parkland operated by the East Bay Parks District, of which Piedmont is a member agency. This compares to a National Recreation and Park Association State of California Department of Parks and Recreation standard of 40-three acres per 1,000 residents, although the national standard includes large regional parks.

The City's park acreage includes 44 acres of City-owned and operated parks. In addition, Davies Tennis Stadium (owned by the City of Oakland) and a portion of the Oakland Rose Garden, together occupying about six acres, are located in Piedmont. School recreational facilities, including playgrounds at Havens, Wildwood, and Beach Schools, and Witter Field (Piedmont High School) encompass another 8.5 acres, and are an important community asset.

The city's parks can be grouped into the following categories:

- **Community Parks.** Community parks are typically more than 10 acres and have a service area radius of one to two miles. Such parks have a full complement of recreational facilities. Piedmont Park is the only local park that serves this function and is the city's "flagship" park.
- **Neighborhood Parks.** Neighborhood parks are typically 3 to 10 acres, with a service area radius of ¼ to ½ mile. They serve surrounding neighborhoods with a limited number of recreational facilities and usually contain a field or lawn area, basketball courts, children's play equipment, and picnic tables. Dracena, Hampton, and Linda Park/ Beach Playfield are considered neighborhood parks.
- **Mini-Parks.** Mini-parks are an acre or less and serve as passive open spaces. They are landscaped, and usually have benches and walking paths. Examples in Piedmont are Crocker Park and the Hall Fenway.
- **Special Use Parks.** Special use parks do not conform to an acreage standard or menu of recreational facilities. They support special functions such as athletic fields or swimming pools. Special Use Parks

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

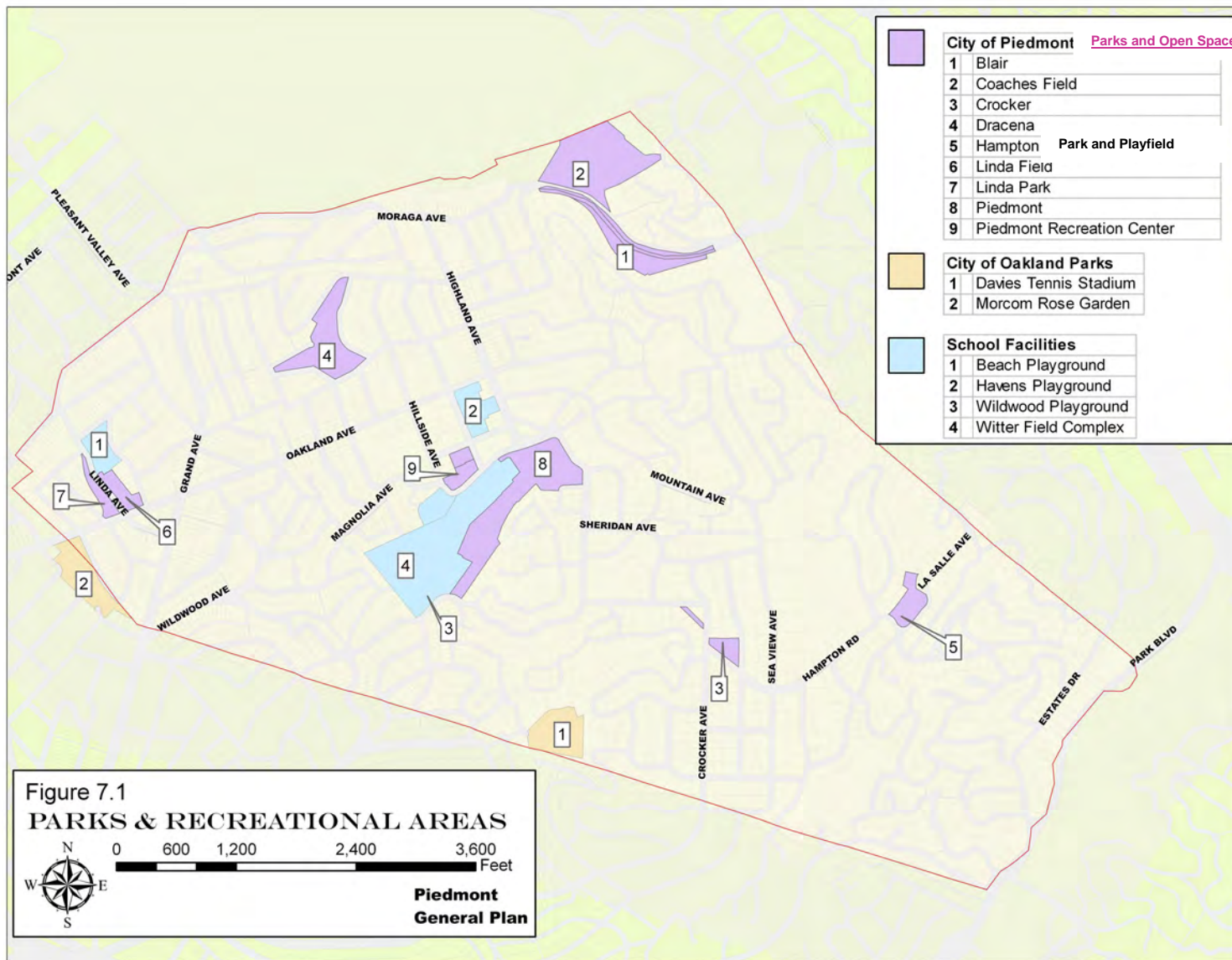
in Piedmont include ~~Blair Park~~, Coaches Field, and the Piedmont Recreation Center.

<b>Table 7.1: Park and Playground Acreage in Piedmont</b>	
Site	Acres
<b>City Parks and Open Space</b>	
Blair	8.2
Coaches Field/ Kennelly Skate Park	3.8
Crocker	1.0
Dracena	7.8
Hall Fenway	0.3
Hampton <del>Park and Playfield (Piedmont Sports Field)</del>	2.4
Linda	1.3
Linda / Beach Playfield	2.2
Piedmont Park	15.3
Piedmont Recreation Center complex	2.0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>44.3</b>
<b>School Facilities</b>	
Beach Playground	2.0
Havens Playground	1.5
Piedmont High - Witter Field	4.3
Wildwood Playground	0.7
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>8.5</b>
<b>City of Oakland Facilities</b>	
Davie Tennis Stadium	5.0
Morcom Rose Garden (part)	0.8
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>5.8</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>58.6</b>

PARKS, RECREATION, AND  
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

*Source: Barry Miller, AICP 2008*

# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## Piedmont's Parks In A Nutshell



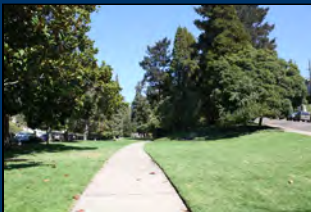
**Piedmont Park.** Piedmont Park is the City's "crown jewel" and is the largest park in the city. The park's formal entry near Highland and Magnolia Avenues includes Piedmont's historic Exedra Plaza. Behind the plaza, large sloping lawns surround the Mediterranean-style Piedmont Community Hall. Nearby, there is a Japanese Tea House in a meditative setting.

The park includes a children's playground, with a climbing structure, a sand pit, swings, benches, restrooms, a drinking fountain and a historic oak tree. It includes large rolling lawns that are used for picnics, community gatherings, and town ceremonies. There are also two tennis courts, a meandering trail along Bushy Dell Creek, and a dog run area. The stream banks are lined with towering redwood trees, creating a dense forest just a block away from the Civic Center.

The park holds an important place in Piedmont history. In the late 1800s, it was the site of the Piedmont Springs Hotel and included a rock grotto and mineral springs. The park's history was commemorated in 2007 with the dedication of a Centennial trail.



**Blair Park.** Blair is the second largest ~~park~~ unimproved open space area in Piedmont, with over 8 acres of land. It is used as a natural, unlandscaped linear park used mainly by dog owners. The linear park runs parallel to Moraga Avenue in a canyon setting.



**Dracena Quarry Park.** Dracena is Piedmont's ~~third~~ second largest park, at 7.8 acres. The park was created from a reclaimed rock quarry and still retains its "bowl-shaped" topography. It includes a children's playground with swings, a play structure, a climbing wall, a sand area and waterfall faucet, and a cement slide built into a grassy man-made hill. The park includes lawns and pathways, as well as steeper hillside areas. At the north end, there is a redwood grove, a picnic table, and a dog run, with shaded paths leading up to Dracena Avenue.

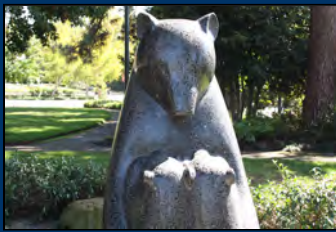


**Coaches Field/ Kennelly Skate Park.** Coaches' Field, off Moraga Avenue, features a grassy play field frequently used by local youth soccer and softball teams. The field includes 70-foot base paths and a 200-foot outfield, along with a 120' x 180' soccer field. Kennelly Skate Park is located behind the field and up a flight of steps. The Skate Park opened in 2001 and includes specially designed concrete ramps and bowls. BMX bicycle use is permitted on a limited schedule.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



***Hampton / Piedmont Sports Field.*** Piedmont Sports Field is the only park located in the eastern part of Piedmont and is an important recreational resource for the entire city. The 2.4-acre park has a high-quality (although small) baseball field, with an outfield that is also used for children's football and soccer. It also has two tennis courts and tennis practice backboards, a volleyball court, and a basketball court. A new recreation center building was constructed in 2000 to replace an older storage structure on the site. The building is used for recreational programs and by the Piedmont Cooperative Playschool.



***Crocker Park/ Hall Fenway.*** Crocker is a one-acre landscaped park in the estate area of Piedmont. It is intended primarily for passive recreational use. The park features a shaded lawn and beds of rhododendrons, camellias, azaleas, and ferns. The park is located on property that was once the home of Wallace Alexander, one of the city's founding fathers. A granite sculpture of a bear and her cubs by noted sculptor Benny Bufano is located in the park. Across the street, the one-quarter acre Hall Fenway provides another passive open space with similar qualities and ambiance.



***Linda / Beach Playfield.*** The Linda Playfield is adjacent to Beach School and includes two tennis courts, a soccer/baseball field, a little tots play structure and sand pit, and picnic tables. There is also a public restroom.



***Linda Park.*** Linda Park is a linear pathway and park across the street from Beach School. It includes a fenced dog-run as well as a pathway for jogging and walking.



***Piedmont Recreation Center.*** The Piedmont Recreation Center occupies most of a city block at Hillside and Magnolia in the Civic Center area. It includes ~~swimming pool~~, four lighted tennis courts, ~~basketball courts, a play structure~~, and a small picnic area. The Recreation Center building itself provides administrative offices for the Recreation Department, and indoor activities. ~~The city leases a swimming pool on the same block to the Piedmont Swim Club, a private club open to all Piedmont residents on a membership basis.~~

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Based on [National Recreation and Park Association Standards California Department of Parks and Recreation standards](#), the city is well served by most facilities. However, because Piedmont is land-constrained, some of its facilities are below optimal size standards or are crowded in relatively small parks. In addition, the participation rate in recreational activities is very high and the city's parks receive extensive use.

Piedmont's parks are maintained by the Public Works Department. The City has a seven-member Park Commission that advises the City Council on the maintenance and improvement of city parks (and on planting, removal, and maintenance of street trees). The Piedmont Beautification Foundation and Piedmont Garden Club also contribute to park maintenance and conduct regular fund-raisers for park and landscape beautification.

The city's parks support a wide range of recreational facilities and activities. Table 2 indicates the major features of each park. Based on [National Recreation and Park Association Standards California Department of Parks and Recreation standards](#), the city is well served by most facilities. However, because Piedmont is land-constrained, some of its facilities are below optimal size standards or are crowded in relatively small parks. In addition, the participation rate in recreational activities is very high and the city's parks receive extensive use.

### Regional Parks

There are no regional parks within Piedmont. However, the city lies within the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBRPD), a special district that owns and manages 55 parks encompassing 91,000 acres in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Regional parks often include facilities and features that cannot be provided in an urbanized setting such as Piedmont, including hiking trails, campgrounds, equestrian areas, golf courses, and swimming lakes. Among the EBRPD facilities serving Piedmont residents are Lake Temescal, Anthony Chabot, and Redwood Regional Parks (in Oakland) and Tilden Regional Park (in Berkeley). In addition, Piedmont residents also use Lake Merritt, Joaquin Miller, and Knowland Parks, which are region-serving facilities owned and operated by the City of Oakland.

### School Grounds

Piedmont's schools provide an important complement to City-operated recreational facilities. All of Piedmont's public schools have children's play structures, handball courts, and basketball goals. Havens and Beach Elementary Schools have paved areas suitable for youth softball. Wildwood School has access to a natural lawn area and softball diamond. Witter Field at Piedmont High School has a regulation football field which is suitable for soccer. It also has a running track and a field suitable for high school baseball.



## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

**Table 7.2: Recreational Facilities and Amenities in Piedmont Parks**

PARK / OPEN SPACE NAME	Passive Open Space	Basketball Courts	Dog Parks		Open Turf	Tot Lots and Children's Playgrounds	Restrooms	Skateboard Facilities	Soccer/ Softball/ Baseball Fields	Tennis Courts
			Off leash	On leash						
Blair Park	X		X							
Coaches Field					X		X		X	
Crocker Park	X			X						
Dracena Quarry Park	X		X		X	X	X			
Hampton <del>(Piedmont Sports Field)</del> Park and Playfield		X		X	X	X	X		X	X
Kennelly Skate Park								X		
Linda / Beach Field					X	X	X		X	X**
Linda Park	X		X*							
Piedmont Park	X		X*	X	X	X	X			X
Recreation Department		X				X				X

(\* dogs permitted off-leash with permit only (\*\* Linda Beach was dedicated to pickleball in 2023.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### A Kid-Friendly City



Piedmont offers an array of programs serving children of all ages. Schoolmates is a before- and after-school program housed in the three elementary schools. It provides supervision for children in T-K through fifth grade. For younger children, the Department offers programs such as , Tiddlywinks Caterpillars and Butterflies (eighteen months to three year olds), Skipping Stones (for three to five year olds) and Hillside Playschool (for three to five year olds). The Department also offers a pre-K program for four and five year olds.

Schoolmates is a before- and after-school program housed in the three elementary schools. It provides supervision for children in kindergarten through fifth grade.

For younger children, the Department offers programs such as

The City and School District have established a joint use agreement for the shared use of facilities, including school fields and playgrounds, and for recreational programming. The agreement provides the City with priority access to school facilities for recreational uses during non-school hours and also provides the schools with priority access to City facilities (~~including the Piedmont Swim Club pool~~) when not in use for Piedmont recreational programs. The agreement also allows the City to operate its Schoolmates program in ~~City-owned buildings on the~~ Havens, Wildwood, and Beach School campuses. ~~The possibility of expanding the joint use agreement to develop a new City-operated day care facility at the reconstructed Havens School is being considered.~~

## RECREATION

Piedmont's Recreation Department is committed to providing a rich and rewarding experience for Piedmont residents, and is dedicated to creativity, enthusiasm, and customer service. A seven-member Recreation Commission advises the Department and the City Council on the use of park properties, sports fields, and recreational programming.

The Recreation Department is organized into four major divisions:

- General Recreation, including sports programs, fee classes/camps, special events, activity guide, registration software, bookkeeping and accounting
- Facility Rentals and Reservations
- Childcare
- Aquatics

The general recreation division administers sports programs including: Piedmont Middle School Athletic teams such as cross-country, flag football, volleyball, basketball, ultimate frisbee and track and field programs; youth sports leagues (basketball) and sports classes and camps for golf, tennis, basketball, baseball, volleyball, lacrosse, and more; and adult basketball and softball programs; and handles reservations and management of the city's tennis courts, fields, and skate park. The division administers the fee classes and summer camp programs; publishes an activity guide three times a year with a complete listing of classes and programs. Fee classes and camps are divided into creative arts, music, dance, STEM, sports, tennis, adaptive programs, and adult and older adult/senior offerings. All fee classes are designed to be self-supporting, and the department has consistently met that goal. The division also organizes community special

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

events such as 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade, Harvest Festival, Lights Up!, movies ~~the~~ in the park, and youth events. In the past, such youth events included as Halloween, Donuts and Dreidels, Bunny Blast, Santa's Workshop and Noon Year's Eve.

The facilities division operates and coordinates the facility and hall rental program for the Community Hall, the Veterans Hall, 801 Magnolia, and the Exedra Plaza.

The childcare division administers Schoolmates after-school program at three elementary school sites and five preschool programs (see text box on prior page).

The ~~A~~aquatics division oversees the management and overall operation of the Piedmont Community Pool, including classes and lessons, facility use schedules, pool operations, and facility rentals.

Piedmont also has a number of recreational sports leagues organized by residents. These include the Piedmont Baseball and Softball Foundation, Skyline Lacrosse, the Piedmont Soccer Club, the Piedmont Ladies Tennis Club, the Piedmont Swim Team, and community organizations such as the Girl Scouts and Scouts of America. These groups provide additional recreational outlets for Piedmont residents. ~~The Recreation Department is organized into three major divisions:~~

- ~~Sports programs, tennis monitors, computer systems, bookkeeping, and accounting~~
- ~~Fee classes, rental facilities, brochure, and facility reservations~~
- ~~Day care, special events, and training.~~

~~The sports programs division administers middle school cross country, flag football, volleyball, basketball, and track and field programs; youth sports (flag football and basketball) programs; summer sports camps for golf, tennis, basketball, baseball, volleyball, lacrosse, and more; and a summer t-ball program for ages 5-6. The division also operates adult basketball and softball programs and handles reservations and management of the city's tennis courts and skate park.~~

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

~~The fee classes division publishes and mails a catalog three times a year with a complete listing of classes and programs. Fee classes are divided into pre-school, children's art, children's sports, children's music, dance, carpentry, day camps, sports camps, adult fitness, and tennis. All fee classes are designed to be self-supporting and the department has consistently met that goal. The division also operates the facility and hall rental program for the Community Hall, the Veterans Hall, and the Excedra Exedra Plaza.~~

~~The special programs division administers Schoolmates, PLAY, the teen center, and an array of early childhood development programs (see text box on prior page). It also organizes special activities such as the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade and Easter egg hunt, as well as canoe and rafting trips, and trips to theme parks and professional ball games.~~

~~Piedmont also has a number of recreational sports leagues organized by residents. These include the Piedmont Baseball Foundation, the Piedmont Basketball Foundation, Skyline Lacrosse, the Softball Foundation, the Soccer Club, the Piedmont Ladies Tennis Club, the Piedmont Swim Team, and community organizations such as the Boy Scouts of America. These groups provide additional recreational outlets for Piedmont residents.~~

## OTHER OPEN SPACE

In addition to the parks and open space described above, private and utility open space in Piedmont includes:

- The 8.3-acre East Bay Municipal Utility District property at the top of Blair Avenue. The property includes a large water storage tank that has been decommissioned as part of EBMUD's seismic improvement program. The edges of the property are heavily wooded and provide a buffer for surrounding residences. The site may be available for reuse during the coming years (see Land Use Element).
- An additional 1.2 acres on scattered sites owned by EBMUD elsewhere in the city. Although these sites are used for infrastructure, their visual profile consists of open lots with trees, shrubs, and other vegetation.
- Approximately 6.3 acres of Mountain View Cemetery is in Piedmont. The land consists of open hillsides covered with grass, scrub, and trees. A majority of the 226-acre cemetery property is in Oakland.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Improvements to city parks are constrained by two factors. First, the city is landlocked and has a limited amount of space available for new facilities. Second, increasing park space and building new facilities requires capital dollars and generates additional maintenance expenses.

- Medians and traffic islands, which encompass more than four acres on scattered sites in the city. Many of these spaces are landscaped and contribute to the visual beauty of Piedmont’s streets.
- Tyson Lake encompasses 4.6 acres near the Oakland-Piedmont border. The lake is privately owned and maintained.

Privately owned vacant lots that are zoned for residential uses are not counted as “open space” using the city’s definition, since these sites may potentially be developed in the future.

### LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

The 2007 Piedmont General Plan Resident Survey confirmed that Piedmont’s parks are vitally important to its residents. More than 80 percent of the survey respondents indicated they were satisfied or very satisfied with the city’s parks. However, the survey elicited hundreds of written responses about the need for additional facilities and programs, especially playfields.

Improvements to city parks are constrained by two factors. First, the city is landlocked and has a limited amount of space available for new facilities. Second, increasing park space and building new facilities requires capital dollars and generates additional maintenance expenses. Because local revenues are finite, spending on parks must be balanced with spending on police and fire services, water and sewer projects, utility undergrounding, transportation investments, and other civic priorities. Major projects could require bond financing or large-scale fundraising campaigns.

The City of Piedmont is constantly working to upgrade its parks through landscaping, replacement of play structures, repair of drainage and irrigation systems, resurfacing of ~~tennis and basketball~~ courts, updating of restrooms, replacement of turf on playing fields, and similar improvements. Such projects are necessary to keep existing facilities in excellent condition.

Improving access for disabled residents ~~also is important~~ is prioritized in planning for any construction in City of Piedmont parks, facilities, and open spaces. ~~Most of the city’s facilities now comply with the Americans With Disabilities Act (ADA), but a few such as the Piedmont Recreation Center still do not.~~

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### Passionate About Parks

Perhaps no other topic in the General Plan Resident Survey generated as many written comments as the future of Piedmont's parks. Several themes were evident:

Many respondents felt the city needs more sports fields. But there are diverse opinions on the best way to meet those needs, ranging from "making the most of the status quo" to installing night lights at Coaches Field or developing new fields at Blair Park.

Emotions also run high on the future of the Piedmont Swim Club. About half of the Survey respondents support development of a new swimming pool. Slightly less than half were opposed. There was no consensus on how a new pool should be operated and managed.

There was strong support for development of a teen center, additional landscaping, additional bike lanes, and retention of basketball courts. Some respondents suggested the city develop more indoor sports facilities. Opinions on dog parks were split, with some feeling that there are too many and others feeling that there are too few.

While maintenance of existing facilities is a priority, the City also is exploring ways to expand the number and range of facilities available to Piedmont residents, including facilities in new affordable housing. This requires careful planning so that a balance between passive and active open space is maintained. The City seeks creative ways to expand facilities without crowding existing parks or creating negative impacts on surrounding homes. The ~~recent~~ acquisition of the former Christian Science Church at 801 Magnolia Avenue is an example. The building has the potential to be converted to a teen center, a senior center, a cultural arts hub, or a similar recreational use. The City is in the process of preparing a specific plan for the City owned land in Moraga Canyon to create 132 units of new housing, as well as to improve public health and safety, public facilities, recreation, and open space.

### Athletic Fields

There are not enough athletic fields in Piedmont to meet current demand. Existing facilities include Coaches Field, Hampton (Piedmont Sports) Field, and Linda/Beach Field, as well as Piedmont High School's Witter Field. Scheduling of City fields is extremely tight, and parking, noise, and traffic impacts associated with field use remains an issue for neighbors. Piedmont teams and sports programs must rely on facilities in Oakland, Alameda, and elsewhere in the East Bay for field space.

~~The possibility of developing an athletic field at Blair Park has been raised as a way of addressing the shortage. Most recently, a private citizens group has conducted preliminary engineering studies and has developed an athletic field master plan for the site. The field would accommodate soccer, baseball, and other activities. It is anticipated that the community and City Council will initiate a formal process to consider this proposal during the coming year. While the field would help address the shortage of facilities, its construction would require extensive grading and would affect surrounding neighbors. There is also no funding source for construction.~~

Improvements to Coaches Field ~~also~~ have been discussed. The City Council recently endorsed replacement of the grass field with synthetic turf. This will reduce wear and tear on the field, reduce watering and fertilizer use, reduce maintenance expenses, and facilitate current levels of use. The City is ~~currently~~ studying the feasibility of night lighting at the field, including visual simulation of the light poles and light impact studies. Further dialogue on night lighting will take place during the coming years. Changes and improvements to Coaches Field and other recreational uses in Moraga Canyon will be studied as part of the proposed Moraga Canyon Specific Plan, currently underway.

PARKS, RECREATION, AND  
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

“The general lack of sports facilities is an ongoing problem—pretty intractable, too. Everything we have is overused, but its hard to see where new facilities might come from.”

“I can’t state it strongly enough—once open space is slated for something else, it’s gone. If we erect playing fields all over town, where does somebody throw a Frisbee?”

- *General Plan Survey Responses*

The reconstruction of several Piedmont schools made possible by Measure E provides another opportunity to create additional field space in the city. ~~The current proposal to reconstruct Havens Elementary School includes a small ballfield on the southwest part of the site. Although the field would be school property and primarily serve Havens students, it would still accommodate some of the unmet demand.~~

A longer-term opportunity for athletic fields exists on the EBMUD reservoir site. Although the property is not available at this time, portions may be sold in the future as EBMUD completes its seismic work.

### Swimming Facilities

The City’s only community swimming facility is the Piedmont ~~Swim Club~~ Community Pool at 777 Magnolia Avenue. The pool is owned by the ~~City~~ but is operated by a private club on a membership basis. ~~In January 2008, the city extended the Swim Club’s lease through 2011 and adjusted the terms so that memberships may be offered to City and School District employees. In the long term, there is still interest in developing a new municipal pool complex suitable for competitive swimming matches and spectator events.~~ The Civic Center Master Plan ~~has~~ explored possible sites for such a facility, including the Piedmont High School campus and the site of the existing pool. In 2016, an award of contract was approved for development of an Aquatics Center Master Plan. In 2020, a bond measure was approved by Piedmont voters to fund the development of a new pool. In 2023, construction of a new Piedmont Community Pool began at 777 Magnolia Avenue. Construction is expected to be completed by 2024.

### Programs for a Changing Population

Demand for recreational programs in Piedmont is constantly evolving. The last few years have seen the resurgence of sports such as lacrosse and rugby, and the growing popularity of yoga, jiu-jitsu, and other fitness activities. Piedmont continues to attract and sustain a large number of families, generating strong demand for programs for children and teens. As the number of empty nesters and retired Piedmonters increases, there is also a growing need for programs geared toward adults and seniors. The Resident Survey indicated a high level of interest in arts and cultural programs, as well as additional access to programs in Oakland. The City will need to carefully evaluate trends and gauge public opinion about local recreational programs to determine what new programs should be offered in the future.



## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### State Surplus Lands Act

Some land owned by the City of Piedmont and used as open space or parks, such as land in Moraga Canyon, may have never been formally dedicated as a city park or improved. These lands may be considered by the City Council under the California Surplus Lands Act (Government Code section 54222 et seq.). Piedmont is currently undertaking a specific plan process for Moraga Canyon which may lead to the parcelization and development of land in Blair Park, Coaches Field, Kennelly Skate Park, and the Corporation Yard to create 132 units of new housing, as well as to improve public health and safety, public facilities, recreation, and open space. See Housing Element program 1.L Specific Plan.

# PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

## Goals, Policies, and Actions

### **Goal 23: Park Planning and Management**

**Provide attractive, high-quality parks that accommodate a wide range of recreational needs.**

#### Policies and Actions

##### **Policy 23.1: Balancing Active and Passive Recreation**

Provide a mix of active and passive recreational areas within the City's parks. The balance between active and passive uses should vary depending on the type of park, its physical shape and accessibility, and its location and physical features.

##### **Policy 23.2: New and Expanded Parks**

Consider opportunities for developing new parks and for expanding existing parks if appropriate sites become available.

##### **Policy 23.3: Environmentally-Sensitive Park Design**

Design parks, trails, and other recreational facilities in Piedmont's parks to be compatible with the natural environment, including habitat, views, and other environmental resources. New recreational buildings, [housing](#), and other park structures and facilities should be sited in a way that minimizes their impacts on useable open space, avoids conflicts with existing park activities, and is compatible with the natural setting. Park design should also be compatible with city policies to reduce fuel loads and wildfire hazards.

*See also policies in the Natural Resources and Sustainability Element on creek protection, and policies in the Environmental Hazards Element on vegetation management.*

##### **Policy 23.4: Park Architectural Standards**

Maintain a high standard of architectural and design quality for any permanent structure constructed in Piedmont's parks, consistent with the standards applied to private development in the community.

##### **Policy 23.5: Americans With Disabilities Act Compliance**

Consistent with federal law, ensure that future recreational facilities are designed to meet the needs of persons with disabilities.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

Provide a mix of active and passive recreational areas within the City's parks. The balance between active and passive uses should vary depending on the type of park, its physical shape and accessibility, and its location and physical features.

### **Policy 23.6: Multi-purpose Field Design**

If new athletic fields are constructed, encourage designs and configurations that can accommodate multiple sports, rather than one sport alone.

### **Policy 23.7: Non-Park Open Space**

Recognize the importance of non-park open space, such as wooded hillsides and ravines, Mountain View Cemetery, and the EBMUD reservoir site to the overall ambiance, ecology, and visual quality of Piedmont.

### **Policy 23.8: Landscaped Medians, Traffic Islands, and Parking Strips**

Recognize the importance of landscaped medians and roadsides, traffic "islands", parking strips, and other planted public open spaces to Piedmont's character and beauty. Encourage and support the planting and care of such areas by community groups and volunteers.

*See also Design and Preservation Element policies on parking strips and the "public realm"*

### **Policy 23.9: Regional Parks**

Support the continued improvement and expansion of East Bay Regional Park District facilities to meet recreational needs that cannot be met within the Piedmont city limits.

### **Policy 23.10: Pedestrian and Bicycle Access to Parks**

Encourage pedestrian and bicycle access to the city's parks by providing sidewalks, crosswalks, bike racks and other facilities that encourage safe non-motorized travel to and from the parks. Ensure that paths and walkways within city parks are safe and well maintained.

*See also policies in the Transportation Element about the improvement of Piedmont's bicycle and pedestrian facilities for practical travel and recreation.*

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

The survey indicated that the City's highest recreational priorities should be landscaping, bike lanes, development of a teen center, improved swimming facilities, and increased availability of sports fields.

- **Action 23.A: Capital Improvement Priorities**  
*In prioritizing capital improvements, consider feedback from the 2007 General Plan Resident Survey. The survey indicated that the City's highest recreational priorities should be landscaping, bike lanes, development of a teen center, improved swimming facilities, and increased availability of sports fields.*
- **Action 23.B: Civic Center Area Improvements**  
*Consistent with the Draft Civic Center Master Plan, explore opportunities for additional recreational facilities in the Civic Center area. To the extent feasible and as funding allows, this should include upgraded fitness and swimming facilities in the vicinity of the Piedmont Recreation Center and the reuse or redevelopment of the Christian Science Church Building (801 Magnolia Avenue) with a recreation- or community-oriented use such as a teen and/or senior center.*
- **Action 23.C: New or Improved Athletic Fields**  
*Complete the feasibility studies and analyses ~~now underway for:~~ (a) night lighting and synthetic turf at Coaches Field ~~and (b) a sports field at Blair Park.~~ If appropriate, develop plans to fund future improvements consistent with study recommendations and community input.*
- **Action 23.D: EBMUD Reservoir Park Opportunities**  
*Work with EBMUD to determine the feasibility of future park uses on the 8.3 acre reservoir site on Blair Avenue. Consider this site's possible availability in the decision-making process for other park-related capital improvements.*

*See Land Use Element Action 4.B for more discussion of the Reservoir site.*

- **Action 23.E : Moraga Avenue Pedestrian Improvements**  
*Undertake improvements to make the City's parks more pedestrian-friendly. Subject to traffic safety studies and cost estimates, this should include better pedestrian access to Blair Park.*
- **Action 23.F: Park Master Plans**  
*As funding allows, develop master plans or specific plans for individual Piedmont parks which identify the locations of future facilities (if any), landscaping and drainage/irrigation improvements, and other changes necessary to implement City goals and ensure optimal use, aesthetic quality, and environmental protection.*

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

- **Action 23.G: Surplus Land Inventory**

Maintain an inventory of potential surplus land. Consider the potential highest and best use of City open space, including parks, that may be underutilized. New uses may include multifamily housing development consistent with the Housing Element. See Housing Element program 1.L.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



*Japanese Tea Garden,  
Piedmont Park*

### **Goal 24: Park Operations**

**Maintain the City's parks in excellent condition, and ensure that park operations are as efficient and sustainable as possible.**

#### **Policies and Actions**

##### **Policy 24.1: Park Inspection and Maintenance**

Regularly inspect, maintain, and upgrade park facilities to prolong the life of equipment, ensure safety and accessibility, and enhance the enjoyment of park users.

##### **Policy 24.2: Funding Adequacy for Maintenance and Operation**

Ensure that sufficient funding is available to maintain and operate recreational facilities.

##### **Policy 24.3: Park Stewardship**

Promote pride of ownership in local parks by involving local residents and neighborhood groups in park maintenance and improvement, community outreach, and special events.

##### **Policy 24.4: Scheduling of Activities**

Coordinate the scheduling and programming of recreational activities to avoid conflicts and detrimental use of fields. The School District should be closely involved in such coordination.

##### **Policy 24.5: Organized vs Casual Park Use**

Maintain a balance between organized ("programmed") sports activities and casual use ("pick-up games", frisbee, catch, etc.) activities in the city's parks.

##### **Policy 24.6: Dog Parks**

Continue the city's program of designating off-leash and on-leash dog areas within appropriate parks. Enforce rules and regulations regarding dogs and dog waste in all city parks.

##### **Policy 24.7: Synthetic Turf**

Consider the use of synthetic turf as a means of extending the life of play fields, accommodating greater field use, reducing water consumption, and reducing maintenance expenses. The use of synthetic turf should be evaluated on a case-by-case basis.

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

### **Policy 24.8: Off-Site Impacts of Park Activities**

Ensure that the off-site impacts of recreational facilities and activities such as noise and parking are mitigated. Where space allows, encourage the use of landscaped buffer zones between parks and adjacent residences.

### **Policy 24.9: Night Lighting**

Ensure that any night lighting of athletic fields, either on city parks or on school properties, is designed to minimize impacts on surrounding homes.

- ***Action 24.A: Interdepartmental Coordination***

*Continue coordination between the Public Works Department and the Recreation Department on the operation and maintenance of recreational facilities. Also coordinate the efforts of the Recreation Commission, the Park Commission, and the Capital Improvement Committee to ensure consistency in recommendations and priorities.*

- ***Action 24.B: Facility Condition Inventories***

*Conduct periodic inventories of facility condition at the city's parks and identify required maintenance and replacement needs.*

- ***Action 24.C: Funding Sources***

*Seek a variety of funding sources for the city's parks, including state and federal grants, general fund revenues, and private donations. Although a citywide park bond measure (subject to voter approval) is not proposed at this time, the feasibility of such a measure could be explored in the future depending on the cost and range of projects to be considered.*

*See policies in the Land Use Element on accepting voluntary donations of land for park and open space purposes.*

## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

“Recognize the contribution of private sports leagues, civic clubs, and other non-profit organizations to the variety and quality of recreational services available to Piedmont residents. There should be a high level of coordination between the City, non-profit service providers, and private leagues so that the public is made aware of the full range of recreational opportunities available.”

### Goal 25: Recreational Programming

**Provide outstanding recreational programs that respond to the diverse interests of Piedmont residents, and that promote personal growth, self-esteem, knowledge, fitness, health, and well-being.**

#### Policies and Actions

##### **Policy 25.1: Program Diversity**

Maintain an active and thriving City recreation program that offers a variety of sports, exercise, arts and crafts, cultural, life skills, educational, social, and leisure programs for residents of all ages.

##### **Policy 25.2: Responding to Demographic Change**

Ensure that the city’s recreational programs respond to demographic changes in Piedmont, including the growing number of empty nesters and seniors.

##### **Policy 25.3: Community Input in Recreation Programming**

Ensure citizen participation and outreach in the evaluation and planning of park and recreational services. Utilize the City’s Recreation Commission as a forum for public input on recreational services.

##### **Policy 25.4: Private and Non-Profit Recreation Clubs and Leagues**

Recognize the contribution of private sports leagues, civic clubs, and other non-profit organizations to the variety and quality of recreational services available to Piedmont residents. There should be a high level of coordination between the City, non-profit service providers, private leagues, and the School District so that the public is made aware of the full range of recreational opportunities available.

##### **Policy 25.5: Community Events**

Encourage community fairs and special events as a way of building a sense of community and bringing Piedmonters together.

- *Action 25.A: Recreation Department Opinion Surveys*  
Conduct periodic surveys of Piedmont residents to determine their recreational preferences, opinions of the city’s recreational programs, ideas for improvement, and level of support for additional programs or facilities.



## PARKS, RECREATION, AND OPEN SPACE ELEMENT



Witter Field,  
Piedmont High School

### **Goal 26: Joint Use of City and School Facilities**

**Encourage coordination between the City and School District to provide the widest range of recreational opportunities possible to Piedmont residents.**

#### **Policies and Actions**

##### **Policy 26.1: Joint Use Agreements**

Maintain joint use agreements between the City and School District ensuring after-hours public access to school recreational facilities, and school day access to facilities in city parks for Piedmont students.

##### **Policy 26.2: Comprehensive Coordination with PUSD**

Consider the concept of “joint use” in the broadest context possible, including programs as well as facilities, and including collaboration on community outreach, education, planning, and capital improvements. Ongoing communication between the School Board and the City Council regarding recreational facilities, programs, and joint projects should be strongly supported.

##### **Policy 26.3: Operating Procedures for Joint Use**

Maintain operating procedures for joint use which address facility maintenance and capital improvement requirements.

- *Action 26.A: Updating the Joint Use Agreement*  
*Periodically update the joint use agreement between the City and the School District to ensure that it is current and responds to emerging issues and priorities.*
- *Action 26.B: Design Changes to Facilitate Community Use*  
*Work with the School District to implement design changes that allow school grounds to function as neighborhood parks as well as school recreation areas. Explore opportunities to incorporate community open space in schools being reconstructed through the Measure E seismic improvement program.*

PARKS, RECREATION, AND  
OPEN SPACE ELEMENT

