

PARKS AND RECREATION



January 2022

2021 Annual Report: Impact and Recovery

The purpose of this document is to present a snapshot of progress for the 2021 fiscal year (July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2021) and to lay out goals for the current 2022 fiscal year.

Parks and Recreation

2021 ANNUAL REPORT: IMPACT AND RECOVERY

DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

2021 was, in many ways, a continuation of 2020 – the global pandemic presented our world and our community with significant challenges. The City of Santa Cruz and the Parks & Recreation Department had a seat on the year's roller coaster that offered both ups and downs. Perseverance was our 2020 objective. 2021 was about recovery, and despite a wild ride, Parks & Recreation accomplished remarkable things for Santa Cruz this year. The long-awaited correction of the community center name to accurately reflect Mr. London Nelson was a historic moment and a wonderful example of community collaboration. Junior Guards were back in action on our beaches. New grant funding was put to good use in our parks and facilities. Adoption of the City's first Street Tree Master Plan was a monumental effort and sets the stage for the future of urban forestry in Santa Cruz. The list of accomplishments is long. The impacts made this year will serve the community for years to come.

I have been reminded this year how resilient, high-achieving, and service-minded Parks & Recreation is especially in the face of trying times. I am proud of the Parks & Recreation team. As we look ahead, we will continue to be adaptive and resilient in light of the ongoing pandemic. Our commitment to providing a world-class parks and recreation system will not waiver in the face of adversity. We will recover, we will serve, and will look forward to building back better in the years ahead.

On behalf of Parks & Recreation, it is our honor and privilege to serve Santa Cruz. Thank you for your support!



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MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Access to parks, open space and recreational activities is vitally important to establishing and maintaining a high quality of life in Santa Cruz, ensuring the health of our seniors, families and youth, and contributing to the economic and environmental well-being of the City and the region. The City of Santa Cruz Parks & Recreation Department manages a diverse portfolio of recreation programs along with a robust, world-class system of parks, beaches, open spaces and urban forest.

This portfolio enables the department to positively impact the community and local economy by: contributing to the strength and health of the City of Santa Cruz and its surrounding communities; functioning as an important component of the City's social safety net services and emergency services infrastructure; serving as environmental stewards of a vast and stunning array of natural resources; providing desirable destinations popular among residents and tourists; and attracting new businesses. The following mission, vision and accompanying values guide the department's work in service to the community:

Mission

To provide quality public spaces and experiences that build a healthy community, foster equity, and better the environment.

Vision

We envision a thriving Parks & Recreation system that creates recreational and cultural opportunities, improves quality of life, and strengthens the health of the local environment and economy for all.

Values – Communication, Openness, Service Collaboration

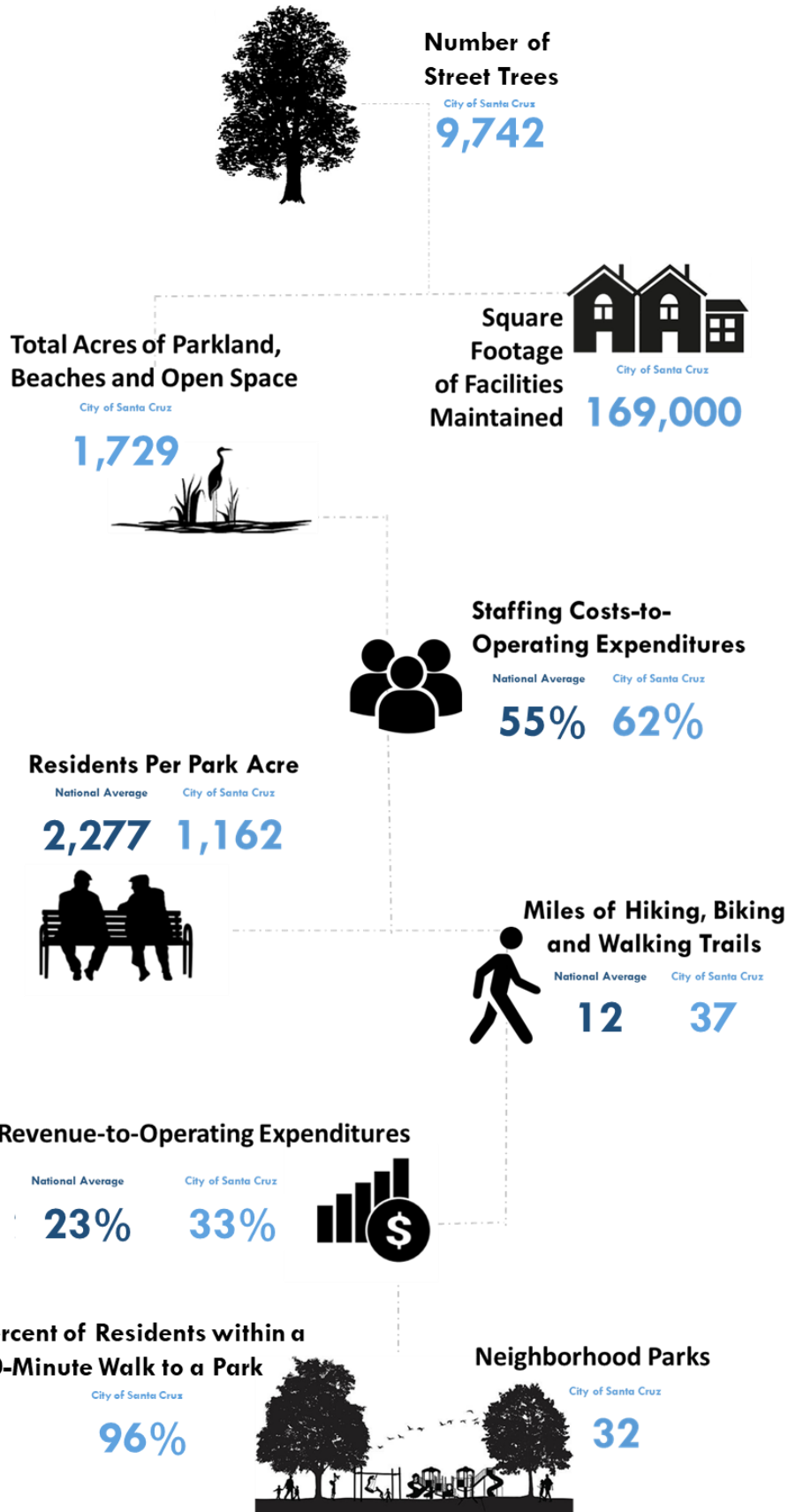
The parks and recreation department is essential to the community. To that end, we commit to:

- transparent and honest communication as the foundation of great relationships.
- a spirit of equity, openness and innovation, welcoming differences and diversity.
- service to the community in a manner that is sustainable, safe, responsive and accessible to all.
- collaboration to achieve results that reflect our department vision, leveraging the strengths of the community.

LOOKING FORWARD

Santa Cruz Parks & Recreation is at its best when engaged with the community. Investment into critical resources, partnerships, and outside support for Parks & Recreation will be essential to continue success and advancement of department mission and goals. Parks & Recreation is a conduit for economic recovery, the green economy, for health, and social equity, and we invite the community to join us as a funding partner, a volunteer, or as an advocate.

BY THE NUMBERS



National Averages from the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA); City of Santa Cruz Statistics based on FY2021 numbers.

DOLLARS & CENTS: DEPARTMENT FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Expenditures

The FY2021 Parks and Recreation adopted revised budget included \$1.1 million in reductions to address significant pandemic impacts to city and department General Fund revenues. These reductions included the structural elimination of two vacant positions – a 1.0 FTE Special Event Coordinator position and a 0.5 FTE Box Office Representative. With reductions, the department budget was approximately \$15.4 million (15,387,534) with personnel costs making up 62 percent of that amount.

Challenges. Early retirements and a hiring freeze led to a vacancy rate of close to 10 percent for FY2021. The department leadership team made up of major area supervisors faced incredible challenges: the global pandemic made outdoor spaces the safest place for community members to be. Further, citizens flocked to parks, beaches and open spaces to sustain their mental health. For the Parks Division, constrained staffing and budget resources limited the ability to respond and keep up with public demand. Alternatively, the Recreation Division was challenged with the opposite dynamic. Bringing people together for in-person events, programs, sports and classes meant completely re-imagining their work and budgets to provide essential support to the community in a manner consistent with ever-evolving public health guidance.

Strategies. The department approached the pandemic budget shock and the city’s structural deficit with a multi-year fiscal sustainability roadmap, knowing that short-, mid- and long-term actions would be required to ensure the department remained fiscally positioned to deliver on its mission and vision for the community. To manage with a reduced budget, the department streamlined operations, reduced service levels, and returned savings from programming not able to operate due to public health constraints. Further, grant opportunities helped offset some costs associated with homeless encampment clean-up.

Revenues

The Parks and Recreation department is funded primarily through general fund revenue sources, such as property taxes, sales and use tax, transient occupancy tax (TOT). In a typical year, the department generates enough revenue via program fees, permits, and other charges to offset about one-third of its expenditure budget. In FY2021, department activities were conservatively projected to bring in nearly \$4.2 million (4,179,601) in General Fund revenues.

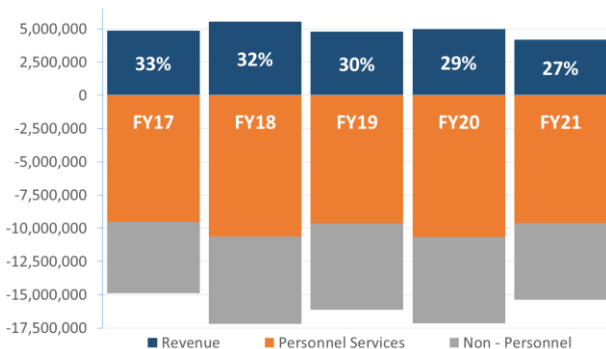
Challenges. Generating revenues is difficult when facilities are closed and bringing people together can be hazardous to public health. The department took the early stance to sacrifice revenues to support a cautious approach to the pandemic.

Strategies. This fiscal year, staff completed a department revenue policy to guide efforts to improve cost recovery. While some revenue centers were limited in their ability to generate revenues, the department continued to make fee improvements by adjusting the fee structure for beach rentals and continued with the implementation of the golf course operations plan.

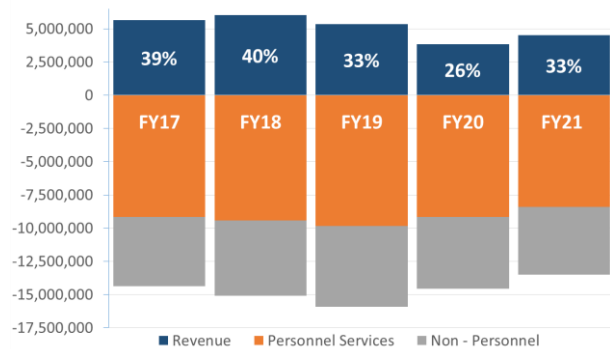
Cost Recovery

A key metric for the Parks and Recreation Department is the revenue-to-operating expenditure ratio. In FY2021, the budgeted ratio was 27 percent. With additional budget savings realized from the pandemic along with a record revenue year at the DeLaveaga Golf Course, the actual ratio ended up being 33 percent, well above the national average and consistent with the department’s actual cost recovery from FY2019 (the last normal year for comparison). The resulting net impact of the department on the General Fund was \$9.0 million (\$9,023,843).

5-YR Budgeted Cost Recovery - Adopted Budget



5-YR Actual Cost Recovery: Year End Actual Performance



FY2021 GOALS & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

GOAL: Safe Parks & Facilities for All

Managing 169,000 facility square footage and over 1,700 acres of urban forest, parks, beaches, open spaces and greenways, the Parks and Recreation Department is working to build a healthy, more resilient future for the Santa Cruz community. These efforts positively impact human and environmental health, as well as the community's safety and economy.

Despite significant staffing constraints, 99 percent of park acreage remained open and key assets like the Wharf and playgrounds were made safe for public use during the pandemic

For the Parks Division, constrained staffing and budget resources limited the ability to respond and manage public demand. With some facilities unable to operate due to public health orders, select recreation staff transitioned to assist the parks team. They filled a number of critical roles to help care for and maintain the parks, monitoring parks and beaches for safe use during shelter-in-place orders, as well as addressing normal day-to-day administrative tasks so park staff could remain focused on maintaining services in the field. A few recreation staff also became department coordinators to oversee response to staff COVID exposures and/or positive test results. The adaptability shown by these staff was remarkable and allowed critical work for the community to continue throughout the pandemic.

Department maintenance crews were on the front lines throughout the pandemic. Nearly all amenities remained open for people to find respite, enjoy the open space, as well as exercise and walk the trails. Maintenance crews mowed lawns, maintained trails, picked up trash and maintained benches and parking areas. Only Lower DeLaveaga Park and Laurel Park were closed due to reduced staff resources. By mid-June, exceptions to hire key maintenance positions allowed the department to reopen Lower DeLaveaga Park for programs and public use.



Kept Playgrounds Safe

In keeping with California State Health and Safety guidelines of supporting a safe environment for children and families to recreate, the department implemented sanitation stations around playground areas. Awareness signage provided guidance on maximum occupancy limits, waiting areas, social distancing measures and California state guidance on safe play during Covid-19. Included within the sanitation stations were self-use hand sanitizer bottles to encourage everyone to “gel in & gel out.”

Managed record amounts of trash on Main and Cowell Beaches with help from key partners

Trash management is always a challenge, on Main Beach in particular. Heading into the the summer of 2021, the department had received more than the normal level of complaints due to some larger impacts – constrained department staffing resources, similarly limited capacity by the department's traditional partner in beach clean-up, the Seaside Company, and a greater concentration of street vendors (and the associated trash associated with some of their products). With assistance from the Sanitation Department in the form of more dumpsters for the beach along with additional Save Our Shores volunteer clean-ups, our tireless Wharf and Beaches maintenance team was able to improve trash management. The result was cleaner beaches and a healthier Monterey Bay.



GOAL: Core Amenities and Essential Services Provided

Through programs, services and spaces, the department ensures the health and well-being of community members by: investing proactively in our community’s at-risk and vulnerable populations; providing support to local youth through access to quality education, after school enrichment opportunities, mentorship from a supporting adult, access to jobs, internships and future career possibilities; delivering virtual and in-person activities and connection to resources for our community’s seniors to help prevent isolation and loneliness; aiding community members in need through various programs: low-cost meeting space for twelve-step groups, host to Meals on Wheels, safe sleeping, convenient access to free COVID testing; building relationships with community partners, creating an extension of Parks and Recreation services to those who need it most; and partnering and supporting local and regional agencies in addressing homelessness, COVID and disaster relief.

Answered the call to reinforce fire lines and harden critical infrastructure

On August 16, 2020, a thunderstorm generated 11,000 lightning strikes at the height of the California dry season. Two days later, a 40,000 acre wildfire was raging in the Santa Cruz mountains. In the days to come, parks staff would be called to assist with creating defensible space around the City of Santa Cruz water system’s key westside storage tanks, westside and Felton pump stations, and the Graham Hill Water Treatment Plant. Other team members would be enlisted to help with door to door emergency preparedness education in higher risk city neighborhoods. Just over a month after ignition, the August CZU Lightning Complex fire would be fully contained, having burned 86,509 acres, destroyed 1,490 buildings, making it California’s 12th most destructive wildfire in the state’s history.



Unable to hold events in FY2021, the Civic Auditorium became a critical asset in emergency response

On August 18, 2020, the Santa Cruz Civic Auditorium became a shelter for CZU fire evacuees. Learning the basics of shelter operations over the course of eight hours, the staff worked through the night with partners from the County Emergency Operations Command Center to pivot the facility to receive those being evacuated from the CZU fire threat in the Santa Cruz mountains. A complicating factor was the need to keep people distanced and safe in those early days of the pandemic. Setting up tents in the main hall and implementing rigorous cleaning protocols, the Civic Auditorium Supervisor, Jessi Bond, and her team created a sanctuary, not only for those displaced, but also for those seeking information, resources or a place to charge a cell phone. The site became the nexus for an outpouring of support from the community, receiving hundreds of messages, phone calls and emails from people asking how they could help.



Parks and Recreation

Four short months later, the same team would see themselves ramping down their facility as a fire shelter so that it could be converted to a COVID testing site. With case rates on the rise and the 2020 winter holidays approaching, providing easy access to testing for the Santa Cruz community became critical to ensuring citizens along with state and local health officials had access to information on the spread of COVID-19 in the community. Collaborating again with Santa Cruz County staff, the Civic Auditorium opened in December for appointment and walk-in testing. By March, the facility had conducted over 7,500 free COVID tests for the community. The Civic Auditorium remained a testing site through the remainder of the fiscal year.



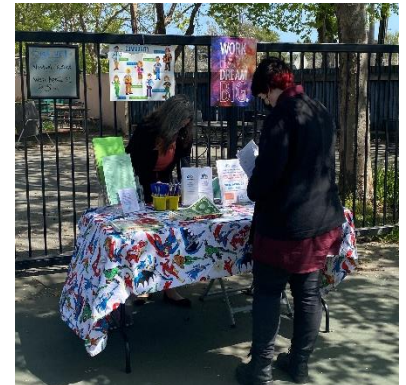
Provided essential programs and services to vulnerable populations



Essential Worker Childcare. Fall and Winter/Spring childcare sessions for essential workers operated at maximum capacity within the London Nelson Community Center. Recreation staff assisted students with virtual learning in the morning and provided recreational activities in the afternoon. To provide as much support to children and teachers, staff trained with City schools teachers on effective ways to assist students with virtual learning. Friends of Parks & Recreation was also there to assist families, awarding over \$35,000 in program scholarships to income-qualified families and those suffering fiscal hardships as a result of the pandemic.

six featured employer booths – Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation, Kianti's, O'Neill, Whiting's Foods, All About Theatre, and the Seaside Company, as well as 25 paper applications for other area employers who hire teens. 127 teen job seekers attended and 152 completed applications were delivered to the employers.

Teen Employment Opportunities. The annual Teen Job Fair moved outdoors to Laurel Park to comply with COVID restrictions. Applicants had access to



Senior Community Support. In addition to offering well-attended virtual classes for seniors – line dancing continued to be quite popular – the Downtown Senior Center also connected 125 seniors with free Amazon Fire tablets through the Senior Center Without Limits partnership with Community Bridges and Elder Day. The Center also helped coordinate vaccine outreach efforts with the county Health Services Agency (HSA). Outreach to high-risk and eligible seniors reached over 2,000 area seniors in remarkable efforts to simplify the appointment-making-process and target the hard-to-reach senior population.



Brought fun back to summer with a wide array of programming in-line with State of California Reopening Blueprint

Parks and Recreation summer programs returned in June 2021 with Junior Guards at Cowell Beach and Summer Camps at Harvey West Park. Kids and parents were thrilled to be back in our programs that have become summer traditions for local families. For possibly the first time ever, summer camp registration filled before Junior Guards in a record-breaking eight minutes. Expanding registration on a rolling basis in response to state guidance was a big lift for the administration team, and they delivered for the community's parents. Also new for summer 2021, Parks and Recreation collaborated with City Schools to provide after summer school classes at Bay View and Gault Elementary Schools. The afternoon classes provided all day recreation options for working summer school parents.



Summer adult sports also returned with over 40 teams registering for our Adult Softball league, nine registered for adult soccer and a strong bocce registration as well.

AWARD'S CIRCLE

Civic Auditorium Supervisor, Jessi Bond, receives Jim Howes Award



In December, Jessi Bond was selected as the staff recipient of the Jim Howes award for her outstanding service to the Santa Cruz community. Jessi exemplifies all the qualities that the award recognizes: community-minded leadership, problem solving, tenacity, engaging enthusiasm and pride in being a Santa Cruz public servant. These qualities were on full display during the Covid crisis as operational needs at the City and the Civic became incredibly fluid from March 2020 onward. Time and time again, Jessi actively looked for solutions to support our community through the crisis. This included small efforts like assisting the Economic Development Department by providing Civic supplies to expand business outdoor operations to assisting the City and County with homelessness response by making the Civic available for storage of large materials like tents and sleeping bags to larger efforts such as running a shelter at the Civic for fire evacuees during a global pandemic.

Recreation Staff win Award of Excellence in Marketing & Communications



On March 23, during the annual statewide conference, the London Nelson Community Center was honored by the California Parks and Recreation Society (CPRS) with an Award of Excellence in Marketing & Communications for the Halloween Horror Film Competition marketing campaign. The campaign was launched in July 2020 and included two promotional videos, which paid homage to classic horror films *The Shining* and *Blair Witch Project*. LNCC was also recognized in February by CPRS for outstanding contributions in the community for creating Innovative Programming During COVID-19 for the Halloween Horrors Film Competition and their Cookies, Cocoa and Connection (CCC) event. Each program was a great success! The film competition received registrations from 28 individual teams. The CCC event partnered 50 local seniors who participated in a variety of connection activities together over ZOOM in the midst of the pandemic and often lonely and challenging holidays.

Santa Cruz Urban Forester, Leslie Keedy, wins WCISA Award



In June, Santa Cruz Urban Forester Leslie Keedy received the Award of Commendation by her fellow peers from the Western Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture at its 87th Annual Conference. Leslie was selected as the best in 2020 for promoting the purpose of the ISA organization through continuing education and communication between practitioners, educators, researchers, and the general public. The award recognized Leslie's 20-plus year career with the City of Santa Cruz and her work overseeing the recent CalFIRE Urban Forestry grant that resulted in the planting of 500 trees.

GOAL: Community, Environment and Fiscal Sustainability through Forward-Looking and Resilient Planning

Planning for Our Future Parks and Recreation System

Parks Master Plan 2030 Approved. Receiving City Council approval in the fall, the final Parks Master Plan 2030 provides a guiding framework to plan for, provide, and maintain parks and recreation services for more than 1,700 acres of land. The plan envisions a quality park system that connects the surrounding greenbelts to the Pacific Ocean, preserves and protects its natural heritage, enhances its cultural and recreational environments, and provides a diversity of experiences that enrich lives and support a healthy community. The Parks Master Plan 2030 is intended to evolve with the City over time, providing a guiding framework while allowing adjustments to be made to meet present and unforeseen needs and desires.

The Plan includes guiding goals, policies and actions which were developed through a comprehensive public process. Additionally, it includes some ideas for specific park properties to explore further through future public processes. Many of the conceptual ideas were further refined in additional public meetings. The Parks and Recreation Department tried to be as flexible and accommodating with the planning process to ensure everyone had an opportunity to provide input. As larger projects move forward, there will be opportunities for community members, Commission, and Council to provide input and help shape the direction of each project, including funding allocation, project scope, community outreach and environmental review.

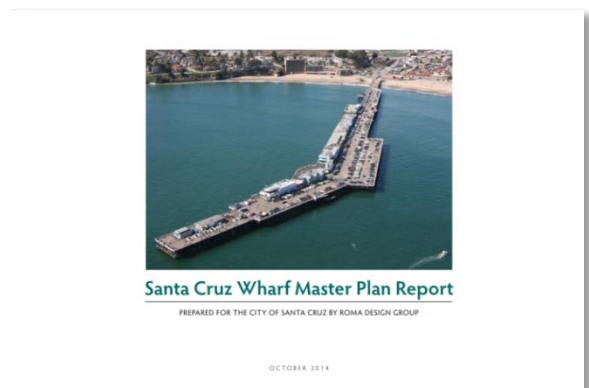


Street Tree Master Plan Approved. In late April, the Street Tree Master Plan was approved by City Council, providing a critical management tool for the Office of Urban Forestry within the Parks and Recreation Department. The management plan effectively quantifies the existing urban forest street tree resource, its values and maintenance requirements, provides a vehicle to maintain consistency between City departments, and establishes goals and actions to be used moving forward.

In addition to utilizing the Street Tree Master plan as a guiding document, future forestry goals also include maintaining the completed tree inventory and the TreeKeeper® software used for tracking accurate data, monitoring tree canopy coverage, and increasing tree planting efforts. Future Urban Forestry actions include improving the existing street tree planting list, improving public outreach for proper forestry management, enhancing the existing forestry work plan and establishing appropriate resource levels including budgeting and staffing adequate for a successful urban forestry program.

Wharf Master Plan Approved. With City Council approval of the Wharf Master Plan, the document establishes a framework for any potential future expansion of the Wharf, most especially the improvements called out in the Master Plan. The Wharf has not had such a comprehensive plan or design guidelines prepared since the 1980 Beach Area Plan. The California Coastal Commission (CCC), the state agency who oversees any proposed development along the California coast, has long urged the City to develop such guidelines. The adopted master plan with associated environmental review is also required for the Wharf to be eligible to apply for competitive grants and outside funding.

Where the Wharf Master Plan will create guidelines and identify opportunities for future projects, it will not lock in the development of any proposed improvements. All future projects on the Wharf will be subject to future City Council review and approval, including a public outreach and input process.



Bettering the Environment

Piloting Electric Tools to Reduce Carbon Emissions and Noise Pollution. With the help of a City Carbon Fund Grant, the Harvey West Park team began a pilot of electric equipment to determine feasibility of transitioning away from gas-powered small tools. The electric blowers will not only reduce carbon output but are also quieter. This means less impact on staff while helping to reduce noise and air pollution in our parks. After a trial period, the Parks Division moved the electric equipment over to the Neighborhood Parks team, as the battery life of the tools seemed better suited to smaller scale parks.

Installing the First Department Solar Array. Through a partnership between Sandbar Electrical and Solar and the City of Santa Cruz, the main parking lot of DeLaveaga Golf Course saw the installation of three new solar power carports. The total combined surface area of the arrays is roughly 9,500 square feet and will provide shade for 50 parking spaces. The solar arrays are expected to produce nearly 250,000 kilowatt hours of sustainable electricity to the sports fields and golf course facilities annually.

Reforestation Audrey Stanley Grove. Partnering with Cabrillo Horticultural Program to celebrate National Arbor Day and Earth Day, the Parks & Recreation Forestry Division planted twelve coast redwood trees at the Santa Cruz Shakespeare amphitheater. In total, Shakespeare staff have added 128 new redwoods to the theatre grounds to improve the venue experience. These new redwood trees will thrive and reforest the grove with a healthy, native tree population.

Helping the Santa Cruz Tarplant Persist at Arana Gulch. The department's Open Space & Greenways team, in collaboration with the Arana Gulch Adaptive Management Working Group, the UCSC Greenhouse, and UCSC volunteers, successfully implemented an experimental outplanting of over 1,000 Santa Cruz tarplant (*Holocarpha macradenia*). An endangered plant species endemic to Northern California, tarplant persistence is a key goal of the Arana Gulch management plan. The short-term goal of this work is to identify the best outplanting methods. The long-term goal is to increase the seedbank of the tarplant at Arana to a level that will ensure a high probability of persistence for 100 years, or in perpetuity. This planting is something of a landmark in that it exceeds the targeted population goal for the Santa Cruz tarplant management program.



Sustaining Park & Public Spaces for the Community



London Nelson Community Center Tile Cleaning. Staff addressed key maintenance improvements while the Center was closed to normal operations over the course of the year. A focal project for the Center, which was first constructed as an elementary school in 1932 in the Mission Revival style, was a much needed cleaning of its beautiful tiled roof.



New Roof Finished for Noland's. The Wharf completed reroofing Noland's, a popular Wharf retail business. The building now has upgraded insulation with fire protection, and an 80 Mil, welded seam IB pool liner roof with a 25-year warranty. This type of roof membrane is necessary for the flat roofs on the Santa Cruz Wharf due to their resilience, ease of repair, and ability to be washed.



Wharf Pile Driving Completed. The Wharf Construction Crew finished pile work allowed under the Army Core of Engineers Nationwide 3 and CA Coastal Commission emergency maintenance permits. Driving piles is a fairly complex operation requiring the trust and cooperation of all involved. From the transporting of the pile to positioning the driver and the driving of the pile to finally cutting the pile off and bolting it in place, all demands the collaborative attention of the team and strict adherence to protocol and procedure.



Bethany Curve Pathway Improvements Kept Neighbors Strolling. Bethany Curve runs four blocks from West Cliff all the way to Delaware Ave. The Parks team completed the installation of two sections of decomposed granite pathway and header board, further improving the space. Take in the beauty of the assorted trees and bird species in this lush riparian zone.



Town Clock and Plaza Refreshed for Spring. The Parks team completed work to get the Town Clock and Plaza ready for the spring season. Lots of effort went into updating the electrical systems to highlight the Collateral Damage statue and make the Town Clock shine bright again. All new landscaping was also added and three new trees were installed creating a beautiful public plaza for all to enjoy for years to come.



Harvey West Park's Redwood Picnic Area Completed. Installation of the new Redwood Picnic Area, located in Harvey West Park, was completed and brought online for reservations beginning May 28th. This new picnic area accommodates 70 people comfortably and has electrical power and a sink. The Redwood Picnic Area replaces the old "Oak" Picnic area, which saw its namesake tree fail last year.



New Landscaping for Chinatown Bridge Dragon Art Completed. New plantings were installed and included edible plants associated with the original Chinese marketplace, native plants to promote habitat along the San Lorenzo river walk, and pops of perennial color to enhance the design elements and colors of the dragon sculpture. All plants are water wise perennials on a drip irrigation system to promote water conservation. Special thanks to the many community partners that contributed to the outstanding final product.



Lighthouse Avenue Park Playground Updates Complete. Early in the year the Parks team updated sections of the playground play surface and installed new playground components in the park.

SPOTLIGHT: MOVING TOWARD EQUITY

In 1979, the Santa Cruz City Council voted to rename the Laurel Community Center to the Louden Nelson Community Center in honor of the heroic figure who had died more than a century earlier. The Center's namesake, Mr. Nelson, was born into slavery in 1800 in North Carolina. After news of the Gold Rush in 1850, Mr. Nelson was taken from the plantation by a slave owner to California, where he was eventually able to purchase his freedom. Traveling throughout California as a cobbler, Mr. Nelson eventually settled in Santa Cruz before succumbing to a terminal illness in 1860. He bequeathed the entirety of his estate to the local schools, a significant contribution to local learning and the community. One that was honored by the 1979 city councilmembers. There was, however, a problem: Louden Nelson was not his real name. A simple mistake in recording his name in the 1870s had compounded for more than a century.

The correction of this long-time error was initiated with a citizen petition started by Brittinii Potter, which secured over 1,000 signatures. Potter's petition cited an imperative to "have a history that is accurately named after some of our first Black leaders." Potter along with Parks and Recreation staff convened a project committee including community center supervisor Iseth Rae, Recreation Superintendent Rachel Kaufman, Civic Auditorium Supervisor Jessi Bond, NAACP President Brenda Griffin, City Councilmember Justin Cummings, Santa Cruz Equity Project founder Luna HighJohn Bey, and Sentinel history columnist Ross Gibson.

This group worked over several months to address remaining uncertainty with correcting the community center name. Their efforts included following up with members of the Black community who had originally supported the name of Louden. There were no holdouts left – It was time to get the name right. On June 8, city councilmembers voted unanimously to change the name. In addition, the council also called for the city "to pursue a more accurate depiction of the history of Mr. Nelson and explore further education efforts on his contributions to Santa Cruz." City councilmembers celebrated the name change with the community during Juneteenth Festivities in Laurel Park, just outside the renamed London Nelson Community Center.



GOAL: Increase cost recovery through partnerships and new revenues

DeLaveaga Golf Course saw record use, turning a profit in FY2021

A true bright spot in FY2021 was the record number of people that sought refuge from the pandemic by playing a round of golf at DeLaveaga Golf Course. By the end of the fiscal year, over 62,000 rounds of golf had been played, beating the five year average by nearly 50 percent. Golf Course operators, GSL Inc., worked hard in collaboration with department staff and the County Public Health Officer to develop protocols for safe play during the pandemic. Measures included greater time intervals between parties, restrictions on golf cart use to members of the same household, and changes to the course that eliminated shared contact of items such as sand trap rakes and putting green cups.



Parks and Recreation golf course staff focused on maintaining quality conditions on the course during this time of increased use, even with personnel furloughs, water budget reductions, and increased responsibilities resulting from the Parks reorganization. Several factors led to the increase in play, including clear weather, lack of alternative recreation, good course conditions, the closure of the Boulder Creek Golf Club due to the CZU Fire, the opening of the Grille at DeLa (as permitted under state restrictions) and enhanced marketing by the operators. At the conclusion of FY2021, the golf course had met its operations plan objective

of a balanced budget several years ahead of schedule with over \$2.1 million in revenues and a profit margin of nearly \$50,000.

New Grant Funds Secured to Reduce Fire Risk in Open Spaces and Support Senior Facilities

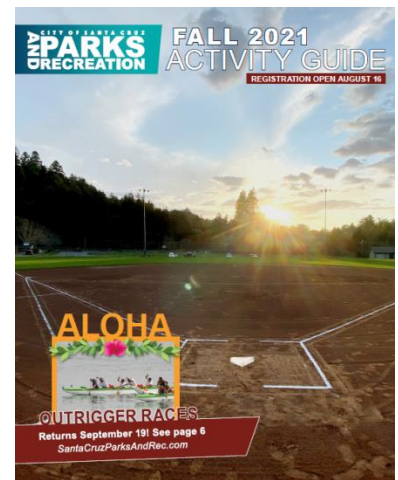
With support from the Fire Department, the Parks Open Space and Greenways team secured from the California Fire Safe Council a new tool trailer and \$10,000 in new tools and resources to support fuel reduction and vegetation management across the city's open spaces.

The Recreation Division also worked closely with their staff at the Downtown Senior Center, as well as partners from the Senior Center Opportunities group, to secure a total of \$160,000 in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding to improve ADA accessibility at the 222 Market St. Senior Center and to create a "senior studio" at the downtown location for expanded senior community activities.

GOAL: Effective Department Operations and Communications

Through the first two quarters of FY2021, the Recreation Division worked with the PROS Consulting Group to complete a full programmatic assessment and services costing. The work clarified Recreation Division offerings into eight major core program areas: Aquatics, Arts and Culture, Health and Wellness, Seniors, Special Events, Sports, and Youth & Teen. The study established core program goals, evaluated program cost recovery and lifecycle planning, as well as provided best practices for volunteerism, partnerships and community outreach. This work, referred to as the Recreation and Leisure Study (RLS), concluded with eight major recommendations along with additional secondary recommendations.

Under the leadership of the Recreation Superintendent, the Division is working to implement RLS recommendations, including development of business plans for each core program area.



ADDITIONAL FY2021 ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

<p>Safe Parks and Facilities for All</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completed the transition of all staff to smart phones, improving coverage and signal reception in critical areas of the parks system to help promote staff safety• Updated on a routine basis operational and public guidance to keep activities and spaces safe and in compliance with regular changes to both county and state public health guidance.
<p>Core Amenities and Services Provided</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provided recommendations to youth sports organizations and group meeting permit requestors on program adaptation based on state issued guidance and safety protocols.• Created virtual programming platform for youth, adults and senior activities.• Offered Virtual Junior Guard program to maintain continuity and fitness option for on-going Junior Guard participants.• Assumed daily maintenance responsibility for first section of Rail Trail to open on the Westside.
<p>Community, Environment and Fiscal Sustainability through Forward-Looking and Resilient Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Initiated work to secure a Wharf maintenance permit.• Delivered re-envisioned special events to encourage safe community building during the pandemic. Events included: the Re-Envisioned Clam Chowder Cook-Off, 13 Days of Halloween at the Wharf and the Halloween Horrors Film Competition.• Facilitated discussions to remove the final Mission Bell in the City of Santa Cruz
<p>Cost Recovery through Partnerships and New Revenues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Volunteers provided much needed support: the Grant Park Neighbors group gave garbage cans, bike racks, and light poles a fresh coat of paint and completed weeding and raking at the park; City Hall volunteers helped with numerous projects at the City's front door; and the Pilkington Creek/Tyrrell Park volunteers removed invasive plants and spread wood chips this season.• Initiated work supported by a \$100,000 CalRecycle grant aimed at removing trash from sensitive habitats in Sycamore Grove and Moore Creek Open Space areas• Secured City Council Resolution to pursue a \$177,952 grant from the State of California Per Capita grant program.• Researched and applied for nearly \$300,000 in ARPA support from the Shuttered Venue Operator's grant, administered by the Small Business Association• Clarified and standardized how beach areas are reserved for events, resulting in improved fee structure• Updated costing analysis for Harvey West Pool and entered into rental contracts with two community groups for use of the pool that provided access to safe, healthy activity during the pandemic and provided improved cost recovery to the department• Finalized internal department revenue policy
<p>Effective Department Operations and Communications</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Implemented the cost neutral Parks reorganization while sustaining record vacancy levels due to the city-wide hiring freeze.• Updated municipal code related to Special Events to reflect its transition from the City Manager's Office to Parks and Recreation• Advanced efforts to update the department's mission, vision and values in response to staff, Parks & Recreation Commission and community comments.• Completed the FY20 Annual Report and began work on a Strategic Framework and Communications Plan.• Created an online activity guide to maintain accurate information for the public and adapt to changes in state and local COVID guidance.

FY2022 GOALS & OBJECTIVES

Deliver high quality parks

- Execute existing and new FY2022 CIP and grant-funded projects
- Complete perimeter fence upgrade at Wharf
- Restore parks staffing levels to address vacancies creating by FY21 hiring freeze

Provide Essential Services, Facilities & Programs

- Align programming to support the Children’s Bill of Rights initiative, as well as the Children’s Fund
- Revitalize the Urban Forestry webpage to provide more information for the community
- Develop and implement business plans for core recreation program areas
- Complete pool feasibility study
- Secure Wharf Maintenance permits

Steward Our Natural Resources

- Complete CalRecycle grant-funded cleanup of Sycamore Grove and Moore Creek along with mitigations to reduce future impacts
- Continue experimental outplanting of Santa Cruz tarplants at Arana Gulch
- Update Approved Street Tree List in accordance with Street Tree Master Plan to help future plantings improve the diversity, environmental benefits, and climate resilience of the urban forest

Responsibly Manage Valued Resources – Both People & Budget

- Update department fee schedule
- Implement new cost recovery targets
- Develop strategic report sets to support department workload and performance measure tracking
- Complete department sponsorship policy
- Initiate strategic CIP review
- Continue to implement DeLaveaga Golf Course Operations Plan to close revenue gap
- Explore pay-to-play operations at the DeLaveaga Disc Golf Course
- Update safety training program for front-line Parks employees
- Make ADA improvements to Market Street Senior Center using CDBG funding.
- Continue Civic roof replacement and solar installation project.
- Rollout updated best practice protocols and templates for partnership agreements

Improve Internal/External Communications

- Upgrade the department’s e-commerce software, Web Trac
- Build out P&R Intranet webpage
- Revamp the website homepage
- Respond to the Grand Jury Website Findings
- Deliver the FY21 Annual Report
- Complete the FY23-25 Strategic Plan/Operating Framework



SPOTLIGHT: HOMELESSNESS AND PARKS

Public parks are designed to provide aesthetically pleasing green spaces where communities can gather for recreation, rest and leisure. Whether by design or by circumstance, public parks and open spaces are frequently a refuge for those experiencing homelessness. While the department provides many essential services to those living under these challenging circumstances, the impacts of encampments on public park spaces can be severe. As a result, the department finds itself on the front lines when it comes to matters of homelessness in the City of Santa Cruz.

For example, the Open Space and Greenways team was tasked with several major encampment cleanups this fiscal year. In one instance, the west side of Highway 9 across from Sycamore Grove had essentially been transformed into a small village. Structures of scrap lumber and metal had been built into sloped hillsides, nailed into trees, and dug into the ground. Further, stairs and drainage lines had been carved into the soil. This sensitive habitat had been inundated with litter, fecal matter and hazardous materials. Highly flammable materials, including 62 propane tanks, 21 fire pits, 32 BBQs, 9 gas generators and other items greatly increased the potential for fire. In the end, the month long clean-up took three city departments, as well as outside contractors, and cost an estimated \$133,500. In addition to the hazardous materials outlined above, 138 tons of garbage, 161 car batteries and thousands of syringes were ultimately removed from the site.

With site clean-up completed, the restoration of the area was initiated out of serious concern that the degraded site would make it particularly susceptible to erosion and debris flow following the CZU fire. The entire Parks & Recreation Open Space & Greenways team set to work placing and staking 900 feet of straw wattles to protect the hillside from erosion and to ensure Highway 9 would not be inundated by silt and soil come heavier rains. An outside contractor was hired to hydro-seed the entire site, which helped to fortify the hillside and encourage the growth of native plant species, to restore the massive encampment site to its original condition. In the end, the cost and staff time required to address the public and environmental safety issues resulting from this large open space encampment was significant. Staff cannot help but ask, “what might have been achieved had time and resources been set to advancing open space habitat management rather than reversing detrimental impacts?”

As another example, the department worked to balance the concerns and needs of both traditionally housed park users and those facing homelessness near San Lorenzo Park. After a court injunction mandated campers in the park not be moved due to concerns with COVID-19 spread, the department estimates it had around 118 tents and 137 occupants living in San Lorenzo community park through March 2021. By April, court orders allowed the City to relocate campers to 122 temporary campsites in the Benchlands area of San Lorenzo Park, where campers remained through the end of June.

The solutions to homelessness are not held by one department or government agency or organization. Resolving the complex issues associated with homelessness in parks requires time, understanding and collaboration. A focus on resolving the causes, as opposed to the symptoms, of homelessness may substantially reduce the prevalence of unsheltered homeless in parks. But, it will take a coordinated strategy across the vast resources of both the public and private sector. The Park and Recreation Department, in the role of serving all members of the community, will be an integral part of the solution.



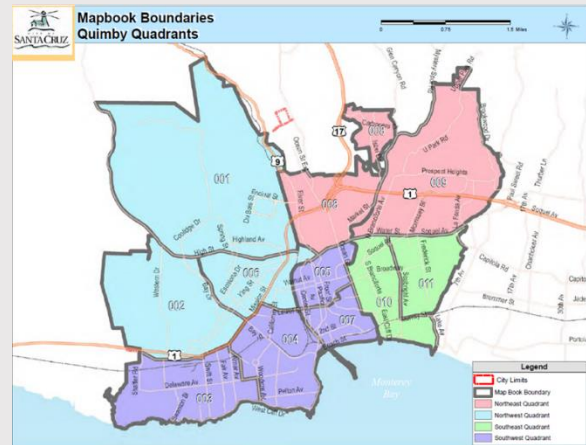
CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The pandemic demonstrated what many in the Santa Cruz community already embrace: parks and recreation is essential infrastructure. The department maintains amenities that promote better physical and mental health, serve as meeting places that brings family, friends and fellow neighbors together, and contribute as an integral part of community environmental and disaster response. Park and recreation infrastructure is diverse and includes recreation centers, community centers, pools, sports fields and courts, bridges, skate bowls, urban forests, outdoor lighting, electrical and water utilities, and many other assets.

DEEP DIVE: Department-Specific Capital Improvement Revenues

Quimby Fees. These fees were established pursuant to the Quimby Act which authorized the City Council to require developers of new subdivisions to dedicate land for park development or pay fees in-lieu of park dedication which are restricted to park or recreational purposes. In lieu fees are assessed at three dollars per square foot. Fees accrue to four different funds that align with city quadrants – Northwest, Southwest, Northeast and Southeast. Funds must be used on projects that will benefit the same quadrant of the City in which the fee was collected. Further, funds are to be used within five years of being collected.

Park & Recreation Facilities Tax. This is a special tax collected on the construction of new or remodeled residential dwellings. The fee is also three dollars per square foot and is assessed on new square footage only. For example, if the remodel of a dwelling is not increasing the existing square footage, then no fee would be assessed. Further, Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs) are exempt from fees for square footage up to 750 square feet. In the case of an 800 sq. ft. ADU, fees would only be assessed on 50 sq. ft, resulting in a total tax of \$150.



Associated Challenges. The department is thankful to have dedicated sources to support its capital improvement, but as with anything, there are challenges. In the case of Quimby funds, there are restrictions in how and where funds are spent. Further, in some cases timing requirements mean that the department cannot allow funds to accrue for larger projects. Instead, they must be spent down, making it hard to address larger issues and opportunities. In the case of both sources of revenue, the cycle and unpredictability of new developments makes it difficult to depend on revenues and plan long-term. In the past ten years, Park Tax and Quimby fees have delivered \$5.6 million, which is not insignificant. However, this level of funding will never be enough to address the expanding gap of deferred maintenance within the Santa Cruz park and recreation system.

To fulfill our mission and vision, the department cannot focus solely on maintaining existing infrastructure. Parks and recreation must grow and evolve with our Santa Cruz community. To do so, the department must evaluate the current state of its system amenities and prepare objective evaluations and options for consideration by the community, City Council and city leadership.

Ultimately, trade-offs may have to be made to restore this magnificent parks and recreation system to its full potential.

Active CIP Project Name	Active CIP Project Description	Allocation	FY21 Status
CIP Allocations Made in FY2021 Budget			
Grant St Park Plumbing Upgrade	Install grinder tank and new lateral in city sewer	\$35,000	In Process
Laurel Park Court Resurfacing	Resurface Laurel Park Basketball court.	\$12,000	In Process
Trail Across 135 DuBois St.	Construct a trail across the easement at 135 DuBois St.	\$80,000	In Process
Beach St. Restrooms	Renovate the Beach Street Restrooms.	\$325,000	In Process
CIP Allocations Made In Prior Budget Years			
Central Park Playground Upgrade	Install drainage, create sub base, install Pour N' Play surfacing, and new play equipment structures.	\$84,406	In Process
Lighthouse Ave Playground Upgrade	Renovate the playground at Lighthouse Avenue Park.	\$30,000	Complete
San Lorenzo Park Redesign	San Lorenzo Park redesign master planning process.	\$100,000	Pre-Planning
Sgt Derby Pickleball Courts	Construct pickleball courts at Sgt. Derby Park.	\$55,000	Pre-Planning
Trails Study	Conduct an Open Space Trails Study.	\$40,000	Pre-Planning

Operating Budget (FY2021)

Division	Adopted Expenditure Budget	Adopted Revenue Budget	Actual Expenditures	Actual Revenues	FTE
Parks	\$10,542,519	\$2,349,858	\$9,587,268	\$3,406,200	58.00
Recreation	\$3,171,226	\$1,549,068	\$2,394,891	\$849,889	16.75
Administration	\$1,673,789	\$280,675	\$1,537,666	\$105,555	9.00
Total	\$15,387,534	\$4,179,601	\$13,519,824	\$4,361,644	83.75

Public Assets

Community Facilities	8
Auditoriums	2
Community Centers	2
Museums	2
Senior Centers	2
Parks	49
Neighborhood Parks	32
Community/Regional Parks	6
Disc Golf Course	2
Ballfields (baseball, soccer, softball)	12
Basketball Courts	5.5
Beaches	4
Bike Park /Pump Tracks	5
Bocce Ball Courts	5
Community Gardens	5
Community Garden Plots	115
Dog Parks	8
Exercise Courses	6
Golf Courses	1
Horseshoe Pits	4
Lawn Bowling Greens	1
Open Spaces	7
Park Playgrounds	21
Pickleball Courts	10
Public Boat Landings	1
Reservable Picnic Areas	16
Reservable Sports Fields	11
Skate Parks	3
Swimming Pools	1
Table Tennis	3
Tennis Courts	6
Volleyball Courts (sand)	21
Wharf	1

Staffing

Employee Type	Total
Full-Time Regular Staff FTE	77.00
Part-Time Regular Staff FTE	6.75
Temporary Staff - Hours	4,645

Department Footprint

Total Acres of Parkland	1,729
Neighborhood Parkland	49
Community/Regional Parkland	332
Open Spaces	1,315
Beaches	33
Total Sq. Ft. of Facilities Maintained	169,000

Trail Network

Total Mileage of Urban Trails	23.2
Paved	13.9
Non-Paved	9.3
Estimated Mileage of Hiking Trails	13.9

Community Health

FY2020 Core Program Participation	
Adult Sports Leagues	2,703
Classes	2,076
Senior Classes	10,455
Community Events	78,662
Youth & Teens (Summer Camps, Junior Guards, Children's Theater, Interns)	1,923
Adopt-A-Park Agreements	9

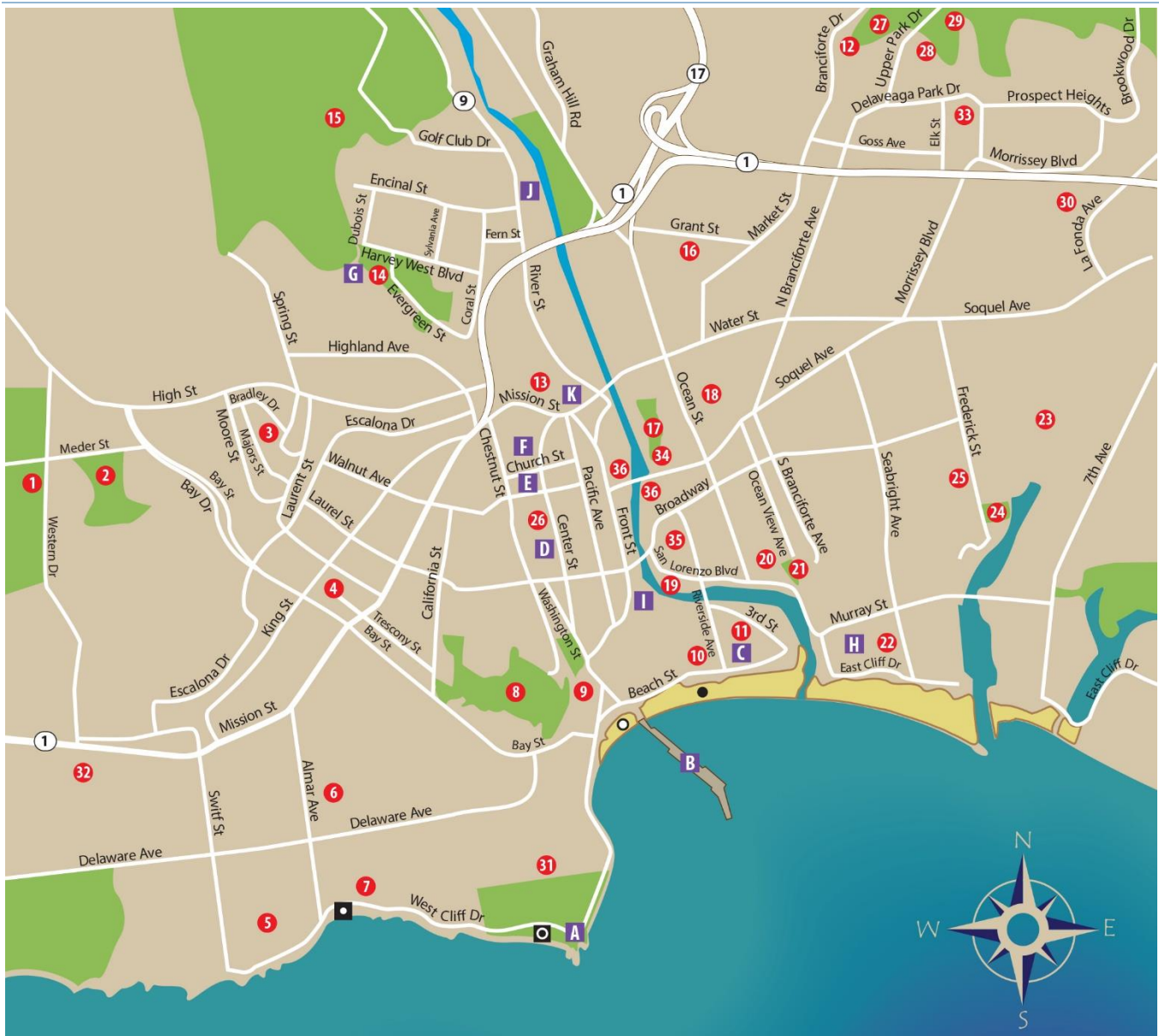
Fast facts are intended to provide public data updated once per year. Data is accurate as of July 1, 2021 and reflective of the adopted budget.

City Workload Indicators

Indicator	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22 Goal
Participants in programs, classes & events	137,268	95,819*	30,000*	102,951
Facility, field, court & picnic areas reservations	6,900	6,149*	5,224*	6,210
Tons of general refuse/green waste removed	201/126*	283/111	319/109	304/115
Annual labor hours (recreation facilities)/ 1,000 sq ft	N/A	N/A	99.54	99.54
Annual labor hours (parks and open space)/per acre	N/A	N/A	60.15	69.77
Indicator	FY19	FY20	FY21	FY22 Goal
Percent tree canopy cover	N/A	N/A	38.9	38.9
Percent of residents within a 10 minute walk to a park	96	96	85*	96
Operating expenditures per acre of parkland	\$9,198	\$8,317	\$7,825	\$9,493
Percent costs recovered from non-tax revenues	34	27	33	25

* Number impacted by COVID Shelter-In-Place Orders and subsequent COVID restrictions; italics indicate estimated number.

Parks and Recreation



Parks & Open Spaces

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1 Moore Creek Open Space Preserve 2 University Terrace Park 3 Westlake Park 4 Trescony Park 5 Sgt. Derby Park 6 Garfield Park 7 Bethany Curve Park 8 Neary Lagoon Wildlife Refuge 9 Depot Park/Bicycle Trip Bike Park and Scott Kennedy Fields 10 Beach Flats Park 11 Poet's Park 12 Branciforte Dog Park 13 Mission Plaza 14 Harvey West Park 15 Pogonip Open Space 16 Grant Park 17 San Lorenzo Park 18 Central Park 19 Ken Wormhoudt Skate Park at Mike Fox Park 20 Jessie Street Marsh Open Space | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 21 Ocean View Park 22 Tyrrell Park 23 Arana Gulch Open Space 24 Frederick Street Park 25 Star of the Sea Park 26 Laurel Park 27 DeLaveaga Park 28 DeLaveaga Golf Course 29 DeLaveaga Disk Golf 30 John Franks Park 31 Lighthouse Avenue Park 32 Pump Track 33 Pacheco Dog Park 34 Mimi de Marta Dog Park 35 Riverside Gardens Park 36 Santa Cruz River Walk (San Lorenzo River Corridor) |
|--|---|

Beaches

- Main Beach
- Cowell Beach
- Its Beach
- Mitchell's Cove (Beach)

Facilities

- A Surfing Museum
- B Santa Cruz Wharf
- C Beach Flats Community Center
- D London Nelson Community Center, Santa Cruz Teen Center and Downtown Seniors
- E Civic Auditorium
- F City Hall
- G Harvey West Clubhouse, Scout House and Pool
- H Museum of Natural History
- I Kaiser Permanente Arena
- J Tannery Arts Center
- K Town Clock



Parks
and
Recreation
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Better!

For contact details and further information, please visit:
www.santacruzparksandrec.com