



8

RECREATION

8.1 POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

8. Recreation Element

GOALS

- Parks and recreational facilities that provide recreation for Old Town San Diego residents and help preserve, protect, and enhance the community's natural, cultural and historic resources.
- The preservation, protection, and enhancement of the integrity and quality of parks and recreation programs in Old Town San Diego.
- Parks and recreational facilities that are accessible by pedestrians and bicyclists with connections to regional recreation and open space areas.

INTRODUCTION

Public Parks within Old Town San Diego are rich in historical and cultural heritage, and reflect the community's character as the birthplace of California. Old Town San Diego's small blocks and grid street network allow residents, employees and visitors to walk or bicycle to Old Town San Diego's parks and recreation center. The parks are a major component of the community's land use fabric and the pedestrian and bicycle system. The resource-based Presidio Park and the adjacent San Diego River Park provide residents with an opportunity to access regional bicycle and pedestrian trails. Old Town's parks and recreational facilities enhance the community's historic character, support livability, and provide opportunities for social interaction and spaces for passive and active recreation.

The Recreation Element aims to capitalize on the Community's location, history, and walkability. The Community Plan seeks to enhance Old Town San Diego's pedestrian environment by strengthening connections between residential sub-districts, the parks and recreation center within Old Town, and the San Diego River Park.

The Recreation Element policies coincide with the Urban Design Element and the Mobility Element that seek to reinforce the public realm by emphasizing walking and bicycling, and strengthening linkages between the different parks and the recreation center in the community, and the San Diego River Park.

The Recreation Element focuses on population-based parks and recreation facilities that serve the recreational needs of Old Town San Diego residents. The resource-based Presidio Park, County of San Diego's Heritage Park, and the Old Town State Historic Park are major visitor-serving parks for the community and the San Diego region that contain important historic landmarks. While these parks are significant community assets, they are not counted towards Old Town's population-based parks since these parks serve the citywide population and visitors.

The resource-based Presidio Park, the Old Town State Historic Park and the County of San Diego's Heritage Park are addressed in multiple elements of the Community Plan. These parks constitute large components of the land use fabric and are addressed as part of the sub-districts in the Land Use Element. The historic and cultural resources within the parks are addressed in the Historic Preservation Element, and the heritage tourism aspects of the parks are addressed in the Economic Prosperity Element.



The Presidio Community Park provides residents with opportunities for active recreation.

8.1 Population-Based Parks and Recreation Facilities

The enhancement of parks and recreation facilities within Old Town San Diego will respect the community's historic character and scale while still meeting the diverse recreational needs of residents. The General Plan establishes minimum standards and guidelines for population-based parks and recreation facilities. The Community Plan establishes the future residential population-based park and recreation facilities requirements for the community using the anticipated household population, as explained in Box 8-1.

BOX 8-1: GENERAL PLAN PARK AND RECREATION FACILITIES NEEDS

The General Plan Park and Recreation Facilities Standards require the following acreage/square footage for population-based parks, recreation centers and aquatic complexes based on the total residential population of the community (based on the planning horizon).

Population-Based Parks

- A minimum of 2.8 usable acres per 1,000 residents.
- A total household population of 2,430 results in the need of 6.8 acres of population-based parks to meet General Plan standards for Community and Neighborhood Parks.

Recreation Center

- A minimum of 17,000 square feet per recreation center to serve a population of 25,000.
- A total household population of 2,430 residents results in the need of 9.72 percent of a 17,000 square feet (1,652 square feet) recreation center to meet General Plan standards.

Aquatic Complex

- An aquatic complex serves a population of 50,000.
- A total household population of 2,430 residents results in the need of 5 percent of an aquatic complex to meet General Plan standards.

Population-based parks and recreation facilities are located within close proximity to residents and intended to serve the daily needs of the community, see Figure 8-1. Population-based parks in Old Town consist of the Presidio Community Park and the El Campo Santo Cemetery, summarized in Table 9-1. These population-based parks will continue to serve Old Town San Diego's residential population park and recreational needs. The Community Plan envisions enhancing the recreational experience and accessibility of the parks and recreational facilities within Old Town San Diego and identifies potential improvements. The community will provide guidance on the type, location, and design of any specific improvements.



The Presidio Community Park, a population-based park, provides picnic areas and passive recreation amenities for residents.



The Presidio Recreation Center offers residents space to play sports as well as organized lessons and activities.

PRESIDIO COMMUNITY PARK

Presidio Community Park was developed in 1946 and is approximately 12.21 acres, of which approximately 9.06 acres are leased as a golf course. The golf course clubhouse is the oldest adobe dwelling in San Diego, built in 1802 and is known as the Casa de Carrillo. The remaining 3.15 acres are allocated as a population-based park that contains a softball field, picnic area, a parking lot, a basketball court, passive lawn areas and the recreation center for residents. Presidio Community Park provides recreational programs and activities for population of diverse ages offered by the Park and Recreation Department. Youth and adult sports leagues also use the softball field and the recreation center.

Improvements to the Presidio Community Park could include a new outdoor children's play area, enhancements to the picnic area, the installation of pedestrian-oriented lighting and native landscaping, and the replacement of chain link fencing with fencing consistent with the community's historical character where appropriate. A public sidewalk along Jackson Drive connecting to Mason Street and sidewalk along Taylor Street toward Mission Valley to improve park access for residents are addressed in the Mobility Element.



Installation of a sidewalk along Jackson Drive and improvements to Presidio Community Park will increase recreation opportunities for Old Town residents.



Enhancements to El Campo Santo Cemetery to improve access and support visitors could include benches, interpretive signage, and accessible entrance ramps.

EL CAMPO SANTO CEMETERY

El Campo Santo is the Old Spanish Cemetery, which was laid out by the Catholic Parish of the Immaculate Conception in 1840 and used until 1880. El Campo Santo is approximately 0.28 acres in size and managed by the City's Parks & Recreation Department, and was designated as a historical landmark in 1970. The grounds include interpretive signage that helps residents and visitors understand its historical importance as an early community burial site and a bench for relaxation. The Community Plan envisions improving accessibility to El Campo Santo to support visitors seeking to appreciate the site's history and ambiance. Potential accessibility improvements could include a new ramp into the park from Linwood Street or increasing the width of the sidewalk along San Diego Avenue to allow the installation of a pedestrian ramp, without detracting from the historic character of the site. These improvements would allow people with assisted mobility devices to access the park, to enjoy the historical resource and the passive recreation to be found there, and to make use of the interpretive signs. Other improvements to support respectful recreation could include installing additional benches, installing security lighting, and enhancing the interpretive signage where appropriate, consistent with the historic character of El Campo Santo.

PRESIDIO PARK TRAILS

The Presidio Park Trails are located within the natural areas of Presidio Park and connect the Old Town community to the developed portions of the park. Existing trails are located throughout the park, proposed trail improvements include improved surfacing, trail heads, overlooks, seating, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, and trash and recycling containers. Trails will provide additional recreational opportunities and add approximately 3.37 acres of additional population-based park land.

PRESIDIO COMMUNITY PARK RECREATION CENTER

The Presidio Community Park recreation center is approximately 5,302 square feet in size and consists of an office space, a kitchen and two indoor basketball courts. The square footage of the recreation center exceeds the community's needs for a recreation center by 3,650 square feet, based on the household population at full community development. Expanding the recreation center could provide additional building space for other community needs such as multi-purpose rooms, office space, equipment storage, and other recreational activities.

AQUATIC COMPLEX

The Old Town San Diego community will meet its need for an aquatic complex through sharing two aquatic complexes with the communities of Midway – Pacific Highway, Ocean Beach and Peninsula communities.

An aquatic complex to be located at the NTC Park at Liberty Station will meet a portion of the community's aquatic recreation needs, and a second aquatic complex will meet the remainder. The Aquatic Complexes will provide a 25 to 50 meter pool and supporting facilities that include a pool building with a reception area, restrooms, showers, meeting rooms, lockers and storage.



Improvements to existing trails within Presidio Park will enhance the user experience and increase opportunities for the interpretation of the natural and cultural resources of this park.



The Presidio Community Park Recreation Center could be expanded to allow additional activities.

TABLE 8-1: POPULATION-BASED PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES INVENTORY AND RECOMMENDATIONS SUMMARY

Parks and Recreation Facilities	Existing Usable Acreage	Future Usable Acreage	Parks and Recreation Facilities Locations and Descriptions	Parks and Recreation Facilities Recommendations
Population-Based Parks				
Presidio Community Park	3.15		Existing park located at the corner of Taylor Street and Presidio Drive.	Design and construct additional recreational facilities at the Presidio Community Park, which may include: new children's play area, picnic area improvements, security lighting, fencing, and landscaping.
El Campo Santo		0.28	Existing cemetery/park located on the east side of San Diego Avenue at the intersection of Arista Street.	Design and construct additional recreational facilities at El Campo Santo which may include: interpretive signage, accessibility improvements, security lighting, and benches.
Portions of Resource-Based Parks				
Presidio Park Trails		3.37	Proposed trail improvements to existing trails within Presidio Park.	Design and construct multi-use trail improvements, of approximately 9,785 lineal feet (approximately 3.37 acres). Trail improvements could include: 10 foot wide trail with 30 inch revegetation on each side, trailheads, overlooks, walkways, interpretive signs, protective fencing, security lighting, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, benches, tables, and native landscaping, where needed and appropriate for the trail type. Specific trail segments within Presidio Park to be improved will be determined when funding is available for design and construction.
Recreation Center				
Presidio Community Park Recreation Center		N/A	Existing recreation center located at the corner of Presidio Drive and Jackson Street.	Design and construct an expansion to the existing recreation center, which may include: community meeting and multi-purpose rooms, office space, equipment storage, and other recreational activities as needed.
Aquatic Complex				
NTC/Liberty Station Aquatic Complex		N/A	Proposed shared aquatic complex to be located at NTC/Liberty Station.	Design and construct Aquatic Complexes which could include a swimming pool, universal access and water amenities such as a children's pool and a therapeutic pool, and a pool house including locker rooms, staff offices, and equipment storage facilities.
Aquatic Complex		N/A	Proposed shared aquatic complex to be located within the Peninsula or Midway-Pacific Highway communities, at a site to be identified.	

FIGURE 8-1: POPULATION-BASED PARKS



TABLE 8-2: POPULATION-BASED PARKS SUMMARY

Population-Based Parks	Usable Acreage
Proposed Population-Based Parks and Park Equivalencies	6.80
Population-Based Parks Requirements at Full Community Development	6.80
Population-Based Park Deficit at Full Community Development	0
Recreation Center	Size (Square Feet)
Existing Recreation Center	5,302
Recreation Center Required at Full Community Development	1,652
Recreation Center Surplus at Full Community Development	3,650
Aquatic Complex	Size
NTC/Liberty Station Aquatic Complex*	N/A
Proposed Aquatic Complex*	N/A
Aquatic Complexes Required at Full Community Development (% of Aquatic Complex)	5%
Aquatic Complexes Deficit at Full Community Development (% of Aquatic Complex)	0%
* Facility will be shared by multiple communities based on population-based need. Facility size may be adjusted in the future according to need.	

POLICIES

- RE-1.1** Provide improvements to the Presidio Community Park that enhance its recreational value to the community that could include new children's play area, picnic area improvements, security lighting, fencing, and landscaping.
- RE-1.2** Seek community guidance on the type, location and design of any specific population-based or park equivalency park improvements to ensure consistency with Old Town San Diego's historical character and resources.
- RE-1.3** Encourage the replacement of chain-link fencing at Presidio Community Park with fencing consistent with Old Town's historic character wherever possible given active recreation uses.
- RE-1.4** Ensure a balance of programmed and non-programmed uses as part of the community's parks and recreational facilities that meets the needs of the Old Town San Diego residents.
- RE-1.5** Preserve, protect and enhance the El Campo Santo Cemetery as a community cultural and historical resource.
- Support the installation of additional benches and enhancements to the park's interpretive signage, as appropriate.
 - Improve accessibility to El Campo Santo to allow people of all ages and abilities to access and enjoy the site.
- RE-1.6** Enhance the recreational amenities of the Presidio Community Recreation Center by expanding the building footprint to provide additional multi-purpose rooms for community use.
- RE-1.7** Provide shared aquatic complexes at Liberty Station and in the communities of Midway-Pacific Highway or Peninsula to serve the Old Town San Diego, Midway-Pacific Highway, Peninsula and Ocean Beach communities.