



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

As the birthplace of the City and State, the enhancement of parks and recreation facilities 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 9-1.

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

The General Plan Park and Recreation Facilities Standards require the following acreage 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 useable acres per 1,000 residents.
- A total household population of 1,185 results in 3.32 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 1,185 residents results in a 7 percent of a 17,000 square feet (1,090 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 1,185 residents results in a 2 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 9-1. Population-based parks in Old Town consist of the Presidio Community Park and the El Campo Santo Pocket Park, summarized in Table 9-1, which meet the community's park acreage requirements. 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, also provides open space and passive recreation amenities for residents.



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

TABLE 8-1: POPULATION-BASED PARKS SUMMARY

Existing Population-Based Parks	Useable Park Acres
Presidio Community Park (Community Park and Recreation Center)	3.15 Acres
El Campo Santo Pocket Park (Neighborhood Park)	0.28 Acres
Total Population-Based Park Acreage	3.43 Acres
Total Park Acreage Needs for Planning Horizon	3.32 Acres
Population-Based Park Acreage Surplus (Above General Plan Standards)	+0.11 Acres



Improved accessibility to the passive recreational area in El Campo Santo Pocket Park will allow more residents and visitors to enjoy its amenities.

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.

EL CAMPO SANTO POCKET PARK

El Campo Santo Pocket Park, approximately 0.28 acres, is the Old Spanish Cemetery laid out by the Catholic Parish of the Immaculate Conception in 1840. This pocket park contains benches for relaxation and interpretive signage that helps residents and visitors to understand its importance to the community's history as a burial site representative of the Mexican and American period between 1840 and 1880. The Community Plan envisions improving accessibility of El Campo Santo Pocket Park. 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. A ramp to the entrance of the park and a landing area made of porous paving would allow people with assisted mobility devices to access the park, to enjoy the passive recreation it provides, and make use of the interpretive signs. Other improvements to the pocket park could include installing additional benches and enhancing the interpretive signage where appropriate, consistent with the historic character of El Campo Santo.

PRESIDIO COMMUNITY PARK RECREATION CENTER

The Presidio Community Park recreation center is approximately 5,300 square feet in size and consists of an office space, a kitchen and two indoor basketball courts. Expanding the recreation center could provide additional building space for other community needs such as multi-purpose rooms, office space and equipment storage.

AQUATIC FACILITY

The Old Town San Diego community will share an aquatic complex with the Midway – Pacific Highway, Ocean Beach and Peninsula communities. The Aquatic Complex at the Liberty Station - NTC Park will provide pools and supporting facilities that could include a pool building with a reception area, restroom, showers, meeting rooms, lockers and storage.



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



The enhancement of El Campo Santo Park with benches and interpretive signage would improve the neighborhood pocket park.

POLICIES

- RE-1.1 Provide improvements to the Presidio Community Park that enhance its recreational value to the community that could include an enhanced children’s play area, walkways and an informational kiosk.
- RE-1.2 Seek community guidance on the type, location and design of any specific population-based park improvements to ensure consistency with Old Town San Diego’s historic character.
- 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 Pocket Park as a community cultural and historic resource.
 - a. Support the installation of additional benches and enhancements to the park’s interpretive signage, where appropriate.
 - b. Improve the accessibility of the El Campo Santo Pocket Park to allow people of all ages and abilities to access and use the park.
- 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 a shared aquatic complex at Liberty Station in the Peninsula Community to serve the Old Town San Diego, Peninsula and Midway-Pacific Highway communities.

FIGURE 8-1: POPULATION-BASED PARKS

