

# 7.0 Recreation Element

## Introduction

The Uptown Community Plan Recreation Element includes goals and recommendations addressing the following topic areas: Parks and Recreation Facilities, Preservation, Accessibility, and Open Space Lands and Resource-based Parks. These goals and recommendations, along with the broader goals and policies of the General Plan and the Balboa Park Master Plan, provide a comprehensive parks strategy intended to accommodate the community at full community development.

In addition to soliciting public input through various stakeholder meetings and the community plan update advisory committees, in August of 2011, the City commissioned a Park and Recreation Needs Assessment for the Golden Hill, North Park and Uptown Communities. The assessment was conducted by an independent research consultant to determine how and where the communities currently recreate, their priorities and preferences for future recreational uses and facilities within their communities, as well as, consideration of Balboa Park as a recreational resource. The assessment consisted of an objective, statistically-valid, random telephone survey. The survey results, which were representative of the broad and demographically-diverse communities' recreational use patterns and opinions, were contained in a report presented to each community, and have been incorporated into this plan update where appropriate. (See Appendix - X for a summary of the Park and Recreation Needs Assessment).

## 7.1 Parks and Recreation Facilities

### Goals

- ◆ To create a sustainable park and recreation system that meets the needs of Uptown residents and visitors which serves a variety of users, such as children, persons with disabilities, and the underserved teenage and senior populations.
- ◆ To provide parks and recreation facilities that keep pace with the Uptown Community population growth through timely acquisition of available land and development of new facilities.
- ◆ To increase the quantity and quality of recreation facilities in Uptown through the promotion of alternative methods, such as park equivalencies, where development of typical facilities and infrastructure may be limited by land constraints.

### Parks and Recreation Facility Standards

The City General Plan Recreation Element describes three categories of parks within the City of San Diego: Open Space Lands, Resource-based Parks, and Population-based Parks. (See Section RE-4 Open

Space Lands and Resource-Based Parks for descriptions.) Population-based parks and recreation facilities are typically located within close proximity to residents and are intended to serve the daily recreational needs of the neighborhoods and community. The General Plan standard is to provide a minimum of 2.8 useable acres of public park land per 1,000 residents.

There are six categories of population-based parks: 1) major park; 2) community park; 3) neighborhood park; 4) mini-park; 5) pocket park or plaza; and 6) special activity park. A recreation center, typically 17,000 square feet in size, should be provided for every 25,000 residents, and an aquatic complex should be provided for every 50,000 residents. The General Plan Recreation Element, Table RE-2, Parks Guidelines, provides the descriptions and minimum standards for these park and recreation facilities.

**Existing and Future Population – Based Parks and Recreation Facilities**

At full community development, the projected population for the Uptown Community is 56,025. Therefore, according to General Plan standards for population-based parks and recreation facilities, the community should be served by a minimum of 156.87 useable acres of park land at full community development. Additionally, at full community development, the projected population warrants approximately two and one-quarter recreation centers equivalent to 38,097 total square feet, and approximately one aquatic complex.

**General Plan Guideline - Parks:** *56,025 people divided by 1,000 = 56.03 x 2.8 acres = 156.87 acres of population-based parks*

**General Plan Guideline - Recreation Center:** *(17,000 square feet) serves population of 25,000: 56,025 people divided by 25,000 people = 2.24 Recreation Centers = 38,097square feet total*

**General Plan Guideline - Aquatic Complex:** *serves population of 50,000: 56,025 people divided by 50,000 people = 1.12 Aquatic Complexes*

Opportunities for additional park land and recreation facilities within the Uptown Community are anticipated to come primarily through redevelopment of private and public properties and through the application of park equivalencies. While the City’s primary goal is to obtain land for population-based parks, where vacant land is limited, unavailable or is cost-prohibitive, the City’s General Plan allows for the application of park equivalencies to be determined by the community and City staff through a set of guidelines. Facilities that may be considered as population-based park equivalencies include:

- 1) Joint use facilities;
- 2) Trails through open space;
- 3) Portions of resource-based parks;
- 4) Privately-owned, publicly-used parks;
- 5) Non-traditional parks, such as rooftop or indoor recreation facilities; and
- 6) Facility or building expansion or upgrades.

The Uptown Community is an urbanized community where park equivalencies are appropriate for satisfying some of the community's population-based park needs. The community and City staff identified and evaluated population-based park and recreation opportunities, as well as potential park equivalency sites, for their recreational value, possible uses and functions, public accessibility, consistency with General Plan policies and guidelines, and other land use policy documents (e.g., Balboa Park Master Plan). It was determined that a variety of sites and facilities within and adjacent to the Uptown Community do, or could, serve as population-based parks or park equivalencies.

Table RE-1, Population-Based Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory and Recommendations, summarizes the existing and proposed parks and equivalencies that have been selected by the Uptown Community to supplement their existing population-based park inventory. The table also includes recommendations contained in the Balboa Park Master Plan, including the Sixth Avenue Area, where appropriate, as well as recommendations generated by the community and City staff for facilities outside of Balboa Park.

**Table RE-1: Population-based Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory and Recommendations**

PARKS / RECREATION FACILITIES	EXISTING USEABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USEABLE ACREAGE	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATION AND DESCRIPTIONS	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Major Parks</b>				
None				
<b>Community Parks</b>				
None				
<b>Neighborhood Parks</b>				
Mission Hills Park (includes Pioneer Memorial Park)	8.34		Existing park consisting of passive recreation amenities, such as multi-purpose turf areas, parking lot, a children’s play area, seating, picnicking, walkways, and landscaping.	
Old Trolley Barn Park	2.92		Existing park consisting of passive recreation amenities, such as multi-purpose turf areas, a children’s play area, seating, picnicking, walkways, and landscaping.	
Reynard Way Neighborhood Park		4.72	Proposed park site on undeveloped property, consisting of multiple, privately-owned parcels, located at 3532 Reynard Way. The site consists of varied topography and a potentially historically significant building which would present some developmental challenges, but would yield many recreational opportunities. Adaptive reuse of the building for recreational purposes is a possibility.	Acquire, design and construct park amenities for active and passive recreation, such as informal multi-purpose sports field, children’s play areas, seating, picnicking, walkways, and landscaping.

PARKS / RECREATION FACILITIES	EXISTING USEABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USEABLE ACREAGE	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATION AND DESCRIPTIONS	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Mini Parks</b>				
None				
<b>Pocket Parks/Plazas</b>				
Golden Gate Drive Pocket Park		0.33	Proposed pocket park on city-owned open space land within the University Heights Open Space area directly adjacent to Golden Gate Drive.	Design and construct park amenities to include passive recreation, such as a trailhead and interpretive signage, improved trails, overlook/seating, landscaping, etc.
Laurel Street Pocket Park		0.11	Proposed pocket park on undeveloped City-owned park land.	Design and construct park amenities to support passive recreation, such as children’s play area, seating, picnicking, walkways, and landscaping.
Olive Street Park		0.36	Proposed pocket park on undeveloped city-owned park property located on Olive Street.	Design and construct park amenities to include passive recreation, such as a children’s play area, walkways, seating, picnicking, and landscaping.
West Lewis Street Pocket Park	0.35		Existing park, located between Falcon and Goldfinch Streets, comprised of passive recreational amenities, a trail, public art, interpretive signage, and seating.	Construct Phase II improvements, including the trail connection with the existing Phase I, in accordance with the approved General Development Plan.
West Maple Canyon Pocket Park		0.25	Proposed pocket park on undeveloped City owned land adjacent to the Maple Canyon Open Space area.	Construct passive park amenities including seating, interpretive signage, landscaping, and a trailhead, in accordance with the approved General Development Plan.
<b>Special Activity Parks</b>				
None				
<b>Recreation Centers</b>				
Grant K-8 School Gymnasium	N/A	N/A	Proposed gymnasium located within the Grant K-8 School site on San Diego Unified School District (SDUSD) land.	Pursue an agreement with SDUSD for joint use of the proposed 10,454 sq. ft. gymnasium. The facility would be designed and constructed by SDUSD.

**RECREATION ELEMENT**

PARKS / RECREATION FACILITIES	EXISTING USEABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USEABLE ACREAGE	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATION AND DESCRIPTIONS	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Recreation Centers</b>				
Redwood Recreation Center (within Balboa Park)	N/A	N/A	Proposed recreation facility located in the vicinity of the existing Redwood Bridge Club, between Sixth Ave., Balboa Dr., Quince and Spruce Streets.	Design and construct an approximately 10,643 sq. ft. recreation center including community meeting and multi-purpose rooms, arts & crafts, and fitness rooms.
Uptown Recreation Center (within Balboa Park)	NA	NA	Proposed recreation facility would expand or replace the existing underutilized Balboa Club building located on Sixth Ave. between Juniper and Ivy Sts. Existing uses, such as Chess Club and Horseshoe Club, could be incorporated into the new facilities.	Expand/replace the existing building with a 17,000 sq. ft. recreation center including a gymnasium, community meeting and multi-purpose rooms, arts & crafts, and fitness rooms. Incorporate the existing Chess Club and Horseshoe Club uses into the new uses, as appropriate
<b>Aquatics Complexes</b>				
Uptown Aquatics Complex	N/A	N/A	Proposed aquatics complex to be located at a site to be determined within the Uptown community.	Acquire land if the location is not within an existing park site. Design and construct an aquatics complex, sized to meet community needs, including 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.

PARKS / RECREATION FACILITIES	EXISTING USEABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USEABLE ACREAGE	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATION AND DESCRIPTIONS	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<b>Joint Use Facilities</b>				
Birney Elementary School	0.86		Existing joint use facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfield, multi-purpose courts, and hardscape for court games pursuant to long-term lease agreement. (Facility is total of 1.82 acres and is shared with North Park (0.96 acres) and Uptown (0.86 acres))	
Florence Elementary School		1.2	Proposed joint use facility at the school site.	Design and construct joint use facilities, including multi-purpose courts. Pursue a pedestrian connection between the joint use area and the future Mission Hills Library site. Enter into a Joint Use Agreement with the San Diego Unified School District.
Grant K-8 School		1.00	Proposed joint use facility at school site.	Design and construct joint use facilities, including multipurpose playfield, hard courts and gymnasium. Enter into a Joint Use Agreement with the School District.
Roosevelt Middle School	2.19		Existing joint use facilities consisting of turf multi-purpose playfields and perimeter running track pursuant to long-term agreement.	

RECREATION ELEMENT

PARKS / RECREATION FACILITIES	EXISTING USEABLE ACREAGE	FUTURE USEABLE ACREAGE	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES LOCATION AND DESCRIPTIONS	PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>Trails:</b> Useable acres credit for trails was determined by multiplying the linear footage of trail by 24'-0" width and divided by one acre in square feet (43,560)</p>				
Bankers Hill Open Space Trail		0.77	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 1,400 lineal feet, in the Bankers Hill Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities, such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, and overlooks, where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.
Buchanan Canyon Open Space Trail		0.82	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 1,500 lineal feet, in the Buchanan Canyon Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities, such as such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, overlooks, etc., where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.
Curlew Canyon Open Space Trail		0.27	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 500 lineal feet, in the Curlew Canyon Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities, such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, and overlooks, where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.
Cypress Canyon / Marston Open Space		2.31	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 4,200 lineal feet, in the Cypress Canyon/Marston Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, overlooks, etc., where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.

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<p><b>Trails:</b> Useable acres credit for trails was determined by multiplying the linear footage of trail by 24'-0" width and divided by one acre in square feet (43,560)</p>				
Hospice Point Open Space Trail		0.60	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 1,100 lineal feet, in the Hospice Point Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities, such as such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, overlooks, etc., where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.
Maple Canyon Open Space Trail		1.54	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 2,800 lineal feet, in the Maple Canyon Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities , such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, and overlooks, where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City
Mission Hills Open Space Trail		0.81	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 1,480 lineal feet, in the Mission Hills Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities, such as protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, overlooks, etc., where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.
University Heights Open Space Trail		0.16	Proposed trail amenities for the existing trails, 300 lineal feet, in the Buchanan Canyon Open Space.	Design and construct trail amenities such as benches, interpretive signs, protective fencing, native landscaping, trash and recycling containers, overlooks, etc., where needed and appropriate for the trail type, as determined and approved by City.
<p><b>Portion of Resource-Based Parks</b></p>				
Freedom Park (within Balboa Park)		2.29	Proposed park located on the north side of the War Memorial Building on Park Boulevard.	Design and construct active and passive recreation amenities and support facilities, such as seating/picnicking, security lighting, walkways, and landscaping.

**RECREATION ELEMENT**

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<b>Portion of Resource-Based Parks</b>				
Nate's Point Dog Off-leash Area (within Balboa Park)	2.75		Existing dog off-leash area at Laurel Street and Balboa Drive.	Design and construct dog off-leash area upgrades, such as drinking fountains, site furniture, security lighting, walkways, and landscaping.
Pershing Recreation Complex (within Balboa Park)		5.00	Proposed community park/sports complex located at the corner of Pershing Drive and 26 <sup>th</sup> Street. This site is currently used by City Central Operations Station facilities. This 15 acre facility will be shared with; North Park; Golden Hill; and Uptown.	Design and construct a community park/ sports complex with active recreation facilities consistent with the recommendations in the BPEMPP, subsequent to relocation of non-park, City facilities.
Presidio Neighborhood Park (within Presidio Park)	3.84		Existing neighborhood park located on Cosoy Way and Presidio Drive within Presidio Park. Existing uses include a children's play area, picnic areas and a comfort station.	Design and construct additional recreation amenities such as a picnic shelter, accessible walkways, interpretive signs, etc.
Quince Street Mini-Park (within Balboa Park)		2.30	Proposed mini park located at the southeast corner of the intersection of Balboa Drive and the Quince Street / SR-163 northbound exit ramp.	Design and construct passive recreation amenities, such as seating/picnicking, security lighting, walkways, and landscaping.
Sixth Avenue Linear Park – North (within Balboa Park)	3.55	4.45	Proposed linear park located between Sixth Avenue and Balboa Drive, from Upas Street to Quince Street.	Design and construct amenities consistent with the approved General Development Plan for the Sixth Avenue Playground located between Thorn and Spruce Streets, as well as additional passive recreational amenities in the adjacent areas such as seating, picnicking, drinking fountains, security lighting, walkways and landscaping.

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<b>Portion of Resource-Based Parks</b>				
Sixth Avenue Linear Park – Central (within Balboa Park)		21.69	Proposed linear park located between Sixth Avenue and Balboa Drive, from Quince Street to Juniper Street.	Design and construct passive recreational amenities such as seating, picnicking, drinking fountains, security lighting, walkways and landscaping.
Sixth Avenue Linear Park – South (within Balboa Park)		12.77	Proposed linear park located between Sixth Avenue and Balboa Drive, from Juniper Street to Elm Street. Existing uses include the Balboa Club building and horseshoe courts.	Design and construct amenities in coordination with the proposed Uptown Recreation Center, including incorporation of the horseshoe courts, as well as additional passive recreational amenities in the adjacent areas such as seating, picnicking, drinking fountains, security lighting, walkways and landscaping.
<b>Privately-Owned Park Sites</b>				
None				
<b>Non-Traditional Park Sites</b>				
Normal Street Linear Park		1.60	Proposed linear park located within the Normal Street right-of-way, including the medians.	Design and construct a variety of passive recreational and community uses, including a children’s play area and flexible opportunities for the weekly farmer’s market and other community events. Coordinate with the State’s redevelopment efforts of the DMV office site, where appropriate.
<b>Facility or Building Expansion or Upgrade</b>				
None				

**Summary of Existing and Proposed  
Population-based Parks and Recreation Facilities**

<b>POPULATION BASED PARKS</b>	<b>USEABLE ACRES</b>
Existing Population-based Parks and Park Equivalencies	24.80 acres
Proposed Population-based Parks and Park Equivalencies	65.35 acres
Total Existing and Proposed Population-based Parks and Equivalencies	90.15 acres
Population-based Park Requirements at full community development	156.87 acres
<b>Population-based park deficit at full community development</b>	<b>66.72 acres</b>
<b>RECREATION CENTERS</b>	
	<b>SQUARE FEET</b>
Existing Recreation Centers:	0
Proposed Recreation Center: Grant K-8 School Gymnasium	10,454 SF
Proposed Recreation Center: Redwood Recreation Center	10,643 SF
Proposed Recreation Center: Uptown Recreation Center	17,000 SF
Total Existing and Proposed Recreation Centers	27,454 SF
Recreation Center Requirement at full community development	38,097 SF
<b>Recreation Center deficit at full community development</b>	<b>No Deficit</b>
<b>AQUATIC COMPLEX</b>	
	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
Existing Aquatic Complexes	0
Proposed Aquatic Complexes: Uptown Aquatic Complex	1.12
Total Existing and Proposed Aquatic Complexes	1.12
Aquatic Complexes Requirement at full community development	1.12
<b>Aquatic Complexes deficit at full community development</b>	<b>No Deficit</b>

Through this community plan update, City staff and community members have identified almost three times as much new population-based park land and park equivalency sites within and adjacent to the Uptown community than currently exists. The plan identifies projects that will provide all of the recreation center space required to serve the community at full projected development, and identifies the need for an aquatic complex, at a future site to be determined. These proposals represent significant achievements towards implementing the community's goals. Staff will continue to work with community members to seek future opportunities for provision of parks and recreation facilities. In addition to the inclusion of these projects in the Uptown Public Facilities Financing Plan, identification of potential donations, grants and other funding sources for project implementation will be an ongoing effort. Figure RE-1, Parks, Recreation Facilities and Open Space, depicts the approximate locations of existing and proposed open space, parks, recreation facilities and park equivalencies.



**POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- RE-7.1.1 Pursue land acquisition for the creation of new public parks and recreation facilities with a special effort to locate new park land and facilities in the central and northwestern areas of the community, especially through urban infill and redevelopment proposals.
- RE-7.1.2 Pursue park equivalencies identified in Table RE-1, Population-based Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory and Recommendations, and as opportunities arise.
- RE-7.1.3 In areas of the community where there are land constraints, encourage new private development proposals to include recreational facilities within their land holdings to serve existing, as well as new residents. Provision of non-traditional park and recreation amenities should be considered on rooftops of buildings and parking structures, and/or on the ground level or within new buildings.
- RE-7.1.4 As public agency land or buildings are redeveloped, active or passive recreation should be incorporated into buildings, support facilities (e.g., parking structures), or the surrounding exterior lands, where space allows.
- RE-7.1.5 Increase recreational opportunities by acquiring and developing land through street/alley rights-of-way vacations (paper streets), where appropriate and legally defensible, to provide for park and recreation uses.
- RE-7.1.6 Promote safety of Uptown parks by providing park designs that incorporate the City's 'Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design' (CPTED) measures (see General Plan Policy UD-A.17).
- RE-7.1.7 Construct the proposed Pershing Recreation Complex as recommended by the Balboa Park East Mesa Precise Plan to serve the North Park, Golden Hill and Uptown Communities.
- RE-7.1.8 Create a 17,000 square foot Uptown Recreation Center to accommodate community recreational needs by expanding or replacing the existing Balboa Club building. Incorporate existing uses such as the Chess Club into the new Recreation Center. Reconfigure the site to accommodate relocated horseshoe courts and other active recreation uses such as a children's play area.
- RE-7.1.9 Explore the possibility of renovating and expanding the existing Mission Hills-Hillcrest Library located at West Washington and Hawk Streets to accommodate community recreational needs, after the library is relocated to a new site at Washington and Front Streets adjacent to Florence Elementary School. Coordinate with the adjacent Fire Station #8 to incorporate activity space which could be jointly used, such as community meeting

rooms and multi-purpose rooms, fitness center, parking lot, etc. Determine short term and long term uses appropriate for the site.

- RE-7.1.10 Implement the Sixth Avenue Children’s Park approved General Development Plan, located along Sixth Avenue in the Marston Point Area.
- RE-7.1.11 Encourage development of parks within residential mixed-use developments, and clustered with other public facilities.
- RE-7.1.12 Pursue lease agreements with public agencies (e.g., San Diego Unified School District, Caltrans, etc.) to incorporate active or passive recreation into existing buildings or surrounding grounds, where non-programmed space is available and appropriate for public use.
- RE-7.1.13 Work with the State Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) to explore the possibility of providing a public park within the redevelopment of the DMV site on Normal Street.
- RE-7.1.14 Acquire land, design and construct an Aquatic Complex for the Uptown community.
- RE-7.1.15 Explore the possibility of providing a public park within the redevelopment of the San Diego Unified School District’s Campus on Normal Street.
- RE-7.1.16 Acquire land or pursue a lease agreement with Caltrans for passive recreation uses in the Cal Trans right of way located along Washington Avenue from the SR 163 east to Maryland and Richmond Streets, in the vicinity of the Vermont Bridge. This site, referred to by community members as Mystic Park, is located in the Cabrillo Freeway Historic District.

## 7.2 Preservation

### GOALS

- ◆ To preserve, protect and enhance the integrity and quality of existing parks, open space, and recreation programs in the Uptown Community.
- ◆ To create a sustainable park and recreation system that meets the needs of Uptown residents by using “green” technology and sustainable practices in all new and retrofitted projects.
- ◆ To preserve, protect and manage the natural, cultural, and historic resources that serve as recreation facilities in the Uptown Community.

The demand for park and recreation opportunities will continue to grow as the population of the Uptown Community continues to grow. Undeveloped land for parks has already become difficult to find in the Uptown Community making preservation of the existing open space and resource-based parks

essential to providing recreation opportunities in this community. Preservation can include improvements to existing facilities to increase their life span, or expand their uses and sustainability. The western mesa of Balboa Park will continue to serve as the main recreation venue for the community, but with increased demand and usage, the facilities will need to be reconstructed, upgraded and expanded with sustainable and green technology features, to optimize the space to be fully utilized and to provide new recreation amenities that are needed by the existing and future community residents.

Preservation can also include the enhancement of resource-based parks and open space that provides a balance between protecting the natural resources and allowing for a certain level of public recreation use. For the Uptown Community, this would mean concentrating active recreational use improvements towards larger resource-based parks, and focusing passive use improvements at various open space areas, mini-parks and pocket parks. Aside from trails, only passive uses are allowed in the City's MHPA, therefore, to protect the natural resources and still add recreation value, interpretive signs should be featured at open space parks to educate the public on the unique natural habitat, scenic value and the history of the place.

#### **POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- RE-7.2.1 Expand/Upgrade the recreation facilities on the western mesa of Balboa Park consistent with the Balboa Park Master Plan to meet existing and future demand. Use sustainable methods and materials (such as native and low-water using plants), and "green" technology that also respects any historical significance of the area.
- RE-7.2.2 Preserve, expand and enhance existing park and recreation facilities to increase their life span, or expand their uses and sustainability.
- RE-7.2.3 Provide sufficient human and economic resources to preserve and enhance the existing parks and open space areas serving the Uptown Community.
- RE-7.2.4 Preserve and protect City-owned open space canyons within the community by limiting public use to designated trails and providing interpretive signs to explain the biologic and scenic value of the open space systems.
- RE-7.2.5 Preserve, protect and restore canyons and hillsides as important visual features of community definition.
- RE-7.2.6 Provide pocket parks with ecologically-sensitive recreational uses as enhanced gateways to open space lands.
- RE-7.2.7 Protect and preserve native species and the unique habitats they depend upon within the open space systems consistent with the MSCP guidelines. (See Conservation Element.)

## 7.3 Accessibility

### GOALS

- ◆ Enhance recreation facilities in the Uptown Community by optimizing pedestrian, bicycle, public transit, automobile, and alternative modes of travel.
- ◆ Design all new recreation facilities for an inter-connected park and open space system that is integrated into and accessible to Uptown Community residents.
- ◆ Retrofit all existing park and recreational facilities to meet the 1990 Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) to accommodate persons with all disabilities.
- ◆ Provide a balance of recreational facilities in the Uptown Community that are available for programmed and non-programmed uses.
- ◆ Create comprehensive pedestrian and bicycle connections between parks and open space lands within and adjacent to the Uptown Community, as well as to surrounding communities.

Accessibility within the Uptown Community has three main components: 1) all facilities should be located within walking distance of neighborhoods and employment centers; 2) facilities should be accessible to the broadest population possible; and 3) facilities should be open for use by the general public with a balance between programmed and non-programmed activities.

All parks and recreation facilities within the Uptown Community are planned to be linked by a network of existing and proposed transit routes, bikeways, and/or pedestrian paths. For a discussion of future accessibility and linkages to parks and open space see the Mobility Element.

All new and existing parks and recreation facilities within the Uptown Community are required to meet ADA guidelines when they are constructed or retrofitted for improvements or upgrades. This could include adding accessible pedestrian ramps, providing paved pathways at acceptable gradients that lead from a public street sidewalk or parking area to a children's play area or other park destination (referred to as the "path of travel"), providing disabled parking spaces, remodeling of restrooms and building interiors.

Accessibility also means the availability of active and passive recreation to all community residents. When special uses are designed into parks, such as dog off-leash areas or community gardens, these areas should also include amenities, such as pathways, benches, exercise stations, or picnic tables on the perimeter that could accommodate more than one type of user and enhance the recreational and leisure experience. Special uses, such as dog off-leash areas and community gardens, would be required to undergo a City approval process prior to facility design.

## POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- RE-7.3.1 Ensure all existing and future parks and recreation facilities meet local, state and federal accessibility guidelines.
- RE-7.3.2 Retain and enhance pedestrian and bicycle paths within Balboa Park, especially within the West Mesa, to connect with the surrounding community.
- RE-7.3.3 Provide an information kiosk and map at the gateways to the community that identifies all parks that serve the Uptown Community and how to get to each by walking, biking or public transit.
- RE-7.3.4 Develop and increase access to senior and youth services, activities and facilities wherever possible within the community's public park and recreation system, such as for the Chess Club, Horseshoe Club, and Bridge Club within the West Mesa of Balboa Park.
- RE-7.3.5 Ensure all new park and recreation facilities within the community are inter-connected and accessible to Uptown residents.

## 7.4 Open Space and Resource-based Parks

### GOALS

- ◆ Provide an open space and resource-based park system in the Uptown Community that provides for the preservation and management of significant natural and man-made resources.
- ◆ Protect the natural terrain and drainage systems of Uptown's open space lands and resource-based parks to preserve the natural habitat and cultural resources.
- ◆ Provide a system of pedestrian paths and bikeways linking population-based parks with resource-based parks and open space lands within the Uptown Community

Open space lands are City-owned lands located throughout the City, consisting of canyons, mesas, and other natural landforms. This open space is intended to preserve and protect native plants and animals, while providing public access and enjoyment by the use of hiking, biking and equestrian trails. See Figure RE-1, Parks, Recreation Facilities and Open Space.

In the Uptown Community, there are several open space canyons that provide opportunities for experiencing the natural environment through low intensity recreational uses, such as hiking (approximately 13,280 lineal feet) and bird watching. Any proposed improvements to existing trail systems shall be in compliance with Natural Resource Management Plans, if any, or other governing documents.

Resource-based parks are located at sites of distinctive natural or man-made features and serve the citywide population and visitors alike. Balboa Park is an approximately 1,200-acre regional facility contiguous to the southeastern edge of the Uptown Community, as well as to the North Park and Golden Hill Communities, which contains specialty gardens and horticultural interests, and houses numerous arts, educational, recreational, social and sports organizations, primarily on the Central Mesa. The adopted Balboa Park Master Plan governs the future development and enhancements within the western area of the park, located between Sixth Avenue and State Highway 163, and Upas Street and Interstate 5, which is intended to remain primarily as free and open parkland. Any expansions or enhancements of recreation facilities should not encroach on open parkland, landscaped areas or plazas. Recommended improvements within Balboa Park to serve the Uptown Community are included in Table RE-1, Population-based Parks and Recreation Facilities Inventory and Recommendations.

### **POLICIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

- RE-7.4.1 Protect and enhance the natural resources of open space lands by re-vegetating with native drought tolerant plants and utilizing open wood fences, where needed, adjacent to very sensitive areas to provide additional protection while still allowing views into the area.
- RE-7.4.2 Require all storm water and urban run-off drainage into resource-based parks or open space lands to be filtered or treated before entering the area.
- RE-7.4.3 Provide recognizable entrances (trailheads) to the Mission Hills Open Space and Maple Canyon Open Space systems. The trailheads should include a kiosk that includes a way finding map that shows how the canyon interfaces with the Uptown Community, as well as interpretive signage to educate users on the sensitive natural and cultural habitats and unique biologic and scenic qualities of these areas.
- RE-7.4.4 Pursue public access easements for approximately 2,300 linear feet of existing trails located on privately-owned open space within the Buchanan Canyon (2,000 LF) and Mission Hills (300 LF) Open Space Lands where appropriate to maintain connectivity between trail segments.