EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 Purpose
1.2 Scope

1.1 PURPOSE

El Cerrito’s Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan will shape the future of the City’s parks, open spaces, and recreation facilities, creating a framework for the services in El Cerrito’s recreation network. The Master Plan assesses the City’s existing conditions, identifies the community’s recreation needs, prioritizes recommendations, and generates a plan for the long-term maintenance and enhancement of the City’s parks and facilities.

This plan includes:

• El Cerrito’s recreation, park, and open space assets
• The recreation services provided by the City
• Current and future recreation opportunities for the El Cerrito community
• Current and future maintenance needs of the City’s parks and recreation facilities
• Prioritized project recommendations for the maintenance, rehabilitation, and improvement of El Cerrito’s parks and recreation facilities

1.2 SCOPE

The scope of El Cerrito’s Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan includes an inventory and assessment of the community’s existing recreation system, community input gathering, exploration of potential enhancement and expansion projects, and priority setting. The Master Plan looks at the significant maintenance and rehabilitation needs of the City’s aging parks and recreation facilities with the intent to identify the necessary repairs and upgrades so that facilities will be sustainably maintained in the future. To help set priorities for improvements, the Plan also assesses community needs in recreation and enhancement opportunities.

INVENTORY AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The inventory and needs assessment of the Master Plan surveys the City’s existing park and recreation facilities, reviews previous planning efforts, and analyzes the community’s demographic and recreational profile. From this, the inventory and needs assessment identifies where community demand is not met by the City’s supply of recreation services.

El Cerrito’s park and recreation system encompasses 16 City parks, one greenway, two special-use open spaces, and 15 recreation buildings. The City maintains and operates 175 acres of parkland, of which 102 acres remain dedicated open space. The City owns 155 acres of parkland and maintains 20 acres of parkland that is owned by the West Contra Costa Unified School District (WCCUSD) (6.5 acres), the City of Richmond (1.5 acres), and BART (12 acres).

Overall, the City’s recreation network receives active community use. However, aging amenities, significant deferred maintenance, and limited opportunity for program expansion negatively impact the City’s provision of recreation services to the community. Additional funding is needed to provide recreation services for youth, teens, and adults which are a priority for the community.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

Extensive community outreach was utilized throughout the master planning process. This outreach included the establishment of a guiding Community Advisory Group (CAG), interviews with parks and recreation Stakeholders, three community workshops, an online survey, and two public study sessions with the El Cerrito Park and Recreation Commission.
Executive Summary

The following are strong themes from the community outreach process:

- Overall, the community is satisfied with the City’s existing supply of and access to parks and recreation facilities and programs
- Many community members view the Hillside Natural Area and Ohlone Greenway as valued recreation amenities that are unique to El Cerrito
- There is a desire to update and improve the City’s existing recreation facilities and programs, to modernize and to meet demands in use
- There is a strong desire for improved general maintenance in the City’s parks – restrooms, waste removal, etc.
- The community is interested in pedestrian access throughout the City’s recreation network – walking and biking
- The community is interested in supporting youth recreational programming – toddler amenities, teen programming, and youth enrichment opportunities

PROJECT IDENTIFICATION AND REFINEMENT

The El Cerrito parks and recreation network has significant deferred maintenance and rehabilitation projects requiring an assessment and systematic prioritization for these projects, while also addressing potential improvements to serve identified recreational need in the community. The Consultant worked with the CAG, City staff, and community input to assess and refine improvements for El Cerrito’s parks and recreation facilities.

The City is faced with high demand and insufficient space to meet the community’s existing recreation needs. The space that is available to the community for recreation programming requires extensive renovation and updates to meet current and future recreation programming. To fulfill its mission of providing the opportunities, resources, and services that will enhance quality of life and create community connections, the Recreation Department’s recreational, educational, and cultural offerings will require expansion.

GOAL AND PRIORITY SETTING

To establish priorities for El Cerrito’s recreation enhancements, the Master Plan is guided by the following overarching goals:

Goal A: Enhance El Cerrito’s Park Network
Goal B: Enhance El Cerrito’s Recreation Facilities
Goal C: Support Recreation Programs
Goal D: Improve Pathways and Trails
Goal E: Improve Natural Areas

In addition to these goals, prioritizing criteria were created through the input of the CAG, City staff, and the community. Combined with a detailed financial analysis of potential park projects, and the identified prioritizing criteria, the overarching goals support the selection of priority projects that will serve the community’s existing and future recreational needs.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Master Plan identifies $9.7 million in existing parks and recreation building deficiencies. This cost includes ADA deficiencies, urban forest management, and the in-kind feature replacement for items at the end of their useful life throughout the City’s parks and recreation buildings as identified through update of the 2004 Structural Facilities Management Plan and the 2003 Landscape Management Plan. The $9.7 million in existing park and recreation building deficiencies does not include
additional amenities or facilities, but the as-is cost to improve the recreation network as it currently is.

The Master Plan recommendations identify $22.3 million in desired park and recreation building improvements and enhancements. These improvements would enhance and expand the City’s recreation network while addressing deficient items. Should the recommended improvements be implemented, many of the identified park and recreation deficiencies will be addressed. The balance of the deficient items will be addressed through the implementation of identified maintenance budget enhancements.

In total, the Master Plan includes 180 projects or implementation activities, of which 128 are estimated to have costs of $22.3 million. 52 projects are not assigned a cost as they are policy and program changes or are not sufficiently defined to estimate implementation. This value reflects hard costs only—future planning will need to account for contingencies such as design, administration, and construction management. With a contingency of 35% (20% contingency and 15% soft costs) the recommendations are estimated to be $30.1 million.

Recommended projects are categorized as follows:

- **(IWP) Immediate Work Priorities**—items/assets that are failing and have reached the end of their useful life (assessed as ‘poor’ in the 2018 Inventory and Deficiencies Assessment)
- **(P) Policy/Program**—recommendations related to park or asset program or City policy
- **(EW) Early Wins**—recommendations with an implementation cost of $20,000 or less
- **(DEF) Deficiencies**—recommendations related to code, regulation compliance, and ADA accessibility
- **(ENP) Enhancement/New Project**—recommendations that support park and asset enhancement or the creation of a new amenity

### Table 1. Recommendation Type, Number, and Cost

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation Type</th>
<th>Projects</th>
<th>Known Costs</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(IWP) Immediate Work Priority</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>$657,765, for 19 projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>(P) Policy/Program</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>NA*</td>
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<tr>
<td>(EW) Early Wins</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>$228,700, for 27 projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>(DEF) Deficiency</td>
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<td>$4,969,449, for 36 projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>(ENP) Enhancement/New Project</td>
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<td>$16,371,380, for 46 projects</td>
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<tr>
<td>Recommendations Total</td>
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<td>35% Contingency</td>
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<tr>
<td>Swim Center Capital Projects*</td>
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<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>$37,650,217</td>
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* A more detailed analysis was conducted for anticipated Swim Center Projects, please see page 137.

In addition to the recommended projects, the Master Plan determines that the total maintenance enhancement needed to maintain existing facilities and parks to the standards desired by the public is an additional $800,000 in current dollars, annually. To fund the implementation of these recommendations, an exploration of funding sources is included in the Master Plan. Existing or potential funding sources include:

- Measure A Extension
- Landscape and Lighting Assessment District (LLAD)
- Development Impact Fees and Development Related Payments
- Enhanced General Fund Revenues
- Community Facilities District (CFD)
- Grant Funding
- State Department of Parks and Recreation
- Charitable Contributions and Donor Campaigns

A **conceptual financing strategy is also included** in the Master Plan. This strategy phases the project recommendations over a 20-year time frame to correspond with revenue potential and the availability of bond funding. Phasing is based on recommendation type and priority assessment.

Figure 1 details the relationship between the Master Plan’s appendices.
Community input and community priorities established in the *Master Plan*

Previous planning efforts related to the *Master Plan*

Assessment of current recreation program offerings

Inventory of existing recreation network conditions and the in-kind cost to replace failing features

Detailed breakout of recommendation costs for recommendations with established scope (known costs). (Includes cost of deficiencies - Appendix D - where applicable)

Illustrative phasing strategy for recommendations with known costs, over 20 years

Complete list of all *Master Plan* recommendations organized by Site, Priority Score, and Recommendation Type