

FINAL DRAFT
November 2008

CITY OF SOUTH GATE



Parks and Recreation Master Plan



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CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

executive summary

INTRODUCTION

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan (Master Plan) is based on the vision that recreation facilities, programs, and open space are important resources within the City of South Gate, enhancing community health, enriching the lives of residents, and contributing to a unique community identity and quality of life.

The Master Plan is an implementation tool of the General Plan, providing strategies for addressing the General Plan's set of goals and policies based on current analysis and community input.

What recreational facilities and programs does South Gate have? Who uses South Gate's facilities and programs? What role do parks, facilities, open space, and recreation programs have in the lives of residents? What type of facilities and programs does the City need? How will the use of the existing facilities be designated? As new facilities become available where will these facilities and programs be placed and how will they be funded?

These are the key questions discussed and answered by this Master Plan. To some, parks are active sports fields; others have images of passive open spaces with walking trails and view points; still others may envision parks as places for community gatherings and events. In actuality parks and recreation facilities are used for all of these purposes.

There are many important organizations such as the California Park and Recreation Society and the National Recreation and Parks Association that describe the many important ways recreation facilities and programming can help in creating healthy lifestyles and livable communities. Some of these ways are:

- *Strengthen community identity and sense of place.*
- *Protect important places (environmentally, historically, aesthetically, and culturally).*
- *Encourage human contact and education.*
- *Support economic development.*
- *Preserve cultural unity.*
- *Encourage fitness and health.*
- *Provide social meeting places.*
- *Support families.*

Through a comprehensive inventory of the recreation resources available in South Gate, and an understanding of resident demand, the Master Plan provides a blueprint for how to meet the recreation needs of the community and to enhance quality of life for all South Gate residents and visitors.

PURPOSE OF THE MASTER PLAN

The purpose of the Master Plan is to provide a realistic guide for the creative, orderly development and management of recreation facilities and programs for South Gate. Through the Master Plan process new information was obtained from community input that has resulted in an up to date understanding of current and future recreation and park needs and opportunities specific to South Gate.

The Master Plan provides data and analysis that lead to recommendations that establish how South Gate should maintain and develop recreation facilities and programs throughout the City now and into the future. The Master Plan covers a time period from 2008 through 2020 and is intended to be a flexible document, presenting findings and recommendations that will be evaluated,

validated, and/or modified periodically as the City responds to unforeseen issues and opportunities as well as changes in residents' needs and demands.

It is anticipated that Master Plan recommendations will be considered on an annual basis in the context of other City projects and, as appropriate, Park and Recreation projects will begin the process of implementation through incorporation into the City's budget.

HIGHLIGHTS OF EACH CHAPTER

The following presents the highlights of each chapter of the document. While the reader is encouraged to read each individual chapter in the document, this overview will provide a quick reference to what the key findings were in each chapter and offers a summary for a speedy review of the document.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter summarizes the purpose and process of the Master Plan. It details the scope and intention of the Master Plan, describes the planning process, outlines the public involvement and presents how the report is organized. The Master Plan identifies realistic goals for the future and methods to achieve successful development in a parks and recreation system that will contribute to the well-being of the community.

Chapter 2 – Planning Context

This chapter provides an overview and description of the study area for the Master Plan. It is important to understand both the regional and local context of the planning area in order to determine its specific needs for park and recreation services. Some of the planning context highlights are:

- *South Gate is located in Los Angeles County in the flat plain area that is the Los Angeles basin. The Los Angeles River and the Rio Hondo River merge within the City of South Gate*

- *South Gate lies close to both North/South and East/West of the major transportation corridors of the 710 freeway and the 105 freeway.*
- *Surrounded by light industrial areas and similar residential communities such as South Gate the City resident are wanting for more green and open spaces to balance the surrounding urban space.*
- *The City evolved from a site once populated by Gabrielino Indian Villages which then became a large Spanish Land grant. Progress saw the community change from ranchos, to dairies, to farms and finally to the urban community it is today*
- *Incorporated in 1923 with a population of 2,500, the City population is now 103,000.*
- *The City held major manufacturing companies prior to 1970, and is now the home of small industrial business areas, residential and retail areas.*
- *Community profile of South Gates current population holds a majority of persons of Hispanic origin with nearly one-third of the residents are non-citizens.*
- *Housing numbers in South Gate show 47% homeownership with half of the population in rental units. Persons per household rate is high at 4.2; 80% of the housing units are 40 years old.*
- *South Gate was at one time occupied by large commercial enterprises, current South Gate Land Use percentages are:*
 - *Business and manufacturing, etc. 40%*
 - *Residential 42%*
 - *Government, Public, Open Space 8%*
- *At 96.8 acres, South Gate Park is situated at the eastern edge of the residential areas and the western edge of the city commercial areas. It is the recreation center of the City.*
- *Census information shows that 54% of the population over the age of 25 have less than a high school diploma*

- *The City of South Gate has endured major economic hardships and continues to face difficult financial choices including parks and recreation services*
- *Largest sector of the South Gate community consists of young families with children 0 to 19 years of age*
- *Planning for future parks and recreation services for the community of South Gate will be influenced by trends identified by National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) including:*
- *Increased demand for parks and recreation services and facilities, security, and maintenance*
- *Sharing of facilities between parks and schools along with financial partnering between public and private sectors*
- *Recreation's increased role for healthy communities*
- *The aging of the "Baby Boomer" generation and the increased demand for senior citizen programs, activities and facilities*
- *The increasing need for facilities to serve people of all abilities and all age groups*

Chapter 3 – Existing Parks and Facilities

Understanding the existing conditions in the community is an essential step in the Master Plan process. Chapter 3 provides an inventory of City recreation facilities as well as other recreation facilities open to the public and includes discussion of public school facilities, private recreation facilities and a listing of other publicly owned lands, (opportunity sites,) within and surrounding the City limits.

This chapter defines the characteristics of community parks, neighborhood parks, regional parks, natural open space and special use areas. An inventory of current park and recreation facilities serving the community along with photographs of the park is included.

There is a discussion of the non-profit organizations that both offer their own programs and activities and share facilities with the City enabling it to offer needed programs and activities.

Chapter 4 – Recreation Programs and Services

South Gate residents enjoy a variety of recreation activities, programs and services. The City along with various nonprofit organizations and community groups offer many recreation pursuits to the community tailored to different age groups along with family support services.

Chapter 4 summarizes the recreation program analysis which included a review of the current level of recreation program and services offered by the City of South Gate Recreation Services Department. Chapter 5 contains the program needs assessment that was completed by using the community input given in Chapter 4 and the demographic trends analysis done in Chapter 2.

Recommendations to address the identified recreation program and facility needs are included in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

The program inventory includes youth services, adult services, senior services and facility-based programs and special events.

Youth services provide activities to meet the recreational and social needs of South Gate's Youth. For the very young children there are family oriented programs where the parent attends along and participates with the child. Kindergarten readiness classes offer group socialization and preparation for pre-school. A partnership between the City and Human Services Association is held at the Westside Resource Center.

The City provides fields and courts in partnership with AYSO and JAA, thus providing a wide range of athletic programs for ages 3-17, emphasizing team

sports. Along with team sports for this age group the City provides lessons in karate, tae kwon do, tennis, volleyball and golf.

The Swim Stadium at South Gate Park provides opportunities for swim lessons and competitive sports programs and events.

Services for adults 16 years and over promote physical fitness, mental-well being, and social interaction. A wide variety of classes for adults is offered including arts and crafts, swimming, team and individual sport activities, educational classes such as guitar and piano and more.

Senior Services are designed to meet the health, recreational, and social needs of adults who are 55 years or older. The newly renovated Senior Center located in South Gate Park offers classes in physical fitness, fine arts/crafts and cultural excursions. Weekly health screenings are available to the senior adults as well as an annual health fair.

Through the communities input there has been expressed concern that the current programs offerings have been hurt by the critical financial situation faced by the City, now and in the past. Offerings have decreased and high quality instructors are hard to retain. There is an expressed desire to improve upon and expand existing recreational services by making them available and accessible to more members of the community. This desire is especially concerned with the youth of the community.

Some key issues and concerns expressed by the community during the public outreach sessions include:

- *Timely communication of recreation activities and special events is missing due to the City not having its own local newspaper.*
- *There seems to be a lack of consistency in program offerings.*

- *The current locations of parks and recreation facilities are not balanced through out the City. This makes recreational services and programs difficult for some to participate. This is more evident on the west side of South Gate.*
- *Due to changing demographics, new trends, busy life styles, changing personal economic situations City recreation programs and services, (including youth team sports participation parent volunteers), have seen a falling off in participation. Other factors expressed by the community input site expense and lack of childcare. Residents felt programming needs to be continually reviewed to meet the changing demands and time constraints of today's society.*
- *The increase in the senior population and the popularity of the Senior Center and its programs the community believes the Recreation Department needs to provide more space, more programs and larger facilities. There is a need for extended schedules for local transportation to the Senior Center. It is difficult to participate in the afternoon programs as the shuttles are not available*
- *The community input, although wishing more opportunities did express the realization that the Parks Department was doing an excellent job of providing recreation programs and services given the facility and financial resources available to the department.*

Chapter 5 – Needs Assessment

The purpose of a needs assessment is to quantify and understand both the facility and recreational programs needs of the community. Long range planning requires the understanding the nature of the community, its recreation desires and needs. This includes the ability to provide the services that are determined necessary to the community.

This report assesses the recreational programming and park facilities needs of the City of South starting with national and state trends, past levels of service, public involvement and identified community desires.

The facilitation process for community input were the consultant's attendance at special community events, public participation in a Visioning Fair, distribution and tabulation of a Parks and Recreation Questionnaire, a Youth Internet Survey via Survey Monkey, direct interviewing of community stakeholders and Focus Group meetings with special interest topics.

Key findings of community demands and needs from the public input process are:

- *The desire for increased level of park and facility maintenance*
- *Addressing graffiti and vandalism should be a first priority*
- *Pursue creative and non-traditional ways of developing funding for the Park System*
- *Pursue partnership agreements with commercial, non profit organizations and the Los Angeles Unified School District for future facility development and programming*
- *Address the recreation needs of the west side of the City*
- *Add more special cultural and musical community events for socialization and celebration*
- *Increase and formalize the process for volunteer opportunities*
- *Creative re-engagement of the teen population*
- *The need to look at land uses and facilities to meet the future demographic profile of South Gate at South Gate Park*

As part of the Master Plan process, a park evaluations and facility needs analysis was completed for assessing what new amenities and park facilities need to be part of the planning for the future. Included in the evaluations are Cesar Chavez Park, Circle Park, Gardendale Tot Lot, Hollydale Community Park, Hollydale Regional Park, South Gate Park, State Street Park and Westside Community Center, Stanford Park, and Triangle Park.

For specific park evaluations refer to the information in Chapter 5. Along with the community input, evaluations of current conditions of the facilities, consideration of the recreational trends for urban areas, key issues and recommendations and development policies are summarized in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7.

Chapter 6 – Recommendation & Policies

This Chapter provides recommendations and actions that should be undertaken to help the City develop and improve adequate recreation facilities to meet community needs and demands.

Included in Appendix A is a Facility Condition Assessment Report which covers all of the facility assessments for all City Parks and Recreation Buildings. Funding and implementation strategies for the recommendations are contained in Chapter 7. Recommendations for each park were developed based on the community outreach input process, facilities inventory and analysis, the community needs assessment, interviews with staff and stakeholder, and analysis to enable the City to meet future park and recreation demands.

Recreation programs and services recommendations support the community's identification of the most important benefits of recreation programming.

Recommendations are presented by park or facility and by age group. Policy recommendations will help City staff in their efforts to implement the program and facility recommendations.

Chapter 7 – Implementation Strategies for Recommendations

This section analyzes and presents conclusions, policy goals and recommendations along with the capital project and program recommendations presented in Chapter 6. The section presents a prioritized Capital Improvement Program that should guide the City as to the sequence or

relative importance of allocating financial resources for implementing the recommendations. Additionally, this section gives possible funding and/or financing strategies for the City to pursue.

To address the results of the Demand and Needs Analysis the project team prepared a list that summarizes those recommendations in Chapter 6 of the Park and Recreation Master Plan that the project team feels represent the most significant impacts and needs in South Gate. These nine recommendations are the focus of the implementation strategies; however, all of the recommendations contained in chapter 6 are important to pursue as the Parks and Recreation Department considers its annual work program, budget and allocation of resources.

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the list and put it into priority to help the City focus available resources on projects that will have the greatest impact on meeting current and future needs.

Suggested priority list of nine recommendations:

1. Replace existing restrooms in parks that have not had their restrooms replaced.
2. Protect and upgrade existing facilities through allocation of resources including:
 - Emphasize deferred maintenance improvements to existing buildings and facilities as a priority for future capital funding.
 - Make maintenance of existing parks and facilities a priority and implement recommended maintenance standards in Appendix F as a funding priority.

- Establish a three-prong approach dedicated Park Graffiti and Vandalism Abatement program in addition to regular park and facility maintenance programs.
 - Develop a long-term funding strategy for maintenance programs, such as Asset Management Programs or implementing a citywide Park Maintenance Assessment District or establishing a Commercial Impact Fee to ensure availability of funding.
3. Develop and implement a specific plan for the eastern corridor of South Gate Park from Tweedy Blvd north to Southern Ave along Pinehurst St. to accommodate additional sports fields, an event plaza, a new Boy Scout Lodge, batting cages, revenue generating commercial sports facility, and associated additional parking.
 4. Increase trails, open space and recreational opportunities on the west side through the following:
 - Complete development of Cesar Chavez linear park.
 - Utilize utility and rail right of ways to create trails, open space and a more attractive environment.
 - Establish a joint use agreement with LAUSD and with the College District to provide for mutual use of existing and new facilities as well as to encourage mutual projects that will address community as well as school needs.
 5. Expand teen opportunities in the community by including teen specific activities at the proposed events plaza, teen sports leagues and programs at the proposed sports center concession and the eventual establishment of a dedicated teen center.
 6. Create a perimeter and internal trail system at South Gate Park to provide formal walking, jogging and exercise paths, pedestrian connections to all

park venues from all parking areas, and a connection to a citywide trails system.

7. Replace existing Park Maintenance Yard in order to implement the recommended aggressive park maintenance program.
8. Undertake refurbishment and recommended improvements to Hollydale Regional Park, renaming it Hollydale Community Park to reflect more appropriate context of its use.
9. Expand swimming pool facilities to include new uses for revenue generation.

This section also identifies City policy issues that affect the parks and recreation system. The policy issues and concerns identified below were determined to be the most important issues to address in the master plan:

Policy Issue # 1 - GRAFFITI AND VANDALISM

Graffiti and vandalism are prevalent throughout the park system causing maintenance problems and resident dissatisfaction with park facilities and the condition of the parks. The City must address the graffiti and vandalism problem because improving existing facilities and building new facilities will not satisfy the community if graffiti and vandalism continues.

To combat graffiti and vandalism the City must adopt some new operational policies and put in place mechanisms to reduce the occurrence of graffiti and vandalism. Cities that have been successful in doing this have taken a three-pronged approach that include removal, enforcement and controlled access:

1. Removal

The City should adopt a policy of removing graffiti and repairing vandalism as its first priority for maintenance and operation of the park system. It should

establish a graffiti and vandalism hot line for people to report graffiti and vandalism in the parks, post the number on signs throughout the park system and establish a dedicated graffiti removal truck, supplies and personnel to remove reported graffiti within 24 hours. The same approach could be taken for vandalism with a dedicated vehicle and personnel to respond to repairing vandalism within 24 hours. While this program will be expensive at first, history of such programs shows that the occurrences of graffiti and vandalism decline rapidly when removal and repair programs are consistent and the long term cost savings of longer equipment and facility life and community satisfaction makes the program cost effective.

2. Enforcement

Catching and punishing taggers and vandals must be a high priority in order to reduce the occurrences of such incidents. The Park and Recreation Department and Police Departments need to work together to provide surveillance and investigation of incidents of graffiti and vandalism. Portable surveillance cameras could be used to identify and catch taggers and vandals at high incident locations within the parks. A monetary reward system, whereby the Park and Recreation Department works with local businesses and service clubs to fund a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of taggers and vandals, should be considered. Studies show that an aggressive enforcement of graffiti and vandalism crimes also reduces other types of crimes, especially juvenile crimes.

3. Controlled Access

While it is impossible to completely control access to public parks and facilities, there are park design features and facility operation policies that can help make parks and recreation facilities used by those who they were intended to serve. This is especially important in South Gate where there is heavy use of

South Gate facilities by non South Gate residents, rival gangs outside the City and a substantial transient population in the region.

By designing parks and recreation facilities with specific access points and providing surveillance at those points the City can reduce the undesirable element accessing the parks and facilities and help with enforcement and punishment of crimes committed in its parks and facilities. By providing wide concrete pathways for police and emergency vehicles to access through the parks the City can increase the ease of surveillance and response to calls.

Designing parks with perimeter boundaries and that channel access to off-street parking and designed entryways improves security and provides a sense of place and arrival, which tends to deter those not specifically going to the location for using the park amenities. This technique is found throughout Europe, where for centuries parks were designed with gated entry points for this specific purpose.

In addition to adopting policies of park design to control and channel access to parks through specific entryways that can be monitored, the City should continue its policy of membership oriented service delivery system for recreation programming. This gives the City more ability to know who is supposed to be in its recreation facilities and who may be there unauthorized.

To obtain a successful park and recreation delivery system, the City must make reducing graffiti and vandalism a budget priority. A policy commitment to the three pronged approach described above and cooperation between city departments is essential.

Policy Issue # 2 - CHANGE IN DEMOGRAPHICS AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

The change in demographics of South Gate over the past 30 years have had a profound affect on both the types of programs and the types of facilities needed to meet the community’s current and projected demand for park and recreation services.

For example, when amenities at South Gate Park were built (Auditorium, Golf Course, Clubhouse, Ball Fields, etc.) they were built to meet the needs of the demographic profile of the City at that time. Now, in the 30 years hence, the City is faced with a completely different demographic profile with different cultural and social needs from the community profile that existed when these amenities were first built.

Consequently, the Park and Recreation Master Plan tries to answer the question “Are the current City facilities relevant to meeting the needs of the community profile or should they be replaced with facilities that will meet the current and future resident profile needs?”

Attendance records and public comments during the public outreach show that although South Gate Park is heavily used, use of specific programs and facilities at South Gate Park has been declining. This is certainly due in part to security issues, age and deteriorated conditions of some of the facilities; however, the majority of comments from the various public input tools indicate that some programs and facilities no longer meet the type of programs and activities the community needs.

Policy Issue # 3 - FUNDING

Funding has been a critical problem for the City, especially for parks and recreation facilities and programs and for park maintenance. While the City is experiencing some new redevelopment and growth that will provide new

revenue, the downturn in the economy, the State's budget problems and the increased costs of goods and services will affect the City's ability to find funding from traditional sources to implement the recommendations for increased park maintenance, park improvements and new facilities. Consequently, the City must take some new policy directions that will allow it to use its resources as assets to generate new revenue; partner with other public agencies, non-profits and commercial entities; and, increase fees for popular/trendy activities to support operation of facilities.

These actions will be critical for the City in the future to address the funding required to implement the programming and facility maintenance recommendations.

Policy Issue # 4 - PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

In future retail and commercial development projects, it is important to see that places for community events, links to trails, passive open space, and commercial family recreation opportunities are included in the design review process. Currently the City's design review process for future commercial and retail development does not include input from the Parks and Recreation Department or Park and Recreation Commission.

The benefits of including the above items in retail and commercial developments are:

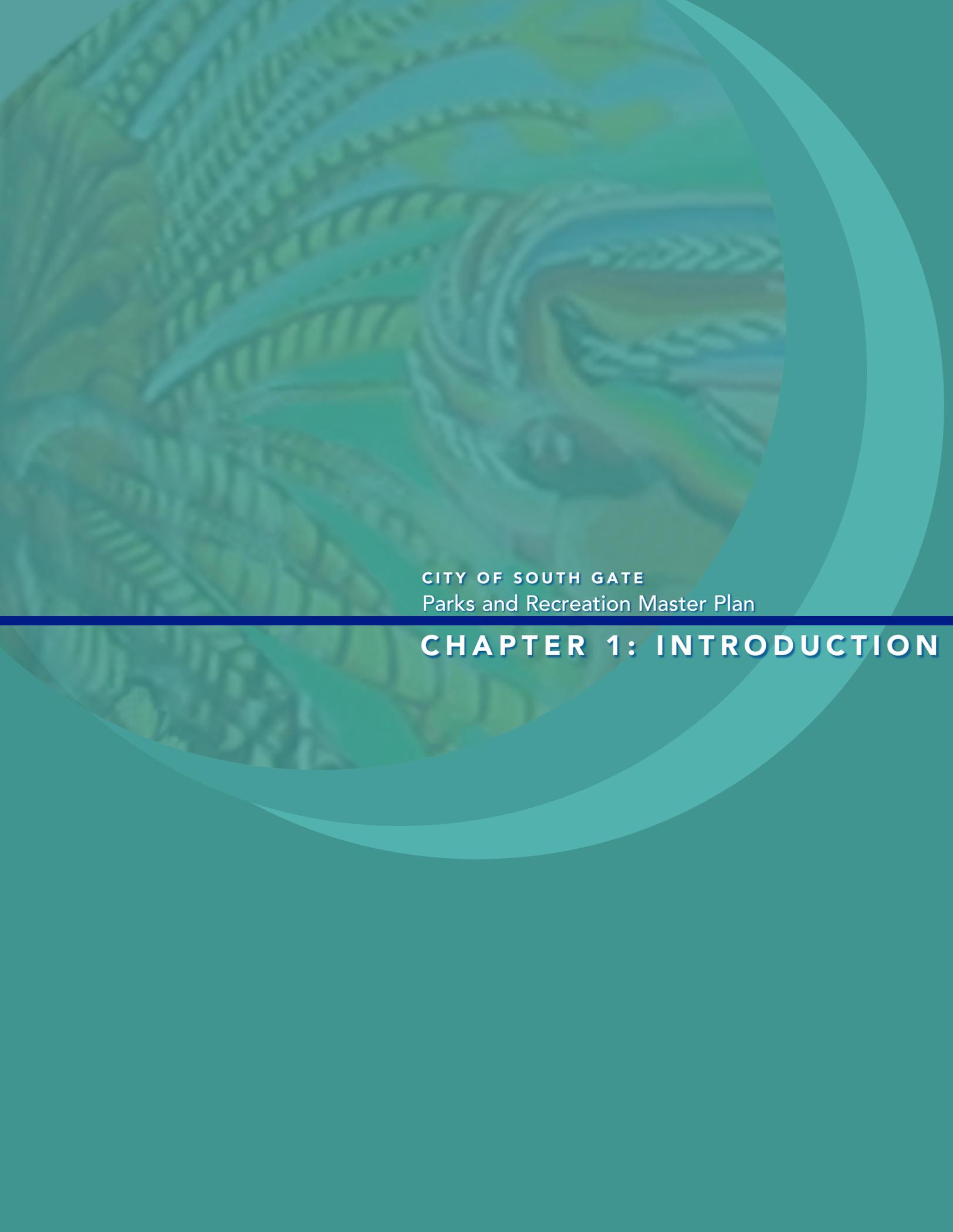
- *Greater generation of pedestrian traffic to the commercial facility*
- *Increased satisfaction of the shopping experience*
- *Increased social interaction among the community*
- *Opportunities for events that bring the community together*

By involving the Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission in the design review process for retail and commercial development projects, the City can achieve designed projects that provide the above stated benefits.

In summary, there is a number of potential funding and financing mechanisms the City can pursue to implement the various capital improvement recommendations presented in the Master Plan when determining how to implement needed facility improvements, new park development and new recreation programs.

The recommendations and strategies are presented as options for consideration and to provide a road map for possible ways to implement the priorities in the recommended Capital Improvement Work Program. The City may find other ways to fund or partner with another agency to accomplish the various projects needed. Certainly, the economy, local politics, special interests and the availability of staff time will all affect the City's ability to implement the master plan.

Finally, the parks and recreation master plan should be used as a working document and updated as new needs are determined and recommended projects are implemented so that the City stays on track with the priorities expressed by the community and the Parks and Recreation Commission.



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

chapter 1 – introduction

1.1 SCOPE AND PURPOSE

IN EARLY 2007, THE CITY OF SOUTH GATE hired Moore, Iacofano, Goltsman, Inc. (MIG) to update the City's Parks and Recreation Master Plan. It has been 21 years since the previous Master Plan was completed in 1987 and the City is now faced with a number of critical decisions to be made as to what should be done to improve existing parks; what type of recreation system should be operated in the future; how it should fund park maintenance; and what are the priorities for new park facilities and amenities that will be needed in the future to meet the needs of South Gate residents?.

The City and MIG developed a Scope of Services to address these issues in the update of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan that includes evaluation and analysis of current facilities, programs, and services; community outreach activities in order to obtain citizen's input on the community's parks and recreation demands and needs; and development of policies and recommendations to help direct the future of Parks and Recreation in the City of South Gate. The updated Park and Recreation Master Plan will be the tool for the City to use for making decisions on the difficult determination of allocating resources for improvements and additions to its park and recreation systems.

1.2 PLANNING PROCESS

To develop the Master Plan for parks and recreation specific to the City of South Gate's current and future needs, MIG embarked on a planning process to discover the unique qualities of this Community. The team made individual park visits and concluded park evaluations; created an inventory of amenities;

and assessed existing facilities and in-place recreation programs. Through public outreach, MIG gained an understanding of the character, spirit and vision of the community and the physical context of neighborhoods in relation to facilities and services to arrive at a basis for building a realistic plan for the future.

1.3 PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In this process it was important to obtain information from the Community as to their views and desires for the park system. To accomplish this task the consultant team conducted interviews, attended community events, distributed questionnaires, and mounted a web-based youth questionnaire. The team together with City staff facilitated discussion meetings with community members, elected and appointed City officials, and key stakeholders.

These community intercepts and meetings provided a wide variety of perspectives and a comprehensive view of the Community's wants and needs.

1.4 REPORT ORGANIZATION

The structure of this Master Plan is designed to lead the reader through the process the team used to determine its findings.

The first Chapter sets the stage for the path the team took in assembling information contained within these pages.

Chapter 2 gives an overview of the city location, demographics, context and profile which forms the basis for the future direction the City may take.

Chapters 3 and 4 report on the current conditions of existing recreation and parks facilities and programs, which gives the City a baseline measurement of where to begin to meet the needs of its residents.

Chapter 5 summarizes and highlights key information gained from the several public input tools employed by the team to assess the needs and determine future demands of the community.

In Chapter 6, the Team makes recommendations and suggests policies based on the analyses of Chapters 3, 4 and 5 that will enable the City to set goals and develop policy direction to help meet its needs in the short term and for the future.

Chapter 7 provides a summary of the issues facing the City in delivering a successful park and recreation system to the community and a practical roadmap containing ten specific policy goals for future development, recommending implementation and financial strategies to make the goals a reality.

Following the body of the document are the Appendices which contain materials referenced throughout the Master Plan, including a glossary of terms, original forms and questionnaires submitted to individuals and groups, unedited input from the various workshops, presentation materials, plus more.

1.5 GOALS, VISION AND OBJECTIVES

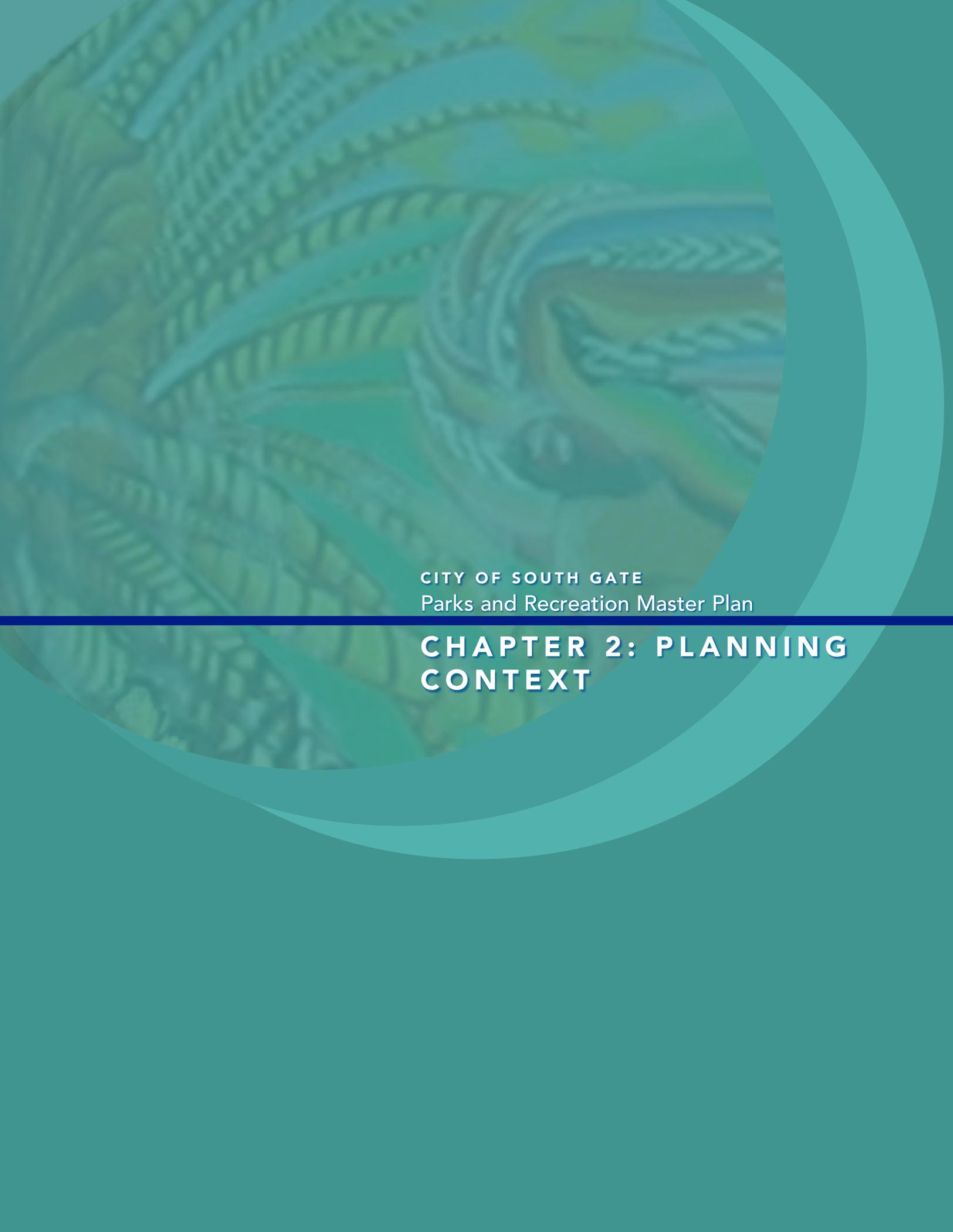
South Gate faces a number of challenges in the next several years. Events of the last decade have placed the City in a position of needing to recover its economic stability well into the next decade. The City has taken positive steps

in the right direction by updating its General Plan and Parks and Recreation Master Plan in 2007/08.

The process of compiling these documents required the City to engage and involve its citizens in a series of public workshops and events. The result was two-fold: 1) The public was given a forum to express its needs, desires and concerns; 2) The City was able to hear how its citizens envision the City's future.

The information and recommended policy goals contained in these documents will help the City of South Gate plot the direction it needs to take in making its City a healthy, sustainable, and safe place for its residents to live, now and 20 years into the future.

The purpose for MIG in doing this Master Plan is not only to help South Gate set realistic goals for the future but to help the City realize those goals by developing a successful park and recreation system that will improve the quality of life in South Gate and contribute to community health, and well-being and the City's livability and vitality.



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

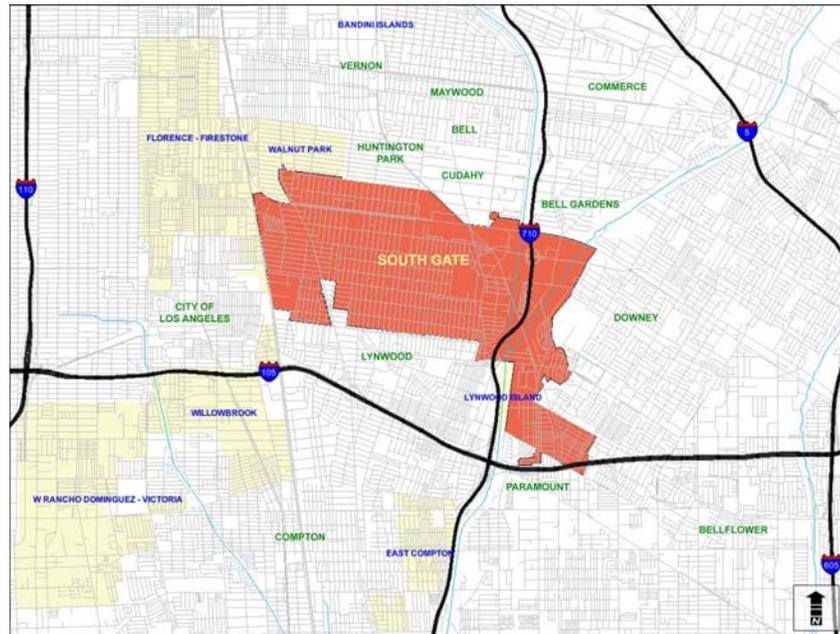
**CHAPTER 2: PLANNING
CONTEXT**

chapter 2 – planning context

2.1 REGIONAL CONTEXT

THE CITY OF SOUTH GATE is located in Los Angeles County 12 miles southeast of downtown Los Angeles and encompasses 7.5 square miles within the flat plain of the Los Angeles basin.

Both the Los Angeles River and the Rio Hondo flow through the city and merge at its southeastern border on their way to the Pacific Ocean.



The 710 Freeway, a major north/south transportation corridor, runs through the eastern sector of the city. And the 105 Freeway, a prime route to L.A. International Airport, lies just south of the city providing east/west travel.

South Gate is bounded on all sides by small densely populated cities and unincorporated communities of Los Angeles County, the majority of which contain a relatively high percentage of manufacturing, industrial and commercial uses. While residential housing takes up 52 percent of the city’s land use, 40 percent is devoted to retail, commercial, industrial or manufacturing businesses. This puts South Gate among many urban municipalities wanting for more natural, green and open spaces. (See the maps on page 5.)

The table below shows comparative population profiles and density of cities in Southern California that closely resemble those of South Gate.

City Population, Density and Per Capita Comparisons

<i>City</i>	<i>Population</i>	<i>Density (High Density)</i>	<i>City Area/Acres</i>	<i>Park Acreage</i>	<i>Percent of Parkland to City Area</i>	<i>Park Acreage p/1000 persons</i>
El Monte	126,053	20.4	6189	51.6	0.80%	0.41
Lynwood	73,147	23.3	3136	25.7	0.80%	0.49
South Gate	102,816	21.4	4800	169.7	3.50%	1.65
Buena Park	82,768	12.6	6586	95.1	1.40%	1.15

2.2 HISTORY

The History of South Gate begins as with many communities in California, as a development from a large Spanish Land Grant given to the Lugo Family by the King of Spain in 1810. Prior to the Spanish settling the area, there were thriving villages of Gabrielino Indians. By the late 1700s, the Spanish had permanently settled and forever changed the traditional native way of life.



The land was passed down from generation to generation over the next 100 years. As a rancho, the primary use of the land was to raise cattle. Eventually the ranchos gave way to dairies, along with vegetable and fruit farms. These farms continued to flourish until the early 20th century.

In the South Gate area, some of the property was sold off to other settlers, most notably was the Tweedy Family. Having moved to the area in 1852, the Tweedy family bought about 2,000 acres of land which in time became the City of South Gate. Today the downtown district is known as the Tweedy Mile named in honor of the family.

Between 1910 and 1940 most of the land use was re-designated, and the area was developed into homes and factories. The City of South Gate was incorporated in January 1923 with a total of 2,500 residents. At one time major manufacturers such as General Motors and Firestone called South Gate home. By the 1970s, many of these businesses as well as some of the residents had left the community.

Today more than 103,000 residents call South Gate home.

2.3 COMMUNITY PROFILE

Of South Gate's current population just less than half was born outside the U.S. -- the majority being of Hispanic origin, and nearly one-third of the residents are non-citizens.

About 87% of the households in South Gate speak Spanish at home. This is also reflected in the K-12 classroom population according to LAUSD and Paramount Unified School District numbers showing an average of 99 percent Hispanic ethnicity among students.

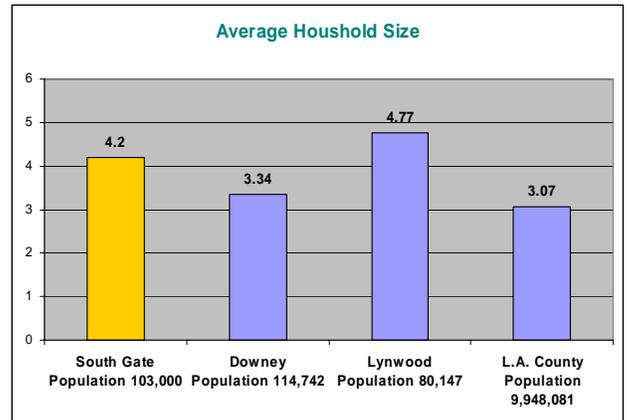
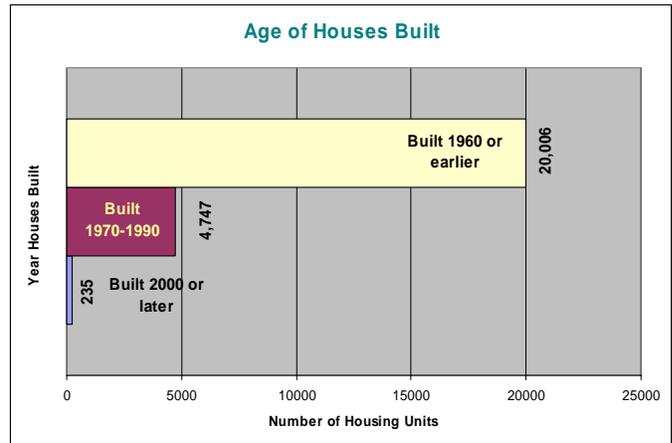
Housing

There are nearly 25,000 housing units with homeownership at 47%. That leaves more than half the population living in rental units. Eighty percent of the housing units are more than 40 years old and the majority of the remaining 20% were built before 1990. The average number of persons per household is 4.2, which is higher than the County’s 3.07, but lower than neighboring Lynwood’s 4.77 persons per household.

Land Use

On the following page are three maps showing how the City’s land uses are distributed. As stated earlier, South Gate’s growth as a city began with a strong infusion of large commercial enterprises—the largest of these being Firestone Tires and General Motors. Though many of these businesses have relocated, the majority of the remaining businesses occupy the eastern sector of the city, in-filled by small pockets of residential neighborhoods.

South Gate Park, the largest and most well-used recreation hub of the city, is situated at the eastern edge of the residential and the western edge of the commercial areas of the City.



City of South Gate Land Use Percentages

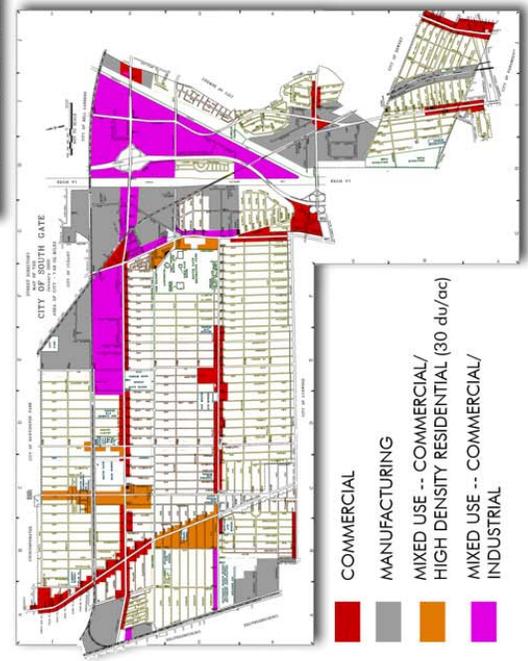
Government, Public and Open Space Uses 8%



Residential Uses 52%

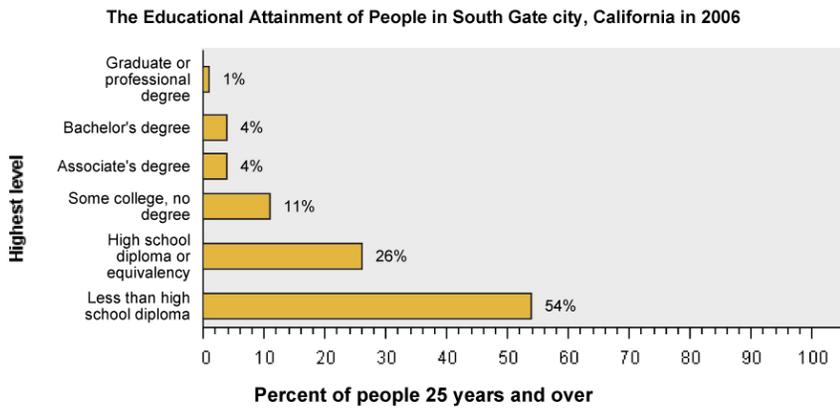


Business Uses 40%



Education

According to the U.S. Census, 54% of South Gate’s population over the age of 25 has less than a high school diploma. That puts residents at a disadvantage in finding well paying jobs and could affect the long term economic future of the City.

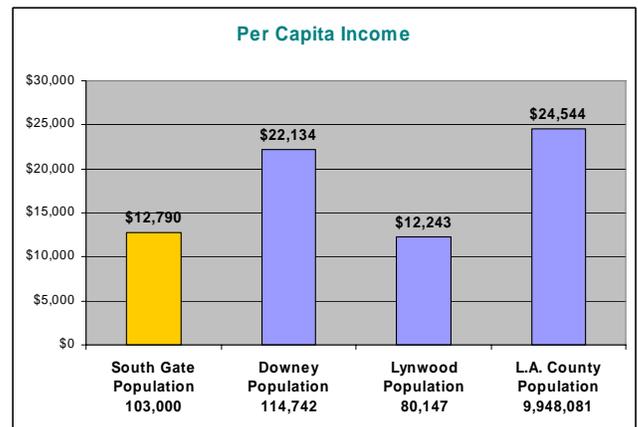


Source: American Community Survey, 2006

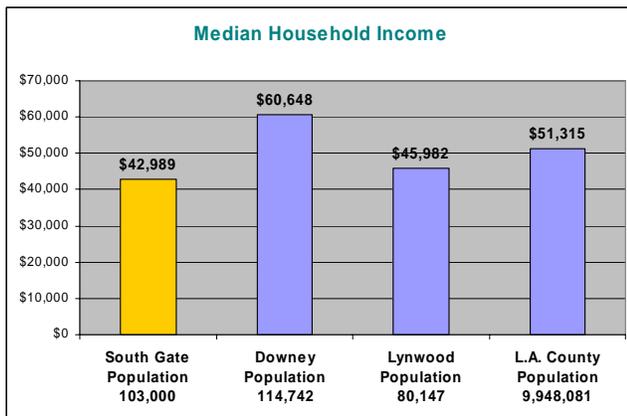
Several new retail and commercial projects are on deck for development in the next 5 to 10 years. The potential jobs they bring to the City could mean a substantial boost to the local economy. Whether the majority of jobs would be filled by residents is not guaranteed, especially if they lack educational requirements.

Economics

During the past decade, South Gate has endured some major economic hardships which have limited its ability to address community park and recreation needs. The City is also faced with difficult financial choices on which public services it needs to provide due to the state of the current economy.

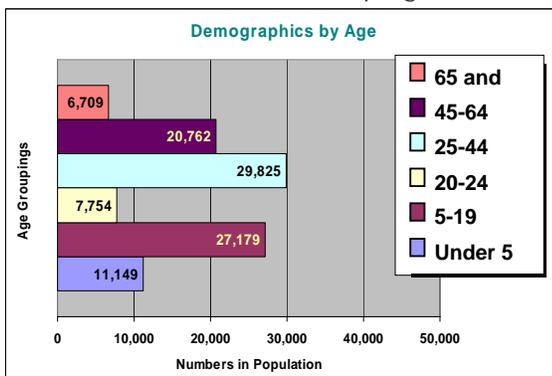


The City has made positive strides in recovering its financial capabilities, reputation and confidence and is now taking steps to position itself to improve its financial capabilities to fund needed facilities and services by completing the Parks and Recreation Master Plan and proceeding to follow the policies and recommendations presented in the plan.



The City has tried to maintain low cost services to the community since it recognizes that the population's income is lower than average. Per capita income is currently \$12,800 compared with L.A. County which is nearly double at \$24,544. Median income per household is about \$43,000 annually compared with \$51,300 for L.A. County. Based on 1999, per capita income number, just less than 20% of the population lives below the poverty level.

On the positive side, the low income status of South Gate's residents makes it possible for the City to apply for State and federal grant funds to help supplement budgetary expenditures for parks and recreation facilities and programs.



Age

The largest sector of the South Gate community consists of young families with children 0 to 19 years of age. The median age of adults is 29.1, nearly four years younger than their counterparts in L.A. County.

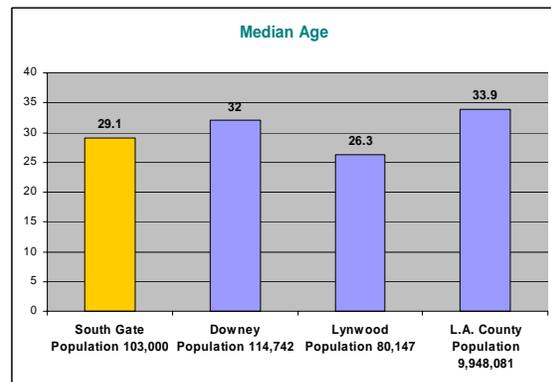
Participation at annual events such as the Azalea Festival is strong among this age group. It is the 5 to 19 age group that will put the greatest demand on park and recreation services for the next 10 years.

Certain national trends must be factored into the City's planning to meet those future demands.

2.4 DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS

In the coming years national trends in the perception of the environment, socio-economics, technology, and in urban development will affect the need for and use of recreation and park facilities. In 2004 the National Recreation and Park Association (NRPA) developed a list of trends which will cause the greatest impact on local agencies planning for recreational facilities. The NRPA's list of pertinent trends that will affect South Gate's planning efforts for developing recreation facilities and programs are as follows:

- *A greater need for walking and biking on trails, sidewalks, within parks and along streets, and utility corridors.*
- *Collaboration between parks and schools to share construction, development, and use of lands and facilities.*
- *Preventive recreation, that is, recreation as an antidote for social problems.*
- *Recreation for groups limited by income, physical disability, language, or cultural barriers.*
- *Collaboration among program and facility providers, partnering and cooperation between public, private, and non-profit sectors, especially cultural organizations.*



- *Family recreation centers (Intergenerational Campuses) that offer a variety of services for each family member.*
- *Pressure to increase park capacity and infrastructure of existing parks and concern for adequate maintenance.*
- *Community volunteering opportunities, such as adopt a park projects, friends of the parks groups, and park watch programs.*
- *Increased demand for Tiny-Tot and Pre-School programs and activities.*
- *Protective measures for open space.*
- *Provision for aquatics programs and water safety instruction.*
- *Provision for Senior Citizen programs and Activities.*
- *The need for financial sustainability in order to deliver quality recreation services and facilities.*

Every one of these trends and issues describe the situation in South Gate and must be taken into consideration, along with the demographic profile of the City, when the City sets its priorities for the future development and operation of its park and recreation delivery system



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

**CHAPTER 3: EXISTING
PARKS AND FACILITIES**

chapter 3 - existing parks and facilities

3.1 – INTRODUCTION

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES A DESCRIPTION of the South Gate’s existing parks and recreation resources. This includes maps showing the locations of the City’s parks, community facilities and schools, the Park Amenities Inventory, along with an overview of recreation facilities offered by other agencies and organizations for the community.

The Parks and Recreation Department currently oversees the use of eight built parks, recreation areas and open spaces encompassing more than 170 acres within the City limits. These sites range in size from 97 acres to 0.2 acres and offer a variety of passive and active recreation opportunities including organized sports, informal play, hiking, picnicking or group gatherings. (See Exhibit 3.1 – Existing Parks, Community Facilities and Local Schools)

3.2 PARK LAND DEFINITIONS

In order to address specific planning needs for park, open space, and recreational areas, park classifications have been used. Each park class provides a distinct type of recreational opportunity. The ideal community park system is made up of several different types or classifications of parks. The classification system used in this document is as follows:

Mini/Pocket Parks: Mini-parks, pocket-parks, tot lots and children’s playgrounds are all small single-purpose play lots designed primarily for small child use or as small oases to break up dense urban areas. Due to their size (less than three acres), the facilities are usually limited to a small open grass area, a children’s playground, and a small picnic area. The

service area is roughly one-half mile, and the size is usually two acres or less. Because of the high cost to maintain these parks, it is not advisable to accept them as land dedications from developers.

Neighborhood Parks: Neighborhood parks are designed primarily for non-supervised, non-organized recreation activities. They are generally small in size (3-15 acres) and serve people living within approximately one-half to one mile of the park. Since these parks are located within walking and bicycling distance of most users, the activities they offer serve the entire neighborhood, including children. Typical facilities found in a neighborhood park include: playgrounds, picnic areas, trails, open grass areas for passive use, outdoor basketball courts, and multi-use open grass areas for practice field sports.

Community Parks: A community park (15-40 acres) is planned primarily to provide active and structured recreation opportunities for young people and adults. Community park facilities are designed for organized activities and sports, although individual and family activities are also encouraged. Community parks can also provide indoor facilities to meet a wider range of recreation interests. Community parks serve a much larger area and offer more facilities. As a result, they require more support facilities, such as parking, restrooms, and covered play areas. Community parks usually have sport fields or similar facilities as the central focus of the park. Their service area has roughly a 2-3 mile radius.

Regional Parks: Regional parks are large recreation areas designed to serve an entire region beyond the city limits. Often they are acquired to provide a specific and sometimes unique recreation opportunity. Frequently they are owned and maintained by a county, state or federal agency.

Linear Parks: Linear parks are developed landscaped areas and other lands that follow linear corridors such as rivers, creeks, abandoned railroad rights-of-way, canals, power lines, and other elongated features. This type of park usually contains trails, landscaped areas, viewpoints, and seating areas.

Special Use Areas: Special use areas are sites often occupied by a specialized recreation facility. Some uses that fall into this category include waterfront parks, boat ramps, botanical gardens, community gardens, single purpose sites used for a particular field sport, or sites occupied by recreation buildings.

Natural Open Space: Natural open space is defined as undeveloped land primarily left in its natural form with recreation uses as a secondary objective. It is usually owned or managed by a governmental agency and may or may not have public access. This type of land may include wetlands, steep hillsides, or other similar spaces. In some cases, environmentally sensitive areas are considered open space and can include wildlife habitats, stream and creek corridors, or unique and/or endangered plant species.

Undeveloped Land: This land is undeveloped and has not yet been designated for a specific park use.

3.2.1 Existing Parks Classifications

Of the types of parks defined above, South Gate’s parks fall into the following categories:

Regional	South Gate Park (96.8 acres)
Community	Hollydale Regional Park (56 acres)
Neighborhood	Circle Park (4 acres)
Linear	Cesar Chavez (9 acres)
Mini	Hollydale Community Center Park (2.2 acres)
	Stanford (0.19 acres)
	Gardendale (0.45 acres)
	State Street (0.8 acres)
Special Use	Westside Community Resource Ctr
	Triangle Park: Trail Rest Area

The sections that follow will provide a more detailed description of each of the parks and facilities, including amenities at each location and a brief site analysis.

Chapter 5 contains a more comprehensive assessment along with recommendations for each park and facility.

3.3 INVENTORY OF SOUTH GATE PARK & RECREATION FACILITIES

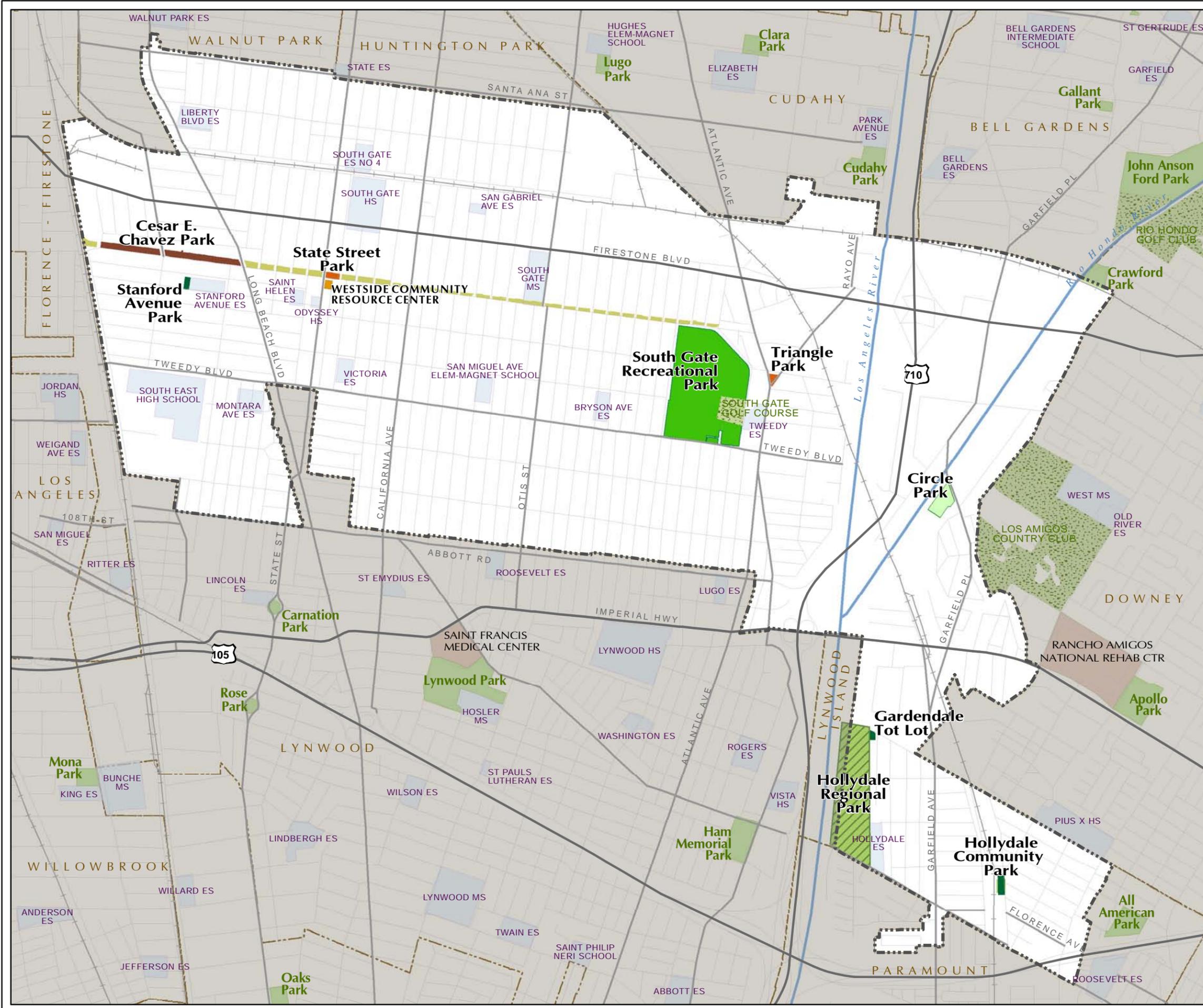
An inventory of park and recreation facilities for this Master Plan was developed using information provided by the City of South Gate Parks and Recreation Department, from site visits by the MIG team, and from private and non-profit agencies that also provide recreation facilities and programs for the community. The Park Amenities Inventory is a matrix showing total

**City of South Gate
Parks Facilities Inventory**

	City Parks							TOTAL	TOTAL OF ALL ORGS		
	Cesar Chavez Park	Circle Park	Gardendale Tot Lot	Hollydale Community Park	Hollydale Regional Park	South Gate Park	Stanford Park			Triangle Park	
Acreage	9.00	4.00	0.45	2.20	56.0	96.8	0.80	0.19	0.30	169.7	
Ball Field Sports											
Baseball Fields				1	1	1					2
Baseball Fields-Junior				1							1
Football Field											0
Multipurpose Field			1								1
Rugby Field											0
Soccer Field											0
Soccer Field, open space	1			1	1						3
Softball Fields											0
Softball Fields w/ backstop	1				9						10
T-Ball Field											0
Hard Court Sports											
Basketball Full Court	1		1	1	2	3					7
Basketball Half Court											0
Handball Walls/Court				8	4						12
Tennis Courts				2	6						8
Tetherball											0
Volleyball – Sand/Grass					1						1
Volleyball Hard Court				2							2
Buildings/Structures											
Amphitheater/Stage					1						1
Community Center				1							1
Computer Lab											0
Concession Bldg											0
Equipment/Storage Bldg.				1							1
Gymnasium					1						1
Maintenance Building/Yard				1	1						2
Meeting Rooms					1						1
Neighborhood Center			1			1					2
Picnic Shelters - Family											0
Picnic Shelters - Group	1		1	1				1			4
Restroom Building	1		1	1	6						9
Senior Center					1						1
Dugouts, Bleachers											0
Shade Coverings				1	1			1			3
Play Areas	2	1	1	1	1	2		1			9
Trash Enclosures											0
Other/Passive Facilities											
Bike Path											0
BMX Track											0
Campgrounds											0
Equestrian Facilities				1							1
Fishing Lake/Pond											0
Fitness Par Course											0
Frisbee Golf Course											0
Horseshoe Pit				1	1						2
Open Space Area	1	1	1	1	1						5
Dog Park											0
Shuffleboard Court											0
Skatepark					1						1
Splash/Water Play											0
Golf Course					1						1
Swimming pool					1						1
Trails	1										1
Furnishings/Amenities											
BBQ - Group				1	1	1					3
BBQ w/sinks					1						1
BBQs					1						1
Benches	x	x	x	x	x	x			x		0
Bicycle Racks/Lockers									1		1
Drinking Fountains ADA									1		1
Drinking Fountains non/ADA						1					1
Picnic Tables	x				x	x		x			0
Picnic Tables – ADA Access				1	1						2
Security Lighting					1						1
Signage – Info, Direct, Monument	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	Inf	0
Walkways - Concrete/A.C.				1	1	1		1			4
Playground Facilities											
Tot Lot (2 to 5 years)											0
Tot Lot (2 to 5 years) w/ADA compliant structure	1	1		1	1	1		1			6
Tot Lot (5-12 years)											0
Tot Lot (5-12 years) w/ADA compliant structure			1			1					2
Parking Facilities											
Parking Lot - lighted						x	x		x		0
Parking Lot - unlighted	x										0
Parking Spaces	str.	x	str.	str.	x	x	x	str.	x		0
Parking Spaces - HC		no			x	x	x		x		0



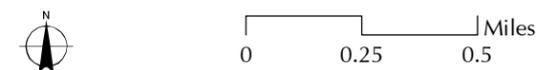
City of South Gate, California
**Parks & Recreation
 Master Plan**



Facility Classification

- Regional Park
- Community Park
- Neighborhood Park
- Mini Park
- Other Public Open Space
- Special Use
- Linear Park
- Other Park Jurisdiction
- Golf Course

- Institutional Use
- School
- Other City
- City Limit
- River
- Highway
- Major Roads
- Streets
- Railroad



**Exhibit 3.1
 Existing Facilities**

amenities in each of the parks in the City and total acreage for each park as well as additional facilities available through the schools, private, public or non-profit agencies.

Following the inventory is an overview of each City park including an aerial or other photo identifying the site, a description of size, classification, development status, existing amenities, its overall condition and any proposed improvements.



Cesar Chavez Park

built 2000-2007

Size:	9.0 Acres
Address:	2541 Southern Avenue
Classification:	Linear Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pergola with single picnic table ▪ Restroom ▪ Pathway ▪ Angled street parking with ADA parking ▪ 2-5 years tot lot with resilient surfacing ▪ 5-12 years tot lot with short climbing wall ▪ Open turf ▪ Benches
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Play equipment is in good shape. ▪ Series of green spaces along Southern Ave. but without visual continuity
Planned Improvements:	Extension of park on Southern Ave.



Circle Park

built 1956, renovated 1976 & 2003

Size:	4.0 Acres
Address:	10129 Garfield Avenue
Classification:	Neighborhood Park
Status:	Semi-developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Full Court Basketball ▪ One ball field with backstop ▪ Open turf for soccer ▪ Small parking lot, no ADA ▪ 2-5 years playground, ADA accessible ▪ No Restroom
Conditions:	Play equipment in good condition with ADA accessibility
Planned Improvements:	None



Gardendale Tot Lot

Renovated 2001

Size:	0.45 acres
Address:	5480 Gardendale St.
Classification:	Mini Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 2-5 years playground ▪ Benches ▪ Trash Receptacles ▪ Street Parking
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Accessible path of travel and surfacing ▪ Mature trees creating a lot of shade
Planned Improvements:	None



Hollydale Community Center Park

built in 1957, updated 1982 & 2003

Size:	2.2 Acres
Address:	12221 Industrial Park, South Gate
Classification:	Mini Park with Community Center
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community Center ▪ 3-5 year-old playground ▪ Practice ballfield ▪ Basketball Court ▪ Picnic Gazebo
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ See Appendix E for condition report ▪ The park and building are accessible
Planned Improvements:	None



Hollydale Regional Park

built 1976

Size:	56.0 Acres
Address:	5400 Monroe Avenue
Classification:	Community Park
Status:	Partial Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5-12 year old playground ▪ Tennis courts, lighted ▪ Handball courts ▪ Softball fields w/backstop ▪ Equestrian Center ▪ Volleyball court ▪ Open turf areas for soccer ▪ One large picnic shelter ▪ Parking lot with ADA stalls ▪ Stair access to the bike path and equestrian trail along Los Angeles River
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Volleyball courts have no nets. ▪ Mature trees ▪ Turf area needs improvement ▪ Graffiti is very evident on the fencing, signage, and concrete stairs with some damage starting to occur on the site amenities.
Planned Improvements:	None



South Gate Park

Acquired 1936, facilities built 1952-1976

Size:	96.8 Acres
Address:	4900 Southern Avenue
Classification:	Community Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Auditorium ▪ Sports Center with Gym and Pool ▪ 9 Softball fields ▪ 1 Baseball field ▪ Soccer fields ▪ Tennis Courts ▪ Golf Course ▪ Jr. Hockey Rink ▪ Skate Park ▪ Senior Center & Azalea Memorial Garden ▪ War Memorial ▪ 2 Playground Areas 2-5 & 5-12 year-old ▪ Picnic areas w/BBQs ▪ Basketball Courts ▪ Handball Courts ▪ Sand Volleyball Court

CHAPTER THREE: EXISTING PARKS AND FACILITIES

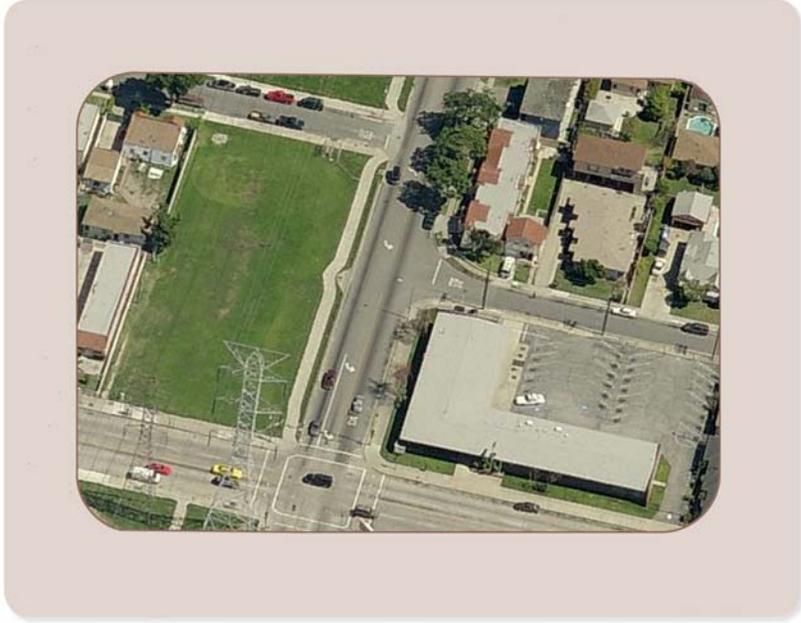
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Boy Scout Huts ▪ Girls Club Building ▪ Horseshoe courts ▪ Drinking fountains ▪ Restrooms, ▪ Benches ▪ Trash containers ▪ 3 Parking lots w/ADA stalls
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Park furnishings need repair and maintenance ▪ Restrooms need major renovation ▪ Mature trees throughout the park add beauty and shade ▪ Some turf areas and grounds are in poor condition, uneven and bumpy ▪ Graffiti and vandalism need to be addressed ▪ The larger trash containers are open to view and unsightly ▪ Dense shrubbery hides areas from observation and security
Planned Improvements:	Former School Site to be developed based on Master Plan recommendations.



Stanford Park

built in 1982

Size:	0.19 Acres
Address:	2715 Illinois
Classification:	Mini Park
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 5-12 year-old playground w/swings ▪ Small Turf Area ▪ Pathway through park ▪ 2 Picnic tables ▪ Bench ▪ Drinking fountain, non-ADA ▪ Trash receptacles
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overall appearance and condition of the park is poor. ▪ Path is ADA accessible ▪ There is minimum park signage and security lighting only. ▪ The play equipment ground surface is primarily sand with two small areas over resilient surfacing. ▪ Street parking only
Planned Improvements:	None



State Street Park
built in 2000

Size:	0.8 Acres
Address:	State Street and Southern Avenue
Classification:	Mini
Status:	Minimally developed
Existing Facilities:	Open turf area
Conditions:	Fair
Planned Improvements:	To be integrated into the planned expansion of Cesar Chavez Park



Triangle Park
built in 2000

Size:	0.3 Acres
Address:	Atlantic Avenue & Rayo Avenue
Classification:	Special Use Area: Trail rest stop (Part of LA Trail Enhancement Program)
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pergola ▪ Seating ▪ Bike Racks ▪ Drinking Fountain ▪ Parking
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small park that is well designed, maintained and very attractive. ▪ There is a high noise factor as the park is surrounded by traffic-heavy streets in a light industrial/commercial area
Planned Improvements:	None



Westside Community Resource Center

acquired 2003

Size:	0.8 Acres
Address:	State Street and Southern Avenue
Classification:	Special Use Area: Westside Community Resource Center
Status:	Developed
Existing Facilities:	Building and parking only
Conditions:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Poorly kept landscape around building. ▪ See Appendix E for Building assessment
Planned Improvements:	Being remodeled for licensed childcare through lease to Human Services Association

3.4 FACILITIES AND SERVICES PROVIDED BY OTHERS

In addition to the facilities offered by the City of South Gate, federal and county agencies along with private and non-profit groups provide recreation facilities, activities and programs to local residents. These programs and facilities sometimes offer unique recreation experiences for participants or visitors to the area.

County of Los Angeles

There are 19 county park facilities within a five-mile radius of South Gate and none within the city's limits.

The County of Los Angeles does operate two public libraries within the city of South Gate: Leland R. Weaver and Hollydale.

The larger Weaver Library is located within the Tweedy Mile Shopping District and offers facilities for adults and children. It also houses a meeting room that can accommodate 110.

The Weaver library provides homework assistance during the week plus it hosts special events throughout the year.

Hollydale holds children's activities on Thursdays and Saturdays, video entertainment on Wednesday and hosts special interest clubs during the month.



Leland R. Weaver

Both libraries are open Tuesday through Saturday and are closed on Sundays and Mondays. And both library's collections include materials in English and Spanish.

Public Schools

The City of South Gate is primarily served by the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) which operates 1 preschool, 14 elementary schools, 2 middle schools, 3 high schools, 2 magnet schools, and a learning center within the City. The Paramount Unified School District operates one elementary school within the city limits and Redeemer Lutheran and St Helen's Catholic churches each run a private K-8 elementary school.

In addition to childhood education, the LAUSD owns and operates the South Gate Community Adult School, a campus focused on technical and business training along with English proficiency skills and those seeking to complete their high school diploma requirements.

Of the many schools operated throughout South Gate, none currently offer opportunities to share facilities with City run programs on a regular basis. There is no official joint use agreement between South Gate and the LAUSD or PUSD. However, South Gate does host LAUSD and school meetings and events at city facilities, and many school sports programs use city fields and facilities. The majority of these uses are at no cost to the schools or district.

According to the City, there are four new elementary schools and one new high school proposed for future development by the LAUSD in South Gate. These new developments may provide additional field space within their designs.

The Parks and Recreation Department has expressed renewed interest in pursuing a city wide joint use agreement with the LAUSD to formalize reciprocal use of facilities and fields.

CITY OF SOUTH GATE
parks and recreation master plan

SCHOOLS WITHIN THE CITY OF SOUTH GATE

SCHOOL NAME	LEVEL	POP*	ADDRESS	DIST.
Bryson EI	EL	1018	4470 Missouri Ave	LAUSD
Bryson EI M/S/T	EL M/S/T	142	4470 Missouri Ave	LAUSD
Hollydale EI **	EL	1180	5511 Century Blvd (Para)	PUSD
Independence EI	EL	742	8435 Victoria Ave	LAUSD
Independence EI MST	EL M/S/T	112	8435 Victoria Ave	LAUSD
International St LC	LC (6-11)	550	2560 Tweedy Blvd	LAUSD
Liberty EI	EL	827	2728 Liberty Blvd	LAUSD
Madison EI	EL	586	9820 Madison Ave	LAUSD
Montara Ave EI	EL	667	10018 Montara Ave	LAUSD
Montara EI M/S/T	EL M/S/T	183	10018 Montara Ave	LAUSD
Odyssey HS	HS	137	8693 Dearborn Ave	LAUSD
Redeemer Lutheran	K-8	138	2626 Liberty Blvd	PRIV
San Gabriel EI	EL	854	8628 San Gabriel Ave	LAUSD
San Miguel EI	EL	1041	9801 San Miguel Ave	LAUSD
San Miguel Mth/Sc Mg	Mag (2-5)	167	9801 San Miguel Ave	LAUSD
So Gate Mth/Sci Mag	Mag (6-8)	359	4100 Firestone Blvd	LAUSD
South East HS	HS	2812	2720 Tweedy Blvd	LAUSD
South Gate MS	MS	2677	4100 Firestone Blvd	LAUSD
South Gate HS	HS	3214	3351 Firestone Blvd	LAUSD
Southeast MS	MS	1367	2560 Tweedy Blvd	LAUSD
St. Helen's Catholic	K-8	364	9329 Madison Ave	PRIV
Stanford EI	EL	1048	2833 Illinois Ave	LAUSD
Stanford PC	Pre school	187	3020 Kansas Ave	LAUSD
State EI	EL	1119	3211 Santa Ana St	LAUSD
Tweedy EI	EL	718	9724 Pinehurst Ave	LAUSD
Victoria EI	EL	857	3320 Missouri Ave	LAUSD
	TOTAL	23,066		
South Gate Community Adult School	Adult & Career Education		3351 Firestone Blvd	LAUSD

*Numbers are based on LAUSD demographics 2006-2007

** Hollydale Elementary is within the Paramount Unified School District

Colleges and Universities

East Los Angeles Community College, located in Monterey Park, operates a satellite campus, the South Gate Education Center, at 2340 Firestone Blvd. The curriculum is aimed at attracting students seeking to complete one-year vocational certificates, two-year associate degrees or acquiring transfer credits toward a four-year degree at a substantially more affordable cost.

Many of the physical education courses offered at the satellite campus are held at South Gate Park facilities.

Local Nonprofit Organizations

Youth sports organizations are among the most active nonprofit groups in the City of South Gate. The American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO), Junior Athletic Association and Youth Football, Inc. play an important role in organizing and running competitive leagues of soccer, baseball, basketball and football. Competitive swim events are organized by the South Gate Aquatics Club.

The Human Services Association runs four preschool programs out of facilities in South Gate:

Hollydale 12221 Industrial Avenue South Gate, CA 90280	San Miguel 9801 San Miguel Avenue South Gate, CA 90280
Tweedy 9720 Pinehurst Avenue South Gate, CA 90280	Westside 9200 State Street South Gate, CA 90280

The YMCA has centers in neighboring Downey and Huntington Park. South Gate falls within the service area of the Southeast-Rio Vista branch in

Huntington Park. Both branches offer membership subsidies to low income families.

Though there is a Boys & Girls Club in Bell Gardens which has a teen center, it doesn't appear to be very active in recruiting participation from South Gate's youth population.

There are many service organizations located in South Gate:

American Legion	Senior Citizen's Club of South Gate
Beautification Committee	South Gate Art Association
Boy Scouts of America	South Gate Boosters Club
Eagles/Eagles Auxiliary	South Gate Toastmasters Club
Girl Scouts (Angeles Girl Scout Council)	South Gate Women's Club
Optimist Club of South Gate	South Gate Multi-cultural Women's Club
JADE Family Services	V.F.W. Auxiliary
Rotary Club of South Gate	

However, their role in active sports or recreation is very minimal. Some, like the Optimists, do sponsor recreational or cultural events in the community.

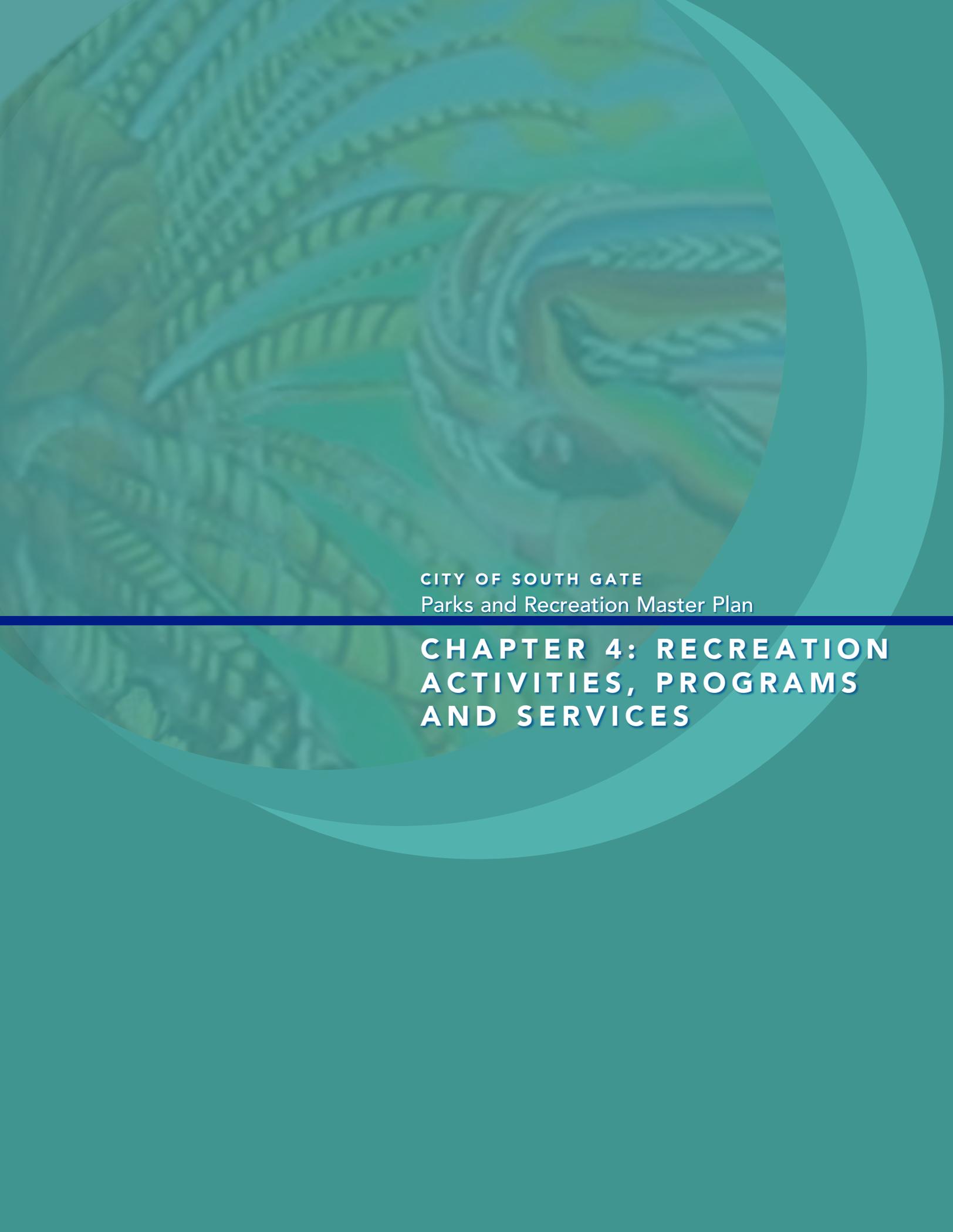
Of the groups mentioned above, most don't have facilities suitable to share with the City of South Gate. In fact, most of the programs run by these organizations take place on public property maintained by the City of South Gate.

3.5 CONCLUSIONS

From observing the sites and speaking to users, the Master Plan Team characterizes the parks and facilities in the City of South Gate as follows:

- *All parks and facilities are well loved and well used.*
- *Most parks are in need of updating and maintenance.*
- *All parks and facilities are inadequate to meet the needs of the residents now and in the future.*

Chapter 5: Needs Assessment contains in depth analysis of each park and/or facility's specific needs. Then in Chapter 6 the Team makes recommendations for improvement of parks, facilities and programs.



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

**CHAPTER 4: RECREATION
ACTIVITIES, PROGRAMS
AND SERVICES**

chapter 4 – recreation programs and services

4.1 INTRODUCTION

THE CITY OF SOUTH GATE PROVIDES a wide variety of recreational programs and special events designed to meet the cultural, fitness and social needs of the community. Most of these recreational programs take place at facilities located inside South Gate Park, but some arts and fitness classes are also provided in the Hollydale Resource Center, and family support services are available in the Westside Resource Center.

Many of these recreational programs are tailored for different age groups, specifically youths (ages 3 to 17), adults (18 and over) and senior residents (55 and over). The interests and needs of all these populations are in flux due to changing demographics and generational trends within the community as explained in Chapter 2. An accurate picture of the current state of the Department's existing recreation program and the challenges it faces is required in order to be prepared in the future to meet the evolving needs and expectations of the community it serves.

In addition to residents having access to recreation facilities, trails and open spaces, the availability of a wide range of recreation programs, cultural activities and leisure opportunities is a major component to the quality of life in any community. Recreation programs benefit individuals, families, businesses, neighborhoods and households of all ages, income levels, cultures and abilities by creating environments that engage people in positive activities. Recreation programs and services that have been developed, designed and delivered effectively can provide the following benefits:

- *Unique sense of place*
- *Sense of belonging*
- *Healthy lifestyles*
- *Advance lifelong learning*
- *Professional growth*
- *Safety and security*
- *Youth development*
- *Strong family units*
- *Cultural unity*
- *Economic development*
- *Environmental stewardship*
- *Fun and celebration*

Recreation pursuits normally provided by public recreation agencies range from organized pursuits such as sports, classes, youth activities, family programming and community events, to more passive endeavors such as picnics, hiking, bicycling, and walking. Effective recreation programs promote the constructive use of leisure time and a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle, personal development and a strong community.

This section summarizes the existing inventory of recreation programs and services; provides a program analysis based on the City's demographic profile and available facilities for delivering recreation services; and outlines key findings regarding the Parks and Recreation delivery system based on the list of desired benefits above.

4.2 PROGRAM INVENTORY

4.2.1 Youth Services

The Parks and Recreation Department offers an especially wide range of programs and activities designed to meet the recreational and social needs of the youth of South Gate. These include both a variety of cultural and fitness oriented classes, as well as an extensive array of athletic programs and other sport options.

Youth Recreation Programs

A variety of family-oriented classes and programs to provide children and youth of all ages with educational and social opportunities are available each quarter. Dance and music classes make up the core of the current class schedule. Classes in ballet, guitar, Mexican folk dance, modern dance, piano and salsa are offered, along with hip-hop, and even baby boogie for 3 years and up. Other more specialized classes include yoga and self-defense. An arts class and a creative crafts class for young children are also provided each quarter. Most of these classes are offered once per week over a 9-week period.

Kindergarten readiness classes offer group socialization opportunities and preparation for pre-school, along with support for young parents. Participation in the Tiny Two's class, which requires parental involvement, is strong. Attendance in the Tot Time program for 3-5 years has slowly declined, possibly due to a significant increase in competition from licensed pre-schools. At the Westside Resource Center, a pre-kindergarten academy for children ages 0 to 5 is also offered by one of the City's partner organizations, the Human Services Association (HSA). Other family support services are also provided by the HSA in this City park and recreation facility.

Recreational programs that offer a healthy outlet for youth when school is out of session are provided during the summer and also during winter and spring breaks, although the experience has been mixed. Attendance at the summer day camp exceeded projected goals, while the winter day camp was cancelled due to low registration. Once every month, the Parks and Recreation Department also sponsors a social, dance event called Teen Town for 6th through 8th grade students.

Youth Sport Programs

The City of South Gate, together with its partner organizations, provides the community with a wide range of athletic programs for both boys and girls in all age groups between 3 and 17, with a special emphasis on team sports. Throughout the year, the City operates rookie clinic classes in basketball, baseball and soccer for children ages 3 to 5. Graduates of these rookie clinic graduates can move on into league play in all of these sports. This includes a Jr. NBA/WNBA basketball league managed by the City, which currently includes six age-based divisions.

Although the City itself does not currently offer organized sports programs in baseball and soccer, children interested in those sports can advance into the very active league play provided by the City's partner organization. It has a close working relationship with its partners, which are able to utilize the sports fields and basketball courts operated and maintained by the City. These include both the South Gate American Youth Soccer Organization (AYSO) and the baseball and basketball leagues of the South Gate Junior Athletic Association(JAA).

The City does not offer football but that need is met through other local outlets. The South Gate Youth Football, Inc, is a local non-profit offering both football and cheerleading for both boys and girls between the ages of 5 to 14. Football is also a very popular organized sport in the local high schools. These LAUSD teams use the sports fields provided by the City.

In addition to traditional team sports, the City provides lessons for youth in sports and athletic pursuits such as karate, tae kwon do, tennis and volleyball. A golf league for youth between ages 7 to 17 meets every Saturday morning in the City's golf course. Swim lessons are also offered by the City at its Swim Stadium, which is temporarily closed for renovations but scheduled to reopen summer 2008. The South Gate Aquatics Club, another partner organization, provides local youth with an opportunity to participate in competitive swim programs and events.

4.2.2 Adult Services

For adults 16 and older, the City of South Gate offers a variety of educational and athletic opportunities, which promote and facilitate physical fitness, mental well-being and social interaction. Each quarter the City offers ten community classes taught by independent contractors. The most popular classes include guitar (beginning and adult), flower arranging, salsa, yoga, and party and balloon decorating. Other class offerings include adult belly dance, cake decorating, dog and puppy obedience, piano, and rubber stamping. These classes are typically offered once a week over a 9-week period.

Adult athletics have been a core element of the City's recreational services. Active leagues for men's basketball, slow pitch softball (men's, women's and coed), and women's volleyball dominate the adults sports program. The City

also offers lessons for individuals in karate, swimming and tennis, along with two different fitness classes. The adult sports programs, which are operated on a fee basis, is one of the few recreational services provided by the City where the revenue generated from participant fees covers the actual direct costs of operating the program.

4.2.3 Senior Services

The City's senior activities program is designed to meet the health, recreational and social needs of adults who are 55 years of age or older. All senior activities and programs operate out of the newly renovated Senior Center, located in South Gate Park. Senior activities include classes and recreational activities held weekly in the Senior Center's conference room. Seven different classes are offered over the course of each week. These include cultural studies (both English and Spanish versions) provided by the South Gate Community Adult School, as well as crafts and fine art classes, and game activities, including senior bingo and loteria.

Participation in all of these classes and activities has increased and exceeded annual expectations. Among the most popular activities are cultural and recreational excursions that are scheduled on a frequent, regular basis throughout the year to various local tourist destinations, theatrical performances, community fairs/festivals and casinos. Approximately ten trips are scheduled each season.

In addition to these educational and recreational activities, the Senior Center also offers a number of health related programs for seniors, primarily weekly health screenings and seminars, as well as an annual health fair. The Senior Center offers a daily lunch program for seniors, and home delivered meals. The latter program is offered through a partner organization, the Old-Timers Foundation, and participation has exceeded the annual goal by over 600%.

4.2.4 Facility-Based Programs and Special Events

Along with the many different programs and services provided by the Parks and Recreation Department designed to focus on the specific recreational needs of the three primary age groups within the community population – youth, adults and seniors - there are other broad-based programs more easily described in the context of the recreational facility in which they take place. These three facilities include the Swim Stadium, Sports Center, and the Golf Course. All three facilities provide recreational services for the community at-large, although here too programs catering to different age groups predominate.

Aquatics Program/Swim Stadium

The Swim Stadium has been the home for the City of South Gate's Aquatics Program, which has been very popular with both the youth and adults of the community. Although the Aquatics Program has been temporarily suspended while the Swim Stadium is closed for renovations, it is scheduled to resume once those improvements are completed in the summer of 2008.

The Aquatics Programs consists of swimming lessons and other classes provided by Department staff on a year-round basis, as well as a special program of swimming lessons and team sports held each summer sponsored by the Amateur Athletic Foundation (AAF) of Los Angeles. The year-round program includes swimming lessons for the following:

- *Tiny Tots (3-5)*
- *Parent and child*
- *Youth (6-17 years)*
- *Adults (18+ years)*

Due to the heavy demand and limitations of time and space, swim lesson sign-ups have been on a lottery basis. Youth semi-private and private lessons are also available. In addition to the swimming lesson program, the Department provides an Aqua Aerobics class for adults and Lifeguard training classes for interested youth. It has also been in encouraging interest in water polo through informal events, like Wednesday Night Madness, to introduce people to the sport.

The AAF sponsored Summer Aquatics programs provide swim lesson classes for youth between the ages of 7 to 17, and also a Summer Swim Team and a Summer Swim Polo Team for the same age group.

The Aquatics Program also supports the South Gate Aquatics Club, a partner organization that holds practices in the Swim Stadium, and a City sponsored swim team and City water polo team. Once the refurbished Swim Stadium opens, the Department is planning to establish a stronger link between its swim lesson programs and these City sponsored teams, making it easier for graduates of those programs to move onto swim team activities. The Aquatics Program is expected to include additional activities once the renovated Swim Stadium re-opens.

Golf Course

The 9-hole 3 par golf course located in South Gate Park provides lessons for both adults and youth. Every Saturday morning, the Urban Youth League provides group golf lessons for youth ages 7 to 17, completion of which qualifies participants for tournament play. This program is part of an overall strategy to find and encourage new players to try the sport, especially as this recreational facility has in recent years experienced a decline in usage. In addition to the Urban

Youth League, the Golf Course also provides other golf instruction for youth, as well as golf lessons for adults. Seniors are also provided discounts and other incentives to encourage their golf play.

The South Gate Golf Course is also home for the Men's Golf Club, and the Women's Golf Club, both of which have weekly golfing events. Golf course tournaments take place once every month.

Sports Center

Some of the recreational programs previously described, including many adult fitness classes, are held in the Sport Center. In addition to the Swim Stadium, which is the home for the Aquatics Program, the Sport Center includes a weight room, full size gymnasium for basketball, community rooms, a game room for billiards and ping-pong, and racquetball courts. These recreational facilities are open to all residents and non-residents who pay an annual "Sports Center Membership Fee". This program is designed for those who expect to use the recreational facilities of the Sport Center on a frequent, regular basis. Other less frequent users can access the facilities at any time by paying an entrance fee.

Main Auditorium

The main auditorium is used extensively for recreation classes such as, baby boogie, hip hop dance, Mexican folk dancing, cake decorating, and many other contract classes. The building is also a popular facility for community meetings and events. The Main Auditorium is part of the facility rental program and it is used for various performance activities.

Girls Clubhouse

This facility includes a main assembly hall and several smaller meeting rooms/classrooms. The facility is primarily used for youth programs including an array dance classes, music classes, craft classes, and self defense classes. All of the tiny tot class offerings take place at this facility. The building does house a number of adult contract classes such as dog obedience, flower arranging, party and ballooning decorating, and adult dance classes.

Hollydale Resource Center

The Hollydale Resource Center located in Hollydale Community Park along the eastern edge of the City, offers a mix of recreational classes and services, similar to those offered in South Gate Park. These include arts and craft classes for adults and children, music lessons, martial arts and soccer for youths. The presence of these recreational programs on the eastside helps provide some geographical balance to the Department's recreation program.

Special Events

Along with the facility-based programs, the Department is engaged in developing and implementing a series of special events during the course of the year. Many of these special events focus exclusively on the needs of young people and their parents, but other major events are intended for the entire community.

The two most significant events are the Azalea Festival, held every March, and the 4th of July Festival and Fireworks show. Both of these major undertakings involve months of preparation on the part of many community organizations working with the Parks and Recreation Department. As many as 20,000 are expected to attend and

participate in each of these special events. The special events offer an opportunity for youth, families and community members to come together in a fun atmosphere and enjoy the spirit of their community. They also provide two of the benefits listed above, fun and celebration and a positive economic impact to the community.

In addition to these two major community events, the Department develops and implements a variety of other smaller-scale special events during the course of each year. The annual event schedule has included, among other such affairs, Halloween Carnivals, a Spring Time Village, Memorial Day service, Lunch with Easter Bunny, Santa's Breakfast, as well as various cultural and sports festivals. Teen Town, the monthly dance event, previously described, is another special event sponsored by the Parks and Recreation Department.

All of these Special Events provide the Department and the City one of its best vehicles for reaching out to the South Gate community to provide a unique sense of place, a sense of belonging, and an opportunity for cultural unity, all of which are desired benefits as listed above.

4.3 KEY FINDINGS

Over the years, the Parks and Recreation Department's comprehensive recreational program has been considered one of its key strengths. Some residents, however, have expressed concern that the current programs were being hurt by the City's financial problems, and as a consequence program offerings are not as extensive or of the same high quality as they have been in the past. Lacking substantive information about the City's recreational programs from past years (or even decades), it is difficult to document

whether this decline is true or not, but the perception that there is a gap between current offerings and what the community is now looking for is real enough and therefore, needs to be addressed.

There is an expressed desire to improve upon and expand existing recreational services by making them available and accessible to more members of the community, especially its young people in their critical early teenage years, and its growing population of senior residents. Although the City has succeeded with activities and classes that engage its younger children, the effort to keep pre-driving teens 13 to 15 years of age interested and out of trouble is proving to be more of a challenge. At the same time, the Department has significantly expanded its senior program, but the desire among some seniors for a more extensive and varied range of services and facilities is strong.

There appears to be a number of issues affecting the successful delivery of recreational programs to the community. Many of these the Department has inherited from the past. The following key issues that need to be addressed in the master plan were derived from interviews and conversations with participants in current programs, civic leaders and comments received at focus group meetings:

- *People blame the lack of a local community newspaper to inform residents on a timely basis about what is happening in their city and community, including the recreational services and facilities available to them. While the Department provides every household in the City with a quarterly brochure detailing all the recreational activities and services available to them, residents want a source of daily or weekly information of the services and activities offered to them, especially the special events that take place throughout the year.*

- *Many residents rely more on word-of-mouth from family, friends and neighbors to keep abreast of what is happening, they are more dependent on having consistent program schedules to rely upon and are more likely to be surprised and discouraged by changes in program offerings they were not prepared for.*
- *The current geographic distribution of its parks and facilities, especially on the City's west side, presents another difficulty in making recreational programs accessible and available to all residents.*
- *Lacking a community park on the west side that can accommodate sports fields or facilities in which to operate classes and other recreational programs, most such activities are concentrated in South Gate Park near the center of the City. While this arrangement attracts people to a central point that facilitates reaching a critical mass of participants needed to support recreational classes, team sports, and other activities, it leaves out other potential participants who lacking a car must walk a long distance or rely on uncertain public transportation to travel to South Gate Park on a regular basis.*
- *Some historically popular programs may have been discontinued due to falling enrollments, reflecting changing demographics and with the passage of time different interests and new trends. Certainly, the emergence of soccer as a popular sport is evidence of this evolution, which will also impact other recreational programs and classes. While some programs may have been discontinued due to falling interest, it is more difficult to ascertain what new activities will be popular today or in the future, but the Department is surveying current recreational program participants in an effort to better anticipate their needs.*
- *For some residents a lack of time to participate in recreational activities or the financial resources required for fitness fees or other expenses are not only significant hurdles for these individuals but also for a Department trying to encourage greater participation in its fee based recreational programs. In part, this is due to having a significant proportion of residents economically and socially disadvantaged, who are naturally pre-*

occupied with the time and effort required supporting their households financially. Others who may be doing better financially are still busy contending with too many demands on their time placed on them by their jobs, and the realities of modern life.

- *A possible symptom of this problem is the observation made by some residents and others who have noted a significant drop in involvement by parents in the recreational activities and team sports of their children. As a result it is increasingly difficult to find and recruit adults to serve as coaches or in other volunteers' roles that are critical to support team sports and other recreational programs. Some complain that many parents simply drop off their kids, showing little interest in what they are doing in the park except for what time they should come back to pick them up. This trend may also contribute to the difficulty of keeping younger teens interested and involved in team sports and other recreational activities. Without the extra encouragement, support and attention from their parents, many of these teens are less likely to make the effort to stay involved, finding it easier to drift into other activities.*
- *The City's parks and recreation system is seen as an essential resource for helping pre-teens and teenagers avoid making the wrong life choices in their formative years. By keeping them out of trouble and away from gang influences, the parks are seen as a vital community development tool.*
- *Although the City has been very successful in engaging younger age groups in its sports programs, especially basketball, they have had less success in keeping older youth involved in organized sports and other recreational services, especially those in their teenage years. This reflects a concern that the City is not offering enough activities for the crucial 13 to 16 year old group, or that what it does offer no longer matches the interests of today's youth. Surveys of local youth indicate that a primary reason for dropping out of organized sports is a lack of time, or that they cannot afford the expense. This is corroborated by input from other sources, which stated that fees at the Sport Center discourage many youth who otherwise would go there on a regular basis.*

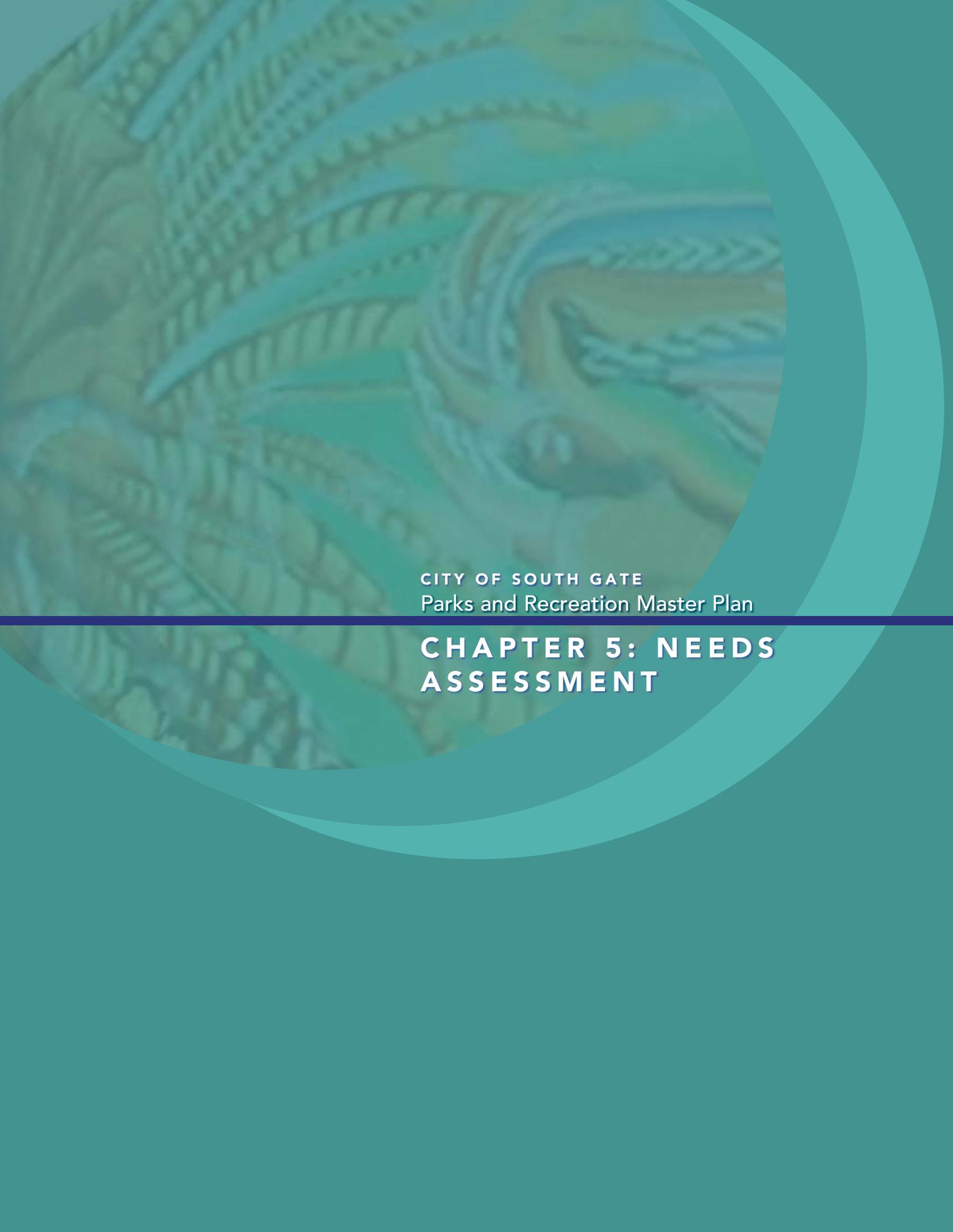
- *Although the recreational adult services provided by the City have been an important element in its overall recreational program, there has been an apparent fall off in participation. During the 06/07 fiscal year the number of adults participating in the community classes fell well short of the annual goal of 900 registrants. In response, the City is evaluating its current class offerings and is recruiting new instructors to expand and refine the list of available classes to make sure they are aligned with current community interests and trends dictated by the current community demographic profile.*
- *According to the parks and recreation survey conducted in the summer of 2007, the most popular outdoor and athletic activities among adults are baseball, boxing, dog walking, swimming, soccer and jogging/running. Most every weeknight evening and on weekends, the latter two sports activities are highly evident, as large numbers of joggers run and walk around the perimeter of South Gate Park, while several pickup soccer games are taking place within its more central areas. Despite the popularity of many of these athletic activities, recent staffing and budgetary problems have forced the curtailment of the City's adult sports leagues, including its popular basketball, slow pitch softball and volleyball adult leagues. Although much of the decline in adult participation is due to these organizational factors, they may mask other trends that have negatively impacted participation in adult recreational services. Additional findings from the parks and recreational survey suggest there is significant competition for the time and energy of adults who might otherwise be interested in participating in the City's recreational programs. The number one reason cited for not participating in recreation or sports programs offered by the City was that they were simply too busy to do so. Additional problems identified in the surveys were inconvenient times, the expense, or a need for childcare.*
- *Just as meeting the needs of youth in their early teen years is viewed as a critical priority for the City of South Gate, so are the needs of its growing population of senior residents. Providing a variety of different classes and*

other activities for senior residents is seen as a way to ensure continued physical health, mental well-being and vital social connections as the foundation for a quality lifestyle. Despite the expansion of the senior program, there is a perception that the Department needs to do more than it has done so far. A factor contributing to this belief among some residents is the increasing popularity of the classes and programs offered by the Department, suggesting that demand for these services exceeds the current supply. This observation is supported by comments from patrons of those senior services who complain that there are not enough things to do at the senior center. This problem, in part, may stem from the apparent limited amount of space available in the senior center for most activities. Most scheduled activities all take place in the same conference room, making it impossible to conduct more than one class or activity at a time. Although the new senior center opened only four years ago, users of the facility would like to see more space added to the facility in the form of additional and larger meeting rooms. In addition, they would like to see new facilities integrated into the senior center that would allow for more casual, unscheduled leisure and recreational activities. These include a recreation room for billiards and other games, a weight room with gym and other fitness equipment, a library and computer room, and more space for arts and crafts classes. There is also a desire for expanded entertainment opportunities, including more space for dance activities and movies.

- *Improved coordination between local transportation services and the schedule of activities at the senior center is also desired. Some senior center patrons who rely on a local shuttle service to travel to and from the center are unable to participate in afternoon programs, as the last scheduled shuttle run leaves the senior center at 1:30 pm.*
- *There is also a sense of growing social isolation among some seniors who, as long time residents of South Gate, find themselves separated from their neighbors not only by age, but also by new cultural and language barriers.*

In summary, the department does an excellent job of providing recreation programs and services given the facility and financial resources available to them. There is a good balance between programs for all ages and interests. The Department is currently soliciting participant feedback and looking for ways to keep programs and services current to community demands. The lack of resources to advertise and market program offerings is a major hurdle to increasing participation. The Department works well with community organizations to partner and provide recreational opportunities beyond what the City can provide directly.

Adjusting to financial problems, maintaining existing resources, providing consistent program schedules, and continuing to expand community partnerships will be the Departments biggest challenges for recreation programs and services in the future.



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

**CHAPTER 5: NEEDS
ASSESSMENT**

chapter 5 – needs assessment

5.1 INTRODUCTION

THE PURPOSE OF A NEEDS ASSESSMENT is to quantify and understand both the facility and recreational program needs of the community. In order for the South Gate Parks and Recreation Department to develop a long-range plan for providing the right recreational facilities and programs, it must understand the nature of the community, its recreational desires, its actual needs, and its ability to provide the services that are determined necessary through the Needs Assessment.

Demand and Needs are sometimes difficult to quantify. A numerical standard may not reflect the makeup of a community, its economic situation, history, traditional recreation uses, or political environment. This report assesses the recreational programming and park facilities needs of the City of South Gate starting with national and state trends, past levels of service, public involvement, and identified community demands and desires.

5.2 SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AND PROJECTIONS

Chapter 2 presented a demographic profile of the City that showed the largest percentage of the population to be young families with parents ages 25 to 44 and children 5-19 years of age. The overall median age of South Gate's population is a young 29.1 years, which is considerably younger than the State average of 35.4 for cities the size of South Gate.

The majority of the population living in South Gate consists of people from Hispanic heritage or birth. One third of the current population is non-citizens, unable to vote.

Residents of South Gate on average earn less than those in surrounding Los Angeles County, both in median and household income.

According to both City and State population projections, South Gate will continue to see growth in the Hispanic community, with increasing numbers of young families replacing long-term residents.

Pre-school age children and seniors over 55 will each continue to remain about 10% of the population.

The education demographic is a major issue in South Gate with over 54% of the community not having graduated High School.

Consequently, in planning for future programs and facilities the City must take into consideration the demographic profile of South Gate, which is going to be:

- *A city of young families with a large population of young parents and school age children*
- *A city of lower than average family incomes*
- *A predominately Hispanic city*
- *A city with a majority of its residents lacking formal education*
- *A city that will have a consistent future need to address both toddler and senior age group needs*
- *A city where immigration and legal status will continue to present challenges*

In addition to dealing with the City's demographic profile in trying to meet park and recreation demands in the future, the City of South Gate is in the midst of recovering from financial setbacks that have taken place within the past decade. This situation has put a strain on available resources for the Parks and Recreation Department. The resulting cutbacks on recreation and maintenance staff have made it difficult, if not impossible, for the Department

to improve conditions in the parks or meet the growing needs of the community.

Addressing how to generate the financial resources necessary to plan for meeting the park and recreation needs of the demographic profile of the community will require new policy directions for both the short term and long term. New policies and recommended actions for implementing them are contained in Chapter 6 and 7, and were developed based on the following demand and needs analysis.

5.3 METHODOLOGY

The Consultant Team, working with the City, utilized a number of input tools to reach the public for their input about recreation needs and desires, as well as their special insights into the operation of Parks and Recreation programs and services. The tools used by the Consultant Team included interviewing members of the public at Special Events; distributing a parks and recreation questionnaire at City facilities; conducting a Visioning Fair for the public to attend; conducting an Internet Survey aimed at soliciting input from the City's youth; providing the Parks and Recreation Commission with a questionnaire to gain their input; conducting meetings with various special interest groups to determine their special needs; plus the Team conducted face to face interviews with a number of stakeholders in the community, which included civic leaders, school district officials, community organizations and groups that partner with the City to deliver programs and services.

Talking to people at City Special Events was particularly helpful in gaining insight into how residents perceive the City's Park and recreation programs and services and what they would like to see the City provide in the future. The Consultant Team attended the Azalea Festival, the Tweedy Mile Street Fair

and the Fourth of July Weekend Carnival, which gave a good cross section of participants and community residents to interview.

The Visioning Fair and Stakeholder interviews gave great insight into the policy issues and concerns, along with the opportunities and constraints facing the City in its quest to deliver a successful park and recreation system.

In addition to the tools mentioned above, the MIG Consulting Team had the opportunity to attend some public events being held to gather community feedback on the City’s General Plan update that is being undertaken at the same time as the update to the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.

The information gained from all of these input tools was analyzed and incorporated into the document in the form of data and then used as a means of determining the policy recommendations and action items contained in Chapters 6 and 7 upon which the City can set and reach attainable goals.

To add perspective to the analysis contained in this and other chapters, the Team obtained statistics from cities in Southern California of similar economic status, ethnic make up, and population density in order to see how South Gate compared. The tables below show how each of those cities use the available land for recreation needs and how they distribute their recreation expenses to their residents.

Sports Field Ratios of Comparable Cities

City	Ballfields	Soccer Fields	Pools	# of Ballfields Per 10,000 Residents	# of Soccer Fields Per 10,000 Residents
El Monte	6	2	1	0.48	0.16
Lynwood	4	3	1	0.55	0.41
South Gate	10	3	1	0.98	0.29
Buena Park	16	5	2	1.95	0.61

Park Expenditures of Comparable Cities

City	Parks Operating Expenditures 2004-05	Expenditures Per Resident 2004-05	Net Expenditures Per Resident 2004-05	Net Expenditures as a Percentage of General Revenues 2004-05
El Monte	\$4,789,254	\$41	\$30	8.47%
Lynwood	\$3,693,259	\$51	\$43	19.12%
South Gate	\$4,224,715	\$51	\$35	13.41%
Buena Park	\$3,779,683	\$50	\$17	3.61%

Along with the public outreach component described above, the Consultant Team toured the parks and facilities in South Gate to assess first hand the current conditions of buildings, fields, restrooms, equipment, amenities, and other elements that combine to make up the park and recreation delivery system. Those observations are summarized in this Chapter and are contained in full in Appendix B – Community Outreach.

5.4 SUMMARY OF PUBLIC OUTREACH

5.4.1 Azalea Festival, Tweedy Mile Street Fair & Fourth of July Weekend Carnival

During the 2007 Azalea Festival, Tweedy Mile Street Fair and Fourth of July Weekend Carnival, MIG staffed booths to draw attention to the fact that the Parks and Recreation Department was updating its Master Plan. The MIG Team wanted to seize the opportunity of being where the greatest number of residents would be gathering to hand out Parks and Recreation questionnaires (See Appendix B3: Parks and Recreation Questionnaire). It provided an opportunity to solicit opinions about what types of programs and facilities were of most interest to residents, and also to answer any questions regarding the Master Plan process.

5.4.2 Visioning Fair

The City of South Gate, Parks and Recreation Department hosted a Visioning Fair for the Community on August 18, 2007 at the Girls Club House at South Gate Park. This public outreach event was designed to facilitate community participation in the Master Plan process. Along with the Consultant Team, City elected officials and City staff were present to discuss issues and answer questions. Participants at the event toured various Vision Fair “stations” and responded to different questions and activities.

The first station exhibit board asked, *“WHERE DO YOU LIVE AND WHAT PARKS DO YOU GO TO?”* This exhibit consisted of a map of the City of South Gate with the individual parks highlighted. Participant were asked to draw a line from the location of their home to the park(s) they visit.

The results of this exercise show that the residents overwhelmingly visit South Gate Park more than their neighborhood parks and that South Gate Park has the programs and facilities residents want to use.

The next station asked the question *“I VISIT THIS PARK BECAUSE...”* and the participant volunteered which park they visited and why. Their response was an indication of the reason they were pleased with a particular park.

The results of this exercise again reinforced the popularity of *SOUTH GATE PARK*. Comments about South Gate Park listed the enjoyment of going to the park for social events, family gatherings, and sports activities. One person wrote of how long they had been living in South Gate and how her children and now her grandchildren were at the park all the time. Youth programs including sports, swimming and other activities were noted as an important asset to the community. There was mention of the many clubs that use the park building facilities for

meetings and gathering places. The clubs mentioned were the Women's Club, senior organizations, the Boy Scouts, and the Optimist Club. Insightful comments were received from participants about the park programs and facilities promoting family interaction, bonding and fun and that this was a good foundation for the family. This holds true on the community level with the special events that bring the citizens out to the park together, i.e. the Azalea Festival events and the many carnivals during the year.

HOLLYDALE REGIONAL PARK received a few comments relating to the fact that the park has an extensive area and is a linear park making it great for walks. This comment explains it all. "I like to take long walks and see the school I went to when I was a kid and the kids on field trips from the school next to the park." One other reason to visit the park, of course is the availability of the open turf areas for soccer play.

Comments on *HOLLYDALE COMMUNITY PARK* spoke of the enjoyment of watching and participating with people as they enjoy their sports and picnics.

Though attendees were given the opportunity to comment on all the parks in South Gate, only these three parks received comments.

The next station asked the question "*I WOULD VISIT THIS PARK IF...*" where the response tried to determine what the participant thought that a particular park in question needed.

The results of this exercise showed that participants had a lack of knowledge about the smaller parks in the City and some of the resources available to them. A comment repeated many times was the desire to be able to reserve areas with a permit system.

Other comments included wanting a place to play bingo and to have more programs available for adults. Better lighting, better park maintenance and cleaner restrooms were also listed as park needs.

People wanted a dog park at *CESAR CHAVEZ PARK* and room for sports activities with off street parking. This is a new park so there were requests for more trees and shade. Cleaner restrooms were also requested.

At *STANFORD AVENUE PARK* there were again requests for cleaner restrooms. More shelters for picnics and barbecues and a dog park were also suggested. Youth counseling services and more youth programs were also a priority.

At *STATE STREET PARK* and *WESTSIDE COMMUNITY RESOURCE CENTER* the community would like to see more resources for families. This includes counseling, parenting classes, and youth intervention. If these services already exist, then they need to be communicated better to residents. The community also expressed a desire for more part-time jobs for students.

At *SOUTH GATE PARK* comments ranged from wanting a dog park to needing more parking. Several citizens commented that maintenance vehicles need to be kept off the grass because they are causing damage to the turf. People wanted upgraded restroom facilities, handball courts, an outdoor stage and events area, batting cages, and a running trail. Some suggested that the youth at the skate park be allowed to paint murals on the concrete.

Residents requested more community special events, such as weekend car shows. It was also suggested that there should be a police

substation and there should be patrols on bikes by the officers to ensure safety within and around South Gate park.

There were only a few comments about *TRIANGLE PARK* and they included the need for a restroom and a water fountain.

At *CIRCLE PARK* the community is asking for restrooms and a water fountain also. There were two comments about being able to get a permit to use the park for private parties.

At *HOLLYDALE REGIONAL PARK* the comments called for many new amenities such as a swimming pool, batting cages, lighting for night sports use, and more picnic shelters. Requests were received for more programs for youth and adults, with counseling programs for youth specifically singled out.

Because of its size, more trails for jogging, running, walking and dog walking were suggested. People indicated that maintenance of the restrooms needs improving as well as cleaning up the grass clippings after the turf is mowed and reducing the gopher population.

Comments on *GARDENDALE TOT LOT* included the need for ADA improvements and amenities other than just play equipment.

Suggestions included the addition of basketball courts, more picnic area with barbecues and a restroom.

In addition to the “stations” the participants visited and gave their input on, there was an exercise titled “*WATER COOLER*” where everyone was able to make general comments on the City’s parks and recreation facilities and programs.

The day's activities also included an exercise titled "The Visionary Map Exhibit", which asked the question "WHAT IS MISSING FROM SOUTH GATE PARKS?" Participants were given the opportunity to review a large map of the entire City and by way of placing symbol stickers, markers, and facility templates on the map were able to make suggestions as to what the park system needed to better service the community.

The results of the "WATER COOLER" and the "Visionary Map Exhibit" produced the following comments and suggestions for the park system in the future:

- *Participants would like to see a bicycle street path formally established within the City, connecting to the Los Angeles River Bikeway. They suggested the connections running East and West could be Firestone Blvd., Tweedy Blvd. and Southern Avenue. These streets could be connected together by bike path designation along Long Beach Blvd and Atlantic Ave, which run North and South. The bike route should connect to Cesar Chavez Park and Triangle Park, thus providing easy access to these facilities.*
- *Participants suggested a dog park and a skateboard park be placed along Southern Ave. across from the Westside Community Resource Center.*
- *It was also suggested that there be additional tot lots with picnic areas and even a splash park along Southern Ave. in what may eventually become Cesar Chavez Park. Participants felt that this linear open space would be great for enhanced walking trails and open turf areas. Participants pointed out that the utility company would need to review and approve any added amenities to the area.*

South Gate Park received the most comments and suggestions from the participants. They would like to see a large performance/event venue created somewhere in the park. They thought the park is large enough to accommodate two splash/water play areas, in addition to expanding the swimming pool and aquatic facilities. They expressed a need for batting cages,

a dog park, tennis courts, and barbecue and picnic areas. There were several requests for walking trails around the perimeter of the park.

Other requests included a connection to Triangle Park from the new bicycle pathway in the City; a splash/water play area at Circle Park; and improving Hollydale Regional Park by adding a dog park, music venue, overnight camping area, a skate park, additional baseball fields, batting cages, and field lights, especially for soccer.

Participants thought Hollydale Community Park could be improved by adding a skate park, additional picnic areas with barbecues and more basketball courts.

Finally, someone suggested a Community Garden could be created, possibly at an area along Imperial Highway.

The “Visioning Fair” ended the day with the participants being asked *“WHAT DO YOU WANT TO EXPERIENCE AT SOUTH GATE PARKS?”* A large display board featured a matrix with images of outdoor physical features and experiential descriptions to assist the participant in imaging how a physical feature could evoke an experience and how the experience would be expressed; either restfully, actively, in an exploratory manner, or adventurously. Participants received five colored dots stickers to place on the cells depicting the kinds of experiences they seek from local parks and recreation.

This matrix shows the results of this VISION activity.

	Restful	Active	Educational/ Exploratory	Adventurous
Greenery/Nature	11	2	2	4
Gathering Spaces	3	3	4	2
Trails	6	3	3	1
Play Areas	5	8	11	4

An art activity for children was conducted while their parents participated in the Vision Fair. They were asked “What do you like to do at the park? The children were encouraged to draw outdoor scenes and park experiences.



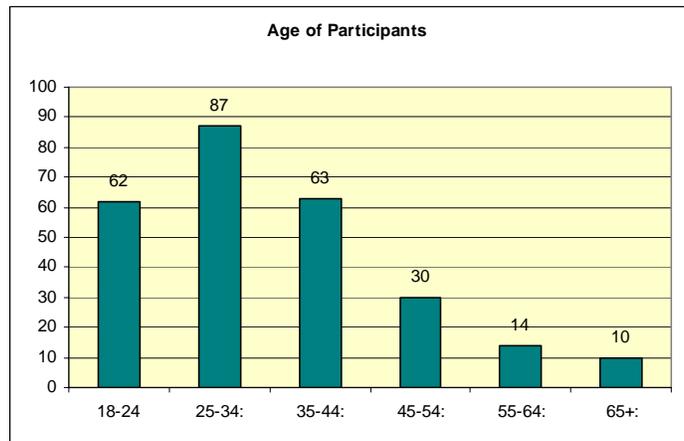
Young artist at the Visioning Fair

The recorded comments (edited for clarity) from the activities presented at the “Vision Fair” can be found in Appendix B.

5.4.3 Parks and Recreation Questionnaire

The project Team printed 1,000 written questionnaires in English and Spanish and distributed them at various locations and events throughout the City for five months (April-August 2007). The number of responses amounted to approximately a 30% return.

The questions were designed to determine the greatest demand for park space, facilities and programs, as well as reasons for non-use of facilities and to discover any gaps in service. The complete tallies of all the questions are located in Appendix B3. A synopsis of the results are presented in summary and chart form below. Participants returning the questionnaire ranged in age from 18 to over 65. As the chart to the left shows, the age group who returned the largest



percentage of questionnaires was 25-34 years, with 18-24 year olds and 35-44 year olds being the second largest age group responding. Thus, the responses are mostly the views of people between 25 to 44 years of age and the results were indicative of the needs and desires of that age group.

What activities you would like to do most?		
1. Baseball	18. Dancing	35. Softball
2. Boxing	19. Paintball	36. Tours & travel
3. Dog walking	20. Bicycling/Pleasure	37. Skateboarding
4. Basketball	21. Musical instrument	38. Sports events/attend
5. Swimming	22. Yoga/palates	39. Drama/participate
6. Soccer	23. Billiards/Pool	40. Gardening
7. Arts & Crafts	24. Dancing	41. Playground
8. Jogging/running	25. Museums/galleries	42. Bicycling/Commute
9. Computers	26. Tennis	43. Needlecraft/sewing
10. Football	27. Gymnastics	44. Painting/sketching
11. Walking	28. Photography	45. Rock climbing
12. Bowling	29. Volleyball	46. Day trips
13. Martial arts	30. Weight training	47. Handball/racquetball
14. Movies	31. Exercise/aerobics	48. Ping pong
15. Fairs & festivals	32. Picnics	49. Riverfront access
16. Concerts	33. Volunteering	50. Other
17. Cooking	34. Cultural Events	51. Badminton

Asked to select from a list of activities and choose five favorites, baseball ranked #1. Boxing was number two and Dog walking was among the top three activities, which relates to the community's request for dog parks.

In the cultural arts area, participants were most interested in seeing performing arts presented by the City.

Art in Public Places and Concerts were next in their popularity. In fact, the participants showed a strong response to all types of cultural offerings.

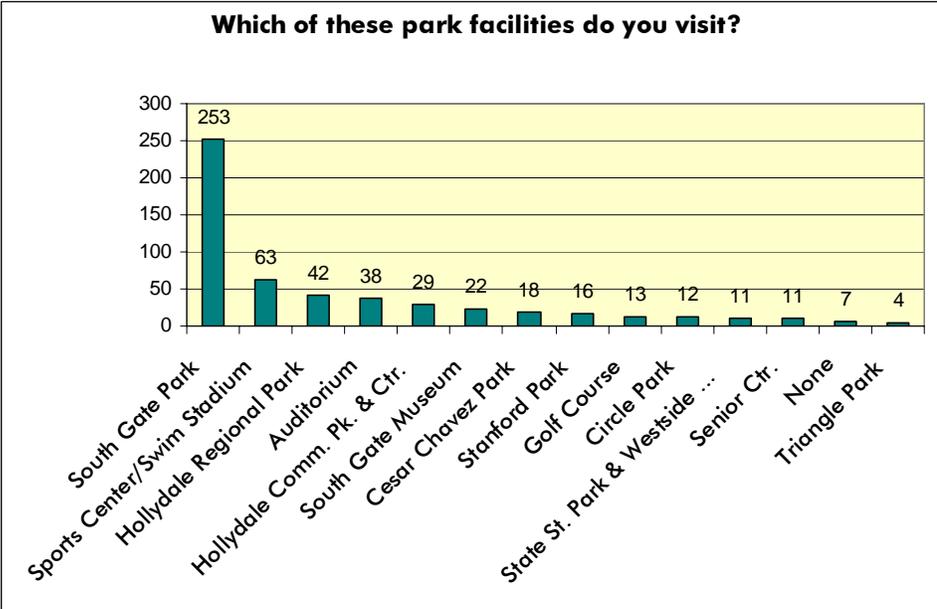
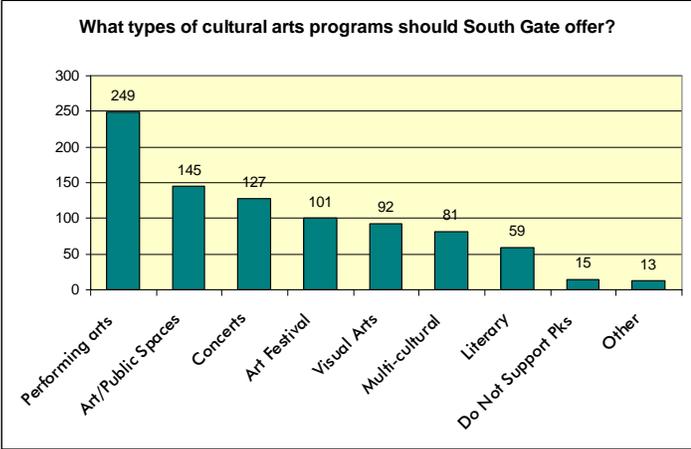
When asked to identify the parks they visit the most, South Gate Park far exceeded any of the others. Within South Gate Park, a substantial number visit the Sports Center/Swim Stadium. At the other end of the spectrum, Triangle Park receives little visitation.

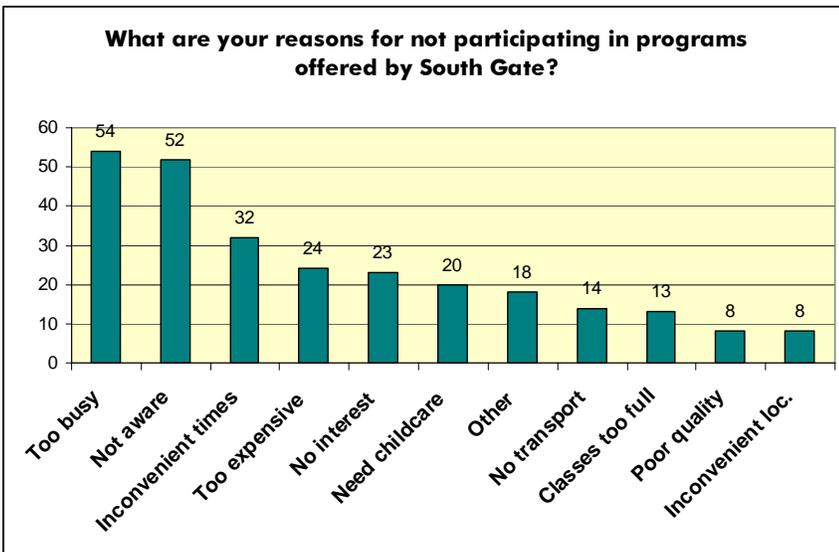
Participants who were asked how frequently they used park facilities responded that half use the park more than three times per week. The other half uses it four times or less per month.

Weekday evenings are the most popular time to visit or use the park’s facilities. The next

most convenient time was noon on weekdays followed by weekends before noon.

The majority of non-users of park programs said they were either “too busy” or were “not aware” of what was offered. The rest of respondents had a variety of reasons as shown in the chart on the left.

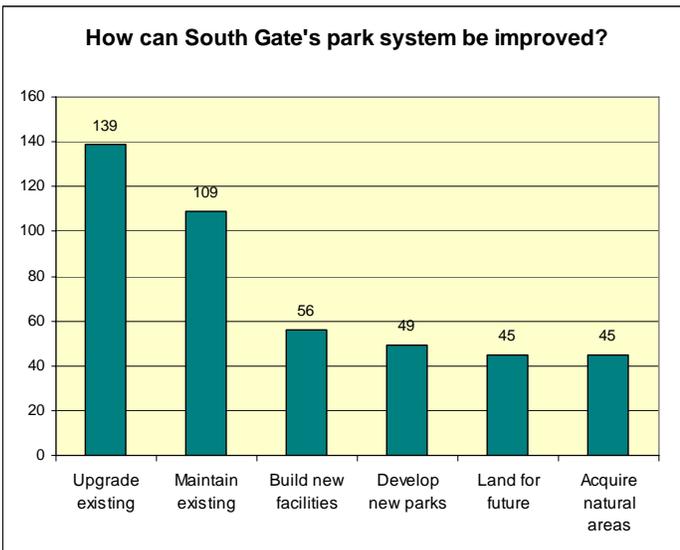




When asked how South Gate's park systems could be improved, those participants who wanted to upgrade and maintain existing facilities was double that of those who wanted the City to build or develop new parks and facilities.

Although most ranked maintenance in the "Poor" range, variety of activities, overall satisfaction and accessibility were rated "Good" to "Excellent".

5.4.4 Youth Internet Survey via Survey Monkey



The Team and the City felt that it was important to reach out to teens in South Gate to determine how best to serve their needs and find out what type of activities attract them to the parks.

In order to accomplish this task, a web-based questionnaire was launched on Survey Monkey in August 2007 with a link on the City's website. The survey was active for three months and attracted 100 respondents.

Appendix B contains the complete tabulations of the survey, but a summary of the results is as follows:

- The greatest number of respondents was in the 17-20 year old age bracket.

- *The most popular means of transportation to the parks was fairly equally distributed between:*
- *Drive myself*
- *Ride with someone else, and*
- *Walk (highest number at 47.42%)*
- *Lack of transportation was cited as the reason for non-attendance by 43% of teens.*
- *South Gate Park by far outnumbered any attendance at other parks in South Gate. Almost 90% of respondents visit facilities at South Gate Park on a regular basis.*
- *Sports fields ranked first (54%) among facilities that attracted teens, followed by shaded tree-filled areas (47%), open grass (40%), with picnic areas and trails tying at 36%.*
- *Swimming facilities ranked as the most needed by youth in South Gate followed by areas to host special events, cultural activities and social gathering.*
- *Of programs rated as most needed by youth, Special Events was #1, an opportunity to volunteer was #2 and organized team sports ranked #3.*
- *Most teens preferred to hang out home; the next closest was neighborhood parks at 16%.*
- *Electronic devices figured large among teens in delivering entertainment value. Using the computer and downloading or listening to music was preferred to any physical activity or sport.*
- *Two-thirds of those responding never did or no longer participate in team sports. Lack of time was the main reason.*
- *Photography, dancing and cooking were rated the top three “cultural activities” that teens enjoy most.*

5.4.5 Recreation Commission Questionnaire

The Parks and Recreation Commission's role in the Master Planning process was to act as the Steering Committee and be a resource for the City staff and the consultants to come to for direction and update on the Plan.

The Team asked the Commissioners for their opinions to gain their insights and to stimulate discussion on topics related to parks and recreation facilities in South Gate.

When asked what they thought the most pressing community needs were in South Gate, their responses ranged from the need for economic development to the need for improving existing parkland with additional new parkland.

- *The Commission expressed concern about redevelopment and revitalization of the Tweedy Blvd. business corridor, as well as the need to develop new businesses throughout the City. They felt that these developments will increase the funding available for all City operations including parks and recreation.*
- *Lack of parking is a concern and they considered it a detriment to business growth, as well as, an impact on the parks and the neighborhoods surrounding the parks.*
- *The Commission stated it would like to encourage the Community to be more active and participate more in the operations of the parks by volunteering and attending public meetings.*
- *The Commission had concerns that problems due to overcrowding in all of the larger parks in South Gate must be dealt with. Both South Gate Park and Hollydale Regional Park are not only heavily used and have many different activities going on next to each other, but are also suffering from increases in graffiti and vandalism. This blight is difficult to combat due to this heavy use and the lack of funding for additional staffing and park patrol. For example, the restrooms in the parks are often messy, without supplies, and marked-up with profanity.*

- *The Commission pointed out that the City of South Gate is densely inhabited, and the City has very little land available for new parkland. A suggested solution was to look at sites currently being underused and looking to joint use of school sites for recreation programs for the west and east side of the City.*
- *The Commission suggested a shuttle service should be explored to provide transportation from the west and east ends of the City to South Gate Park for access to programs.*
- *The Commission felt Parks and Recreation is very valuable to the community and must be a priority in the City operations.*
- *There was a consensus among the Commission that the greatest challenge facing the City of South Gate is the cost of running the park and recreation system and the lack of funding. They commented that the lack of funding not only reduces programs and facilities maintenance, but it also affects the motivation and energy of the park and recreation staff.*

When asked to evaluate how parks and recreation services improve the quality of life in South Gate, the Commission reiterated its affirmation that open space and recreation allows for a connection to nature and a respite from the daily stresses that people must face.

- *The Commission felt that introduction to sports, whether it is organized sports programs or casual games, is a life enhancing experience and that sports experience includes developing living skills that transfer to other endeavors in life.*
- *In addition to the obvious need for more programs and facilities, the Commission thought that there is a need to look at re-programming the existing space in parks, especially at South Gate Park, for more efficient and greater use.*
- *The Commission was concerned that additional park and recreation programs needed in South Gate should be focused on not just increasing*

the number of programs, but to diversify the types of programs offered to attract people with different interests.

- *The Commission expressed its desire for programs that focus on the City's youth, especially the 14 to 17 age group.*
- *Finding a solution to providing services to the underserved East and West sides of the City was a major concern of the Commission.*

Recreation programming/activities that were stated as the most important to the community were listed by the Commission as follows:

1. *Youth activity programs*
2. *Open space, trails and playgrounds*
3. *Family and Community Events*
4. *Organized Sports*
5. *Dog Park*
6. *Health and Fitness*
7. *Cultural Arts and Music*
8. *Education and social services*
9. *Childcare*

In addition to the above comments and suggestions the Parks and Recreation was asked to rank its highest priority policy issues facing parks and recreation. The Commission responded with the following:

1. *Maintaining green turf areas and open space for active field game playing and picnicking*
2. *Funding*
3. *Maintenance of existing buildings and turf and landscaping, including decreasing graffiti and vandalism*
4. *Expansion of existing facilities, such as the need to expand the Sports Center weight room*

The Commission was also asked if the community would support programs, facilities, or park maintenance funded by user fees or a tax measure. The response was “yes” for the tax measure; they thought this would be supported dependent on the amount; and “no” to any fees for park use.

5.4.6 Focus Group Meetings with Various Special Interest Groups

The purpose of conducting meetings with Focus Groups was to target specific audiences within an interest area to obtain insights from those familiar with the needs of those unique users of park facilities and programs.

The Parks and Recreation Department formed a Community Advisory Committee to assist the Master Plan Team in identifying and recruiting members of those Focus Groups. It was determined that five groups would be formed and meetings would be scheduled and facilitated by members of the MIG Team. The Focus Groups were identified as the following:

- *Recreation Programs*
- *Seniors*
- *Teens*
- *Maintenance and Operations*
- *Open Space and Trails*

Results from those meetings are summarized below. Complete findings from the meetings are found in Appendix B.

Recreation Programs

The purpose of the “Recreation Focus” group was to gather feedback from local residents on the recreation programs provided by the City of South Gate. Members of the focus group included residents who have participated in many of the recreation programs offered by the City and volunteers who, as coaches or in other capacities, have helped to implement many of the programs.

Among the volunteers were lifetime residents who, while growing up here as children, had enjoyed the parks and recreation programs of South Gate.

The input received from the “Recreation Focus” group is summarized as follows:

- *The most important areas to continue funding, regardless of budget problems include field maintenance, maintaining clay infields and keeping sports fields upgraded*
- *Issues the Parks and Recreation Department staff needs to concentrate on include:*
 - *Providing consistent program schedules*
 - *More programs for 13- to 16-year-olds*
 - *Increasing civics classes and teaching what it means to be a volunteer*
 - *More cultural classes, including art classes for 13- to 16-year-olds*
- *Development of more programs and facilities on the West and East side of the City, not just in South Gate Park, where they will be closer to where residents live*
- *Increased swimming opportunities for 13- to 16-year-olds*
- *Meeting the needs of both seniors and teens*

Seniors

The “Seniors Focus” group was established to collect input from seniors about the roles, needs, and strengths of the City’s Parks and Recreation programs and facilities for senior citizens. The input from this focus group included:

- *The group praised the Parks and Recreation Department for doing an excellent job overall in providing maintenance and services.*
- *They voiced a need for more rooms for meetings, recreation, exercise classes, and crafts classes.*
- *They were concerned with safety and security lighting.*

- *They thought that more should be done to combat graffiti and vandalism in the parks.*
- *They commented that communication could be better to reach seniors to inform them about events and programs.*
- *They felt that there needed to be more and better transportation services to the senior population.*
- *They think there should be more dedicated outdoor space for seniors.*
- *They thought it would be difficult, but that Seniors would support a slight increase in taxes to fund some of the improvements they asked for.*

Teens

The “Teen Focus” group was established to get the opinions and suggestions from teens and pre-teens in South Gate. Although 10 or more participants had been expected, only three teens attended, so the input received may not be fully representative of the teen population in South Gate. However, their input appears to be in line with findings from the internet-based youth survey completed prior to the “Teen Focus” group meeting.

The three teens in attendance said they visited South Gate Park at least once weekly to participate in sports activities. They indicated that the teens they know and they see using the park like to

- *play basketball*
- *use the skate park*
- *play baseball*
- *go to dances*
- *go jogging in the park, and*
- *use the weight room at the Sports Center.*

They did say that they go to neighboring cities to use updated and nicer facilities. The poor condition of the fields, restrooms and courts is the main

reason teens stay away or go elsewhere. They suggested that the Sports Center should stay open later than 5 p.m. to make it more accessible and user friendly.

When asked about what new programs should be implemented to appeal to Teens they responded that there should be an expansion of cultural and dance activities.

Maintenance and Operations

The people interviewed for the Maintenance and Operations Focus Group had varying experience using or volunteering at the parks. Most were long time residents of South Gate.

All shared their concern for safety in the parks, especially at South Gate Park. One woman witnessed drugs used in the park during daytime hours with children playing near by.

Vandalism, graffiti and trash throughout South Gate Park was commonplace. However, one interviewee said that that was not typical of the golf course, which he found to well maintained.

Several voiced concern that pride of ownership was lacking among users and something needed be done to build a sense of belonging and pride among residents and other visitors so they would treat the parks with more respect.

All remarked about the rundown state of the restrooms, including broken fixtures, vandalism, lack of supplies, graffiti, and uncleanness. In addition, those questioned felt that all the fixtures and amenities, such as benches, picnic tables, drinking fountains, trash receptacles, park signage, etc., needed to be updated and kept in good working condition. However, several noted that the Parks and Recreation Department was doing the best they could to

keep up, and recognized that the lack of funding and staffing was largely to blame for the problems they saw.

Suggestions to help the situation in the parks included:

- *Placing more trash receptacles throughout the parks*
- *Opening a police sub-station at South Gate Park*
- *Begin park cleanup earlier in the morning*
- *Start a volunteer clean up brigade or Adopt-A Park program*
- *Adding signage to remind people to clean up after themselves*

Open Space and Trails

The Open Space and Trails Focus Group was the same interviewees as the Maintenance and Operations Group. Of those interviewed, one felt that South Gate did not need any trails for walking or biking, however, he was in the minority. All the others recognized trails as a healthy and popular way to exercise, one used by many in South Gate.

South Gate Park and Hollydale Regional Park are heavily used by walkers and joggers. And although Hollydale's trails were stated to be in good condition, South Gate Park's were not.

Cesar Chavez Park and the remaining easements along Southern Avenue are potential developable land for open space and trails.

Interviewee raised concerns about safety of bikers and walkers along existing trails that encounter vehicle traffic and suggested special lanes be developed to isolate trails from cars.

Suggestions to improve the trails experience were:

- *Add Par Course Stations for exercise along trails*

- *Add security lighting along walkways*
- *Improve planting and greenery along walkways*
- *Provide drinking fountains along trails*
- *Offer recreation programs for walking and jogging*

5.4.7 Stakeholder interviews

The Consultant Team conducted 11 confidential phone interviews in the months of July and August 2007 with civic and community leaders. Those selected for the interviews were chosen because of their leadership positions in the community, along with the confidence they would offer objective, comprehensive views encompassing both the strengths and weaknesses of the current park system. Those interviewed included local elected officials, park department staff, and community leaders outside City government. The interviews provided an opportunity to speak candidly in response to the following key questions.

- *What do you value most about parks and recreation?*
- *How do parks and recreation services help to improve the quality of life in South Gate?*
- *What are the major parks and recreation issues facing the City of South Gate?*
- *What do you think are the most pressing community needs in South Gate? What do you think is the role of the City's Park and Recreation Department in addressing these needs?*
- *What improvements, if any, to the parks and recreation services do you think should be the highest priority for the City of South Gate? (e.g., new parks, facilities, programs, etc.)*
- *Are there ways the City can collaborate with other organizations or build upon existing partnerships to improve parks and recreation services?*

- *How can the City best involve community members in parks and recreation services on an ongoing basis?*
- *Are there any people, groups or organizations that we should involve in the Parks and Recreation Master Plan project?*
- *What is the one key goal, need or opportunity the City should keep in mind while developing its Park and Recreation Master Plan?*

The responses provided by those interviewed often extended beyond the initial question to cover a variety of other related issues and topics. Consequently, the following synopsis of responses is organized in terms of the major themes and issues that emerged from the interviews, rather than as direct answers to the above questions.

The key themes that emerged from these interviews include the following:

- *There is a desperate need to provide active recreational facilities and open space for the West side of the City, repeatedly identified as the most densely developed and park-starved area of the City.*
- *There is an overall general need throughout the City to extend the park system beyond its current concentration in South Gate Park.*
- *Hollydale Regional Park was cited as needing additional park facilities, although all did not share this view or believe its needs were in anyway comparable to those of the West side of the City.*
- *The weak financial situation of the City was described as the reason for gradually eroding the quality of the park system. The resulting downward funding trend for the park system had occurred during a period in which park usage had dramatically increased because of significant changes in the economic, social and ethnic characteristics of the population. Due to the convergence of these factors, wear and tear on parks and recreational facilities was increasing at the very same time that the capacity of the City to fund and maintain these facilities was declining.*

- *Most interviewed noted that the scarcity of parks in many parts of South Gate is aggravated by a growing imbalance between existing recreational facilities and the sports and activities that are now most popular with the current community demographic profile. In particular, soccer is extremely popular among all age groups, but the park system is not set up to handle the high demand for soccer. Because of the lack of dedicated soccer fields pickup soccer games have taken over much of South Gate Park, sharply increasing grounds maintenance due to wear and tear on park turf.*
- *Many of the interviewees questioned if the golf course was still relevant for South Gate, and whether that land should be used instead for other recreational and cultural activities viewed as being more family friendly and popular.*
- *Many described South Gate Park as the number one asset of the City. They suggested the City seek creative ways to use this regional attraction to generate revenue for the City and the park system and in the process help to jump start community revitalization and badly needed economic development.*
- *Those interviewed were divided on the desire to develop new recreational facilities better aligned with the current community demographic profile and the need to improve and make better use of existing parks and recreational facilities. The majority felt the master plan should address the policy issue of upgrading existing facilities versus building new parks and facilities.*
- *All interviewed felt that new policies are needed to set financial priorities and develop new revenue to prevent the continued erosion of recreational programs and facility maintenance hurt by the City's financial problems.*
- *Many cited South Gate's comprehensive cultural and recreational programs as having been one of the Department's key strengths, but that they were no longer at the same high level they had been in the past, at least when compared to some other nearby cities.*

- *A majority of the stakeholder interviews indicated that meeting the critical needs of youth between the ages of 13 and 20 should be a priority, however, meeting senior needs was also a high priority.*
- *From the perspective of the Parks Department, it is increasingly difficult to find volunteers to help with park improvement projects and other needed activities. In contrast, others are saying that Parks staff has been discouraging volunteer efforts.*
- *Many of those interviewed were critical of Parks Department staff, expressing concern at what they saw as a lack of care and attention in day-to-day operations, along with a need for much more creativity and initiative. Others observed that the Parks Department has been placed in an increasingly difficult position because they are being asked to do more with less funding, less equipment and fewer staff.*
- *Partnerships with other organizations were seen as essential for improving the overall park and recreation delivery system. The LAUSD was seen as a key partner. First, by allowing community access to its existing recreational facilities. Second, by creating new parks and open space in all upcoming educational construction projects. Unfortunately, building an effective relationship with LAUSD was portrayed as difficult.*
- *One of the stakeholders noted in their interview that South Gate Park came about because of the WPA program as an unexpected benefit of the financial crisis created by the Great Depression. Another observed that although the City is now facing new financial difficulties, this too may bring about unanticipated opportunities for revitalization of the city and its park system that otherwise would not be possible.*

5.5 ANALYSIS AND KEY FINDINGS OF THE PUBLIC OUTREACH

As one can see, a significant effort over the past year provided the public opportunity to give their input into the current and future needs for the City's park and recreation system. Several types of outreach tools engaged a cross

section of residents, community leaders, elected and appointed officials and all age groups in the community. The Consultants have analyzed the volume of data, comments and suggestions collected and have determined the public's key issues, policy concerns and items they would like to see addressed in the update of the Park and Recreation Master Plan. The following is the summary analysis of the key findings of the public outreach:

- *The Public would like an increased level of Park and Facility Maintenance with an emphasis on improving restroom and field maintenance.*
- *The Public wants the Department of Parks and Recreation to make addressing graffiti removal and vandalism repair a first priority for existing parks and facilities.*
- *The Public feels that funding is the biggest deterrent to the department being able to deliver a higher level of park maintenance, address graffiti and vandalism, and deliver quality recreation programs and, therefore, wants the department to pursue creative and non-traditional ways of developing new revenue to fund the Park and Recreation system.*
- *The Public feels that it is important for the City to pursue partnerships for both programming and facilities, especially new partnership agreements with the Los Angeles Unified School District.*
- *The majority of the Public outreach indicated that addressing the Park and Recreation needs on the West Side of the City should be a high priority but that the East Side also needed improvements and new amenities.*
- *The Public outreach identified that the most requested new facilities were for dog parks, splash/water play features, picnic facilities, playgrounds and tot lots, soccer fields, teen center, fitness facilities, and meeting room space.*
- *The Public has a strong desire for more special events and opportunities for socialization and celebration. They would like to see a creation of a community events area that could accommodate a variety of cultural, social, and performance type events.*

- *The Public outreach indicated broad support for increasing volunteer opportunities.*
- *The Public wants the Parks and Recreation Department to be creative in re-engaging the teen population. The overwhelming believe keeping this population involved in the community in constructive pursuits will have a positive impact on the health and well-being of those who participate in activities and on the City as a whole.*
- *The Public would like to see increases in the number of cultural, music and social activities sponsored through the Parks and Recreation Department to appeal to the high number of young families in the community.*
- *The Public holds South Gate Park in high esteem for its diverse facilities and program offerings and wants the City to address improvements to existing facilities and look at possibilities for reuse of land space for new amenities that would serve the current and future demographic profile of the community.*

These key findings from the public outreach; along with the trends developed by the National Recreation and Parks Association; the consultants professional expertise; and the park evaluations presented below were used to develop the goals and policy recommendations and the Capital Improvement Program contained in Chapters 6 and 7.

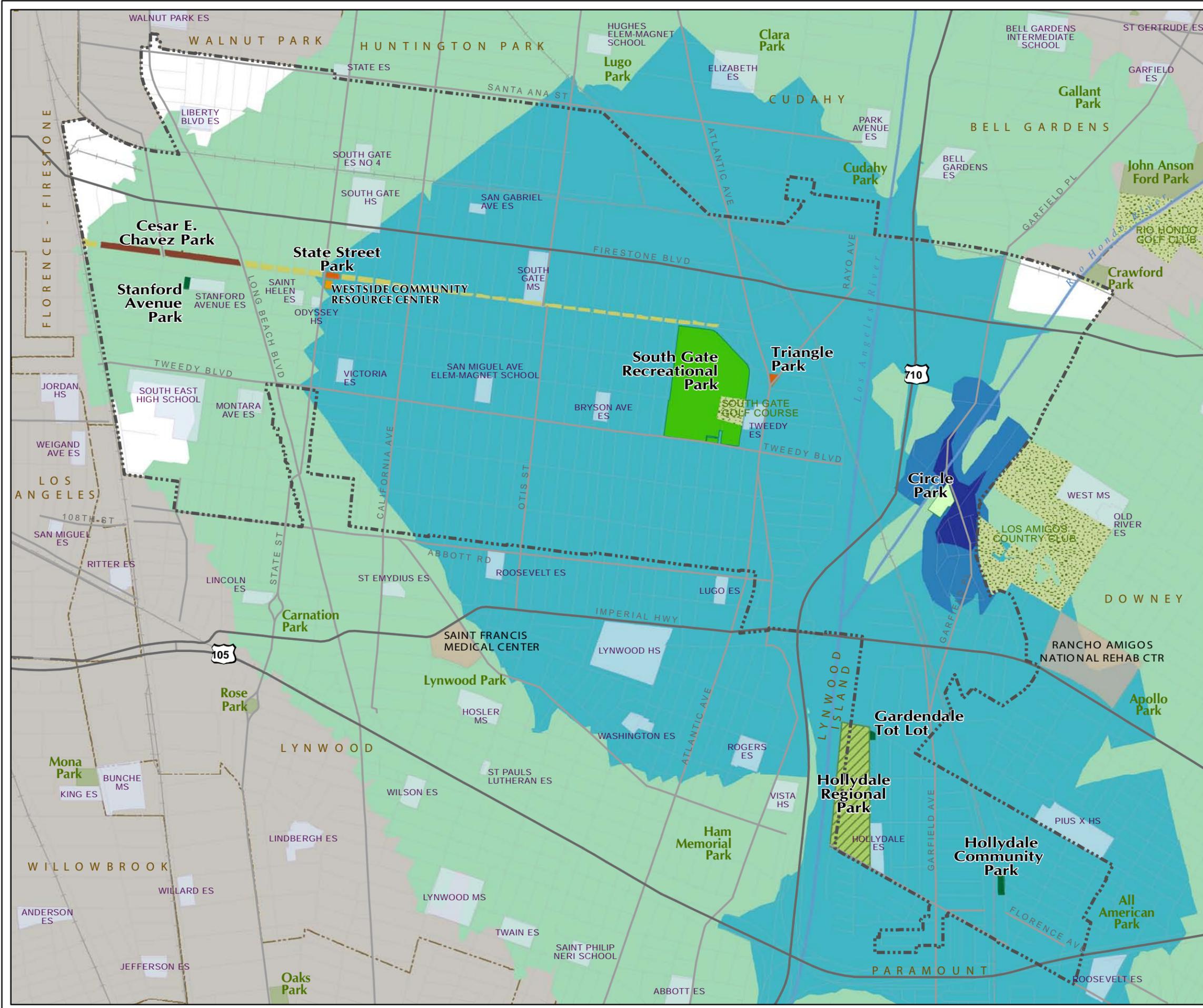
5.6 PARK EVALUATIONS & FACILITY NEEDS ANALYSIS

In addition to conducting extensive public outreach to determine the public's perception of the needs and demands for the South Gate Park and Recreation system, the Consultants did an overall inventory of parks and facilities (See Chapter 3 and Exhibit 5.1). This enabled the Project Team to assess the specific needs for improvements at existing parks and facilities and determine what new amenities and park facilities should be added to address comments expressed in the public outreach process. The Master Plan Team noted conditions within the parks that warranted special attention. The findings are



City of South Gate, California

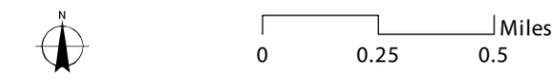
Parks & Recreation Master Plan Exhibit 5.1



Facility Classification	Park Service Area*
Regional Park	.25 Mile
Community Park	.50 Mile
Neighborhood Park	1.5 Miles
Mini Park	2.5 Miles
Other Public Open Space	
Special Use	
Linear Park	
Other Park Jurisdiction	
Golf Course	

*Only parks that meet acreage requirements for neighborhood or community parks are included.

Institutional Use	River
School	Highway
Other City	Major Roads
City Limit	Streets
	Railroad



Regional, Community & Neighborhood Park Service Areas

presented by facility and were used to develop the recommendations for park improvements in Chapter 6 and the Capital Improvement Program in Chapter 7.

Cesar Chavez Park

This park is located on a linear utility easement that runs from Alameda Street to Atlantic Avenue. The first and second phases of improvements consists of play areas for ages 2-5 and 5-12 linked by a walkway, a restroom building, a covered structure for picnicking and turf and landscaping. The master plan for this linear park is to extend it along Southern Avenue all the way to Atlantic Avenue and develop neighborhood park amenities to serve adjacent residential neighborhoods along the corridor.



Cesar Chavez Park

In addition to planned tot lots, turf areas, picnic facilities and pedestrian paths the master plan also calls for such amenities as Community Gardens and Exercise Par Courses.

The Project team's assessment of the site noted that Phase one and two improvements are heavily used, the City is having a difficult time keeping up with park maintenance; graffiti, and vandalism are a major problem along the entire corridor.

In analyzing the entire linear park site, the public outreach suggestions for this area and the proposed master plan for Cesar Chavez Park, the Project Team has developed a list of needs for this park as follows:

- *Increased level of maintenance*
- *A program to reduce graffiti and vandalism*
- *Completion of the park from State Street to Atlantic Blvd*
- *A design for future improvements that would address safety and security*
- *In future phases of development add a dog park, practice field space and parking lots across from South Gate Park that would serve both Cesar Chavez Park and overflow parking for South Gate Park*

Circle Park

Circle Park is located in the North East section of the City and functions as a neighborhood park for residents in this area. The park contains a basketball court, an informal ball field, an open turf area that is primarily used for soccer practice, and a tot lot for 2-5 year olds. There is also a non-defined parking area.

The park is in generally good condition, however, during the public outreach there were several comments about the lack of landscaping at the park. After reviewing the public outreach and visiting the park to complete the inventory and condition report the Project Team has developed the following list of needs for this neighborhood park:

- *Increased park maintenance*
- *Additional play equipment for 5-12 year olds*
- *Improved parking areas and entryway*
- *Install a restroom building*



Circle Park

- *Perimeter fencing/boundary element to channel users to entry area and increase security*
- *Additional landscaping*
- *Installation of a walking/jogging trail*



Gardendale Tot Lot

Gardendale Tot Lot

The Gardendale Tot Lot facility is a special use park located on the eastern border of the City next to Hollydale Regional Park. This special use park consists of a tot lot for 5-12 year olds, accompanied by benches for seating to observe children playing in the tot lot. The site is covered with mature trees that provide shade for the tot lot amenity.

In analyzing the public outreach comments and observing the site the Project Team has the following suggestions for Gardendale Tot Lot:

- *Increased level of maintenance particularly tree trimming and pruning*
- *Additional play equipment for children 2-5 years old*
- *Additional security lights*

Hollydale Community Park



Hollydale Community Park

Hollydale Community Park is a neighborhood park located on the eastside of the City and functions as a community resource center for residents in this area. The park contains tot lots with play equipment, a community center that offers pre-school and head start programs, a basketball court, and a ball field used for practice. There were few comments regarding this park site during the public outreach and observation of the site indicates that its current development serves the area for its attended purpose, i.e.: a neighborhood park. The only short-term need for this park would be increased park maintenance. In the future, the City may

consider redesigning this neighborhood park to expand the community center to offer more services and recreation programs and update the basketball court and fields.

Hollydale Regional Park

Hollydale Regional Park is located east of the 710 Freeway and serves as a regional park facility for residents on the east end of the City. This is another park the City has developed on a linear utility easement. The park is divided into two sections by Monroe Street. The section north of Monroe Street primarily serves passive uses. While the park area south of Monroe Street contains the active uses including basketball courts, tennis courts, soccer fields, handball courts, and softball fields. The area also contains equestrian facilities that are used by a regional audience in a non-supervised manner. There is also a staging area and access to the California River Parkway Trail along the Los Angeles River. All of the amenities at this location show signs of heavy use and deferred maintenance. Graffiti and vandalism is a major concern. During the public outreach there was support for increasing the types of uses for the park to include a dog park, group picnic shelters, an amphitheater, a skate park, and lighted ball fields. However, there were also comments that the existing facilities should be improved and maintained before new amenities are added.

Analyzing the public outreach concerning Hollydale Regional Park and inspecting the site the Project Team has the following suggestions for meeting the needs of this park site:

- *Increased level of maintenance particularly in the active portion of the park*
- *A program to decrease graffiti and vandalism*



Hollydale Regional Park

- *Refurbishment/upgrading of existing facilities*

South Gate Park

South Gate Park is located in the center of the City and is the City's most popular park where most of the organized recreation activities offered by the



South Gate Park

City and its partner agencies take place. The park has a number of special use facilities including sports fields, golf course, auditorium, sports center, senior center, skate park, Boy Scout event area, girls clubhouse, community pool, Veteran Memorial Fountain and flame, tot lots, picnic areas, and open turf space. There is undeveloped space within the park boundary where a former elementary school site once stood.

The City uses South Gate Park for numerous special events. Keeping up with adequate park and facility maintenance and battling graffiti and vandalism has been a major concern for the City. The park is heavily used which puts even a greater burden on the need for increased park and facility maintenance.

Over the past few years, the City has added new amenities such as the Senior Center and skate park. The City is currently in the process of renovating and improving the community pool at the sports center.

During the public outreach, South Gate Park received the most comments from all of the public input tools used in the Master Plan process. In analyzing and summarizing all of the community input and the Project Team's observation of the park, the team has reached a conclusion that South Gate Park is the most important asset in the park system and there are a number of needs in the community the park can meet by reuse of certain areas for new

amenities to serve those needs. Consequently, the Project Team has the following suggestions for South Gate Park:

- *Implement a master planned trail system through the park connecting the various quadrants of the park by a perimeter trail that provides for walking, jogging, and exercise and connects to an internal trail that surrounds the ball fields and allows connection to the perimeter trail through the various parking areas*
- *Master plan the east side of the park containing the areas from the corner of Tweedy & Pinehurst north to Southern Avenue and Pinehurst (See Exhibit 6.1 - South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan) to include:*
- *An indoor/outdoor sports center containing soccer fields, batting cages, gymnasium, basketball and other sports uses which could be developed and operated in partnership with a commercial recreation concessionaire*
- *An area designed specific for special events to provide the community a place for all types of social and entertainment events*
- *Additional parking to serve the new amenities and the existing Main Auditorium and Girls Clubhouse*
- *A new Boy Scout Lodge with meeting rooms, craft rooms, classrooms and dining hall*

The Consultant Team has prepared a concept plan for the Eastern Corridor of South Gate Park that encompasses the existing Boy Scout area, the three par golf course, the former elementary school site, and the parking and open space on the corner of Southern Avenue and Pinehurst. The description and recommendations for the concept plan are contained in Chapter 6.

State Street Park and Westside Community Resource Center

State Street Park and the Westside Community Resource Center are located across the street from one another on the west side of town on the corners of State Street and Southern Avenue.



State Street Park and Westside Community Resource Center

State Street Park is maintained as an open turf area within a utility right of way. The City's plan is to develop it as part of the Cesar Chavez Park Master Plan.

The Westside Community Resource Center is a neighborhood site leased to a tenant that currently provides recreation and human service programs to the community. The building on the site was evaluated as part of the Facilities Assessment Report in Appendix D. Future needs for this site include increased landscape and building maintenance which the tenant intends to provide.

Stanford Park

Stanford Park is a small, narrow neighborhood park bordered by Iowa and Illinois Ave on the North and South sides of the park, respectively and by Stanford Avenue Elementary School on the East and private homes on the West. Overall appearance and condition of the park is poor.



Stanford Park

A single curving sidewalk path runs the length of the park from Iowa Avenue to Illinois Avenue, circles the play equipment and is ADA accessible.

There is minimum park signage and security lighting. The landscape amenities are few with two medium size trees, one of which is providing some shade. The turf is in poor condition as it is uneven, bumpy and the turf is splotchy and thin. The turf is small and cannot support any sports use.

Site amenities include a single drinking fountain, park benches, picnic tables, and trash receptacles. The park is enclosed by park fencing, school fencing, and fencing from private homes. There is no off street parking, just street parking only.

There were a few comments and suggestions received during the public outreach noting that this park serves an area where there are a lot of young families and kids. Again, graffiti and vandalism are a problem and the site suffers from a lack of funding resources to properly maintain the site. The primary needs for this site are increased park maintenance, increased security lighting and the need to address the graffiti and vandalism.

Triangle Park

Triangle Park is a mini park that is well designed, maintained and very attractive. Noise from traffic is a concern, as well as access to the park from surrounding neighborhoods across extremely busy intersections.

Triangle Park is one of six parks that form a connected greenway along the river developed as a recreation and rest area. Site amenities include four park benches, bike racks, and a drinking fountain that is ADA accessible. No additional needs were expressed during the public outreach and the project Team feels that this site is serving its intended purpose of providing open space and an access point to the river trails.



Triangle Park

5.7 CONCLUSIONS

After analyzing the facility demands generated from the public outreach; site visits to determine current conditions and locations of park facilities; and taking into consideration the National Recreation and Parks Association’s list of recreational trends for urban areas, the Project Team has determined the key issues or findings regarding facility needs. This list of key issues or findings provided the basis for the Project Team’s recommendations for facilities and development policies contained in Chapters 6 and 7. The list of key issues or

findings regarding facility needs in South Gate determined by the needs analysis above are:

- *The refurbishment and upgrading of existing facilities throughout the current park system should be a high priority when seeking and allocating financial resources.*
- *Redesigning existing facilities to make improvements that would increase security and decrease the incidences of graffiti and vandalism should also be a high priority in seeking and allocating financial resources.*
- *Finding a way to provide park facilities on the Westside of the City either through acquisition or partnerships with the Los Angeles Unified School District is an important strategy for future facility needs.*
- *Developing a plan to address facility needs at South Gate Park that will provide improvements to existing facilities to enable them to operate safely and effectively and a plan to add additional or expanded facilities in the future is a high priority need.*
- *New soccer fields for practice and games are a high priority. Practice fields should be located throughout the City so that they are conveniently located to all residential areas. Game facilities centralized at a single location so that families who have children and youth in soccer programs can travel to one location and not have to travel across town is desirable.*
- *Dog parks are a high priority. In each of the public outreach input tools dog parks were requested and dog parks are very popular components in most cities Park and Recreation Master Plans.*
- *Splash pools/water play features were another highly requested amenity and the City should make accommodations for these features where possible.*
- *A trail system connecting City park facilities, using the utility corridors, is another high priority need.*

- *Either expansion of existing facilities or development of a new teen center is a high priority need to address the current and future projections of a significant teen population in South Gate.*
- *Development of a festival/events/performance venue in South Gate Park for space to conduct special events, concerts, holiday activities, ceremonies, and other citywide social events is highly desired.*
- *There is a need for more meeting room/classroom space both for delivering City park and recreation programs and for rentals by the community for special interest activities.*
- *There is a need to redesign or expand the Auditorium at South Gate Park to enable the facility to offer a wider variety of cultural programs in the area of art, dance, music, and performance.*
- *Redesigning and/or expanding the Sports Center to accommodate more fitness programs, teen sports programs, and senior movement and exercise classes is a critical need.*
- *Upgrading and refurbishing the Park Maintenance Facility to allow administration and operation of the park maintenance system to increase efficiency and effectiveness is a vital need.*
- *There is a need to incorporate asset management amenities in existing and future facilities so that the park system generates revenue to pay for the level of maintenance that will make the park system safe and attractive.*
- *There is a need to continue the City's program to improve and make all City park facilities ADA compliant.*
- *Because of increased density in future developments there is a need to preserve open space and passive use areas within the future developments and in areas that are impacted by such developments.*
- *There is a need to improve and provide additional parking at park facilities, particularly at South Gate Park, so that parking is convenient, easily accessible, and secure.*

- *There is a need for a coordinated park signage program where rules and regulations; program schedules; and public information are prominently displayed.*
- *Park restroom improvement and upgrading on a life cycle replacement schedule to insure that restrooms are continually improved and maintained to insure that restrooms do not deteriorate and become problems for the City is a serious need.*



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

**CHAPTER 6:
RECOMMENDATIONS &
POLICIES**

chapter 6: recommendations & policies

THIS CHAPTER PROVIDES RECOMMENDATIONS and actions that should be undertaken to help the City develop and improve adequate recreation facilities to meet community needs and demands. Goals and policies, as well as financial implementations strategies to accomplish the recommendations and actions are contained in Chapter 7. A major emphasis on improving existing facilities as well as developing new facilities on existing parks and school properties is included in this chapter. The use of existing resources like schools; the negotiated lease of utility easements; and the acquisition of properties in the west side of the city to provide park facilities and activity space are recommended. This Chapter also contains recommendations and policy statements for expanding and providing new recreation programs.

6.1 FACILITIES

Appendix E is a Facility Condition Assessment Report which contains a description and general facility assessment of the condition for all city Park and Recreation buildings including the Main Auditorium, Sport's Center, Girl's Clubhouse, South Gate Swimming Pool, Senior Center, Golf Course Starter Shack, Westside Community Resource Center, Hollydale Community Resource Center, Restroom buildings, and the Park Maintenance Yard building. The assessment for each building includes recommended maintenance and recommended improvements for each of the facilities that were assessed. The following is a summary of those recommendations for each City facility.

6.1.1 Main Auditorium

The main auditorium facility consists of a large assembly hall with two smaller meeting/classrooms. The building appears to be structurally sound and the city continues to upgrade the building to current fire code and ADA access as funds

become available. The following improvements should be pursued to enhance the environment and current operation of the facility.

- *Continue to make ADA and building code improvements as funding permits.*
- *Plan for general interior improvements including replacing floor tiles, clean/replace tile and grout, new carpeting, new acoustic ceiling tiles, and painting the building throughout as part of an ongoing building deferred maintenance program in the annual CIP.*
- *When funds are available, possibly from energy grants, the City should pursue energy conservation by replacing current windows with energy efficient windows, consider solar heating, and install low flow faucets in the rest rooms. The building should be evaluated as a candidate for solar energy panels on the roof to provide electricity.*
- *The two meeting/classrooms could become more specialized for certain activities by improving one room with mirrors and flooring for space to conduct programs such as dance, music, acting and other performing arts activities; and the second room could be designed with washable surfaces to accommodate messy activities such as crafts, painting, model building, cooking, parties, etc. This would allow the recreation staff greater flexibility for programming contract classes, teen activities and facility rentals.*

6.1.2 Sports Center

The Sports Center includes a main gymnasium, racket ball courts, a weight room, and several meeting rooms. The building is in generally good condition and improvement recommendations are as follows:

- *Continue to assess and do deferred maintenance projects to keep the roof in good condition, adequate lighting levels in the building, properly working heating and air conditioning, and replacement of ceiling tiles and floor surfaces as they wear out*

- *Continue to make ADA improvements as funding permits.*
- *Fitness equipment and fitness programs were a major request in the public outreach and needs assessment so it would benefit the programming options if the City could enlarge or add additional weight room and fitness center space. This may be difficult due to land restrictions and space available.*

6.1.3 Girls' Clubhouse

This facility includes a main assembly hall and several smaller meeting/classrooms. The building appears to be in good structural condition and the City continues to make ADA accessibility improvements as funding becomes available. Recommended improvements include:

- *Continue to address deferred maintenance items such as floor renovation and ceiling tile replacement, kitchen refurbishment, restroom refurbishment, and updating of the electrical, plumbing, and heating and air conditioning as needed and funding is available.*
- *The existing roof should be replaced soon along with new flashing and gutters. The mechanical equipment on the roof should be screened from view.*
- *For security purposes, the facility should have a single entry point with a check-in reception area. This would require some redesign and possible addition to the facility.*

6.1.4 South Gate Swimming Pool

The South Gate swimming pool recently underwent refurbishment in time for its June 2008 season. As time and funding permit the City should undertake a study to expand the swimming pool facility to include an outdoor recreational pool area with a zero depth pool, splash pool, picnic shelters that can be rented for parties, and a family recreation pool with food and rental concessions.

6.1.5 Senior Center

The senior center was recently renovated and is in good condition. The existing flooring should be addressed so that it contrasts with the colors of the walls so that seniors can distinguish where the walls end and the floor begins, possibly with a coving or different color carpet. In the future the City will have to consider possible expansion of the senior center to meet senior programming and activity needs in the years to come. Creating an outdoor area adjacent to the Senior Center for activities would help provide space for programming requested by seniors during the public outreach.

6.1.6 Golf Course Starter Shack

The golf course starter shack currently serves its purpose as a check in/golf shop for the City's three-par municipal golf course. If the city decides to keep the golf course operation, the City should consider replacing this building with a new modular building that would contain a check in starter area, golf shop, and snack bar/concession area. A new modular restroom facility should also be considered for the site. The City should consider if a management contract for the operation and maintenance of the golf course, pro shop and food concession would make financial sense. The whole golf course operation should be considered in light of the master plan recommendations for the entire east side corridor of South Gate Park as described in Section 6.2.9.

6.1.7 Westside Community Resource Center

This building is in generally good condition and serves a critical recreation and human services need and will continue to do so in the future due to the projected demographic profile of the community. Consequently, the facility should be put on an annual lifecycle improvement program to insure that it will continue to adequately deliver these necessary services.

6.1.8 Hollydale Community Resource Center

This facility is in generally good condition; however, there is a need for additional parking so the City should consider adding on-site parking or purchasing additional land to add parking. In the future, as funding becomes available it would be a benefit to programming if the kitchen could be expanded and kitchen equipment replaced with commercial standard equipment.

6.1.9 Park Restroom Buildings

Park restrooms are important to the community, as noted in all of the public outreach tools summarized in the Needs and Demands Analysis in Chapter 5. There should be a program of annually updating and improving park restrooms to insure they are attractive, secure and in good working condition.

6.1.10 Park Maintenance Facility

As outlined in the Facilities Condition Assessment Report this building needs to be demolished and replaced with one that meets current code requirements and provides better functionality for park maintenance purposes.

6.2 PARKS

The recommendations for each park were developed by the project team based on the community outreach input process, facilities inventory and analysis, the community needs assessment, interviews with staff and stake-holders, and an analysis of what improvements and new amenities would allow the City to meet future Park and Recreation demands. Funding and implementation strategies for the recommendations are contained in Chapter 7.

6.2.1 Cesar Chavez Park

The second phase development of Cesar Chavez Park will be completed in 2008. Future plans include leasing additional utility right of way to add to

Cesar Chavez Park and continued development of the park. Future improvements planned for the linear park include planting a landscape barrier on the perimeter walls such as vines and other low maintenance landscaping to provide more of a green belt look in addition to separating the adjacent residences from the park, extending the park along Southern Avenue all the way to Atlantic Avenue and developing neighborhood park amenities to serve adjacent residential neighborhoods along the corridor such as tot lots, turf areas, picnic facilities and pedestrian paths. On the easement portions across from South Gate Park the City should try to use the areas for overflow parking for South Gate Park to accommodate busy weekends and special events. There may be some restrictions on parking under power lines so this option needs input from the utility company.

6.2.2 Hollydale Regional Park

This park is located to the east of the 710 freeway, adjacent to Downey and Lynwood. A large portion of the park is on a utility easement, and it is also adjacent to a residential area, two factors which restrict its use. Some possible considerations for the site include a dog park, basketball courts, group picnic shelters, and a perimeter trails system for walking, jogging and exercising. Because of its regional location to residents of surrounding cities the park has been classified as a regional park, however, in reality it functions as a community park with most users coming from the local community.

6.2.3 Triangle Park

Triangle Park functions as a Gateway and a trail access to the L.A. River Trail. The park offers green space and a respite for bikers. There are no additional recommended neighborhood park uses for this site.

6.2.4 State Street Park & Westside Community Resource Center

State Street Park consists of a turf area which will eventually become part of Cesar Chavez Park. The Westside Community Resource Center which is located

across the street from the park was included in the evaluation for the Facility Condition Assessment Report and recommendations for the site are contained in Appendix E.

6.2.5 Stanford Avenue Park

Stanford Avenue Park is a small neighborhood park adjacent to an elementary school. The park needs overall landscaping improvement including turf, trees, and ornamental planting to enhance the environment. The City plans to make improvements to this site which includes gaining access to basketball courts on school grounds as part of a joint use agreement with the LAUSD.

6.2.6 Circle Park

This is a four-acre neighborhood park on a utility easement adjacent to the Los Angeles River. It has a tot lot, basketball court, and informal play fields used for practice, but it also contains a back stop for softball. There is limited parking. Recommended improvements for this site include:

- *Adding a rest room facility*
- *Installation of a trail system around the perimeter of the park to allow for walking, jogging, and exercising*
- *Installation of dog stations as this park is heavily used by people walking their dogs*
- *Installation of landscaping and some turf to accommodate some picnic facilities to serve the adjacent neighborhood*

6.2.7 Hollydale Community Park

This is a mini park with tot lot, picnic area and open turf practice field. There is also a neighborhood center for recreation classes and activities. This park serves the adjacent neighborhoods and the only recommendations are to keep it maintained and make lifecycle improvements/replacements as needed.

6.2.8 Gardendale Tot Lot

This is a mini park primarily serving as a tot lot and green space for the adjacent residential. The only recommendation for this site is to prune and lace the tree canopies to allow more light on to the site for better security.

6.2.9 South Gate Park

South Gate Park is the City’s central park and contains most of the Park and Recreation facilities the department operates to meet community needs. The park has been developed over the years and the resulting placement of facilities and amenities has caused the site to be separated into quadrants which are not readily accessible from each area of the park. Consequently, park goers need to know where they are going in order to park in the right location to access the quadrant where their activity takes place.

This could be resolved with a master planned trail system through the park connecting the various quadrants which would also provide for a walking, jogging, and exercise trail which was heavily requested by the community. An informal dirt trail has been established by people walking/jogging the perimeter of the park. In addition to formalizing a perimeter and internal trail system the consultant team believes the City should concentrate on master planning the east side of the park containing the areas from the corner of Tweedy and Pinehurst north to Southern Avenue and Pinehurst (See Exhibit 6.1 – South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan.)

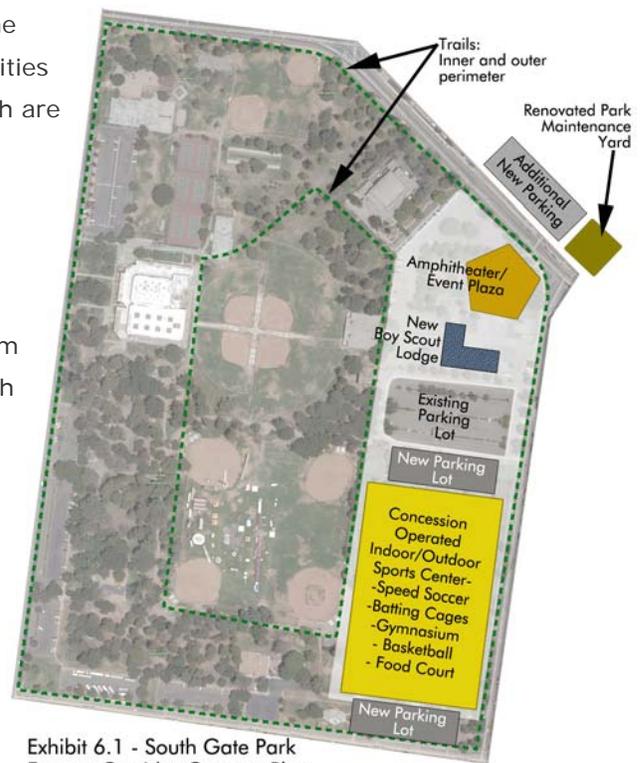


Exhibit 6.1 - South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan

In the concept master plan an internal trail around the baseball/softball fields connects with a proposed perimeter trail at various parking areas to allow for transiting from one area of the park to another without having to move your automobile to a different parking location.

There were several predominant themes throughout the public input process for South Gate Park which included the need for soccer fields, batting cages, fitness facilities and an area designed specific for special events to provide the community a place for all types of social and entertainment events that allow the community to come together and celebrate in a positive environment and participate in activities in a safe and enjoyable manner. More parking was also sited as a real need.

To accomplish this the consultant team has prepared a design for the Eastern Corridor of South Gate Park that encompasses the existing Boy Scout area, the three par golf course, the former elementary school site, and the parking and open space on the corner of Southern Avenue and Pinehurst. (See Exhibit 6.1 – South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan.)

The plan redesigns the current Boy Scout area into an indoor/outdoor sports facility that can accommodate soccer, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and other sports activities, along with batting cages, food courts and rental concessions. It is envisioned that the City would request proposals from qualified companies experienced in developing and operating sports concessions to partner with the City to implement such a facility per the concept master plan. In Chapter 8 this development approach will be explained in depth, along with examples such as the American Sports Center in the City of Anaheim.

The area from the corner of Southern Avenue and Pinehurst south including the existing three par golf course has been redesigned to accommodate a new Boy Scout Lodge facility surrounded by a community events area designed for all types of social and entertainment programs and community events.

Implementing this proposed plan would eliminate the 3 par golf course. While the golf course does serve a segment of the community, the proposed Eastern Corridor South Gate Regional Park Master Plan would serve a greater segment and would eliminate the financial subsidy the City currently provides to the golf course.

By implementing the Master Plan proposed for South Gate Park the City would provide several of the major needs identified in the Needs Analysis and requested by the public during the public outreach process including:

- *A Community Events/Boy Scout area*
- *A family sports center with indoor/outdoor soccer, volleyball, basketball, batting cages etc.*
- *Additional parking to serve the Main Auditorium and Girl's Clubhouse.*

With the implementation of the proposed Eastern Corridor South Gate Regional Park Master Plan improvements South Gate Park should be reclassified as a Regional Park. The park already serves a regional audience with its existing amenities and activities. The park's extensive picnic facilities, sports center, Main Auditorium, and other amenities receive participation from residents of surrounding cities and with the proposed concession for soccer and family fun center the regional nature of the park will expand. By reclassifying the park as a regional park the City will make itself eligible for additional funding from County and State agencies for development of regional facilities.

6.3 RECREATION PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

In addition to residents having access to recreation facilities, trails and open spaces, the availability of a wide range of recreation programs and leisure opportunities is a major component to the quality of life in any community. Recreation programs benefit individuals, families, businesses, neighborhoods and households of all ages, income levels, cultures and abilities by creating environments that engage people in positive activities. Recreation programs and services that have been developed, designed and delivered effectively can provide the following benefits:

- *Unique sense of place*
- *Sense of belonging*
- *Healthy lifestyles*
- *Advance lifelong learning*
- *Professional growth*
- *Safety and security*
- *Youth development*
- *Strong family units*
- *Cultural unity*
- *Economic development*
- *Environmental stewardship*
- *Fun and celebration*

Recreation pursuits normally provided by public recreation agencies range from organized pursuits such as sports, classes, youth activities, family programming and community events, to more passive endeavors such as picnics, hiking, bicycling, and walking. Effective recreation programs promote

the constructive use of leisure time and a lifelong commitment to a healthy lifestyle, personal development and a strong community.

During the community outreach effort, South Gate residents identified the most important benefits of recreation programs and facilities that support the quality of life in South Gate to be:

- *Building stronger families and sense of community*
- *Promoting security and safety*
- *Involving people in the community*
- *Providing spaces and programs to keep youth out of trouble*
- *Ensuring open space is maintained and increased*
- *Creating opportunities that increase fitness and wellness for all residents*
- *Programs that engage all age groups*

The City of South Gate is committed to the delivery of quality, affordable and accessible recreation programs. In general, the City sees its role as a direct provider of recreation programs and services. The City collaborates with local sports organizations to deliver a variety of outstanding, quality sports programs, leagues and tournament play. These non-profit sports organizations serve thousands of South Gate and surrounding area children annually in sports, including soccer, Little League baseball, football, basketball, etc.

As is the case with most municipal recreation departments, South Gate does employ the efficient and effective practice to provide many of their special interest classes through contractual arrangements with local instructors or private businesses, such as dance and music classes; exercise classes and self-improvement classes.

The types of recreation programs and activities offered by the South Gate Recreation Division are determined through customer interest; input from local users, residents and employees; and input from the Recreation and Parks Commission.

While there appears to be a decline in participation from past years in City offered recreation programs and services, this is most likely due to a natural cycle of popularity of programs and activities. Busy lifestyles, increased regional entertainment opportunities, greater interest in the digital age and the need for dual parent income to support the family all contribute to less leisure time to participate in municipally offered programs and activities. However, even with these factors, there will always be a base segment of the community that needs community recreation programs and activities and will take advantage of them to accomplish the goals stated above. Therefore, it is extremely important for the recreation division to continue to offer a variety of recreation programs that engage all age groups, every section of the city and all ethnic demographics of the community.

By continuing to solicit participant feedback, asking the community what types of activities they would like to see offered, and continuing to offer programs that are trendy in today's society, the recreation division will be able to involve the community and meet its recreation needs.

The following recommendations for new or expanded programs and services were developed by the consultant team as a result of analyzing the community input tools and assessment of community needs during the Master Plan process. The recommendations are general and conceptual to allow the City to develop the specific ways in which to meet the desired goals.

The recommendations reflect the activities, programs, and services deemed most needed in the community in order to satisfy community needs in the future. These recommendations will take financial resources and time to develop the administrative infrastructure in order to implement them. Consequently, the strategies suggested for how to implement the recommendations are presented as options for consideration and may be modified as funding and political issues dictate. The new or expanded program recommendations are listed below followed by suggested operating policies that will help guide staff to implement the recommendations:

6.3.1 Youth Programming

1. Increasing program opportunities for youth in volleyball, basketball, soccer, gymnastics and other indoor sports can be accomplished if the recommended master plan for the eastern corridor of South Gate Park can be implemented and the proposed family sports center developed. This would be done through a public/private partnership designed specifically for the youth sports needs of South Gate and its regional area.
2. Increasing Parent-Child Aquatics activities and classes, especially family aquatic fitness programs, would fill a strong need of the community and should be included when developing the programming for the newly refurbished swim complex.
3. Working with local service clubs, organizations and businesses to provide sponsorships or reduced fees for youth to participate in Youth Sports Programs and other youth activities offered by the Department would help with the affordability issue of youth programs that were a major concern of the community. So finding ways to involve sponsors to offer scholarships and/or reduced fees to ensure that those youths

that need the programs and services are able to participate is an important objective for the department.

4. Expanding opportunities for more youth activities in citywide festivals and events should be a goal of City planned events and contracted promotional events. The community was very appreciative and supportive of the community festivals and events offered by the department and indicated a desire for more events targeted directly for youth. Implementation of the eastern corridor master plan for South Gate Park will provide a specialized specific venue for such events.

6.3.2 Teen Programs

1. Initiate a “street ball basketball league/tournament” for teens. This could be done through partnering with one of the national organizations, such as Hoop-It-Up, to provide this programming.
2. Increasing offerings for art, dance, and music for teens should be pursued as a way to deter gang involvement, improve self esteem, develop social skills, promote diversity acceptance, and as a way to develop local performers for City events. If the recommendations for the Main Auditorium’s two classrooms are implemented it will provide specific space designed to accommodate more cultural, creative and performance based classes for teens.
3. If the indoor/outdoor sports complex detailed in the “Eastern Corridor South Gate Regional Park Master Plan” is developed it will provide a tremendous facility for the City to work with the concessionaire and local service clubs and organizations to offer

more teen social activities such as sports leagues and tournament competitions in soccer, volleyball, cheerleading, basketball, and other sports.

4. Initiating a teen volunteer internship program that places teens in volunteer working positions at City Park and Recreation facilities and programs will provide teens with positive work experiences and prepare them for future work opportunities through on the job training in park and recreation programs.

6.3.3 Adult Programming

1. Initiating an information kiosk program through an asset management plan to place kiosks with City program information along with advertising at all city facilities in order to better communicate to the community about available opportunities for programming and activities would respond to the request by the community for more on-site information on City programs and activities. The department should also consider increasing the number of copies printed of the quarterly recreation brochure in order to distribute copies to local markets so that residents can pick them up when they do their shopping. Grass roots marketing such as this and distributing flyers, activity calendars and posting posters will help offset the fact that there is no local newspaper for residents to get their information about City program offerings.
2. Partner with the Chamber of Commerce and local business community to distribute program and activity information in addition to the quarterly brochure being directly mailed to all residents. Providing program information and activity calendars in the Chamber newsletter

and newsletters of community service clubs and organizations can be an effective tool in advertising City programs, activities and services.

3. Add additional community events/festivals directed primarily to adults such as car shows, craft shows, farmer’s market, and entertainment events. In addition to family-oriented, city-wide events and festivals, the community expressed a desire for events specifically designed for adults to offer them a place to socialize, communicate with their neighbors, interact with public officials and display the cultural diversity there is in South Gate. If the “Eastern Corridor South Gate Regional Park Master Plan” can be implemented the ability to provide these activities, directly by the City and through promotional companies will greatly be improved.

6.3.4 Senior Citizen Programs

1. Initiate a “Seniors Driving Seniors” transportation system to provide curb side transportation to and from the senior center. Getting to the Senior Center was expressed as a major concern during the community input process. Although Dial-A-Ride services are available, they are primarily for disabled. Many cities have successfully developed volunteer operated “Seniors Driving Seniors” programs, whereby residents in the community volunteer one day per month to drive seniors to and from the senior center for activities and services. Chapter 7 explains in more detail how this program can be implemented.
2. Increase the number of lifestyle, social, and fitness activities during the day at the senior center. Explore partnering with the community college district to provide low cost classes. Feedback from the senior community during the community input process indicated a desire for

more classes and social activities. Recruiting or starting special interest clubs that meet at the senior center could be one way of increasing activity offerings without incurring additional direct costs.

3. Partner with local businesses, service clubs, and organizations to sponsor entertainment events, holiday events, and dances at the senior center designed to attract active seniors. During the input process, seniors desired more social activities, parties and special event days at the senior center. A good way to both pay for the activities and involve the community is to partner with service clubs and organizations, as well as, businesses to sponsor and operate special events at the senior center.

In addition to the above program recommendations presented by age group the following programming action items are presented by type of activity and apply to all age categories:

6.3.5 Aquatics

Aquatics programs are especially valued by the community. The community is desirous of having a year-round full service aquatics complex for swim lessons, recreational swim, competitive swim, lap swimming, water polo, parent-child classes, and water exercise activities and for birthday parties. The community also would like to have water play/splash pools located at either neighborhood or community parks.

1. Continue with planned programming at the pool and strive to add additional aquatic programming in the areas of parent-child classes, water exercise, and recreational swim.
2. Work with the School District and other interested agencies and organizations to insure that the design of new aquatics facilities in the

future meets community needs and demands for future lessons, recreational swim, competitive swim, and special interest aquatic programs like scuba lessons, kayaking instruction, etc.

6.3.6 Sports

Sports fields and sports programs garnered the most number of requests and identified demand during the community outreach and public input process. For example, youth soccer was rated as a high priority need in the community. However, soccer was not the only requested sports activity. Youth baseball, youth basketball, youth football, as well as, boxing programs, softball, golf, gymnastics, and track were identified by the community as desired.

Expanding tennis programs was also a persistent theme throughout the public input process. Junior tennis leagues, junior instruction and tennis competitions were consistently requested.

It is evident that sports programming is very important to the community, not only for youth but for positive family involvement. The community equated youth sports activities as providing youth with self-esteem, a sense of purpose, instilling responsibility and providing for social interaction.

1. Continue to collaborate with youth sports organizations to both encourage their development and expansion and to help them meet their field needs for both practice games and league competition.
2. Continue to provide youth basketball and expand the program when additional facilities become available.
3. As facilities permit, continue to expand the opportunities for junior tennis including lessons, clinics, events and junior tennis league.

Consider offering a tennis program for special needs youth including development of special needs tennis Olympics.

4. As facilities permit, increase the offerings for youth volleyball. Consider offering volleyball clinics prior to the volleyball season to introduce new participants to the sport.
5. Work with the School District to expand both track and cross-country program offerings. Work to ensure that the design and implementation of South Gate Park will accommodate various configurations for cross-country meets.
6. Consider establishing a Spring track meet for elementary aged youth preceded by workshops or clinics for track events.
7. Continue efforts to ensure girl's softball programs have access to the softball fields.
8. Try to collaborate with a community group to offer a youth boxing program.
9. Continue to collaborate with the School District to expand after-school sports activities for elementary school-age youth for flag football, volleyball, basketball, softball, and track.
10. The development of the family sports complex as proposed in the *South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan* (see Exhibit 6.1) would provide a facility to accomplish most of the above.

6.3.7 Extreme Sports

In today's world of electronic games and media marketing, so-called "extreme sports" are very popular among both youth and young adults. Many extreme

sports centers are being developed across the country and provide not only individual opportunity for participation but also outlets for families to join in these activities. Extreme sports might include skateboarding, bicycle motor cross, rock climbing, paint ball, laser tag, par course/obstacle fitness courses, and roller hockey.

During the community outreach and public input process, it became apparent that there is a high degree of participation and demand for extreme sports activities. Numerous cross sections of the community indicated that they currently drive great distances to facilities that offer extreme sports programming. Providing an opportunity to participate locally in such activities will satisfy a major segment of the community's recreation outlet needs.

1. Consider partnering with a commercial recreation operator in developing an indoor rock climbing facility or with the Boy Scouts if the South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan (see Exhibit 6.1) is implemented where instruction and clinics can be offered.
2. Consider the alternative of facilitating the commercial development of an extreme sports park that could include a paint ball course, laser tag, or other team challenge opportunities at the equestrian rings and area at Hollydale Regional Park. The equestrian rings are not programmed by the City and are frequented mostly by equestrian users outside the City of South Gate. Reuse of this site for a commercial extreme sports center may make sense given its location. The Parks and Recreation Commission would have to determine the priority between equestrian use and extreme sports use, most likely through a community survey or public outreach effort. From a financial stand point the commercial extreme sports facility would provide revenue to the City to help maintain the other portions of the park,

while the equestrian use requires subsidy for maintenance. However, the traditional equestrian use of the site may be a priority to subsidize. Exploring possible alternative uses of the equestrian rings and area could be placed in the work program of the Parks and Recreation Commission in the future if demand for equestrian activities diminishes and demand for other recreational activities increases and the equestrian space could accommodate alternative activities desired by the community.

6.3.8 Special Use Programs

Special Use Programs are defined as those activities that require a specialized facility for participants. For example, hiking programs require hiking trails; dog parks require an enclosed area; fairs and exhibitions require a venue for such activities.

When special use facilities are developed, the City should determine the degree of involvement of the City in organized activities at these facilities and the role it needs to play in providing and coordinating the facilities for informal or community based organizations.

For example, holding an annual 5k/10k Run in collaboration with community organizations and in coordination with a holiday event or other community event can be an example of a special use activity. The City already sponsors an Adopt-a-Pet day and a pet vaccination clinic which is an example of a special use activity. Some other ideas include:

1. Make physical fitness activities a part of community events, such as, adding a walk or a stretching class, or 10k Run, or specialty footraces as a warm up to concerts in the park.

2. Hold monthly community hikes for beginning hikers. People who are avid hikers have local hiking clubs that organize group outings; however, these sometimes advanced hikes are intimidating to those who have never hiked in a group situation. So introducing newcomers to the sport of hiking is a valuable service. This could be done if the proposed recommended trail system is implemented at South Gate Park.

6.3.9 Special Interest Programs

Special interest programs are those programs that serve a small but active segment of the community. They are usually requested by community organizations or clubs who want to get involved in some kind of community service or have a common interest in a subject and need a place or outlet for their interest.

Examples of such programs include providing opportunities for people or organizations to volunteer in their community, mentoring programs, service organizations, opportunities to raise funds for a special purpose and opportunities to serve on public committees or commissions.

It is important for the City to offer such programs and opportunities, both to take advantage of the benefits these programs can provide and to offer outlets for residents who want to be involved.

1. Consider establishing a bi-annual "Park Improvement" or "Park Clean-Up Day" to allow clubs and organizations and individuals to provide community service in improving existing park facilities.
2. Consider establishing an "Adopt-A-Park" program whereby local community organizations, service clubs, scouting groups, school groups, etc. can raise funds for their organizations by adopting a park

to keep clean for one year. For example, a local business would sponsor the “Adopt-A-Park” program by providing a \$500 donation to a local service club or organization in exchange for on-site signage for a year that the business adopted this park in coordination with the local service club or organization. This program provides opportunities for community service as well as the opportunity for local service clubs and organizations to raise funds for their charitable purpose. It also gives local businesses a chance to support community charities and gain local exposure for their efforts.

3. Continue to provide residents with opportunities to participate on committees and commissions.
4. Seek to dedicate space for community clubs, hobby groups, Scouts, and other special interest groups to meet and hold activities.

6.4 OPERATING POLICIES

The Park and Recreation Department offers direct programs and services, while overseeing and coordinating the services of community organizations and various non-profit groups. The following policies and guidelines can be used by the department when making decisions and implementing programs and services to ensure that they are consistent with the goals adopted by City Council. The Park and Recreation Department’s Goals and Objectives for 2008 are as follows:

Goals

1. Develop and improve park facilities to expand recreational programs and enhance the quality of life in the community.

2. Promote and market recreational activities to increase level of community participation.
3. Work with LAUSD to develop a joint use plan for South Gate that includes guidelines for school access to park facilities, opportunities to utilize school grounds as public playgrounds during non-school hours, and process for development of joint projects that will serve both school and public recreation needs.

Objectives

1. Develop a capital improvement development plan based upon the recommendations of the Park Master Plan.
2. Continue implementation of new customer service program and objective-based management practices with all staff.
3. Work with the L.A. Department of Water and Power to develop a long-term lease and development plan for Cesar Chavez Park.
4. Establish a volunteer committee to assist with the development and management of programs and assets at the City's museum.
5. Review hours of operation for recreation classes to address the changing needs of the community.
6. Establish new youth sports leagues and classes by offering sports clinic.
7. Partner with LAUSD and Special Olympics to offer daytime activities for Special Olympic athletes.
8. Schedule infield renovation for each ball field at least twice a year.

9. Work with the Commission for South Gate Youth to re-introduce a Teen Board with representatives from South Gate and South East middle schools.

The following operating policy recommendations should help the Park and Recreation Department meet the above goals and objectives which, in turn, will allow the Park and Recreation Department to successfully support its recreation programs and services in the community and better govern the planning, administering, publicizing, coordination, and communication that are necessary in meeting the desired needs of the community.

1. Enforce, to the extent possible, all regulations regarding public safety, littering and drinking in public parks.
2. Seek out and encourage the provision of volunteer assistance from civic organizations, special interest groups, and individuals to provide program leadership or facility development to augment recreation opportunities.
3. Consider ways to facilitate the process of identifying and recognizing South Gate Park's historical significance and what amenities need to be preserved and what areas could be designated for new amenities.
4. Monitor program needs through surveys of neighborhood residents or other participation mechanisms and through periodic reviews of recreation and park needs.
5. Coordinate with the Los Angeles Unified School District to ensure that locations of existing and future portable classrooms on elementary, middle school and high school campuses minimize the impact on available field space.

6. Pursue developing joint use agreements with the Los Angeles Unified School District to improve and expand the City's ability to provide more recreation programs for the community. Identify and address problematic issues associated with developing joint use agreements with the School District. These issues may include scheduling, maintenance and operation, usage conflicts, shared maintenance costs, etc.

It is recommended that each joint use agreement be as specific as possible relative to the times and days of the week the City will be able to use school facilities and school fields. The agreement should specify the waiver of rental fees and identify each agency's responsibility for the costs for maintenance and operations including security, utilities and replacement costs. The agreement should also set forth a procedure for quick arbitration of possible conflicts.

7. Consider developing Site Agreements or Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) between community groups using specific school facilities under the umbrella of the agreements the City would have with the School District. This will decrease the number of issues relating to who's responsible for what when there is third party use of school facilities.
8. City and School District staff should meet at least quarterly to discuss maintenance and operations issues. Meeting minutes should be typed up and distributed to all participants to allow for quick identification of any possible misunderstandings. The minutes should also identify issues and items requiring further follow up.

9. Seek opportunities to satisfy field space demands of sports leagues by installing artificial turf so that increased use does not unduly impact park and school fields.
10. Continue to provide customer service training for staff members. Provide other training opportunities that empower staff to do the very best job they can.
11. Review and revise operational policies to ensure that programs and services can be offered effectively and efficiently. Develop policies that ensure that service is available to all residents without barriers or limitations to program access.
12. Consider establishing a Coordinating Council made up of City representatives, School District representatives and representatives from non-profit community organizations that provide programs and services to the community. The Coordinating Council should meet twice per year to discuss mutual interest and concerns, ways of coordinating services and avoiding duplication, ways to reach underserved areas of the City, possible program collaboration, and possible joint facility development.
13. Pursue the implementation of the *South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept Plan-Exhibit 6.1*.

6.5 OPEN SPACE & TRAILS POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

6.5.1 Trails

During community outreach events, attendees expressed a strong desire to improve trails systems throughout the City.

Many walkers and joggers currently use South Gate Park's perimeter as a path even though it is interrupted by driveways and other impediments.

Cyclist requested a trails system they could access along Southern Ave.

Both South Gate Park and Southern Avenue provide excellent opportunities for connecting the City's east to west axis by foot or bike.

Because of the City's proximity to the Los Angeles River, opportunities already exist to connect the City with the trails that link the river-way systems. Cities through which flow the rivers of greater Los Angeles are seizing the opportunities to create paths that connect their residents to the water.

There are a small number of equestrians who already take advantage of the trails near Hollydale Regional Park. The existence of equestrian facilities could provide an opportunity to encourage or expand that interest to a wider audience.

A Trails Master Plan would help the City in several ways:

- *It would map out and phase in a trail system that would optimize the limited space available within South Gate.*
- *It would link South Gate to regional trails and waterways that run through and near the city.*
- *And it would create opportunities for alternative travel or non-motorized transportation for residents going to work or school.*

Recommendations

1. As part of a new Master Plan for South Gate Park upgrade and standardize walking, jogging and biking trails in South Gate Park and look for opportunities to create additional walking, jogging and biking paths in other parks within the City.

2. Look to expand trails throughout the City by providing on-street bike paths and off-street trails that link to trails systems of other nearby communities.
3. Consider the feasibility of doing a Trails Master Plan within the next two to five years to define future and expanded trails throughout the City to link to trails systems of other nearby communities, design trail development standards, establish walkway/trail requirements for residential and commercial development projects, and to provide a trails map for public use.
4. When completing the Cesar Chavez Park Master Plan insure that the design of the linear park segments link the linear rights-of-way along Southern Avenue.
5. Consider partnering with equestrian organizations currently leasing areas along the Los Angeles River to create interest among residents for equestrian activities for health and therapeutic uses.
6. Consider installing exercise stations or par-courses along trails where appropriate in future park development.

6.5.2 Open Space

Natural open space is a rare commodity in the inner city; South Gate is no exception. However, open spaces surrounded by city environs can be designed to feel as though they are islands of green, natural habitat even though they are steps from busy traffic and hard edged buildings.

Recommendations

1. South Gate's land is limited, but there are linear spaces along Southern Ave. that might be developed to fulfill the needs for open spaces adjacent to many local neighborhoods along that corridor.

2. As mentioned in the Trails section, the City should revisit the Cesar Chavez Park Master Plan and update it to include open space in appropriate areas along the liner park.
3. Consider Hollydale Regional Park and Circle Park as locations to create more heavily planted passive areas that can also include trails and pathway systems.
4. If property is acquired on the west sides of the City for park purposes make sure some passive open space area is included in the design of the park.
5. When partnering with the LAUSD for future development of school/park facilities try to include passive open space areas in the design.
6. Consider acquiring lots or small parcels on the west side through tax deductible donations or use of grant funds to create “green patches” or “passive mini open space parks” to create islands of green, natural habitat even though they are steps from busy traffic and hard edged buildings.

6.6 MAINTENANCE POLICIES & RECOMMENDATIONS

Throughout the Master Plan document there are references to maintenance of South Gate parks. During the public outreach sessions, park maintenance was expressed as a high priority for the City to concentrate on. It was noted that a lack of funding and deferred maintenance has lead to deteriorated conditions of fields, facilities, and park amenities.

The maintenance staff does the best it can with the resources it has available, however, because of the lack of funding and lack of parks and facilities maintenance standards, there has been no consistent effort by staff for a maintenance management program. Rather, maintenance staff tries to respond to the “hot issues of the day” in order to keep facilities, parks and fields operating instead of providing a consistent level of service on a management program basis.

Graffiti and vandalism add to the difficult situation of maintaining South Gate parks. ***Without a program to address removal, repair, and enforcement of graffiti and vandalism the maintenance staff will continue to struggle to maintain South Gate parks at a level acceptable to the community.***

Consequently, Chapter 7 contains an explanation of how the City should approach dealing with graffiti removal and enforcement and vandalism repair and enforcement from both a design level and a maintenance perspective.

There is an important connection between budget and park maintenance. In order to determine the necessary budget to provide a level of park and facility maintenance satisfactory to the community the City must know what level of park maintenance is actually acceptable. To do this the City must establish park maintenance standards that utilize attractive and usability outcomes as its framework and shows how outcomes are affected by budget appropriations.

The intent here is to clearly demonstrate the relationship between budget and the quality of park and facility maintenance. Appendix F “Quality Standards for Park and Facility Maintenance” defines the desired conditions of fields, facilities, park features, etc. so that all employees can identify the level of park

and facility maintenance that will satisfy the community and set the standard for evaluating the conditions of parks and facilities.

While the quality standards are somewhat subjective they have been made simple so that inspection audits can be done with a series of yes and no questions which then can be rated as to the percentage of satisfaction with the level of park and facility maintenance. Each year staff can then develop its park and facility maintenance budget based on the available resources and the percentage of community satisfaction the City wishes to provide.

In addition to providing quality standards that translate into budget requests, the standards also provide clear expectations to staff relative to the maintenance of those physical features for which they are held responsible and give staff direction related to the provision of service levels expected by City Council.

By adopting the “Quality Standards for Park and Facility Maintenance” the City will be able to have:

- *A clear understanding of the level of Park and Facility Maintenance the community desires,*
- *Be able to translate that level into budget requests,*
- *Be able to evaluate the level to determine if the City is successful in providing that level, and*
- *Be able to provide consistent maintenance service instead of giving attention to what needs maintenance at the moment.*

CHAPTER SIX: RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES



CITY OF SOUTH GATE
Parks and Recreation Master Plan

**CHAPTER 7:
IMPLEMENTATION
STRATEGIES**

chapter 7: implementation strategies

7.1 INTRODUCTION

THIS SECTION PRESENTS POLICY ISSUES FACING the City that will affect priorities for implementing recommendations contained in Section 6. It also presents nine recommendations from Section 6 that have the most significant impacts on needs in South Gate as determined by the Parks and Recreation Commission.

It also presents a Capital Improvement Work Program and implementation strategies with estimates of the costs and funding that will be necessary to realize the priority recommendations and possible funding and or financing strategies the City could pursue to fund the recommended projects.

Actual funding, design, and implementation will be determined during the City's annual capital improvement budget process. The proposed Capital Improvement Work Program presented in Section 7.5 provides an annual projects priority program for City consideration that would theoretically have the City implement all recommended capital improvements over the next 20-years. In actuality, it is unrealistic to think the City will be able to secure all of the funding necessary to implement every capital project listed; therefore, the Parks and Recreation Commission has conducted an exercise to formulate their priorities if resources are limited.

It is important for staff, appointed and elected officials to have knowledge of alternative funding and financing methods that could be available to them if there is community support for implementing a capital project or several projects. Thus, Section 7.7 explains to the reader the various funding sources that may be available to the City to implement the recommended facility

improvements, acquisition of future park property and development of new facilities.

7.2 COST METHODOLOGY

The methods used by the consulting team to determine probable costs and funding requirements include looking at similar projects being done by other agencies, building industry cost estimates, inflation and economic factors, determining desired quality of construction, level of service needed to implement the recommendations and the types of funding sources that will be used to implement the proposed recommendations.

Facility recommendations are organized according to key findings identified through the community outreach and needs analysis process. Projected costs and required funding estimates are calculated in 2008 dollars for going “green” with “LEED Compliant” (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) construction.

The cost estimates represent the following LEED compliance:

- *Sustainable sites*
- *Water efficiency*
- *Energy and atmosphere*
- *Materials and resources*
- *Indoor environmental quality*
- *Innovation and design process*

Although the cost estimates are for high quality “green” construction for the recommendations, there are less expensive ways of implementing the recommended facilities if political and financial concerns limit the ability to be LEED compliant.

Estimated costs for program recommendations are based on current costs for staff, supplies and facility maintenance and also include a 20% overhead cost factor.

In summary, the recommendations and strategies presented herein meet the identified needs, benefit the community, and align with the City of South Gate's General Plan goals and policies. If implemented they should provide the community with the provision of adequate recreation facilities and programs to meet citizen expectations and improve the City's image as one of a desirable place to live, work, play and retire.

7.3 NINE PRIORITY RECOMMENDATIONS

To address the results of the Demand and Needs Analysis the project team prepared a list that summarizes those recommendations in Chapter 6 of the Park and Recreation Master Plan that the project team feels represent the most significant impacts and needs in South Gate. These nine recommendations are the focus of the implementation strategies; however, all of the recommendations contained in chapter 6 are important to pursue as the Parks and Recreation Department considers its annual work program, budget and allocation of resources.

The Parks and Recreation Commission reviewed the list and put it into priority to help the City focus available resources on projects that will have the greatest impact on meeting current and future needs.

The suggested priority list of nine recommendations is:

1. Replace existing restrooms in parks that have not had their restrooms replaced.

2. Protect and upgrade existing facilities through allocation of resources including:
 - *Emphasize deferred maintenance improvements to existing buildings and facilities as a priority for future capital funding.*
 - *Make maintenance of existing parks and facilities a priority and implement recommended maintenance standards in Appendix F as a funding priority.*
 - *Establish a three-prong approach dedicated Park Graffiti and Vandalism Abatement program in addition to regular park and facility maintenance programs.*
 - *Develop a long-term funding strategy for maintenance programs, such as Asset Management Programs or implementing a citywide Park Maintenance Assessment District or establishing a Commercial Impact Fee to ensure availability of funding.*
3. Develop and implement a specific plan for the eastern corridor of South Gate Park from Tweedy Blvd north to Southern Ave along Pinehurst St. to accommodate additional sports fields, an event plaza, a new Boy Scout Lodge, batting cages, revenue generating commercial sports facility, and associated additional parking.
4. Increase trails, open space and recreational opportunities on the west side through the following:
 - *Complete development of Cesar Chavez linear park.*
 - *Utilize utility and rail right of ways to create trails, open space and a more attractive environment.*
 - *Establish a joint use agreement with LAUSD and with the College District to provide for mutual use of existing and new facilities as well as to encourage mutual projects that will address community as well as school needs.*

5. Expand teen opportunities in the community by including teen specific activities at the proposed events plaza, teen sports leagues and programs at the proposed sports center concession and the eventual establishment of a dedicated teen center.
6. Create a perimeter and internal trail system at South Gate Park to provide formal walking, jogging and exercise paths, pedestrian connections to all park venues from all parking areas, and a connection to a citywide trails system.
7. Replace existing Park Maintenance Yard in order to implement the recommended aggressive park maintenance program.
8. Undertake refurbishment and recommended improvements to Hollydale Regional Park, renaming it Hollydale Community Park to reflect more appropriate context of its use.
9. Expand swimming pool facilities to include new uses for revenue generation.

7.4 POLICY ISSUES THAT AFFECT PRIORITIES

The City of South Gate has a number of policy issues to consider when and if it proceeds with implementing the recommendations and strategies contained in this chapter. The specific policy issues are as follows:

Policy Issue # 1 - GRAFFITI AND VANDALISM –

Graffiti and vandalism are prevalent throughout the park system causing maintenance problems and resident dissatisfaction with park facilities and the condition of the parks. The City must address the graffiti and vandalism

problem because improving existing facilities and building new facilities will not satisfy the community if graffiti and vandalism continues.

To combat graffiti and vandalism the City must adopt some new operational policies and put in place mechanisms to reduce the occurrence of graffiti and vandalism. Cities that have been successful in doing this have taken a three-pronged approach that include removal, enforcement and controlled access:

Removal

The City should adopt a policy of removing graffiti and repairing vandalism as its first priority for maintenance and operation of the park system. It should establish a graffiti and vandalism hot line for people to report graffiti and vandalism in the parks, post the number on signs throughout the park system and establish a dedicated graffiti removal truck, supplies and personnel to remove reported graffiti within 24 hours. The same approach could be taken for vandalism with a dedicated vehicle and personnel to respond to repairing vandalism within 24 hours. While this program will be expensive at first, history of such programs shows that the occurrences of graffiti and vandalism decline rapidly when removal and repair programs are consistent and the long term cost savings of longer equipment and facility life and community satisfaction makes the program cost effective.

Enforcement

Catching and punishing taggers and vandals must be a high priority in order to reduce the occurrences of such incidents. The Park and Recreation Department and Police Departments need to work together to provide surveillance and investigation of incidents of graffiti and vandalism. Portable surveillance cameras could be used to identify and catch taggers and vandals at high incident locations within the parks. A monetary reward system, whereby the Park and Recreation Department works with local businesses and service clubs

to fund a \$500 reward for information leading to the arrest and prosecution of taggers and vandals, should be considered. Studies show that an aggressive enforcement of graffiti and vandalism crimes also reduces other types of crimes, especially juvenile crimes.

Controlled Access

While it is impossible to completely control access to public parks and facilities, there are park design features and facility operation policies that can help make parks and recreation facilities used by those who they were intended to serve. This is especially important in South Gate where there is heavy use of South Gate facilities by non South Gate residents, rival gangs outside the City and a substantial transient population in the region.

By designing parks and recreation facilities with specific access points and providing surveillance at those points the City can reduce the undesirable element accessing the parks and facilities and help with enforcement and punishment of crimes committed in its parks and facilities. By providing wide concrete pathways for police and emergency vehicles to access through the parks the City can increase the ease of surveillance and response to calls.

Designing parks with perimeter boundaries and that channel access to off-street parking and designed entryways improves security and provides a sense of place and arrival, which tends to deter those not specifically going to the location for using the park amenities. This technique is found throughout Europe, where for centuries parks were designed with gated entry points for this specific purpose.

In addition to adopting policies of park design to control and channel access to parks through specific entryways that can be monitored, the City should continue its policy of membership oriented service delivery system for

recreation programming. This gives the City more ability to know who is supposed to be in its recreation facilities and who may be there unauthorized.

To obtain a successful park and recreation delivery system, the City must make reducing graffiti and vandalism a budget priority. A policy commitment to the three pronged approach described above and cooperation between city departments is essential.

Policy Issue # 2 - CHANGE IN DEMOGRAPHICS AND COMMUNITY PROFILE

The change in demographics of South Gate over the past 30 years has had a profound affect on both the types of programs and the types of facilities needed to meet the community's current and projected demand for park and recreation services.

For example, when amenities at South Gate Park were built (Auditorium, Golf Course, Clubhouse, Ball Fields, etc.) they were built to meet the needs of the demographic profile of the City at that time. Now, in the 30 years since, the City is faced with a completely different demographic profile with different cultural and social needs from the community profile that existed when these amenities were first built.

Consequently, the Park and Recreation Master Plan tries to answer the question "Are the current City facilities relevant to meeting the needs of the community profile or should they be replaced with facilities that will meet the current and future resident profile needs?"

Attendance records and public comments during the public outreach show that although South Gate Park is heavily used, use of specific programs and facilities at South Gate Park has been declining. This is certainly due in part to

security issues, age and deteriorated conditions of some of the facilities; however, the majority of comments from the various public input tools indicate that some programs and facilities no longer meet the type of programs and activities the community needs.

Therefore, the City will have to decide either now or in the future as to the existing land uses and if they can be better used for facilities that are more relevant to the community demographic profile. For example:

- *Should the golf course continue as a golf course or could the property be better utilized as part of an events plaza/amphitheater, indoor/outdoor sports complex master plan?*
- *Should the current Boy Scout Huts/Campout area be utilized to accommodate an indoor/outdoor sports complex so that a new Boy Scout Lodge can be built around the amphitheater/community events facility to serve the Scouts needs?*
- *Could the current Sports Center and Swimming Pool be expanded to include revenue producing amenities to fund future operations?*

These are tremendously important decisions to be made in order to determine the direction the City will go in the future in delivering its park and recreation system to the community.

Policy Issue # 3 - FUNDING

Funding has been a critical problem for the City, especially for parks and recreation facilities and programs and for park maintenance. While the City is experiencing some new redevelopment and growth that will provide new revenue, the downturn in the economy, the State's budget problems and the increased costs of goods and services will affect the City's ability to find funding from traditional sources to implement the recommendations for increased park maintenance, park improvements and new facilities.

Consequently, the City must take some new policy directions that will allow it to use its resources as assets to generate new revenue; partner with other public agencies, non-profits and commercial entities; and, increase fees for popular/trendy activities to support operation of facilities.

These actions will be critical for the City in the future to address the funding required to implement the programming and facility maintenance recommendations.

Policy Issue # 4 - PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT INVOLVEMENT IN THE DESIGN REVIEW PROCESS

In future retail and commercial development projects, it is important to see that places for community events, links to trails, passive open space, and commercial family recreation opportunities are included in the design review process. Currently the City's design review process for future commercial and retail development does not include input from the Parks and Recreation Department or Park and Recreation Commission.

The benefits of including the above items in retail and commercial developments are:

- *greater generation of pedestrian traffic to the commercial facility*
- *increased satisfaction of the shopping experience*
- *increased social interaction among the community*
- *opportunities for events that bring the community together*

By involving the Parks and Recreation Department and the Parks and Recreation Commission in the design review process for retail and commercial development projects, the City can achieve designed projects that provide the above stated benefits.

7.5 IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

This section provides costs and suggested implementation strategies for the nine priority projects. The suggested strategies will provide the City with potential ways to implement the recommended projects and possible phasing of the projects to enable the City to implement them over time if necessary. Implementation priorities may change as the City proceeds with its annual work program. In actuality, staff may work on several or all of the projects as funding and political times dictate. The suggested implementation options are simply a roadmap to use as funding and resources become available.

7.5.1 Replacing existing restrooms in parks that have not had their restrooms replaced was a high priority for the community during the needs assessment and public outreach portions of the master plan process and the Parks and Recreation Commission confirmed that park restrooms are the highest priority for capital improvements.

Building a new restroom in Circle Park was particularly high on everyone's list.

There are prefabricated modular park restrooms on the market designed to be as vandal and graffiti resistant as possible and come in various contemporary designs constructed as individual units. They come in four restroom units per module. The units can be unisex or the City can designate which units are for males and females. The estimated cost to purchase and install modular restrooms is \$75,000 per unit, not including sewer hook up. A modular restroom containing four units would cost an estimated \$300,000 plus sewer hook up.

Restrooms built on site run about \$340 per square foot, depending on the architectural style. A typical park restroom is usually around 25' by 30' or 750

square feet. Thus, a restroom built on site will cost approximately \$255,000 plus sewer hook up.

Funding for restrooms can come from State Park Bond funds or local park funds. If the City pursues a park bond or financing method for other recommended capital improvements, it should consider bundling several park restroom projects into the park bond or financing mechanism.

7.5.2 The Park and Recreation Commission's second priority was to protect and upgrade existing facilities through allocation of resources including:

- *Emphasize deferred maintenance improvements to existing buildings and facilities as a priority for future capital funding.*
- *Make maintenance of existing parks and facilities a priority and implement recommended maintenance standards in Appendix F as a funding priority.*
- *Establish a three-prong approach dedicated Park Graffiti and Vandalism Abatement program in addition to regular park and facility maintenance programs.*
- *Develop a long-term funding strategy for maintenance programs, such as Asset Management Programs or implementing a citywide Park Maintenance Assessment District or establishing a Commercial Impact Fee to ensure availability of funding.*

Improving existing facilities and implementing maintenance standards (Appendix F) was a high priority of the public and will need to be a funding priority for the City. The City will have a difficult time funding the deferred maintenance improvements, implementing desired maintenance standards and implementing the three-prong approach to graffiti and vandalism control without new sources of revenue. When economic times are right the City may want to consider going to the voters to establish a Community Facilities

Maintenance District that would provide the revenue needed to supplement general fund dollars allocated for park and facility maintenance so that the City can provide the standard of maintenance desired by the community.

Other strategies the city could consider include implementing an Asset Management Program to generate revenue from use of property and designing future facilities with revenue producing amenities included.

7.5.3 The third priority of the Parks and Recreation Commission was to develop and implement a specific plan for the eastern corridor of South Gate Park from Tweedy Blvd north to Southern Ave along Pinehurst St. to

accommodate additional sports fields, an event plaza, a new Boy Scout Lodge, batting cages, revenue generating commercial sports facility, and associated additional parking.



To accomplish the above the consultant team has prepared a design for the Eastern Corridor of South Gate Park that encompasses the existing Boy Scout area, the three-par golf course, the former elementary school site, and the parking and open space on the corner of Southern Avenue and Pinehurst. The plan redesigns the current Boy Scout area into an indoor/outdoor sports facility that can accommodate soccer, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics and other sports activities, along with batting cages, food courts and rental concessions. The suggested strategy is for this facility is for the City to request proposals from qualified companies experienced in developing and operating sports concessions to collaborate with the City to implement such a facility

per the concept master plan. Lease income generated from the Sports Concession could then be used to pay for debt service on a City issued Revenue Bond or Certificates of Participation (see explanation of alternative

funding options in Section 7.6) for the development of the amphitheater/events plaza area and additional parking. The new Boy Scout Lodge could be funded through grant programs such as the “Safe Places for Kids” program, Anti-Gang Program Grants and/or County, State and Federal Earmark funds.

Generating revenue for maintenance of the entire eastern corridor master plan could come from rental fees paid by promoters to use the events plaza for commercial concerts and entertainment events.

Again, the first step in implementing the entire eastern corridor master plan for South Gate Park is to request proposals and get a sports concessionaire onboard.

7.5.4 The fourth priority is to increase trails, open space and recreational opportunities on the west side through the following:

- *Complete development of Cesar Chavez linear park.*
- *Utilize utility and rail right of ways to create trails, open space and a more attractive environment.*
- *Establish a joint use agreement with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and with the College District to provide for mutual use of existing and new facilities as well as to encourage mutual projects that will address community as well as school needs.*

The City is already in the process of continuing to develop Cesar Chavez Park. One way in which to implement the types of uses the City would like to see at Cesar Chavez Park, such as parking and neighborhood park use, is to work with the utility company to take ownership of the right-of-way and give the utility an easement for the power lines. This would transfer the liability for parking under power lines and putting park uses in the right-of-way to the

City, thus negating the utility company's objection to letting the City have access to the right-of-way for recreation purposes.

Staff of both agencies should first explore a new joint use agreement between the City and the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) where the types of joint projects and joint use that would be beneficial to both agencies can be determined. Each staff can then present proposals to their respective Council and Board for specific projects that are consistent with both agencies priorities.

7.5.5 The fifth priority is to expand teen opportunities in the community by including teen specific activities at the proposed events plaza, teen sports leagues and programs at the proposed sports center concession and the eventual establishment of a dedicated teen center. Putting an emphasis on teen programs at existing facilities is a function of program staff being directed by management to implement such activities.

Developing a dedicated "Teen Center" will be more difficult, from both a design standpoint and funding availability. Recent trends are seeing cities partner with local high schools to develop media centers/teen centers on high school campuses. The high school uses the facility during the day for school purposes and the city runs the facility after school, evenings and weekends as a teen center. This provides a safe place for teens to study, socialize and learn, while not duplicating facilities and creating stand-alone facilities that are hard to supervise and maintain. Some operation models have the City contract with a local YMCA, Boys & Girls Club or other non-profit organization to operate the media/teen center on behalf of the City.

7.5.6 The number six priority is to create a perimeter and internal trail system at South Gate Park to provide formal walking, jogging and exercise paths,

pedestrian connections to all park venues from all parking areas, and a connection to a citywide trails system. This project can be done with or without the implementation of the eastern corridor master plan for South Gate Park. It could be phased over a period of time as funding becomes available or be done all at once if the city was successful in getting a State or Federal trails grant. Local service clubs could be solicited to fund sections of the trail system in exchange for on-site recognition of the trail portion they pay for.

7.5.7 The seventh priority is to replace the existing Park Maintenance Yard in order to implement the recommended aggressive park maintenance program. As noted in the Facilities Condition Report, the Park Maintenance Facility needs replacing and reorganized to provide an efficient and effective park maintenance operations program.

The City could pursue the establishment of a Community Facilities Maintenance District to fund a new Park Maintenance Yard and fund the adoption of the recommended Maintenance Standards (Appendix F). During the public outreach process there certainly was a desire and demand for an increased level of park maintenance, particularly turf maintenance, restroom maintenance, and facility maintenance. Whether or not the voters would approve the establishment of a property tax assessment to pay for the desired increased level of park maintenance needs further study and public input. In any event, the park maintenance facility needs replacing if the City is to provide the aggressive level of park and facility maintenance the community desires.

7.5.8 The eighth priority is to undertake refurbishment and recommended improvements to Hollydale Regional Park, renaming it Hollydale Community Park to reflect more appropriate context of its use. Funding for these improvements would have to come from City General funds or Park Funds, as

this area of the City is not low income and, therefore, not eligible for use of State Park Grant funds, such as Roberti-Z'berg and Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) programs.

7.5.9 The final priority is to expand swimming pool facilities to include new uses for revenue generation. The addition of a zero depth pool and splash pool area, along with an area with shaded grass and picnic tables for party rentals, could produce greater attendance and income from party reservations to offset the cost of providing these amenities. A food concession along with equipment rentals would also produce additional revenue. These amenities would enhance the community's swimming experience while generating income to pay for the improvements.

7.6 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT WORK PROGRAM PRIORITIES

Capital Improvement Programs based on time lines that indicate when projects should be undertaken on an annual basis or scheduled by benchmarks tied to priorities are the most common ways to develop CIPs. The problem with Capital Improvement Programs established by what year a project should be completed is that funding availability; property acquisition; political issues; and partnership agreements that are required to move forward with projects cannot always be resolved within a predetermined period. Therefore, the City may not be able to adhere to specific years in a CIP based on a time line.

In addition, most Capital Improvement Projects for parks are dependent upon the City receiving parkland dedication and development impact fees from residential development. Consequently, it makes more sense to tie Capital Improvement Programs to community priorities. Table 7.1 below lists priorities based on the recommendations in Chapter 6, which were determined from the

Demand and Needs Analysis and the priorities established by the Parks and Recreation Commission as to the projects that will have the most positive and immediate impact for the community.

Obviously, trying to determine timeframes and funding requirements is difficult and somewhat subjective; however, the suggested plan based on priorities should serve as a starting place for City staff to determine where to allocate funding each year that is available for capital improvements.

Table 7.2 below assigns cost estimates in 2008 dollars using the methodology described in Section 7.2 to provide an understanding of the funding that will be necessary to implement the priority recommendations listed above. The amounts are general approximations that will need adjusting, as more specifics of each project are determined. This chart should help staff prepare budget requests and get a feel for the overall financial needs the park system has in order to implement the recommendations in the Master Plan.

Section 7.7 presents revenue and financing options the City may wish to consider when looking at ways to fund the recommendations listed.

TABLE 7.1 - PRIORITY FOR ALLOCATING CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT FINANCIAL RESOURCES

RECOMMENDATION	1ST	2ND	3RD	4TH	5TH	6TH
Annual Upgrade of Existing Park Rest Rooms	■					
New Rest Room at Circle Park	■					
Main Auditorium ADA & Building Code Improvements	■					
Eastern Corridor of South Gate Park Improvements to accommodate an event plaza, a new Boy Scout Lodge, batting cages, revenue generating commercial sports facility, and associated additional parking	■					
Complete Development of Cesar Chavez Linear Park	■					
South Gate Park Trail Improvements	■					
Establish a joint use agreement with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and with the College District to provide for mutual use of existing and new facilities as well as to encourage mutual projects that will address community as well as school needs	■					
Implementation of 3 Prong Graffiti & Vandalism Program	■					
Upgrade or Replace Park Maintenance Building		■				
Improve Landscaping & Trees at Stanford Ave Park		■				
Upgrades & New Amenities at Hollydale Regional Park		■				
Upgrade Kitchen at Hollydale Community Resource Center			■			
New Amenities for South Gate Park Swim Complex to Produce Revenue and Attendance – Zero Depth Pool, Party Rental Area, Food Concession			■			
Life Cycle Replacements to Park Buildings – roofs, heating and air systems, lighting, etc			■			
Trail System Around Perimeter of Circle Park				■		
Upgrades to Classrooms in Main Auditorium				■		
Develop Outdoor Area for Activities at Senior Center				■		
Installation of Dog Stations Throughout the Park System					■	
Landscaping Improvements to Circle Park					■	
Develop a Dedicated Teen Center (Convert Sports Center if new commercial sports center develops)						■
Tree and Landscape Improvements to Gardendale Tot Lot						■

TABLE 7.2 – PROPOSED COST ALLOCATION FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION	COSTS/FUNDING NEEDED
Annual Upgrade of Existing Park Rest Rooms	\$100 K YEAR NEXT 10 YEARS
New Rest Room at Circle Park	\$250,000
Main Auditorium ADA & Building Code Improvements	\$525,000
Eastern Corridor of South Gate Park Improvements to accommodate batting cages, an event plaza, a new Boy Scout Lodge, revenue generating commercial sports facility, and associated additional parking	\$8 MILLION – CITY PORTION
Complete Development of Cesar Chavez Linear Park	\$6 MILLION
South Gate Park Trail Improvements	\$350,000
Establish a joint use agreement with Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD) and with the College District to provide for mutual use of existing and new facilities as well as to encourage mutual projects that will address community as well as school needs	VARIES DEPENDING ON PROJECTS
Implementation of 3 Prong Graffiti & Vandalism Program	\$150,000 YEAR
Upgrade or Replace Park Maintenance Building	\$2 MILLION
Improve Landscaping & Trees at Stanford Ave Park	\$90,000
Upgrades & New Amenities at Hollydale Regional Park	\$1.2 MILLION
Upgrade Kitchen at Hollydale Community Resource Center	\$75,000
New Amenities for South Gate Park Swim Complex to Produce Revenue and Attendance – Zero Depth Pool, Party Rental Area, Food Concession	\$2.1 MILLION
Life Cycle Replacements to Park Buildings – roofs, heating and air systems, lighting, etc	\$300,000 PER YEAR - 10 YRS
Trail System Around Perimeter of Circle Park	\$175,000
Upgrades to Classrooms in Main Auditorium	\$135,000
Develop Outdoor Area for Activities at Senior Center	\$545,000
Installation of Dog Stations Throughout the Park System	\$12,000
Landscaping Improvements to Circle Park	\$40,000
Develop a Dedicated Teen Center (Convert Sports Center if new commercial sports center develops)	\$1.75 MILLION
Tree and Landscape Improvements to Gardendale Tot Lot	\$150,000

7.7 EXPLANATION OF ALTERNATIVE FUNDING OPTIONS

While developing a comprehensive Recreation and Parks Master Plan to determine the community's needs and priorities for park and recreation facilities and programs is an important planning tool, unless the City can find ways of financially implementing the plan, the Master Plan just becomes a wish list and not a true planning document.

While current economic conditions and budget constraints limit the City's ability to implement new programs and facilities now, the Parks and Recreation Master Plan is a long-term planning document. When the economy and budget situation improves, the City will need financial strategies to proceed with implementing needed improvements, new facilities and programs.

While all of the following funding and financing alternatives are tools the City of South Gate could take advantage of to fund the capital improvement recommendations, there are some specific alternatives the city should consider pursuing to address funding to accomplish the list of first priorities above. These include establishing a citywide Park Maintenance District using assessment authorities described in 7.7.5; use of revenue bonds to finance the South Gate Park Eastern Corridor Concept master plan as described in 7.7.3; and Asset Management programs that provide commercial concessions to generate revenue to pay for the revenue bonds as described in 7.7.7. Lease purchase options explained in 7.7.6 as a possible way to acquire utility right of way to complete Cesar Chavez Park could present a good solution.

Probably the most significant action the City could take to secure funding for future park acquisition, development and improvements would be to adopt a Parkland Dedication and In-Lieu Fee Ordinance. Almost every other city in

California has a Parkland Dedication requirement in its General Plan and either uses the State Quimby Act or adopts a local park ordinance under the Authority of the Quimby Act.

The Quimby Act Standard requires the dedication of a minimum of 3 acres per thousand population in proposed new residential developments. Most cities have adopted higher standards in their General Plan, usually 5 acres per thousand population.

While the City of South Gate is essentially built out, there will be in-fill residential projects, land rezoned for residential use, and multi-family residential development, such as, high-rise apartment and condominium complexes, in the future that will have impacts on the City's Park and Recreation system.

State Law under the Quimby Act allows the City to require Parkland Dedication or the payment of Park In-Lieu Fees by developers of such projects. If the City of South Gate is going to offset the impacts of future residential development will have on its Park System it should consider establishing a Park Standard in the City General Plan and then either use State Law or develop its own Parkland Dedication and In-Lieu Fee Ordinance.

The recommended direction for South Gate would be to establish its own Park Ordinance, rather than using the State Quimby Ordinance, so that it could include a broader range of housing types that would be subject to the required dedication of parkland or payment of in-lieu fees than the State Ordinance allows. A local ordinance can also define park in-lieu fees as the market value of improved parkland required to be dedicated. Under the State Ordinance, the in-lieu fee is established by the market value of raw land to be dedicated.

Pursuing a Park Standard in the General Plan and establishing a Parkland Dedication and In-Lieu Fee Ordinance would be an important step for the City to take to generate revenue for the recommendations listed above.

The following description of the various tools available to the City for funding and financing is included here instead of in an appendix so that the non-city staff reader gets a general understanding of how the funding and financing options work. It also provides a quick reference when using the document to prepare annual work programs on strategies to implement capital improvement programs.

The potential funding sources and financing methods explained in this section give the reader an introduction into what methods or combination of methods may be available to the City to pursue in the future. There may be other ways of finding funding or revenue to support the implementation of the recommended facilities and programs and the City should continue to look for these methods, however, the following methods are the most common funding and financing vehicles used by municipalities and public agencies.

7.7.1. Use of Bonds to Finance Parks

General Obligation Bonds make sense when a City has several different types of facilities it needs to develop and there is strong community support. For example, if a City wanted to build a new police station, community park and library, it may bundle all three into one General Obligation Bond. Hopefully, this would create a wider voter support to get the two-thirds approval required by General Obligation Bonds. General Obligation Bonds usually do not succeed for special interest facilities. For example, a General Obligation Bond to build a new aquatics facility or sports complex would probably not receive the two-thirds voter approval necessary to issue the bonds.

Some agencies that need to develop a number of Recreation and Park facilities have had success in forming a Park District and selling General Obligation Bonds to support the districts implementation of its facility development plan. When voters know that the bonds will only go to a Park Master Plan that they have approved, they tend to support such initiatives.

General Obligation Bonds are paid out of the City's General Fund. Therefore, the allocation of dollars to a General Obligation Bond for park purposes will compete with the City's needs for ongoing operations and other types of needed improvements, such as, public safety facilities, roads, and other infrastructure. Only agencies with excess general fund capacity are able to use General Obligation Bonds for Park Facility Development.

7.7.2. Paying for Bonds

The most common method for implementing Recreation and Park facility development by the use of bonds is to gain voter approval for an additional property tax assessment to pay for the debt of the Park Bonds. The bond issuing method is the same as General Obligation Bonds: they require two-thirds voter approval. However, along with the voter approval to issue the bonds, the voters need to approve an additional annual tax assessment to pay for the debt service on the bonds.

This approach is successful if there is strong community support for park facilities and implementing the Master Plan. The key to a successful Park Bond and tax assessment campaign is to work with a community foundation to build support for the tax assessment and to educate the voters that the additional tax assessment can only be used for development of the approved park facilities.

Most agencies have found that Park Bonds with a tax assessment are most successful when placed on a general election ballot rather than a special election ballot. It usually takes at least two years to develop a community support foundation, educate the voters, and develop enough community support to get two-thirds approval. Consequently, agencies most likely will only be able to do a Park Bond with a tax assessment once every 10 to 20 years. Before this financing approach should be undertaken, the City should allocate some resources to doing a statistically valid community survey on how the community perceives the adopted Recreation and Parks Master Plan, if they would be willing to pay additional taxes to implement it, and if so, how much additional taxes would be acceptable.

The public's perception of value is the most important element of generating a two-thirds voter approval. For example, the community may be willing to pay an additional \$30 a year on their property taxes to implement a number of facilities they believe they will use, but not \$100 a year. A statistically valid random phone survey is the only way to find out what the community's acceptance might be. This is necessary if the City wishes to finance park facility development by going to the voters for approval of a Park Bond with a tax assessment.

7.7.3. Revenue Bonds

Revenue Bonds are a popular way for local agencies to finance capital improvements, especially Recreation and Park facilities, when the facility will generate the necessary revenue to pay the debt service on the bonds. This method is common for development of sports arenas, convention centers, show grounds and other facilities that generate revenue through admission, concessions, and rentals. Revenue Bonds require the agency to provide collateral equal to one and half times the value of the bond issue. An agency must provide collateral in the form of property or properties it owns that have

a market value of at least one and a half times the amount of revenue bond it wishes to issue. Revenue Bonds do not require voter approval but do require a four-fifths vote of the City Council. Revenue Bonds are usually combined with the establishment of an assessment district under AB1600 and Asset Management programs, which are explained later in this section.

If the City can design capital improvements with revenue generating components so that the debt service and the cost of maintenance and operations do not impact the City's general fund, Revenue Bonds are a good approach to funding facilities where there is strong Council and community support and political motivation to develop the facilities.

7.7.4. Certificates of Participation (COPs)

Certificates of Participation (COPs) are similar to Revenue Bonds in that they do not require voter approval, just a four-fifths City Council vote. And they require the City to provide collateral in the form of property equity one and a half times the market value of the proposed issue. The advantage of COPs is that they are issued in script of \$5,000 or \$10,000, which allows for smaller investors to invest, and they are tax exempt, so interest rates are lower. Again, the key to this type of financing is to design the proposed facilities with revenue generating components and/or combine it with an AB1600 assessment district so that there is no impact on the City's existing general fund to issue the COPs.

7.7.5. Assessment Methods

There are two main methods for establishing assessments to pay for Recreation and Park acquisition and facility development; these are:

Lighting and Landscape Assessment Districts, Mello-Roos, and other state legislation that allows local agencies to create assessment districts for capital

improvements. Each of these requires approval by the property owners who are within the district and are subject to paying the assessment.

California State Law AB1600 allows local agencies to impose an assessment on properties within an improvement area when the City can show a nexus that the improvements are a benefit to the properties being assessed. Under this method of assessment, the City sends a direct mail ballot to the property owners, if fewer than 50% of the property owners vote “No”, it could implement the assessment.

Agencies typically use enabling legislation for assessment districts for facility improvements that impact or benefit the whole City or a specific area, such as for street lighting, storm drain improvements, sidewalks, etc. Some agencies have had some success using this legislation to fund large community or regional park developments where there is broad community support for the improvements. Newer agencies and park districts have had the most success in setting up assessment districts, because establishing them when only a few property owners are within the proposed assessment district is easier.

Established areas where there are thousands of property owners within the proposed assessment district have had trouble getting 50% approval. This legislation requires the assessing agency to do an engineering study to determine the proportionate benefit each property within the proposed district receives.

AB1600 has several benefits over other assessment legislation in that it is an impact fee. Unlike the benefit assessment districts, the City does not have to do an engineering study to proportion the cost according to benefit. The City simply has to make a finding that there is a need for recreation and park

facilities based on the impact of the proposed development, and the proposed development is not contributing to mitigate the impact.

Accomplishing this requires preparing a nexus study showing the relationship between the defined impact and the facility or facilities the proposed developments impact.

For example, if the City wanted to use AB1600 to impose an impact fee on new commercial and industrial development, it would need to do nexus studies to determine if existing commercial and industrial properties have an impact on its recreation and park facilities.

If the City finds that employees in commercial and industrial businesses use the City's recreation and park facilities, and employers use the park system and/or recreation programs as recruiting tools; and, as a result, commercial and industrial property increases in value due to a well developed and maintained park system; the City could use the authority under AB1600 to impose a park fee on new commercial and industrial development.

7.7.6. Lease Purchase Financing

A newer concept in financing Recreation and Park improvements being used successfully by local agencies is a form of lease/purchase financing. Under the lease/purchase, financing method the City would contract with a financial institution that would put together an investment group. The City would then lease the proposed site and facility to the investment group who would provide the funding for the development of the site and facility. The investment group then leases the site and facility back to the City at a lease rate equal to the cost of the financing the investment group provides to the City for the development of the site and facility.

The lease serves as the collateral for the financing, not other real property, as is the case in issuing revenue bonds or COPs. If the City defaults on the lease payments, the investment group would own the lease and could operate the facility or contract the operation of the facility to a third party. The City owns the site throughout the lease purchase period, and at the end of the lease period, the City owns the improvements free and clear. This form of financing currently has very attractive interest rates, is tax exempt for investors, and does not impact the City's bond indebtedness or credit rating.

This type of financing works best for facility development whereby the facility generates revenue. Municipal parking structures are one type of facility that local agencies have been very successful in using this financing method. It can be used for non-revenue producing facilities whereby the lease payments are paid from the agency's general fund; however, with competing needs it may be politically difficult to dedicate general funds for lease payments. The term of the lease is set by the agency and can be any length. Another attractive feature of this form of financing is the low cost of issuance compared to Bond issues.

The City could also use non tax-exempt lease purchase financing to acquire commercial or industrial property. As a lessee, the City could sub-lease to a commercial recreation developer/operator for the development and operation of major commercial recreation facilities, such as, batting cages, sports complexes, dance studios, fitness/health centers, community theatres, skateboard parks and off road vehicle parks.

7.7.7. Asset Management

Besides raising revenue through bonds, assessment districts and impact fees, several local agencies in California are developing and implementing Asset Management Plans to generate income to pay for facility development and

maintenance. Asset Management is defined as using the City's facilities and other assets for business purposes in order to generate revenue without raising taxes.

Through the community input process and surveys the consensus was that the community understood the need for revenue development and would be generally accepting of some commercialization of these proposed facilities in order to insure quality programming and proper maintenance, however, there was concern expressed regarding aesthetics and too much commercialization of public facilities.

The three components to developing an asset management plan are:

- *Revenue from facility rentals, fees, and charges*
- *Leases or licenses for private concessions*
- *Advertising/vending/sponsorship opportunities*

Based on the recommended future projects outlined in the master plan the project team has developed the following list of advertising/vending/sponsorship opportunities for consideration by the City to help it generate additional revenue for which to use in operating and maintaining these new facilities:

- *Parking lot and walkway banner programs*
- *Shade shelter advertising*
- *Information and advertising kiosks*
- *Trash receptacle advertising*
- *Telecommunication tower leases*
- *Naming rights and/or facility sponsorship*
- *Soda/water/juice/snack vending*

Several of these revenue categories are advertising programs and the potential revenue is dependant upon the number of impressions that can be generated on the proposed site. In advertising terms, there are two types of impressions, repeat impressions and one-time impressions. Repeat impressions are those exposures to the same people over and over and one-time impressions are those that people see passing by just once. Companies who are trying to establish a brand identity like to advertise at locations that provide repeat impressions, while established brands prefer one-time locations that provide for brand reinforcement.

The facilities proposed for the city have the potential to offer both types of advertising locations. The value of these locations is determined by the number of visits and the amount of participation at each site. It is best to “bundle” the sites and offer potential contracts for each category at all sites.

The extent of advertising programs the City wishes to use to offset maintenance and operational costs will have to be a policy decision made by elected officials. Designing facilities with advertising programs in mind is important so that the advertising fits in and looks a part of the environment instead of looking like after thoughts that stand out and are unsightly additions. Advertising components need to be attractive structures, located for maximum exposure and controlled by the city as to content, so as not to create public controversy or opposition. The extent of commercial advertising should not be offensive to visitors or participants or it will defeat the purpose and turn people away from using the facilities.

In preparing the market analysis for using City facilities, to raise revenue in order to offset the cost of operating and maintaining the facilities, the City will have to consider several factors:

- *The economic makeup and image of the city*
- *The types of facilities, their projected use and attendance*
- *The community's perception and acceptance of commercialization*
- *Income levels, race, ethnicity, and age demographics*
- *The city's ordinances and regulations regarding signage, advertising and use of public property for private commercial purposes*
- *The demand in the market place for commercial exposure in the city*
- *The city's ability to manage asset management contracts*
- *The political environment for balancing the need for revenue versus commercialization of public facilities*
- *Aesthetics, logistics, and the cost versus revenue benefits of asset management programs*

Generating revenue from the use of public facilities is a business venture and thus requires good business decisions and good business practices when implementing asset management programs. For example, an agency cannot decide to implement an information/advertising kiosk program at its parks and facilities but then decide to hide the kiosk in an obscure location because it does not want to appear that it is commercializing its facilities. By designing the kiosk to be attractive and fit into the theme of the facility, the kiosks actually become an integral part of the facility environment and an essential amenity to provide information to site visitors.

It is recommended that when the City proceeds with the design of new facilities, the design process contains an analysis of potential asset management opportunities to generate revenue to offset operation and maintenance costs. By doing this the City can develop attractive new quality facilities that have financial sustainability in the future.

7.7.8. Grant Programs

The City should apply for and make use of both state and federal grant programs. Per capita grant programs such as Roberti-Z'berg and CDBG can provide the City with funding for both improvement of existing facilities and acquisition and development of new facilities. Most of these grant programs are based on a per capita distribution and some require matching funds by the City. Federal grant programs such as Community Development Block Grants (CDBG) and Urban Recreation and Park Programs (URPP) can provide funding for specialized facilities that meet the criteria for these particular grant programs.

The City should also consider combining several different grant programs for the development of a single project. For example, the City could apply for several different beautification grants, trails grants, storm drain improvement grants, urban park development grants, open space grants, and per capita grants to accomplish the funding necessary for developing a trails system through out the City.

Private Foundation Grants may also be available to the City if it can partner with a local non-profit group for a specific program that addresses the private Foundation's mission, such as, transportation, safe places for kids, gang prevention, youth employment, protection of the environment, preservation of open space, early child education, etc.

Grant writing for private Foundation grants is a very specialized field and the City would need to seek a grant writer experienced in this field to help it develop the partnerships and pursue these funding sources.

7.7.9. Community Park Foundations

A key element of funding Recreation and Park facilities is community support. Whether the funding method is bonds, assessment districts, asset

management, or joint partnerships, it will be necessary to build community support in order to implement facility development. The best way to build community support for facility development is by establishing a non-profit community foundation made up of concerned volunteers to support the City's implementation of its Recreation and Parks Master Plan. In addition, a Community Parks Foundation can also provide the following:

- *An organization that can accept donations that are tax deductible to the contributor*
- *An organization that can apply for grants that are not eligible for government application*
- *An organization that can put on fundraising campaigns and recruit a large volunteer base to implement the campaigns*
- *An organization that can partner with other non-profits, such as churches, service clubs and organizations and private companies to jointly develop Recreation facilities*

The key to developing a successful Community Parks Foundation is in the development of by-laws establishing the foundation, recruitment of board members and training of volunteers. The by-laws should be developed so that they are very specific about the role and duties of the foundation. Board members should represent all segments of the community and not be controlled by any one special interest group.

In summary, there is a number of potential funding and financing mechanisms the City can pursue to implement the various capital improvement recommendations presented in the Master Plan when determining how to implement needed facility improvements, new park development and new recreation programs.

The above strategies are presented as options for consideration and to provide a road map for possible ways to implement the priorities in the recommended Capital Improvement Work Program. The City may find other ways to fund or partner with another agency to accomplish the various projects needed. Certainly, the economy, local politics, special interests and the availability of staff time will all affect the City's ability to pursue these options.

CHAPTER SEVEN: RECOMMENDATIONS AND POLICIES