
5 Parks and Recreation

Pacific Grove and its scenic coast offer residents and visitors a wide range of recreational opportunities, ranging from simply enjoying a view of the bay to more formal nature study, walking, jogging, cycling, diving, surfing, and sport fishing.

The City, the State, and the Pacific Grove Unified School District each own and operate an extensive system of parks, recreation facilities, and open space areas in Pacific Grove. The Recreation Department administers City park and recreation programs, and maintains recreation facilities. City parks are maintained by the City's Public Works Department.

Despite an apparent abundance of land devoted to recreation and open space uses, there is a growing need for facilities for community meetings, indoor group activities, and cultural events.

5.1 EXISTING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES

There are 28 formally-designated park, open space, and recreation facilities in Pacific Grove in addition to public school facilities used for recreation. Several other areas constitute important open space resources, but are not available for traditional park and recreation use. The system of park and recreation areas can not be assessed according to typical park and recreation standards, for a number of reasons:

(1) several parks are on the coast which makes service areas difficult to establish; (2) many parks have natural areas with steep topography or substantial tree cover, and thus their recreational use is quite limited; (3) the heavy use of the City's coastal parks by visitors makes them *de facto* "regional parks"; (4) the Municipal Golf Course (a substantial portion of the City park land) serves a highly specific group; and (5) local residents use the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds.

To inventory and describe the City's parks and recreation facilities (see Figure 5-1), the following classification system was developed:

- A. Shoreline Park Network (23.4 acres)
- B. Neighborhood Parks-Recreational (5.6 Acres)
- C. Neighborhood Parks-Natural Areas and Open Space (3.82 acres)
- D. Community Parks-Recreational (94.9 acres)
- E. Community Parks-Natural Areas and Open Space (40 acres)
- F. Regional and State Parks (112 acres)
- G. Other Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Space Areas (49.9 acres)
- H. Public Schools (85.9 acres)
- I. Visual Open Space Resources (33.7 acres)

Total: 449.2 acres

The total acreage of parks, open space, and recreation facilities shown here differs from the land use description in Figure 2-3, Chapter 2. This discrepancy is due to the inclusion here of the public schools as recreation sites, and to differences in the categories to which some of the other properties are assigned. The Visual Open Space Resources category consists here of El Carmelo Cemetery, the California-American reservoir, and Hopkins Marine Station. In Figure 2-3, however, the reservoir and the Hopkins Marine Station are listed by their ownership, under Public/Private Facilities, not in the Parks and Open Space category. The combined acreage of the public schools, the reservoir, and the Marine Station (107.32 acres) is the difference between the total for parks and open space given in Figure 2-3 and the total given here.

The *Shoreline Park Network* includes all parks and recreation areas located on the coastal edge of the city.

These facilities (described in detail below) serve their contiguous neighborhoods, the community as a whole, and regional recreation needs.

Neighborhood Parks are intended to serve the recreation needs of people living or working within a half-mile of the park. *Community Parks* are larger than neighborhood parks and are intended to provide recreation opportunities beyond those supplied by the smaller neighborhood parks. In the list below, these facilities are subdivided into areas with active and formal park and recreation uses and facilities, and parks principally having natural areas limited to passive use.

A. Shoreline Park Network, 23.4 acres

1. Berwick Park (one acre) is located on the coastal side of Ocean View Boulevard between 9th Street and Carmel Avenue, south of the Recreation Trail. It offers spectacular views of Monterey Bay and the surrounding coastline. Part of the park has a large, well-manicured lawn area with gentle topography. The remainder has a natural landscape with rocky outcrops and native vegetation.
2. Lovers Point Park, located at the foot of 17th Street, is a landscaped community park of 4.4 acres. It is used for picnicking, fishing, sunning, swimming, water sports, and surfing. Lovers Point’s amenities include a large lawn area, a sand volleyball court, a children’s swimming pool, sandy beaches, rocky outcrops, a concrete pier structure, and a restaurant and snack bar.



Bathing in the surf, circa 1905

Source: *The Pat Hathaway Collection*

Key to Figure 5-1, Parks and Recreation Facilities

Shoreline Park Network

- 1 Berwick Park
- 2 Lovers Point Park
- 3 Perkins Park
- 4 Shoreline Park

Neighborhood Parks—Recreational

- 5 Arnett Park
- 6 Caledonia Park
- 7 Jewell Park
- 8 Platt Park

Neighborhood Parks—Natural Areas and Open Space

- 9 Andy Jacobson Park
- 10 Chase Park
- 11 Esplanade Park
- 12 Greenwood Park
- 13 Higgins Park

Community Parks—Recreational

- 14 Municipal Ball Park
- 15 Community Center and Tennis Courts
- 16 Municipal Golf Course

Community Parks—Natural Areas and Open Space

- 17 George Washington Park
- 18 Lynn “Rip” Van Winkle Open Space

Regional and State Parks

- 19 Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds
- 20 Rocky Shores Addition to Asilomar State Beach
- 21 Monterey Peninsula Recreation Trail

Other Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Space Areas

- 22 Monarch Grove Sanctuary
- 23 Rec Club
- 24 Chautauqua Hall
- 25 Elmarie Dyke Open Space
- 26 Hayward Park
- 27 Southern Pacific Railroad Right-of-Way
- 28 Point Pinos Lighthouse Reservation

Public Schools

- 29 Robert H. Down School
- Forest Grove Elementary School
- David Avenue School
- 30 Lighthouse Adult School
- 31 Pacific Grove Middle School
- 32 Pacific Grove High School

Visual Open Space Resources

- 33 El Carmelo Cemetery
- 34 California-American Water Reservoir
- 35 Hopkins Marine Station

**Figure 5-1
Parks and Recreation Facilities**

The Feast of Lanterns

The Feast of Lanterns is an annual community festival in Pacific Grove. Various events are spread throughout the festival week, including sports tournaments, a pet parade by the children, a street dance, a sand castle contest, a salad potluck luncheon, and a chicken barbecue at Lovers Point.

In part, the Feast of Lanterns commemorates Pacific Grove's early days as a Methodist summer campground. First held in 1895 as the closing high point of the Chautauqua series of lectures and concerts, early festivals featured parades of people dressed in exotic ethnic costumes. The festivals ended at Lovers Point with the lighting of Chinese paper lanterns at the beach.



The Feast of Lanterns at Lovers Point, circa 1910

Source: *The Pat Hathaway Collection*

Held from the turn of the century through the 1930s, the festivals were interrupted by World War II. In 1951 Elmarie Dyke, a tireless organizer and Pacific Grove booster, revived the Feast of Lanterns. She elaborated on the early traditions, wrote the script for the Saturday night pageant, and gave the festival its current fondly cornball savor. Spectators gather on their blankets and beach chairs for the Saturday evening climax of the Feast of Lanterns at Lovers Point beach. Members of the Pacific Grove Ocean Rescue Unit, in their wet suits, delight the children by floating a papier mache dragon over the water toward the shore. This dragon breathes “smoke” from its fire extinguisher mouth. The pageant is enacted on the breakwater. It retells the Chinese tale of thwarted and triumphant young lovers seen on the popular “Blue Willow” china pattern. Typically the crowd hisses the villain, sighs with the heroine, and cheers the hero.

Along the beach and the surrounding cliffs, people light hundreds of multi-colored Chinese paper lanterns, which glow in the dusk. The pageant ends with fireworks exploding gloriously over the bay. People leave smiling.

3. Perkins Park is the section of shoreline between Lovers Point and the Esplanade. (Acreage is included in Shoreline Park.) It was named for local resident Hayes Perkins, who planted the first pink ice plant along this section of the waterfront. The park is well maintained and is landscaped with “magic carpet” ice plant and stone terrace walls. Walking trails in Perkins Park are heavily used.
4. Shoreline Park (18 acres) is the designation applied to those portions of the publicly-owned waterfront not otherwise named from Hopkins Marine Station at its eastern boundary, around the shoreline along Monterey Bay to the foot of Asilomar Avenue on the west.

B. Neighborhood Parks—Recreational, 5.6 acres

5. Earl “Topper” Arnett Park (three acres) is located at the intersection of Piedmont and Moreland Avenues. It has a baseball field, two playground areas with swings and slides, a large playground structure, picnic tables, a barbecue grill, and rest rooms.
6. Caledonia Park (1.69 acres) is located on Caledonia between Central and Jewell Avenues (behind the Post Office). It contains an open space free-play area, tots’ play area, playground and climbing equipment for older children, a baseball backstop, basketball court, picnic tables, and rest rooms. It is often used by Pacific Grove residents for family picnics and small group events.



Arnett Park



Jewell Park

7. Jewell Park (0.6 acres) is a small block bounded by Park Place and Central, Grand, and Forest Avenues in the City's civic district. Bordering the park are the City's museum, library, and a City-owned building used by the Chamber of Commerce. The park's urban character is established by a well-maintained lawn area, specimen trees, gentle topography, a small meeting building with a kitchen, a gazebo suitable for outdoor performances, and several benches.
8. Platt Park (0.3 acres) is bounded by Morse Drive, McFarland Avenue, and Platt Court. The unimproved park has a gentle topography and many trees.

C. Neighborhood Parks–Natural Areas and Open Space, 3.82 acres

9. Andy Jacobson Park (0.57 acres) is located at the corner of Ocean View Boulevard and 7th Street. Planted primarily with native plants, it resembles a lush backyard garden, is rugged and natural in appearance, and is well maintained.
10. Chase Park (0.5 acres) is located at Ocean View Boulevard and Briggs Avenue and is divided by Ocean View Boulevard into two parcels. The western parcel is rugged and unimproved. The eastern parcel is contiguous to a parking area, and consists of a very small landscaped area with a bench and a path.
11. Esplanade Park (1.2 acres) is located on Esplanade between Ocean View and Del Monte

Boulevards. It is unimproved, with gently rolling topography and many Monterey cypress trees.

12. Greenwood Park (1.1 acres) is a full block bounded by Ocean View Boulevard, Central Avenue, 12th Street, and 13th Street. Like Esplanade Park, it has a natural landscape character and large trees (predominantly eucalyptus). The park follows a moderately steep ravine with a seasonal creek at its bottom. Except for a footbridge across the ravine, there are no improvements.
13. Higgins Park (0.45 acres) is located at the intersection of Forest and David Avenues. This rugged park with steep terrain contains many Monterey pine and coast live oak trees. Improvements are limited to several park benches.

D. Community Parks–Recreational, 94.9 acres

14. The night-lighted Municipal Ball Park (2.87 acres) is located at 17 Mile Drive and Pico Avenue. It is used primarily for youth baseball, and youth and adult softball. In 1992, the City Council adopted a Ball Park Master Plan, which outlines conditions of use such as hours, scheduling, lighting, and parking, and a program of proposed physical improvements.
15. The Pacific Grove Community Center/Morris Dill Tennis Courts (two acres) is located at 515 Junipero Avenue. The Center offers daytime community programs, including preschool care and social events for all ages, and can be rented.

The five tennis courts and an accompanying tennis pro shop are available during the daytime.

16. The Pacific Grove Municipal Golf Course (90 acres (including 36 acres of city property east of Asilomar Avenue and a 54-acre portion of the Point Pinos Lighthouse Reservation west of Asilomar Avenue) is located at 77 Asilomar Avenue. The Peninsula’s only municipal golf course, it has an 18-hole course, a clubhouse, golf equipment, electric carts, and a driving range.

E. Community Parks–Natural Areas and Open Space, 40 acres

17. George Washington Park (20 acres) is the largest of Pacific Grove’s city parks. It is six blocks long (from Short Street to Sinex Avenue) between Melrose and Alder Streets. Most of the park is natural forest land that offers important wildlife habitat. Monarch butterflies reside here annually from October to March. The City is in the process of restoring this park, and is planting Monterey pines and native understory. The park contains picnic tables, barbecue grills, rest rooms, a large play structure, and a youth baseball field at Sinex Avenue and Alder Street.
18. Lynn “Rip” Van Winkle Open Space (20 acres) is a narrow ribbon of open space approximately 2,200 feet long and 400 feet wide. Located between Sunset Drive and Forest Lodge Road along Congress Avenue, it is rugged, wild, and heavily forested with Monterey cypress, Monterey pine, and coast live oak. Joggers and walkers extensively use the park, as do people who want to exercise their dogs off-leash.



George Washington Park



Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds

F. Regional and State Parks, 112 acres

19. The Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds (103 acres total) is part of the California State Park System. Asilomar was established as a YWCA retreat in 1913. The State acquired the retreat in 1956 and annexed it to the beach and rocky shoreline which the State Division of Beaches and Parks already owned along the western edge of the retreat.

The Asilomar Conference Grounds (approximately 50 of the 103 acres) are located south of Pico Avenue between Crocker Avenue on the east and Sunset Drive on the south and west. Asilomar’s original buildings, designed by architect Julia Morgan, are listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Asilomar can accommodate groups up to 1,000. It has an 850-seat multi-use auditorium, a 450-seat chapel, dining facilities for up to 500, and a wide variety of housing accommodations. The conference facilities are operated by a non-profit corporation committed to providing quality facilities and to preserving the environment. The Monterey pine forest and dune areas of the conference grounds provide a natural setting of high ecological and scenic value.

Asilomar State Beach (approximately 53 acres) is located on the coast side of Sunset Drive between Rocky Shores on the north and the Del Monte property along Spanish Bay on the south. It consists primarily of a rocky coastline with white sand beaches and tide pools. An extensive on-going dune restoration has been undertaken including revegetation with native plants and the construction of a shoreline trail and boardwalk.

20. Rocky Shores addition to Asilomar State Beach extends the northernmost boundary of the Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds by adding four lots (three acres). Through joint efforts of the City, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, the Asilomar Operating Corporation, the State Coastal Conservancy, the California Department of Parks and Recreation, private foundations, and individuals, this portion of Rocky Shores was purchased in August 1992 for permanent preservation as public open space.
21. The Monterey Peninsula Recreation Trail (six acres) extends for about a mile between the Monterey Bay Aquarium and Lovers Point. The trail, located on the former Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way, has separate walking and cycling paths. It serves as a major walking, jogging, and bicycling route along the northeastern coastline of the city.

G. Other Parks, Recreation Facilities, and Open Space Areas, 49.9 acres

22. The Monarch Grove Sanctuary (2.26 acres) is historically a site for overwintering Monarch butterflies. This site was purchased by the City of

Pacific Grove in August 1992 as the result of a bond issue approved by the voters and a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board. It is protected as open space and butterfly habitat by both the City and the State.

23. The Pacific Grove Rec Club, located at the corner of Laurel Avenue and 16th Street, adjacent to City Hall, was constructed and dedicated for use as a youth center in 1950. As of 1994, this facility is being used temporarily as City offices.
24. Chautauqua Hall (0.29 acres), located at the corner of 17th Street and Central Avenue, is a California Registered Historical Landmark built in 1881 by the Pacific Grove Retreat Association for concerts and entertainment. It is now used for Boy Scout meetings, judo classes, gymnastics, jazzercise, square dancing, fitness classes, the Chautauqua Hall Dance Club, and for special art and craft exhibits.
25. Elmarie Dyke Open Space (0.1 acres), located adjacent to Chautauqua Hall, was purchased by the City in 1990 to enhance Chautauqua Hall. It has been landscaped as an urban garden with flowering plants, a fountain, benches and tables, and a gazebo.



Point Pinos Lighthouse

- 26. Hayward Park, Dedicated to City Volunteers (1.07 acres), located adjacent to Crocker Avenue from Sinex Avenue to Sunset Drive, was donated to the City in 1990 for open space. It will be developed with a trail for hiking and biking. The landscaping will maintain the natural look of Asilomar with native plants and trees typical of the area.
- 27. The Southern Pacific Railroad right-of-way (12.9 acres), owned by the Southern Pacific Land Company, extends from the Monarch Pines Mobile Home Park on the east to Sinex Avenue on the south. The grassy, tree-lined right-of-way passes through the Pacific Grove Municipal Golf Course. Local residents walk and jog along the portion between Lighthouse Avenue and Hayward Park.
- 28. Point Pinos Lighthouse Reservation (33.3 acres of shoreline and open space, in addition to the 54 acres used by the Municipal Golf Course), includes the Point Pinos Lighthouse and the stretch of rocky beach and shoreline around Point Pinos from Asilomar Avenue to Jewell Avenue. Point Pinos Lighthouse is the oldest continuously operating lighthouse on the west coast. It is open to visitors on weekends.

H. Public Schools, 85.9 acres

- 29. There are three elementary schools (30.23 acres) in Pacific Grove. Robert H. Down School is bounded by Pine Avenue and Junipero Avenue, between 12th Street and Fountain Avenue. Forest Grove Elementary School is located on Congress Avenue next to Pacific Grove High School. David Avenue School is located on David Avenue west of Congress Avenue. Each provides grassy playing fields, playground equipment, and visual open space.
- 30. Lighthouse Adult School (6.15 acres) is bounded by Lighthouse Avenue, 17 Mile Drive, Short Street, and Ridge Road. Formerly an elementary school, the facility houses the administrative offices for the Pacific Grove Adult Education program and is a site for adult education classes. The grassy fields behind the school include a baseball diamond, and serve as visual open space.
- 31. Pacific Grove Middle School and District Office (11.5 acres) is bounded by Hillcrest, Carmel, Sinex, and Forest Avenues. Facilities include a quarter-mile track and athletic field, outdoor basketball courts, a gym, and a 600-seat auditorium.

- 32. Pacific Grove High School (38 acres) is bounded by Congress Avenue, Sunset Drive, and Forest Lodge Road. Facilities include a football stadium and a quarter-mile track, two large baseball fields, eight tennis courts, a gym, and a swimming pool.

I. Visual Open Space Resources, 33.7 acres

- 33. El Carmelo Cemetery (12.3 acres) is a visual open space resource contiguous to the Municipal Golf Course east of Asilomar Avenue and north of Lighthouse Avenue.
- 34. California-American Water Reservoir (8.94 acres) is a visual open space resource near the eastern edge of the Planning Area, on a site bounded by 14th Street and Hillcrest, Carmel, and David Avenues.
- 35. Stanford University’s Hopkins Marine Station (12.48 acres) is located on the coast side of Ocean View Boulevard between Eardley Avenue and 3rd Street. It provides important visual open space at the eastern end of the coastal park network.

5.2 PARK GOALS AND POLICIES

The City’s Recreation Master Plan was prepared in 1957. A draft update was prepared in 1977 but was never officially adopted. Development of recreation facilities and planning for additional facilities continued nonetheless. In 1987, the City created a 25-member committee to study the feasibility of improving and expanding recreation facilities at Pacific Grove High School and Forest Grove School through a joint use concept. At that time, no feasible facility-sharing opportunities were identified.

From time to time, the City is presented with opportunities to acquire open space lands that are unique, that would complement existing open space, or that are relatively inexpensive. This General Plan attempts to designate adequate land for development of quasi-public and public uses, including parks; however, the City has no comprehensive framework for evaluating open space acquisition opportunities, nor has it a financial plan for buying open space.

GOAL 1 **Maintain a public park system and recreation facilities suited to the needs of all Pacific Grove residents**

and visitors.

GOAL 2 Designate adequate land for developing parks and recreation facilities.

To carry out these goals, the City will establish new park standards and seek outside financial assistance and cooperation, as expressed in Policies 1 through 3, below.

POLICY 1 Establish a standard in acres for combined neighborhood and community park land per 1,000 residents, and require new development to meet that standard.

POLICY 2 Pursue available and appropriate County, State, and federal funds to acquire park land, upgrade, and develop park facilities.

POLICY 3 Promote joint-use of public facilities and agreements for sharing costs and operational responsibilities among public service providers. (See Public Facilities, Policy 27.)

Policies 1 through 3 will be carried out by Programs A through D.

Program A Prepare a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan that addresses the needs of Pacific Grove residents and visitors.

The Parks and Recreation Master Plan will:

- Look ahead at least 10 years, devoting greater detail to improvements planned for the first five-year period;
- Establish goals, policies, and standards for the location, size, and level of development for all existing and proposed parks;
- Identify existing park land deficiencies;
- Evaluate the City’s recreation facilities for compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act and related regulations;
- Establish development priorities;
- Identify financing mechanisms;

- Identify desirable sites for acquisition and development of new parks and open space;
- Schedule the development of community activity centers;
- Address maintenance, improvement, and equipment standards;
- Emphasize joint use of City and School District facilities;
- Re-establish and maintain the use of the Pacific Grove Rec Club as a youth center, unless a more appropriate facility is identified.

Preparation of the Master Plan will be guided further by Policies 4 through 7.

Program B Regularly monitor County, State, and federal funding sources and apply for loans and grants for which the City may be eligible, to acquire, develop, and rehabilitate park land and facilities.

Program C As potential open space sites are identified as available, seek funding to acquire them.

Program D Review periodically and enforce a Master Plan for the Municipal Ball Park.

In carrying out Programs A and C, the City will be guided by the following policies:

POLICY 4 Protect sensitive habitats, natural landforms, and scenic resources in planning for recreation facilities and for open space, taking into account the carrying capacity of the areas.

This is intended to apply, citywide, the same policy contained in LUP 3.3.4.1.

POLICY 5 Design park improvements in such a way as to facilitate accessibility, security, policing, and maintenance.

POLICY 6 Where practical, foster the use of drought-tolerant and drought-resistant landscaping in City parks.

POLICY 7 Give high priority to maintaining, improving, and rehabilitating existing parks.

5.3 RECREATION GOALS AND POLICIES

The Recreation Department provides a wide range of activities that contribute to the recreational and cultural life of the community. Activities include sports, classes, and field trips for age groups from pre-schoolers to seniors.

GOAL 3 Establish recreation programs suited to the broad needs and diverse interests of Pacific Grove residents of all ages.

The City intends to maintain and expand a balanced recreation program that addresses the needs of the various age and interest groups in Pacific Grove.

POLICY 8 Give first priority to residents of Pacific Grove for participation in City-sponsored recreation programs, activities, and leagues, and for the use of City facilities for such activities.

POLICY 9 Give priority to youth programs and facilities.

Program E Re-establish and maintain the use of the Pacific Grove Rec Club as a youth center, unless a more appropriate facility is identified.

POLICY 10 Evaluate the adequacy of existing facilities and determine their optimum utilization.

POLICY 11 Consider the needs of the various neighborhoods in developing facilities and programs for indoor and outdoor activities.

Program F Establish a method for periodically surveying community needs, attitudes, and preferences for recreation facilities and programs.

The City periodically will compile statistics concerning the use of recreation facilities and program participation which, together with information from the user attitude and preference survey, will be used by the Recreation Department to program and budget future facilities and activities.

POLICY 12 Promote the active involvement of all affected residents, including those with special needs, such as the disabled and the elderly, in the planning of recreation programs and facilities.

POLICY 13 Establish cooperative agreements with the Pacific Grove Unified School District for the use of school facilities for City-sponsored recreation programs.

5.4 RELATED GOALS AND POLICIES

Goals and policies related to the coast, and access to it, are found in the Land Use Plan (LUP) and the Coastal Parks Plan of the Local Coastal Program. They encourage, to the fullest extent possible, public access to the coast for recreation purposes. In addition, the Transportation Chapter of this General Plan sets forth plans for a network of pedestrian and bicycle pathways connecting parks and open space areas with other destination points within and beyond the city.

