



*Photo of a Play Area at De Anza Park*



CITY of CALABASAS

# Section 8

## IMPLEMENTATION

- 
- *Capital Facilities Plan*
  - *Funding Sources*
  - *Implementation Strategy*
  - *Project Priorities*

## INTRODUCTION

This section of the report identifies implementation strategies for funding park and facility improvements.

### A. Capital Facilities Plan

Table 8.1 contains a capital projects list including for all projects identified in Section 7.

**Table 8-1  
Capital Projects List  
Park and Recreation Master Plan**

Site #	Park Name	Cost
<b>PARK REHABILITATION AND UPGRADES</b>		
MP-1	Freedom Park	\$14,000
MP-2	Highlands Park	\$23,000
NP-3	Grape Arbor Park	\$575,000
CP-7	Juan Bautista de Anza Park	\$280,000
CP-8	Gates Canyon Park	\$8,700,000
SU-11	Bark Park	\$25,000
SU-12	Creekside Park	\$250,000
SU-14	Wild Walnut Park	\$2,750,000
	Subtotal	\$12,617,000
<b>NEW PARK DEVELOPMENT</b>		
NP-4	Bay Laurel Elementary School Park	\$400,000
NP-5	Chaparral Elementary School Park	\$400,000
NP-6	The Oaks/Millennium School Park	\$400,000
CP-9	East Side Community Park (acquisition & dev.)	\$9,200,000
SU-15	West Side Park Site	\$1,000,000
	Subtotal	\$11,400,000
<b>NEW FACILITIES</b>		
N/A	Teen Center (10,000 s.f.) <sup>1</sup>	\$2,500,000
N/A	Senior Center (5,000) <sup>2</sup>	\$1,250,000
N/A	In-Ground Skate Park <sup>3</sup>	\$625,000
N/A	Performing Arts Stage/Flexible Use Space <sup>4</sup>	\$2,000,000
	Subtotal	\$6,375,000
<b>OPEN SPACE ACQUISITION</b>		
OS	Acquire 123 acres of open space <sup>5</sup>	\$30,750,000
	Subtotal	\$30,750,000

<sup>1</sup> Does not include land acquisition.

<sup>2</sup> Assumes the senior center is part of the Civic Center, and shares some facilities, such as rest rooms.

<sup>3</sup> Cost includes skate facility only, and does not include land acquisition or support facilities such as restrooms.

<sup>4</sup> Assumes this facility is part of the Civic Center. Does not include land acquisition costs or costs for a free-standing facility.

<sup>5</sup> Assumes acquisition cost of \$250,000 per acre.

Table 8.1 does not include costs for improvements to the TSC, because the facility is run as an enterprise fund and as such, funds its own capital improvements. Nor does it include costs for improvements to the Community Center, because this facility is also intended to pay for itself.

In the case of Gates Canyon Park, costs are based on no additional land acquisition and inclusion of a pool, small tennis center, large children's play environment, paved court area and two additional picnic areas. The site master plan for this park may recommend different facilities and will result in a more detailed cost projection. The purpose of Table 8.1 is to provide an order-of-magnitude cost projection for long-range budgeting.

The cost of the East Side Community Park is based on 8 acres of land acquired at \$700,000 per acre and park development costs of \$450,000 per acre. Land prices could vary greatly and park development costs may also vary depending on the site and the facilities included in the park's design. Again, the purpose of Table 8.1 is to provide an order of magnitude tool for long-range planning and budgeting.

For improvements at elementary schools, \$400,000 per school was allotted. This amount may be more than needed currently at the sites, but the City could potentially make this level of investment in the school sites (through improvements or maintenance) over time as part of a use agreement.

## **B. Potential Funding Sources**

The following are possible funding sources for developing, upgrading and maintaining parks and other recreational facilities in Calabasas.

*General Fund:* This is the City's primary source for operating funds. The three major sources of General Fund revenue are sales tax; the utility users tax, a tax charged on telephone, electricity, and gas utility services; and property taxes levied on property within city limits. During fiscal year 2002-03, park and recreation services received approximately \$924,000 in General Funds. In a typical year, the General Fund represents about 45 - 50% of the cost of providing park and recreation services. This figure does not include the Tennis & Swim Center, which is a separate service area.

*Capital Improvement Plan:* The City maintains a Capital Improvement Fund and Budget. While the 2002-2004 plan is a two-year plan, the City is changing to a five-year capital improvement plan to allow for better long range planning. A variety of park improvements are included within the current plan. This includes \$852,000 in park development and improvement projects, \$350,000 in trail development projects, and \$421,000 in improvements at the Tennis & Swim Center. While General Funds pay for a variety of capital improvements,

the City has been very successful at obtaining funds from grants and other sources to help pay for capital projects.

*General Obligation Bond:* These are voter-approved bonds paid through an assessment placed on real property. The money can only be used for capital improvements, not maintenance or operations. This property tax is levied for a specified period of time (usually 15-20 years). Passage requires a two-thirds majority approval by the voters. Major disadvantages of this funding option are the high approval requirement and the high interest costs.

*Revenue Bonds:* These bonds are sold and paid from the revenue produced from the operation of a facility.

*Community Development Block Grants:* Grants from the Federal Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) are available for a wide variety of projects. These funds have requirements that generally limit projects to lower income areas of the community.

*Park Impact Fees:* These are fees imposed on new development to pay for the impact on the City's park system. They can only be used for park land acquisition and/or development.

*Donations:* The donations of labor, land, or cash by service agencies, private groups or individuals are a popular way to raise small amounts of money for specific projects. Such service agencies as Kiwanis and Rotary often fund small projects, such as playground improvements. The City has been effective at obtaining donations. For example, the Cheesecake Factory recently donated new playground equipment for Grape Arbor Park, and the City has received donations of picnic tables and trash containers.

*Exchange of Property:* If the City has an excess piece of property with some development value it could be traded for a private piece of property more suitable for park use.

*Partnerships:* The City of Calabasas has been very successful at using partnerships to leverage its recreation resources. For open space and trail projects, the City has developed strong relationships with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and the Mountains Restoration Trust. The City has also developed partnerships with the Las Virgenes Unified School District and the Las Virgenes Municipal Water District, typically obtaining the use of land or facilities from these agencies.

*Joint Public/Private Partnership:* This concept is relatively new to

park and recreation agencies. The basic approach is for a public agency to enter into a working agreement with a private corporation to help fund, build, and/or operate a public facility. Generally, the three primary incentives a public agency can offer is free land to place a facility (usually a park or other piece of public land), certain tax advantages and access to the facility. While the public agency may have to give up certain responsibilities or control, it is one way of obtaining public facilities at a lower cost.

*Private Grants and Foundations:* Private grants and foundations provide money for a wide range of projects. They are sometimes difficult to find and equally difficult to secure because of the open competition. Private foundations typically have specific interest areas they fund, and grant proposals need to fall within those interest areas. Private grants and foundations often fund unique projects or ones of extreme need.

*TEA-21 and Reauthorization:* Through the years, California has received considerable revenue for trail related projects. Originally called the *Intermodal Surface Transportation Efficiency Act (ISTEA)*, this federal transportation funding source also funded a wide variety of transportation related projects, including regional trail systems. In 1998 this program was modified and renamed TEA-21 (The Transportation Efficiency Act for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century). The money can be used for both maintenance and capital construction. In 2004, TEA-21 was reauthorized and called SAFE-TEA.

*Land and Water Conservation Funds:* This grant program is funded by the National Park Service and administered by California State Parks. About \$14 million is distributed to state and local agencies for land acquisition and park development. The grant requires a 50% match.

*State Bicycle Funds:* This is revenue from state gas taxes distributed to each City for the development of bicycle lanes. This would be an appropriate funding source for developing bicycle lanes or paths.

*Statewide Park Bond (Proposition 40):* In recent years, California passed two state-wide bond measures for funding parks and open space. The most recent one, Proposition 40, allocated about \$220,000 to the City of Calabasas. The funding program has several elements including a grant based on a per capita allocation, a matching grant and several competitive grant programs.

*Other State Grant and Bond Funds:* Calabasas has been very

effective at capitalizing on state grant and bond fund opportunities. There are several grant programs, such as Murray Hayden, which Calabasas may be able to take advantage of.

*Landscape and Lighting Act:* This funding mechanism permits a public agency to assess housing units or land parcels. The assessment revenues can be used for park land acquisition, development and/or maintenance. The agency can choose to use the revenue generated on a pay as you go basis or can sell bonds in order to receive a lump sum amount. The bonds are then paid back from the annual revenue generated from the assessment. This act requires 50% voter approval.

*Enterprise Fund:* The Tennis & Swim Center (TSC) is an enterprise fund, in which the revenues it generates completely recover the costs of operations. This is an unusual arrangement for a park and recreation service, and is more typically seen for municipal water or sewer service. The TSC enterprise fund has been very effective for the City of Calabasas, because the TSC is completely self-supporting and does not use General Funds. However, it is important to note that many other park and recreation services or facilities, such as a Teen Center, could not recover enough revenue to be run as an enterprise fund.

## C. Implementation Strategy

Calabasas has been wise in its financial policies, and has built high quality facilities without ever seeking new tax measures. The City has taken advantage of opportunities to acquire additional parks and expand recreation services when they have arisen. The City has also been effective at identifying and successfully pursuing grants to assist in funding projects. As an example, the first phase of Wild Walnut Park was constructed last year with grant funding, and the City was awarded an \$8.2 million grant to help pay for a new library at its proposed Civic Center.

Community Services has been effective at obtaining donations, ranging from the recent donation of new play equipment by The Cheesecake Factory to smaller donations, such as picnic tables.

It is recommended the City continue on the same path as currently, to implement the recommended improvements. This means using general fund monies, aggressively seeking grants, seeking partnerships and donations, and capitalizing on opportunities when they arise.

It is also recommended the City set up a 501(c)(3) Parks Foundation. The purpose of this foundation would be to

provide an opportunity for citizens to make tax-free donations. Since many of the proposed facilities are the type that would attract donations (such as a skate park or teen center), it would be good to establish this Foundation as soon as possible.

## D. Project Priorities

The priorities listed below are based on community input, as well as the results of the needs assessment. This list will be revised continually.

- Implement school parks at Bay Laurel and Chaparral Elementary. This is a top priority due to the lack of facilities in this area of Calabasas. Implementation of the New Millennium school park is a priority if public access issues can be addressed, and should occur when the school is built.
- Begin seeking locations for the East Side Community Park, and secure property when a suitable site becomes available, and assure funds will be available when an opportunity arises. It is unpredictable when an appropriate site might become available. It could happen immediately, or it could take years.
- Explore the potential for acquiring additional land to the north of Gates Canyon Park.
- Continue to look for open space acquisition opportunities and act upon them when they meet City objectives.
- Determine whether a performing arts center/flexible use space and a Senior Center will be part of the Civic Center.
- Establish a second off-leash area and community gardens within three years. These are fairly low-cost improvements and will expand the services available to the community.
- Identify a Teen Center site and a skate park site. Establish a youth committee to participate in the design and possibly site selection. Implement facilities as soon as funds are available.
- Proceed with development of Gates Canyon Park when funds permit. A decision on whether aquatic facilities will be included should be made as part of the design/ planning.
- Implement Phase II of Wild Walnut Park, and build the West Side Park as per master plan when funds become available.
- Implement improvements to parks as funds and time permit.