



Public Spaces Commission

Regular Meeting **AGENDA**

(to be held both at the physical and virtual locations below)
Civic Center Annex ♦ 411 W. Clay St., Conf. RM #5 ♦ Ukiah, CA 95482
To participate or view the virtual meeting, go to the following
link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746>

January 14, 2025 - 5:30 PM

1. **ROLL CALL**

2. **INTRODUCTIONS**

3. **APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

3.a. Approval of the Minutes for the November 12, 2024, Community Forum

Recommended Action: Approve the minutes for the November 12, 2024, Community Forum.

Attachments:

1. Draft Minutes

4. **AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS**

The Public Spaces Commission (PSC) welcomes input from the audience that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the PSC. In order for everyone to be heard, please limit your comments to three (3) minutes per person and not more than (10) minutes per subject. The Brown Act regulations do not allow action to be taken on audience comments.

5. **STAFF MEMBER PRESENTATIONS / REPORTS**

5.a. Update on Observatory Park Landscaping

Recommended Action: Receive report.

Attachments: None

6. **COMMISSIONERS REPORTS**

7. **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

7.a. Creation of a New Friends of Ukiah Parks Group

Recommended Action: Consider and provide recommendations on the work of the Public Spaces Commission as the Advisory Board for a new Friends of Ukiah Parks and Open Spaces Group.

Attachments: None

8. NEW BUSINESS

- 8.a. Review of Final Draft of the 2025 City of Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis

Recommended Action: Provide comment on the 2025 Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis.

Attachments:

1. Gap Analysis DRAFT

- 8.b. Discussion of the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area's Potential as a Community Forest

Recommended Action: Approve recommended action to update the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area Management Plan and consider renaming the property.

Attachments:

1. WHWPA Management Plan F2025 DRAFT Update

- 8.c. Review, Update as Necessary, and Approve a 2025 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule

Recommended Action: Recommend the City Council approve the 2025 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule.

Attachments:

1. DRAFT 2025 PSC Outreach Plan
2. 2025 Schedule DRAFT

9. ADJOURNMENT

Please be advised that the City needs to be notified 72 hours in advance of a meeting if any specific accommodations or interpreter services are needed in order for you to attend. The City complies with ADA requirements and will attempt to reasonably accommodate individuals with disabilities upon request. Materials related to an item on this Agenda submitted to the Public Spaces Commission after distribution of the agenda packet are available for public inspection at the main entrance of the City of Ukiah Annex, located at 411 W. Clay St., Ukiah, CA 95482, not less than 72 hours prior to the meeting set forth on this agenda.



Public Spaces Commission
Community Forum
MINUTES

Ukiah Valley Conference Center ♦ 200 S. School St. ♦ Ukiah, CA 95482

Virtual Meeting Link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746>

November 12, 2024 - 5:30 PM

1. ROLL CALL

Public Spaces Commission met at a Community Forum on November 12, 2024, having been legally noticed on November 8, 2024. The meeting was held virtually at the following link: <https://us06web.zoom.us/j/81764322746> and in person at the Ukiah Valley Conference Center at 200 S. School St., Ukiah, CA 95482. Commissioner Babbini called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. **Commissioners Present:** Elora Babbini, Vicki Bitonti-Brown, Steven Ratley, and Joe Scriven. **Commissioners Absent by Prearrangement:** Megan Parker. **Staff Present:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director and Araceli Sandoval, Community Services Administrative Assistant.

2. INTRODUCTIONS

3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES

a. Approval of the Minutes for the September 10, 2024, Community Forum.

*Scriven/Ratley to approve the Minutes of September 10, 2024, a Community Forum, as submitted. Motion **carried** by the following roll call vote: AYES: Babbini, Ratley, Bitonti-Brown, and Scriven. NOES: None. ABSENT: Parker. ABSTAIN: None.*

4. AUDIENCE COMMENTS ON NON-AGENDA ITEMS

The Public Spaces Commission (PSC) welcomes input from the audience that is within the subject matter jurisdiction of the PSC. In order for everyone to be heard, please limit your comments to three (3) minutes per person and not more the (10) minutes per subject. The Brown Act regulations do not allow action to be taken on audience comments.

Commission Consensus to hear item 7a out of order.

5. COMMISSIONERS REPORTS

6. UNFINISHED BUSINESS

a. Review and Comment on the 2024 Park Gaps Analysis.

Presenter: Neil Davis, Community Services Director.

7. NEW BUSINESS

a. Creation of a Friends of Ukiah Parks Group with the Public Spaces Commission Serving as the Board of Directors.

Presenter: Neil Davis, Community Services Director.

Public Comment: Martin Bradley.

Scriven/Ratley to approve Staff to 1) Discontinue the MOU between the North Coast opportunities

sponsored Friends of Observatory Park group, and 2) create a Friends of Ukiah Parks group with the Public Spaces Commission Acting as the Group's Board of Directors. Motion **carried** by the following roll call vote: AYES: Babbini, Ratley, Bitonti-Brown, and Scriven. NOES: None. ABSENT: Parker. ABSTAIN: None.

b. Consideration of a Trial Period of Extended Park Hours at Oak Manor Park.

Presenter: Neil Davis, Community Services Director.

*Babbini/Ratley to approve a ninety-day pilot program of extended hours at Oak Manor Park with an 8pm shut-off time. Motion **carried** by the following roll call vote: AYES: Babbini, Ratley, Bitonti-Brown, and Scriven. NOES: None. ABSENT: Parker. ABSTAIN: None.*

8. STAFF MEMBER PRESENTATIONS/REPORTS

- Observatory Park Cyclone Fence Removal Update and Native Plant Nursery Update – Neil Davis, Community Services Director.

9. ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

Araceli Sandoval, Public Spaces Commission Clerk

AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT



SUBJECT: Creation of a New Friends of Ukiah Parks Group

DEPARTMENT: Community Services **PREPARED BY:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

None

Summary: Consider and provide recommendations on the work of the Public Spaces Commission as the Advisory Board for a new Friends of Ukiah Parks and Open Spaces Group.

Background: At the November 2024 PSC meeting it was decided by unanimous vote to dissolve the Friends of the Observatory Park group and the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with North Coast Opportunities (NCO) who acted as a fiscal sponsor for the group. In its place a Friends of Ukiah Parks and Open Spaces group will be formed. The City has approved the hiring of a part time volunteer coordinator who is expected to play a key role in the operations of the Friends group.

Discussion: Staff provided NCO verbal notification of the pending dissolution of the group in December but have not yet provided written notification. NCO is eager to have the remaining funds transferred out of their account as it has been inactive for years. Staff are open to suggestions for names of the group.

Recommended Action: Consider and provide recommendations on the work of the Public Spaces Commission as the Advisory Board for a new Friends of Ukiah Parks and Open Spaces Group.

AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT



SUBJECT: Review of Final Draft of the 2025 City of Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis

DEPARTMENT: Community Services **PREPARED BY:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. Gap Analysis DRAFT

Summary: Commissioners are provided with a draft of the Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis for comment.

Background: The City of Ukiah’s 2040 General Plan’s section 5.10 (Implementation Programs; page 5-16) identifies the need for a Parks Gap Analysis. Section 5.10 B (Parks Gap Analysis) states, “The City shall prepare a parks gap analysis identifying areas of the city underserved by parks and recreation facilities access. The analysis shall, at a minimum, establish equitable access standards, including the minimum distance between parks, every residence, and potential funding mechanisms.” The complete 2040 General Plan can be found at chrome-extension://efaidnbmninnibpcajpcgclcfndmkaj/https://cityofukiah.com/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Ukiah-2040-General-Plan_reduced.pdf

Staff have presented on this subject to the PSC at the May 14, 2024, and July 9, 2024, meetings. At the November 2024 meeting Jen Dalton of Kitchen Table Consulting facilitated the PSC in providing input to the analysis. An initial draft Gap Analysis document is now ready for comment (Attachment 1).

Discussion: Executive Summary of the 2025 Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis:

Ukiah is located at the base of the Ukiah Valley and approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. The natural landscape includes forested hillsides, the Russian River, and valley flatlands. With both City of Ukiah and County administrative offices within the city, Ukiah boasts many public sector employment opportunities, particularly in education and social services. While Mendocino County collectively is rural in nature, the City of Ukiah is an urban center. Ukiah is recognized as a micropolitan area core with the primary commute flow within the “large urban cluster.” A secondary commute flow leaves Ukiah to access a larger urban area. However, most of the commute and service flow from around the Ukiah Valley is to the City of Ukiah. While the median household income in Ukiah is modest compared to California averages, there are wide swaths of the community that are rated as “Disadvantaged” or ‘Severely Disadvantaged.’

The City of Ukiah’s boundaries have remained essentially unchanged for decades. Growth adjacent but outside City limits has created a population concentration this report refers to as the Greater Ukiah Node that extends beyond the City limits. For many local people everything within this node is considered “Ukiah.” Outside the Greater Ukiah Node an additional five population centers, or “nodes,” are within short driving distance and have many of the characteristics and act as suburbs to the micropolitan Greater Ukiah Node. For this report the nodes have been designated as Talmage/Nob Hill, Vichy Springs, El Dorado/Deerwood, Eastside Calpella/Lake Mendocino, and Calpella. The populations of these nodes range from 312 to 1,912.

The Local Area Formation Commission has mapped the Sphere of Influence and Area of Interest for the Ukiah Valley and this report evaluated park and recreational opportunities between and among these zones.

The City of Ukiah has over twenty designated parks. This report establishes a goal of providing a park within a half mile of all residents. While all parks have benefits, some parks such as pocket parks and specialty parks lack wide appeal or use, and therefore will not meet the needs of the general public. The Greater Ukiah Node includes nine parks that are large enough and include a sufficient variety of features to meet the park needs of all who live within a half mile. These nine parks are well distributed and ensure that the vast majority of residents living inside the city limits are within a half mile of a significant park. A notable exception is the Wagenseller neighborhood.

Outside the City limits but within the Greater Ukiah Node to both the north and south of the city limits are areas underserved by parks. A new park on the north side of the node and one large and two small parks are likely needed to meet the needs of those residents.

Outside the Greater Ukiah Node there are few park and recreation opportunities. However, total population and population densities in these areas are too low to provide an economy of scale to allow for park and recreation opportunities. Citizens who opt to live in sparsely populated areas are prioritizing dark skies, low crime rates, inexpensive real estate, and light traffic over public services. Attempting to provide urban services to these areas is not financially feasible.

On the other hand, the City's recreation department already provides services to residents living within the Area of Interest and beyond with many of these residents traveling to Ukiah to utilize both parks and recreation opportunities.

Community input for this report included bilingual online and in-person questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and a series of facilitated focus groups. The focus groups included stakeholders representing Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center, business community members, a real estate group, climate action and healthy communities, LatinX, County of Mendocino employees, competitive sports enthusiasts, Ukiah Unified School District, and elected officials. The same focus group questions were presented to the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI).

Community engagement was designed to elicit information in line with the reports nine designated park goals. The goals address Quantity, Quality and Diversity of features, Accessibility, Commitment, Community and Social Capital, Climate Readiness, Native American Co-Stewardship, Homelessness, and Gentrification.

On-site staff assessments of the parks concurred with community input in determining the parks to be well maintained and in overall good shape. The one exception was the County managed Low Gap Park. While residents desire a greater diversity of park features, they also expressed overall satisfaction with existing park diversity of features. Desirable park features that are not represented in City parks include dog parks, pickleball, courts, skating venues, neighborhood basketball courts, river access, shade, and cooling or misting stations.

The City of Ukiah's budget for parks is adequate to maintain current facilities but expanding or improving the system of parks will require additional funds. The recreation team is doing more than other similar size municipalities and already serves the entire Area of Interest.

While homelessness is an issue throughout the city, it is not created or solved with parks. Nevertheless, the impact of homelessness on parks is felt by the community and feelings of insecurity and unsanitariness decrease the use and enjoyment of parks. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the efforts of the City to keep parks clean and safe while also acknowledging the ongoing challenge and negative impact of the issue. Gentrification can become an issue when parks in low-income areas are improved. Coordination and planning between the Community Services and Community Development departments can help address the issue of gentrification before it becomes an issue.

Climate change will have a disproportionately large impact on cities and Ukiah will be no exception. Parks provide an opportunity to help mitigate climate change and help residents adapt to the impacts of climate

change. Existing parks will need to be adapted as possible and new parks should be designed to maximize permeable surfaces, provide flood control elements, sequester carbon with trees and plants, provide nature-based elements to help children develop an ecological awareness, and to provide a refuge from heat. Open spaces should be managed to balance the need for maximizing carbon sequestration while being fire resilient.

A continuous improvement process should be implemented with a strong commitment to community engagement. The National Park and Recreation Association survey should be completed periodically to track progress and compare levels of service to similar sized municipalities. Community engagement should include efforts to assure parks and recreation services are diverse, equitable, and inclusive and should aim for Native American co-stewardship as possible.

Should the City annex all or part of the Sphere of Influence prior to 2040 there will be both challenge and opportunity. Addressing the substantial deferred maintenance at Low Gap Park, updating the Municipal Pool, and creating new parks to serve residents on the north and south end of the Greater Ukiah node will be expensive. However, the City's large park staff is much better equipped to address the issues at Low Gap Park than is the minimally staffed County of Mendocino. As the City's recreation team is already providing services to the entire Area of Interest, additional staff and resources would not be needed. Further, the City's Community Services team and grant writers from the Community Development team will be available to seek grant funding and explore opportunities for fundraising and the possibility of a parks district.

Staff seek comment and suggestions for edits on this draft analysis.

Recommended Action: Provide comment on the 2025 Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis.



City of Ukiah Park Gap Analysis 2025

**Adopted Some Date,
2025**

2025

City of Ukiah Park Gap Analysis



Parks Gap Analysis 2025

A Commitment of the Public Facilities, Services, and Infrastructure Element of the 2040 General Plan

5.10 Implementation Programs; B. Parks Gap Analysis

“The City shall prepare a parks gap analysis identifying areas of the city underserved by parks and recreation facilities access. The analysis shall, at a minimum, establish equitable access standards, including the minimum distance between parks every residence, and potential funding mechanisms.”

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Introduction

The City of Ukiah is committed to fostering a healthy and vibrant Ukiah Valley. The City Council’s Strategic plan speaks to “enhancing our neighborhoods,” and “developing quality infrastructure.” The City’s 2040 General plan and the Ukiah Valley Area Plan (2011) identify the importance of parks, recreational facilities and trails for residents and visitors, while the City’s Climate Initiatives speak to maintaining wild lands and protecting parks and recreation. Further, the City’s Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan emphasizes the need for connectivity and the Equity Action Plan asserts the City’s commitment to diversity and equity. All these diverse plans converge in support of a built environment that relies on parks and trails to achieve the overarching goal of creating a healthy and vibrant quality of life for all who live in and visit the City of Ukiah.

The City’s 2040 General Plan specifically sets an action step of performing a parks gap analysis to help the City achieve these goals. City of Ukiah staff began the analysis in the Spring of 2024 with an extensive literature review. The literature review helped inform the creation of draft level of service measures, goals, and processes for conducting the analysis.

It is hoped this analysis can assist in identifying necessary improvements to existing infrastructure as well as places where new parks may be required, while assessing the City’s ability to provide equitable park and recreation services to the City’s present and future residents within existing City limits and beyond to potential areas of annexation.

Executive Summary

Ukiah is located at the base of the Ukiah valley and approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. The natural landscape includes forested hillsides, the Russian river, and valley flatlands. With both City of Ukiah and County administrative offices within the city, Ukiah boasts many public sector employment opportunities, particularly in education and social services. While Mendocino County collectively is rural in nature, the City of Ukiah is an urban center. Ukiah is recognized as a *micropolitan* area core with the primary commute flow within the “large urban cluster.” A secondary commute flow leaves Ukiah to access a larger urban area. However, most of the commute and service flow from around the Ukiah Valley is to the City of Ukiah. While the median household income in Ukiah is modest compared to California averages, there are wide swaths of the community that are rated as “Disadvantaged” or “Severely Disadvantaged.”

The City of Ukiah’s boundaries have remained essentially unchanged for decades. Growth adjacent but outside City limits has created a population concentration this report refers to as the *Greater Ukiah Node* that extends beyond the City limits. For many local people everything within this node is considered “Ukiah.” Outside the Greater Ukiah Node an additional five population centers, or “nodes,” are within short driving distance and have many of the characteristics and act as suburbs to the micropolitan Greater Ukiah Node. For this report the nodes have been designated as Talmage/Nob Hill, Vichy Springs, Eldorado/Deerwood, Eastside Calpella/Lake Mendocino, and Calpella. The populations of these nodes range from 312 to 1,912.

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Outside the City limits but within the Greater Ukiah Node to both the north and south of the city limits are areas underserved by parks. A new park on the north side of the node and one large and two small parks are likely needed to meet the needs of those residents.

Outside the Greater Ukiah Node there are few park and recreation opportunities. However, total population and population densities in these areas are too low to provide an economy of scale to allow for park and recreation opportunities. Citizens who opt to live in sparsely populated areas are prioritizing dark skies, low crime rates, inexpensive real estate, and light traffic over public services. Attempting to provide urban services to these areas is not financially feasible.

On the other hand, the City's recreation department already provides services to residents living within the Area of Interest and beyond with many of these residents traveling to Ukiah to utilize both parks and recreation opportunities.

Community input for this report included bilingual online and in-person questionnaires, one-on-one interviews, and a series of facilitated focus groups. The focus groups included stakeholders representing Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center, business community members, a real estate group, climate action and healthy communities, LatinX, County of Mendocino employees, competitive sports enthusiasts, Ukiah Unified School District, and elected officials. The same focus group questions were presented to the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI).

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The City of Ukiah's budget for parks is adequate to maintain current facilities but expanding or improving the system of parks will require additional funds. The recreation team is doing more than other similar size municipalities and already serves the entire Area of Interest.

While homelessness is an issue throughout the city, it is not created or solved with parks. Nevertheless, the impact of homelessness on parks is felt by the community and feelings of insecurity and unsanitariness decrease the use and enjoyment of parks. Most respondents expressed satisfaction with the efforts of the City to keep parks clean and safe while also acknowledging the ongoing challenge and negative impact of the issue. *Gentrification* can become an issue when parks in low-income areas are improved. Coordination and planning between the Community Services and Community Development departments can help address the issue of gentrification before it becomes an issue.

Climate change will have a disproportionately large impact on cities and Ukiah will be no exception. Parks provide an opportunity to help mitigate climate change and help residents adapt to the impacts of climate change. Existing parks will need to be adapted as possible and new parks should be designed to maximize permeable surfaces, provide flood control elements, sequester carbon with trees and plants, provide nature-based elements to help children develop an ecological awareness, and to provide a refuge from heat. Open spaces should be managed to balance the need for maximizing carbon sequestration while being fire resilient.

A continuous improvement process should be implemented with a strong commitment to community engagement. The National Park and Recreation Association survey should be completed periodically to track progress and compare levels of service to similar sized municipalities. Community engagement should include efforts to assure parks and recreation services are diverse, equitable, and inclusive and should aim for Native American co-stewardship as possible.

Should the City annex all or part of the Sphere of Influence prior to 2040 there will be both challenge and opportunity. Addressing the substantial deferred maintenance at Low Gap Park, updating the Municipal Pool, and creating new parks to serve residents on the north and south end of the Greater Ukiah node will be expensive. However, the City's large park staff is much better equipped to address the issues at Low Gap Park than is the minimally staffed County of Mendocino. As the City's recreation team is already providing services to the entire Area of Interest, additional staff and resources would not be needed. Further, the City's Community Services team and grant writers from the Community Development team will be available to seek grant funding and explore opportunities for fundraising and the possibility of a parks district.

Glossary of Terms

Accessibility – Is the measure of the number of residents who live within a half mile of a park combined with the degree to which parks are connected to allow for free movement between parks, facilities, and neighborhoods, particularly for non-motorized transportation.

Area of Interest - An Area of Interest is a geographic area beyond the sphere of influence in which land use decisions or other governmental actions of one local agency (the "Acting Agency") impact directly or indirectly upon another local agency (the "Interested Agency"). For example, approval of a housing project developed to urban densities on septic tanks outside the city limits of a city and its sphere of influence may result in the city being forced subsequently to extend sewer services to the area to deal with septic failures and improve city roads that provide access to the development. The city in such a situation would be the Interested Agency with appropriate reason to request special consideration from the Acting Agency in considering projects adjacent to the city.

Connectivity - the extent to which a landscape facilitates or impedes the movement of living things between patches.

Commitment - Is a measure of resources that are devoted to building and maintaining a parks system.

Climate Readiness - Targeted action to preserve and improve our region's economy, infrastructure, and resources while safeguarding our community members' health, safety, and quality of life in the face of climate change.

First Tier Facility/Park – A first tier facility or park is open all day every day and free to the public.

Feature(s) – A feature is a park amenity such as a playground, ball court or field, trail, BBQ area or picnic tables, shade structure, etc.

Gentrification - the process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, leading to the displacement of current inhabitants in the process.

Level of Service - the measure of how we are performing per area of service (Park or Recreation)

Micropolitan - a population area that includes a city with 10,000 to 50,000 residents and its surrounding communities such as Ukiah.

Open Space - An undeveloped or minimally developed large area conserved for habitat and general conservation value.

Park – A park is outdoors, is a named destination, is publicly accessible and advertised, encourages informal public use, and encourages socializing, play or exercise, or an opportunity to enjoy nature.

Pocket Park - Very small park, may have a bench.

Neighborhood Park – Often includes a playground and park area generally for non-organized activities. May include a restroom.

Community Park - Designed for organized activity with users traveling from some distance.

Includes parking, sports fields and restrooms.

Regional Park - Larger park which may be more isolated from population nodes. May be limited to trails and outdoor recreation, but may have additional facilities.

Special Use Park - Specialized use recreational areas, usually single use, such as dog parks and skate parks that do not fit another category.

Linear Park - A park along a travel corridor, generally narrow and long.

School “Park” - School-owned facilities with limited availability. The City of Ukiah has a Facility Use Agreement that allows for bilateral shared use of facilities between the City and Ukiah Unified School District (UUSD). School recreation areas act as a second-tier parks during non - school hours. Their primary purpose is student education. Recreation that does not interfere with the education mandate is allowed on school grounds.

Park Pressure - Park pressure analyses park size in relation to population density and quantifies how population density affects parks.

Population Nodes - Outside the City limits, but within the Sphere of influence and the Area of Interest there are six areas of population concentration. These unnamed population concentrations will be referred to as population “nodes” for this report.

Railbank - a voluntary agreement between a railroad company and a trail sponsor to use an out-of-service rail corridor as a trail. The goal is to preserve the corridor for possible future rail use while allowing for alternative trail use in the meantime.

Recreation Facility – A facility (as opposed to a “feature”) provides an *indoors location*, is a named destination, is publicly accessible and advertised, encourages informal public use, and encourages socializing, play or exercise, or an opportunity to learn about nature. The equivalent of a park, but indoors.

Rural - A countryside area with a low population density and lots of open space.

Special District - A special district is a local government that provides specific services to a community within defined boundaries. Special districts are separate from cities, counties, and school districts. They are autonomous entities but are overseen by the state government. Special districts are accountable to the voters or landowners they serve.

Suburban - A place with a mix of residential and commercial development located on the outskirts of a city with most residents traveling to a city to shop and work.

Second Tier Recreational Facility or Park – A second tier recreational facility or park is open for limited hours or fee based thereby making it inaccessible to a percentage of the public.

Social Capital - the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively.

Sphere of Influence - The Mendocino County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) establishes the Sphere of Influence (SOI), which defines the probable 20-year growth physical boundary and service area of a local agency. An SOI typically includes both incorporated and unincorporated areas within which the City will have primary responsibility for the provision of public facilities and services. The City's Sphere of Influence was most recently updated in 2022.

Urban - A city or town with a high population density and many buildings.

The Ukiah Valley Demographics History and Character

Ukiah is located at the base of the Ukiah valley and approximately 100 miles north of San Francisco. The natural landscape includes forested hillsides, the Russian river, and valley flatlands. The Pomo lived in much of what is now Mendocino County and primarily lived in small groups which relied on hunting, fishing, and foraging. In 1859, Ukiah was designated the seat of Mendocino County and was incorporated in 1876. The name “Ukiah” draws from the history of the Pomo people as Ukiah is an anglicized version of the Pomo word yokaya, meaning “deep valley.”

Ukiah’s prime soils and climate supported farming and agricultural opportunities, which became a dominant economic driver during the early settlement period of the city. The dominant crop grown during this time was hops. The City experienced rapid growth post 1920, especially after World War II. The population growth coincided with the growth of the logging industry in California’s northern coasts. This further increased growth in the region and created additional employment opportunities.

In 2020, Ukiah is still the county seat and largest city in Mendocino County with approximately 16,296 residents. With both City of Ukiah and County administrative offices within the city, Ukiah boasts many public sector employment opportunities, particularly in education, government, and social services. Outside the public sector, the city is known for strong retail and service industries and a bustling tourism industry catering to travelers and adventurers looking to explore the Valley.

Regional Setting

The Ukiah Valley is approximately nine miles long, running north to south, comprising more than 40,000 acres along U.S. Route 101. The Russian River follows the valley, winding through agricultural lands just outside of Ukiah to the east. The valley is approximately 630 feet in elevation, with the hills of the Mendocino and Mayacamas ranges that flank the valley reaching up to 3,000 feet in elevation. Located 45 miles north of Healdsburg and 155 miles south of Eureka, the City of Ukiah spans more than 3,000 acres (4.6 square miles). It functions as a center for commerce, recreation, medical and social services, and cultural events. The nearest major city to Ukiah is Santa Rosa, a city of 175,000, which is located approximately 60 miles to the south. Larger urban centers including San Francisco and Sacramento are approximately 100 miles to the south and southeast. Ukiah’s relative isolation from major population centers increases its importance as a regional center. Closer to Ukiah, there are several small unincorporated communities in the Ukiah Valley, as well as in the neighboring Redwood Valley to the north.

While Mendocino County collectively is rural in nature, the City of Ukiah is an urban center. The USDA Rural-Urban Commuting Area Code lists Ukiah as a micropolitan area core with the primary commute flow within the “large urban cluster.” A secondary commute flow leaves Ukiah to access a larger urban area. However, most of the commute and service flow from around the Ukiah Valley is to the City of Ukiah.

Economic Demographics:

The Ukiah Valley economy is primarily driven by agriculture, government services, retail, and tourism. The surrounding region is renowned for its wine production, particularly organic vineyards, and other forms of sustainable agriculture, including the cultivation of cannabis, which has

become increasingly regulated and economically significant. Small businesses and local services dominate the economy, with healthcare, education, and government being major employers. The city has also seen growing interest in sustainable practices and green technology industries. While the median household income in Ukiah is modest compared to California averages, there are wide swaths of the community that are rated as “Disadvantaged” or ‘Severely Disadvantaged” by the *California State Parks Statewide Parks Program Community FactFinder* ([https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities/.](https://www.parksforcalifornia.org/communities/)) These disparities are reflected in the distribution and quality of regional parks and recreational opportunities.

Cultural Demographics:

Culturally, Ukiah reflects a mix of influences from its Native American roots, Hispanic heritage, and the area's countercultural movements. The city is known for embracing sustainable living, environmentalism, and progressive values. It's also home to a vibrant arts scene, with local artists, musicians, and cultural festivals playing a significant role in the community. The nearby City of Ten Thousand Buddhas, one of the largest Buddhist communities in the Western Hemisphere, adds to the city's diverse cultural fabric, fostering interfaith understanding and cultural exchange.

Ethnic Demographics:

Ukiah's population is diverse, with a significant Hispanic/Latino community, comprising 35-40% of the population. This reflects broader demographic trends in California, especially in agricultural regions. The city is also home to Native American communities, particularly those from the Pomo tribe, who have a longstanding historical connection to the area. Additionally, Ukiah has a small but growing Asian population, thanks in part to the presence of the Buddhist community. The remainder of the population is primarily White, with smaller percentages of African Americans and other ethnic groups.

Ukiah Parks Gap Analysis Planning Boundaries

This Gap Analysis will compare Level of Service between various areas of the Ukiah Valley (Map 1). The outer limits of the study are outlined by the Local Area Formation Commission's (LAFCo) map of the City of Ukiah's Area of Interest. The level of service in this area will be compared to the Sphere of Influence, the City limits, and a half dozen population nodes. The population nodes were identified by City staff for this report. All other areas are consistent with the City of Ukiah's General Plan 2040 and LAFCo documents.

City Limits

The boundary that includes all land that has been incorporated into a city. Ukiah has land use authority over all land within its city limits. Ukiah encompasses approximately 3,071 acres.

Sphere of Influence

The Mendocino County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCo) establishes the Sphere of Influence (SOI), which defines the probable 20-year growth physical boundary and service area of a local agency. An SOI typically includes both incorporated and unincorporated areas within which the City will have primary responsibility for the provision of public facilities and services. The City's Sphere of Influence was most recently updated in 2022.

Area of Interest

An Area of Interest is a geographic area beyond the sphere of influence in which land use decisions or other governmental actions of one local agency (the "Acting Agency") impact directly or indirectly upon another local agency (the "Interested Agency"). For example, approval of a housing project developed to urban densities on septic tanks outside the city limits of a city and its sphere of influence may result in the city being forced subsequently to extend sewer services to the area to deal with septic failures and improve city roads that provide access to the development. The city in such a situation would be the Interested Agency with appropriate reason to request special consideration from the Acting Agency in considering projects adjacent to the city.

Population Nodes

Outside the City limits, but within the Sphere of influence and the Area of Interest there are six areas of population concentration (Map 2). These unnamed population concentrations will be referred to as population "nodes" for this report. The first node ("Greater Ukiah") includes the City of Ukiah and an area to the north and south with existing contiguous areas of housing and associated development similar to the concentration inside the City limits. The Greater Ukiah Area node excludes undeveloped areas inside the City limits, and includes areas of population concentration outside the City Limits. This node is believed to represent what the average person thinks of as "Ukiah" irrespective of the defined City limits. The Greater Ukiah Node therefore includes fewer acres and more population than is included in the existing City limits and has nearly double the population density. This is the area of population that is actually served by Parks and Recreation. For example, the Ukiah Municipal Airport and wastewater treatment center do not use Park and Recreation services so are not included in calculations.

The other five identified population nodes are seen in Map 2 and include 1) Talmage/Nob Hill, 2) Vichy Springs, 3) El Dorado / Deerwood, 4) Eastside Calpella /Lake Mendocino, and 5) Calpella.

The Greater Ukiah node is, and for the foreseeable future, will be the urban center of the Ukiah Valley. The other five nodes are effectively suburbs of Ukiah. Were the City to annex the entire Area of Interest, the city would include within its City limits an urban center, five suburbs, and surrounding rural areas. The ability for the City to provide park and recreation needs will differ for these different settings. Urban, suburban, and rural areas will each provide their own unique benefits to residents, but park and recreation opportunities will be greater in the urban population center.

Level of Service Measures

The “level of service” is the measure of how we are performing per area of service. These measures were identified based on a literature review and rely heavily on National Recreation and Park Association documents^{10,18,25}. These measures are supported by the American Planning Association’s *PAS MEMO “Alternatives for Determining Parks and Recreation Level of Service”*³ Additional measures were added based on PolicyLink’s document “*Advancing Park Equity in California*”¹⁴, and *Tools for Equitable Park Planning Design: Digital Workflows to Enhance Park Access and Quality*²⁹.

For this analysis levels of service include Quantity of Parks, Quality & Diversity of Parks, Accessibility, Commitment, Community and Social Capital, Climate Readiness, Native American Co-Stewardship, Addressing Homelessness, and Gentrification.

Quantity of Parks

The first measure relates to the quantity of Parks. For this report, quantity of parks is measured as “Acres of Parkland per 1000 residents,” “Total Parks per 1000”, and “Facilities per 1000 residents.” Assuring adequate park space requires more than simply providing a high total acreage. The parks must be distributed equitable while providing a diversity of park types and experiences.

“Although increasing parkland space is encouraged, there are situations where available land is sparse and the parks that are available may be unevenly distributed, resulting in areas where park space is unavailable within a convenient travel distance. Park access and quality is not a quick or easy matter to resolve as it requires intimate understanding of a park system, its users, the operational and programmatic elements, and various other factors and needs which may result in unbalanced access and quality. One universal guideline is to provide equal access, park amenities, and quality of experience throughout a community as effectively as possible, while allowing parks to serve as a green infrastructure buffer for climate change where applicable.”

*Tools for Equitable Park Planning and Design: Digital Workflows to Enhance Park Access and Quality*²⁸

Providing an adequate quantity of parks is key to maintaining a comfortable park pressure (avoiding crowding). Park pressure increases with the number of users per acre. When parks become too crowded, they are no longer enjoyable for the user and some amenities may be effectively rendered unavailable. An adequate quantity of parks is necessary to assure the total acreage is distributed equitably while also providing a diversity of park experiences. Facilities provide indoor experiences. In Ukiah’s hot climate, exacerbated by climate change, having adequate facilities is essential. This was confirmed in this report’s focus groups with participants stating they need more indoor opportunities during inclement weather. Observational surveys of City of Ukiah’s parks suggest existing parks are not currently over pressured.

Quality and Diversity of Parks

Quality of parks is a more subjective measure and was assessed with field visits and evaluations by City of Ukiah Community Services staff. Additionally, through online surveys and focus groups the community was asked to discuss their impressions of park quality. Ideally a parks system will be diverse with various sizes, features, and intents. The largest parks in this system (Low Gap Park and Riverside Park) are predominantly open space providing hiking and nature experiences. The smallest parks also have value.

Accessibility

The primary measure of Accessibility is the number of residents who live within a half mile of a park. “A growing number of studies have found that people who live in close proximity to parks or other green spaces experience lower levels of stress and are less likely to experience depression and other mental health problems.”¹³

“Nationwide nearly one in three people do not have a park or natural area within 10 minutes of their home.”⁹

However, accessibility also requires connectivity. Parks that are connected allow for free movement between parks, facilities, and neighborhoods particularly for non-motorized transportation. These connections should be treated as linear parks and when possible, should provide landscaping, shade, and places to rest.

Commitment

Commitment is a measure of resources that are devoted to building and maintaining a parks system. It has been said, “if you want to know an organization’s priorities, don’t look at their stated goals, look at their budget.” Providing quality park and recreation resources to the community require a commitment to funding the efforts. Measuring commitment can be done by evaluating 1) the number of full-time equivalent staff provided per capita, and 2) the operating expenditure per capita. These figures can be used as a comparison to other communities as well as to track the trend of funding over time.

Community and Social Capital

Community and Social Capital are seen in the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. Community Capital is evidenced by mutually respectful relationships, connectedness and trustworthiness among people. Often volunteerism, voting rates, and emergency response are seen as evidence of healthy social capital in a community. Further, the 2011 Ukiah Valley Area Plan (UVAP) goal PR-1 references the need for “recreation, cultural resources, and on-going education” and PR-3 references the need to “promote a greater sense of community through events, gathering places, and shared facilities.” These UVAP goals have been included as goals 5.1 and 5.2 in this study.

This subjective measure was addressed via survey and focus group questions. The survey asked respondents to agree or disagree with the two following questions:

- 1) “I feel like Ukiah Valley Parks provide a sense of place and history.”
- 2) “I feel like parks in the Ukiah Valley are safe enough for me to comfortably use.”

Focus groups were asked “Do you think our parks are promoting a sense of community?” and “How could they do that better?”

Climate Readiness

The City of Ukiah’s 2040 General plan addresses climate change in the Environment and Sustainability Element and the Safety Element. Safety Element SAF – 2 is “to create a more resilient community that is prepared for, responsive to, and recoverable from hazards created or made worse by climate change.” Climate change induced fire, flooding, and heat island effects will have the greatest impact on cities and population centers. City parks can provide both a refuge and a buffer to these impacts. A Trust for Public Land Study of over 14,000 cities found that areas of cities and towns “within a 10-minute walk of a park are as much as 6 degrees cooler than areas beyond that range.”⁹

“Climate change is bearing down on the world faster than scientists predicted, making life in cities especially challenging. Densely built environments, dominated by concrete and pavement, absorb and hold heat longer than natural landscapes. They are also more prone to flooding as extreme precipitation dumps so-called rain bombs on urban areas that become inundated with dangerous—even lethal—amounts of stormwater”⁹

Planting trees is an obvious intervention, but parks can also help as a defensible space in the slowing of wildfire spread and can provide swales and ponds to help absorb storm water runoff. The inclusion of splash pads, shade, and keeping parks open during the cooler evening can create areas of refuge during extreme heat.

Providing bike racks, and bus stops at parks can help reduce the city’s carbon footprint, while planting trees and providing shade structures, misting stations, and splash pads will help climate adaptation.

Native American Co-Stewardship

The 2011 Ukiah Valley Area Plan’s (UVAP) section 10 relates to Historical and Archeological Preservation. This analysis will adopt the UVAP goal “to protect Native American cultural and archeological resources.” However, as the Native American community embodies a living culture represented by sovereign nations, simply protecting artifacts and historic sites is only the first step. Indigenous voices are increasingly acknowledged as a vital source of time-tested land management practices. Further, current cultural needs of Native American park users need to be considered in parks and recreation planning.

Addressing Homelessness and Gentrification

Homelessness and gentrification both provide challenges related to income inequality and both need to be addressed to assure the City of Ukiah maintains safe, healthy, and equitable parks. While parks neither create nor cure homelessness, the presence of the homeless can present both real and perceived health, safety, and security concerns. Tracking the presence and effects of the homeless in parks will assist in finding the best ways to mitigate impacts.

Gentrification is the process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, typically displacing current inhabitants in the process. The City of Ukiah has not to date seen neighborhood improvements to cause gentrification. However, the risk of gentrification is real, particularly on the south end of the Greater Ukiah node should new parks be built.

Goals

Park services, like all other City services, should be subject to some kind of continuous improvement process. Ideally a circular process should be initiated that involves planning, design, implementation, and evaluation; evaluation then leads to a new planning phase and renews the cycle. Setting goals is a critically important part of this continuous improvement process. These goals provide a target to aim for, and a benchmark to measure improvement. In developing goals for this report, a review of the City of Ukiah's 2040 general plan, the Ukiah Valley Area Plan (2011), and a robust literature review led to the formation of nine broad goals for Ukiah Parks. These nine goals are then broken down into thirty-two total sub-goals.

The Goals identified in this plan align with the plan's Levels of Service. Additionally, both the public survey and the focus group questions were written to reflect these common themes.

The goals assess the quantity and quality of parks as well as accessibility. In this context "accessibility" is not an ADA term but the very specific measure of population within a half mile of the park. "Commitment" is a measure of resources that are devoted to building and maintaining a parks system. Goal five, "Community and Social Capital," evaluates if the parks are addressing the community's need for recreation, cultural resources, and on-going education. Climate readiness is addressed with goal six and goal seven addresses Native American Co-stewardship. Finally, goal eight and nine assess the concerns of homelessness and gentrification.

Goals (coordinated with Level of Service Measures)

1 Quantity

- 1.1 Assure a minimum of 3 acres of parks per 1000 residents (CA Parks and Rec recommendation) in all areas with a population density greater than 5 people per acre.
- 1.2 Evaluate "park pressure" through periodic user experience surveys and location analytics platforms.

2 Quality and Diversity of Features

- 2.1 Maintain and enhance the area's natural resources by balancing protection, conservation, replenishment, and sustainable use. (UVAP Goal 9OC-1)
- 2.2 Conserve Open Space, hillsides, and indigenous habitats for the enjoyment of future generations. (UVAP Goal 9OC-2)
- 2.3 Preserve historical buildings and spaces that create a sense of place. (UVAP Goal 10 HA-1)
- 2.4 Work with other entities to ensure there are a variety of parks, recreational facilities, and points of river access. (UVAP Goal PR-2)

3 Accessibility

- 3.1 Assure there is a first-tier park within a half mile of all residents living inside an area with a population node greater than one thousand residents with a density greater than 5 residents per acre.
- 3.2 Support the development and access to second tier recreational opportunities in identified population nodes.

- 3.3 Create connections between parks, facilities and neighborhoods to maximize ease of access, encourage neighbor interactions, and encourage non-motorized transportation.
- 3.4 Treat connectors as Linear Parks and provide landscaping to make the connections appealing locations as part of the park's infrastructure.

4 Commitment

- 4.1 Complete a NPRA survey at least once every ten years and improve area's competitiveness with other municipalities in terms of staffing and committed funding.
- 4.2 Maintain a minimum of 1 Recreation staff for every 1500 residents.
- 4.3 Maintain a minimum of

5 Community and Social Capital

- 5.1 Meet the community's need for recreation, cultural resources, and on-going education. (UVAP Goal PR-1)
- 5.2 Promote a greater sense of community through events, gathering places, and shared facilities. (UVAP Goal PR-3)
- 5.3 Utilize best practices in new park development including utilizing the CA State Parks "*Designing Parks Using Community-Based Planning Methods*" or similar with an emphasis on inclusive practices.
- 5.4 Prioritize funding projects that increase park access for low-income communities and communities of color in terms of park proximity and the quantity of parks space available per person.

6 Climate Readiness

- 6.1 Assure all parks are accessible for pedestrians and bicyclists.
- 6.2 Work with Mendocino Transit authority to improve bus access to parks.
- 6.3 Assure parks have tree canopy or other shade structures commensurate with the size and intent of the park.
- 6.4 Use 100% climate adapted trees for any new tree planting in parks.
- 6.5 Explore opportunities to include cooling, misting or similar stations in parks.
- 6.6 Convert all parks irrigation to achieve 100% compliance with the City's Water Efficient Landscaping Ordinance.

7 Native American Co-Stewardship

- 7.1 Protect Native American cultural and archaeological resources. (UVAP Goal 10 HA-2)
- 7.2 Explore options for increasing engagement and developing co-stewardship or co-management opportunities in parks.
- 7.3 Include and compensate indigenous people for their time and expertise during planning.

8 Addressing Homelessness

- 8.1 Continue to work with Mendocino County HHSA and Sheriff to compassionately assure the health, safety, and security of parks.

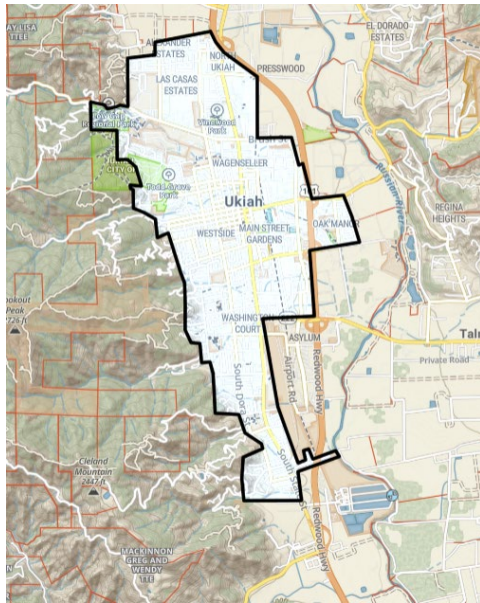
- 8.2 Utilize the Mendocino County HHSA Homeless Encampment Coordination Protocol to manage collaboration between organizations and provide compassionate approach to homelessness in parks.
- 8.3 Convene minimum one meeting per year with HHSA to discuss management of Homelessness in Parks.

9 Addressing Gentrification

- 9.1 Consider a “just green enough” strategy in low-income neighborhoods to improve conditions, livability, and health without pricing out current residents.
- 9.2 Partner with planning and development departments to assure adequate stock of affordable housing in areas where park improvements are planned.
- 9.3 Strive to address deep rooted inequities in accessible park acreage by adding substantial amounts of new green space in park-poor, low-income communities of color, while also providing and protecting nearby affordable housing.

Current State

Ukiah City Limits and the Greater Ukiah Population Node



The Greater Ukiah node (Figure 1) includes the City and the populated area to the north and south of the current city limits. The node includes the area where people predominantly live and excludes the airport and areas that are principally industrial or open, undeveloped space. The intent is to assess “living space,” or the area where people go about their activities of daily living and to accurately capture real-world, experienced population density and park coverage.

Quantity and Accessibility of Parks in the Greater Ukiah Node (Goal 1 and 3)

There are twenty-one designated parks inside Ukiah City limits that host over 600,000 park visits per year. Todd Grove Park is the most heavily visited with over one-hundred and seventy-five thousand visits. The City’s parks include small pocket parks, specialty parks, linear parks, neighborhood parks, community parks, and a regional park. While all

these parks provide value, some are either too small or too specialized to completely serve the park needs of those living within a half mile. Excluding the small or specialized parks, the Greater Ukiah node has nine neighborhood, community, and regional parks that are well distributed allowing the vast majority of residents to live within a half mile of a significant park (Map 3). The Wagenseller neighborhood is a notable exception. Additionally, a few underserved pockets exist that are within a half mile of a park “as the crow flies” but more than a half mile by surface street route.

Outside the City limits but within the Greater Ukiah population node there are underserved areas both to the north and the south of the City. North of Empire Drive is primarily underserved (no park within a half mile) as well as a few isolated areas to the south of Empire Drive that are farther than a half mile by actual surface street routes. Figure 2 shows the half mile radii from Vinewood and Low

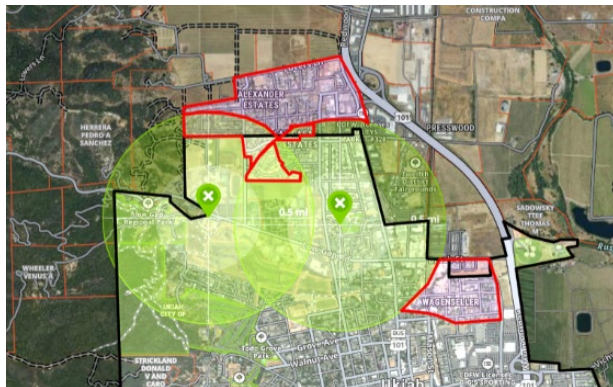


Figure 2 - Underserved Areas on North End of Greater Ukiah Node in Red

Gap parks showing the areas outlined in red to be more than a half mile away from a park. The Wagenseller neighborhood, also underserved and outlined in red, is shown on the east side of the map.

There are no first-tier parks to the south of current City limits including the densely populated, low-income area inside the Greater Ukiah node (Map 2). Second tier options for residents in this area include Grace Hudson Elementary school and Ukiah Athletic Club.

The City of Ukiah has established goals for assuring an adequate number of parks. The goals for the number of parks only apply to areas with a population density of greater than 5 residents per acre. The Greater Ukiah node has a population density of 8.6 residents per acre and the City of Ukiah has a population density of 5.3 residents per acre. There are sixteen parks in the City of Ukiah with a total of 152 acres. Consistent with State of California standards, Goal 1.1 establishes a minimum standard of 3 acres of parks per thousand residents. According to David Barth² “there are no LOS standards for recreation facilities in the U.S., and the number of facilities needed can vary widely due to a number of variables between communities.” Rather than establishing a minimum quantity of “parks” the City’s focus is on assuring an adequate diversity of features in the park system while simultaneously assuring all residents are living within a half mile of a park.

The vast majority of Ukiah residents live within a half mile of a park and with over 9 acres of parks per 1000 residents the City is meeting Goal 1. However, to meet this goal for the Greater Ukiah node at least one park will need to be added on the north end of the node and one large and one or two small parks will need to be added on the south end of the node.

Quality and Diversity of Parks in the Greater Ukiah Node (Goal 2)

The quality and diversity of existing parks was determined through staff onsite evaluations, surveys, and focus groups. Surveys, focus groups, and on-site evaluations all support the conclusion that the parks are in good shape and well maintained. The playground and group BBQ area at Todd Grove Park were both replaced in the last year. While Todd Grove Park is well maintained, the municipal pool is aging and requires frequent maintenance. The eighty-year-old facility has a wading pool that is closed, a solar water heater that is non-functioning, and a variety of features that have been removed as irreparable or obsolete. The City’s Community Services team is working on a stand-alone Municipal Pool review and feasibility study aimed at outlining the best approach to address the many issues. Replacement of the pool is a likely conclusion.

In the last ten years a steady effort has seen significant capital improvements at Vinewood, Oak Manor, and Observatory parks as well as the Skate Park. Monthly inspections of play structures by certified inspectors assure minor problems are found and corrected quickly. Parks staff can keep up with routine maintenance including mowing and leaf blowing and respond to the ongoing instances of graffiti and vandalism. It’s important to note, that while graffiti, vandalism, and litter can be found around town, City crews respond quickly to these issues in our parks. Similarly, city crews respond quickly to issues that arise related to the activities of the homeless. The City has policies in place to assure compassionate interactions with those experiencing homelessness but camping and littering are not tolerated in City parks.

The sole exception to the conclusion of well-maintained parks is at the County managed and maintained Low Gap Park. Low Gap Park has a significant amount of deferred maintenance, has had to remove features that were failing to the point of being dangerous, and has additional features that arguably should be removed for safety reasons. The paths need repair and disc golf course use is taking a toll on the surrounding plant life with many of the trees suffering and at risk of death. The public restroom utilizes a fifty-year-old septic system. Remnants of the out-of-use caretaker’s site remain in place, and there are significant drainage issues at the dog park. The entrance to the park does not meet the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Importantly, the bridge that allows access to most of the park likely needs replacement rather than repair. Low Gap Park is a beloved community asset with heavy daily use, but unfortunately, it is being loved to death. While the park is heavily used, these issues are a result of deferred maintenance as opposed to park pressure.

Park Type Distribution
Regional Parks
Low Gap Park
Mill Creek Park
Riverside Park
Lake Mendocino
Community Park
Todd Grove Park
Oak Manor Park
Neighborhood Park
Observatory Park
McGarvey Park
Orchard Park
Ukiah Civic Center
Vinewood Park
Pocket Park
Gardner Park
Railroad Depot Park
Special Use Park
Alex Rorabaugh Center
Giorno Park/Anton Stadium
Grace Hudson Museum
Ukiah Skate Park
Ukiah Sports Complex

Ideally a parks system will be diverse with various sizes, features, and park styles⁹. Not all parks can have all things, so the required diversity of park features need to be dispersed throughout the system. The parks system needs a variety of park sizes, with all community desired features represented somewhere in the system (Table 1). Not all users are looking for the same experience. As such the system of parks needs to include locations for boisterous children as well as opportunities for resting seniors. The largest parks in this system (Low Gap and Riverside) are predominantly open space providing hiking and nature experiences. In addition to open space and trails, Low Gap Park provides a wide variety of features including disc golf, archery, a fitness, course, a dog park, picnic areas, tennis courts and a playground. These regional parks provide numerous recreation opportunities for residents as well as drawing tourism and visitors from the far reaches of the County.

The smallest parks also have value. Tiny Gardner Park is nestled under Redwoods along a sidewalk next to a parking lot. Though few will go out of their way to go to the park, it provides a bench on which to rest in the shade during a walk, and a picnic table for a quiet place for a lunch break close to downtown.

Community and Neighborhood parks provide a wide variety of opportunities for those living within a half mile but will also attract residents from around the City. Both Todd Grove and Oak Manor have reservable picnic areas that are in frequent use for parties, celebrations, and get-togethers. Todd Grove Park is also the home to the popular Sundays in the Park as well as the Community Yard Sale, the Kids Triathlon and many more community building events.

Seven parks include playgrounds, fields, and structures desired by children and their parents while Observatory, Riverside, and McGarvey Parks all provide more restful experiences.

Community input provided a long list of desired but unavailable park features. The only dog park in the Greater Ukiah node is at Low Gap Park. This is likely the most mentioned, clearly necessary addition immediately needed for our parks system. Other features that were unearthed during community input included, pickleball courts, places to roller skate, river access, volleyball, and indoor facilities and splash pads. These unavailable features offer opportunity to improve the diversity of City parks and should be considered for inclusion in the establishment of new parks.

Goal 2.1 and 2.2 both speak to the importance of preserving natural resources and open space. With Low Gap Park, Riverside Park, and the City’s newly acquired but not yet open to the public Western Hills Watershed Protection Area the city is clearly meeting these goals. Goal 2.3 addresses the need to preserve historic spaces and is met with the historic gate and wall at Todd Grove Park and the many historic features at Observatory Park. Goal 2.4 is the most subjective of the Quality and Diversity goals. Focus group comments indicated that the community is happy with the diversity of park features while also wanting more. The lack of dog parks, pickleball courts, and river access suggest there is more to be done in this area. Additionally, the need for climate adaptation suggests a need for more opportunities to cool off such as splash pads and misting stations.

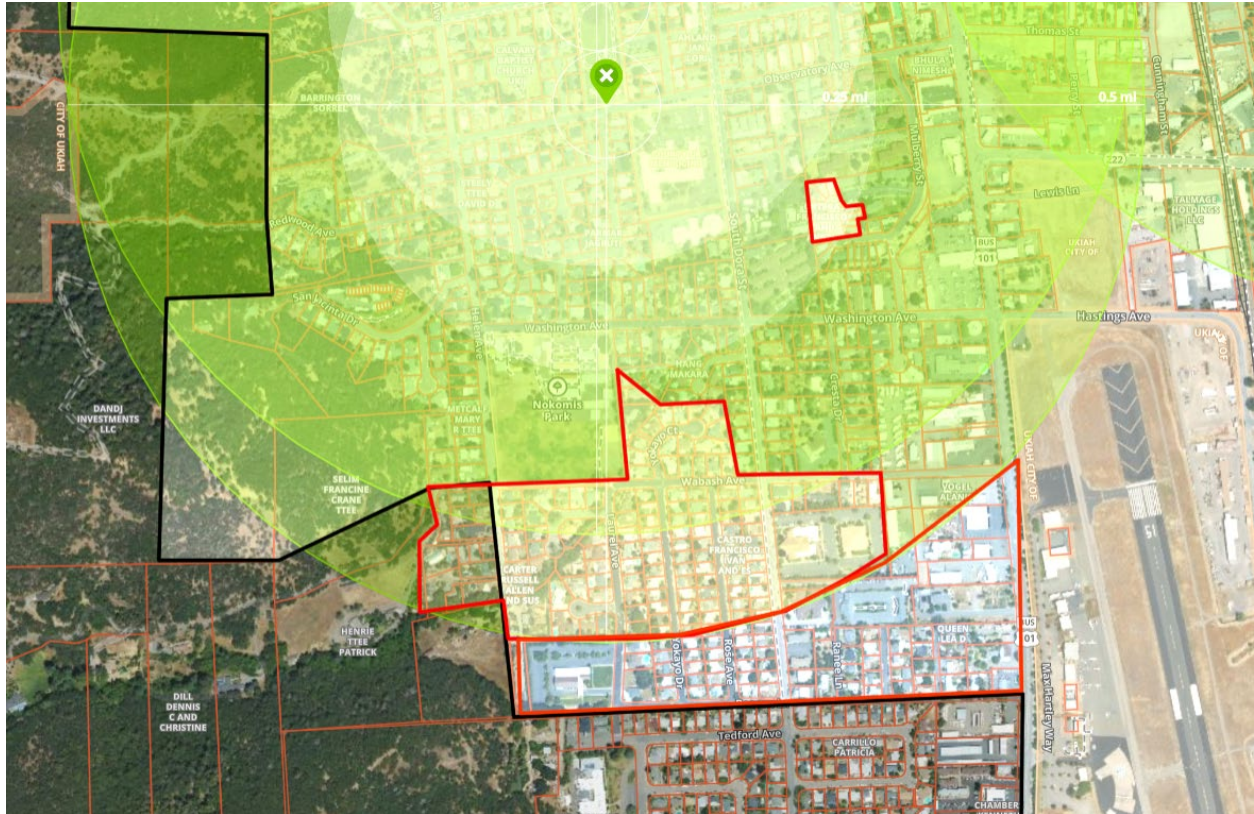


Figure 3 Observatory Park half mile radius in green. Underserved area inside City limits in red.

Park Accessibility in the Greater Ukiah Node (Goal 3)

As discussed in the Quantity of Parks section, the vast majority of Ukiah residents live within a half mile of a park (Goal 3.1). The Wagenseller neighborhood is the most notable exception. Surface transportation routes create a few additional small, underserved areas. For the Greater Ukiah node additional parks are needed to both the north and the south. Additionally, in both the City limits and the Greater Ukiah node improved connectivity (Goal3.3) and landscaping improvements in those corridors (Goal 3.4) will enhance the park system and community quality of life.

Commitment in the Greater Ukiah Node (Goal 4)

Commitment is a measure of resources that are devoted to building and maintaining a parks system. The City Parks team has a \$1.884 million dollar budget with most of the money going to

support a maintenance staff of eleven full-time equivalent employees. The Parks team works under the direction of the Director of Community Services and with the advice of the City Council appointed Public Spaces Commission. The parks team works collaboratively and partners daily with the five-member recreation staff. The Parks Superintendent and the Parks Lead Worker manage the day-to-day activities of the team. Although the maintenance work is shared by all, workers tend to specialize in either hardscape or landscape maintenance.

Goal 4.1 suggests the need to participate in the National Parks and Recreation Association (NPRA) survey at least once every ten years. The City has for the first time filled out this survey as a part of this analysis but results have not yet been received from the NPRA.

Compared to neighboring municipalities, the COU has a strong commitment to parks. Neither the City of Willits, Fort Bragg, or the County of Mendocino have a parks division. For these municipalities parks are maintained by some form of general services department.

Community and Social Capital in the Greater Ukiah Node (Goal 5)

Social Capital is defined as the networks of relationships among people who live and work in a particular society, enabling that society to function effectively. Parks should help meet the community's need for recreation, cultural resources, and on-going education (Goal 5.1). Additionally, parks should promote a greater sense of community through events, gathering places, and shared facilities⁹(Goal 5.2). Community input is the primary way to assess how well this is being achieved. Over seventy-five percent of survey respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement "I feel like Ukiah Valley Parks provide a sense of place and history." Focus group participants also generally stated a positive impression of the park's role in building community and social capital. Most responses referred to recreation programs, particularly the Sundays in the Park and community yard sale, but also went on to include murals, community gardens, and "connectivity" as important infrastructure elements to increase community and social capital. Connectivity is addressed as goal 3.2 in this plan identifying the need to "create connections between parks, facilities and neighborhoods to maximize ease of access, encourage neighbor interactions, and encourage non-motorized transportation." As addressed in the Climate Readiness section of this report, bike and pedestrian infrastructure around the parks is good. Nevertheless, there is a clear benefit to adding additional connectivity to the parks system.

The City of Ukiah has created a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee to help monitor Goal 5.4; "Prioritize funding projects that increase park access for low-income communities and communities of color in terms of park proximity and the quantity of parks space available per person." The City is pursuing options to create a park in the Wagenseller neighborhood. Further, a park planning process is scheduled for July of 2025 to seek community input on a proposed park at the end of Norgard Lane.

Climate Readiness (Goal 6)

Transportation is a primary contributor to climate change⁶. Goal 6.1 and 6.2 suggest a need to reduce climate impact by encouraging the use of bicycles, walking, and public transportation (alternative transportation). The first-tier parks within the Area of Interest were evaluated for alternative transportation infrastructure. A four-point scale was used with one point apiece given

for 1) complete sidewalks within a half mile, 2) bike lane access to the park, 3) Public transportation stop within one quarter of a mile, and 4) low traffic volume. The results (Table 2) show most significant Greater Ukiah node parks score a three or four with good to excellent options for alternative transportation.

The need for refuge in the form of shade from trees or other shade structures is identified in goal 6.3. Some parks (Todd Grove and McGarvey) are almost entirely shaded while other have little shade (Softball Complex) or no shade (Great Redwood Trail). The lack of shade on the Great Redwood Trail needs to be addressed. All other parks have reasonable amounts of shade.

Goals 6.4 suggesting the importance of cooling stations with splash pads and misting stations is not being met. Similarly, water reduction measures spelled out in goal 6.6 require investment.

Backstrom² et al identified a need to reconsider how playgrounds are designed, approved, and built. The consensus of subject matter experts asserted a need to utilize more permeable “nature-based” playgrounds and play structures. This approach can add shade, retain water, and help to create “ecological affiliation” in children.

Native American Co-Stewardship (Goal 7)

The Ukiah Valley is the ancestral land and current home of Northern Pomo and other displaced tribes. In November of 2021, President Biden announced the “Tribal Homelands Initiative. “One of the key components of the Initiative is ensuring that Tribal governments play an integral role in decision making related to the management of Federal lands and waters through consultation, capacity building, and other means consistent with applicable authorities.”⁵ Ukiah City Council’s Strategic Plan Priority 1 is to “enhance our neighborhoods” and speaks to the importance of creating vibrant “community spaces that reflect the diversity of our cultures.” Doing so requires developing strong collaborative working relationships with sovereign tribal governments.

This report has identified three aspirational goals for this area. Goal 7.1 is to protect cultural resources. This goal is being met primarily through California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) compliance. Goal 7.2 is to explore options for increasing engagement and developing co-stewardship or co-management opportunities in parks. The City has not yet effectively engaged the Native American community in the management of parks. The City’s Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee is a partner in this effort and the City will continue to work on this goal. The City complies with all CEQA requirements including the identification and protection of cultural resources during all CEQA triggering projects. Goal 7.3 is to include and compensate indigenous people for their time and expertise during planning. This is another area where the City can improve.

Addressing Homelessness (Goal 8)

The City of Ukiah has policies and practices in place to help mitigate the impacts of homelessness. The City’s position is that Parks and Recreation infrastructure and programs neither create nor solve homelessness. The presence of people lingering, sleeping, or setting up “camp” in a park detracts from the experience of most users¹. Not all litter and graffiti are created by the homeless, but much of it is. City staff are trained to treat all members of the public with decorum, compassion, and respect. When it feels safe to do so, staff will ask people to clean up their trash and remind them there is no camping in City parks. In accord with goals 8.1 and 8.2 City staff

operate under an MOU with the County to address encampments. The MOU requires seventy-two-hour notice be given before disbanding and cleaning up an encampment. Any materials collected, no matter the item or condition, is placed in storage for ninety (90) days and is made available to property owners who feel their possessions were lost during a cleanup.

The impacts of homelessness have the greatest impact on the urban center of Ukiah. Homeless activity is greatest in public spaces along creeks and in parks and along trails. Outside city limits the areas of greatest impact are along the abandoned railroad corridor at locations where it nears services, and at Lake Mendocino's campgrounds. The City of Ukiah's parks and streets crews monitor and maintain the sections of developed Great Redwood Trail. The City in collaboration with the Great Redwood Trail Agency has the capacity to manage and mitigate the impacts of homelessness within the city limits and the Greater Ukiah node.

Great Redwood Trail

The conversion of the old railroad corridor to a multi-use path has been established as a legislative priority by the State Legislature. The legislature created the Great Redwood Trail Agency (GRTA) tasked with building the new Great Redwood Trail (GRT) in 2021. The future GRT will bisect the Area of Interest for a total of eleven and a half miles with approximately ten miles in the Sphere of Influence. Currently approximately two miles of the trail has been built inside the city limits with an additional two miles slated to be built within the next year. The Great Redwood Trail has tremendous unmet recreation potential. However, the GRTA has not yet completed the process of railbanking the rail line. Railbanking will allow the removal of the unused rails and ties and allow for a relatively inexpensive conversion to trail. Without railbanking the trail must be built alongside the rails at a much greater cost.

The City has begun the process of adding landscaping to the existing trail to create a linear park. The trail will provide recreational opportunities for hikers, bicyclists, skaters, and nature lovers. The 100-foot-wide corridor is wide enough to allow additional features including small playgrounds, fitness courses, and other park features but the City awaits railbanking to allow complete property access. The GRT will provide recreational benefit to residents in the Lake Mendocino and Calpella nodes and act as a regional park serving the entire Area of Interest.

Addressing Gentrification (Goal 9)

The creation of new or improved parks in poor neighborhoods poses the risk of gentrification¹¹. Gentrification is the process whereby the character of a poor urban area is changed by wealthier people moving in, improving housing, and attracting new businesses, leading to the displacement of current inhabitants in the process. The potential for gentrification is greatest on the south end of the Greater Ukiah node. Meeting the community needs in this area will require adding parks. Unfortunately, few best practice park and recreation solutions for this problem have been identified. The only parks related practice found in this report's literature review was the concept of "just green enough." The "just green enough" approach suggests that new parks and park improvements should attempt to make the park improvements just nice enough to provide benefit to current residents without attracting new residents and increasing property values¹⁰. The City can consider this approach, but it is not consistent with the City's institutional commitment to

excellence. It may be the best approaches to gentrification will be found in the Community Development and Housing arenas specifically by increasing housing stock.

Area of Interest Outside the City Limits and the Greater Ukiah Node

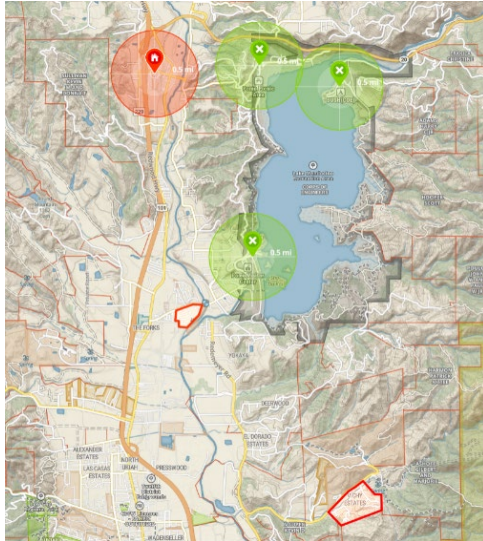


Figure 4 Outside the Greater Ukiah node: First Tier locations in green. Second Tier locations in red.

The evaluation of the current state of parks within the City of Ukiah's Area of Interest reflects the input of GIS review, on site evaluations, focus group surveys, one-on-one interviews, and community surveys. Outside the Greater Ukiah node, but within the Area of Interest there are three first tier park entrances at Lake Mendocino. Outside the Greater Ukiah node, these are the only first tier parks (Figure 4). While Lake Mendocino serves well as a regional park, very few people live within half a mile of the park entrances. Neither Mill Creek Park nor Cow Mountain have trail heads inside the City's Area of Interest. However, like Lake Mendocino, they serve the Ukiah Valley as regional parks and provide valuable outdoor opportunities to residents as well as economic benefit through tourism.

Outside the Greater Ukiah node there are two significant second tier homeowner association (HOA) parks, three trailer park association parks, and one Ukiah Unified School District school (Calpella Elementary). There are also a few private (second tier) recreational areas including the Rifle and Pistol Club and the Vichy Springs Resort in the Vichy Hills node, while the Deerwood/Eldorado Node includes a pool and tennis courts at the Ukiah Bible Church.

The Vichy Hills HOA park serves the vast majority of the residents in the Vichy Hills node well. It includes a 7.5-acre greenway and a 9.6-acre open space area with a trail. While these areas do not include any play equipment or other features, with over 17 acres of open space they provide an affordable approach to serve the five hundred and seventeen residents living in this rural/suburban setting.

The West Fork Estates subdivision's HOA park includes a small area of turf (suitable for a game of "catch") and a small play structure. The HOA comprises approximately 130 homes. However, the park is not open to the majority of the 1912 people living in the Eastside Calpella/Lake Mendocino node. Each of the three trailer parks in this node provide small parks that meet the minimum requirements for park access to those residents.

Calpella Elementary School provides after hours recreational access to the 312 residents in the Calpella Node.

Overall, outside the city limits park and recreation opportunities are very limited. Goal 1.1 and 1.2 establish a threshold density of five people per acre combined with a minimum population over which the City expects to provide parks. The Vichy Springs node with a population density of 4.5 people per acre is the most densely populated area outside the city limits. By contrast, the Greater

Ukiah population node has nearly twice that density providing a much greater economy of scale to support parks and recreation. The population density threshold of five per acre excludes the requirement of providing parks and facilities beyond the limits of the Greater Ukiah node. However, park and recreation services inside the urban Greater Ukiah node need to be adequate to serve all the residents living within the Area of Interest. Further, as outlined in Goal 1.3, the urban parks need adequate resources to not become over “pressured.” Currently the parks in the Greater Ukiah node are meeting the needs of the surrounding area without experiencing the “pressure” of overuse.

In selecting a place to live residents can choose locations that best meet their needs. Residents who choose to live in rural or lightly populated areas reap the benefits of dark skies, remote neighbors, lower land costs, and more natural home settings. Those benefits however come at the cost of substantially reduced park and recreation opportunities. New housing developments could increase the population and density of an identified node to a point where the City would work to provide new parks, but with the exception of the Greater Ukiah node, none of the outlying nodes currently provide adequate density or an economy of scale to merit the development of a new park.

Recreation Services

The mission of the recreation team is to fill recreation gaps that are not met by for-profit or non-profit organizations but are desired by the public. In some cases, such as the municipal pool at Todd Grove Park, the recreation team provides a low-cost alternative to otherwise expensive recreational needs.

The City of Ukiah (COU) boasts a five-member recreation team providing a robust and varied slate of recreation opportunities. The Gap Analysis survey and recreation sign up lists confirm the recreation team currently serves the entire Area of Interest and beyond. While the majority of people signing up for recreation activities and attending COU recreation sponsored events are from the Greater Ukiah Node, the services are also used by many from the Area of Interest.

The COU recreation team organizes team-sports leagues, swimming lessons, an after-school program, a summer school program, an intramural elementary school sports program, and a multitude of classes. Additionally, the team partners with Ukiah Unified School District (UUSD) to organize games and practices at Anton Stadium.

Adult team sports include softball, volleyball, and basketball. Youth team sports cover the same sports plus flag football. Cumulatively, there are year-round team sports opportunities for residents of the Ukiah valley. The recreation team hires umpires and referees and oversees the work of the volunteer coaches for all the teams. Ukiah's Softball complex hosted nearly seventy-three thousand visits in the last year and over 150 coaches and volunteers are employed by the recreation team to support team sports services. Adult and youth soccer leagues are provided by local non-profit organizations and therefore not conducted by the COU Recreation.

Major Annual Events

- All American Picnic
- Community Yard Sale
- Dias De Los Muertos
- Earth Day
- Friday Night Grinds
- Grasshopper Gravel Bike Race
- Holiday Ice Rink
- Hometown Holidays
- Kids Triathlon
- Let it Glow Festival
- Light Parade
- Moonlight Movies
- Pumpkin Fest
- Sundays in the Park

In addition to sports, the recreation team puts on multiple large events throughout the year. The largest events are the Sundays in the Park Series (six concerts per summer with close to 26,000 attendees) and the Pumpkin Fest. The Ice Rink and Hometown Holidays are now drawing over 10,000 visitors per year and the 2024 Light Parade attracted over 6000 attendees.

City sponsored classes are held year-round linking teachers to students interested in music, art, health & fitness, aquatics, dance, pets, and children's activities.

The recreation team publicizes these activities primarily through social media and contact lists. Participants can review and sign up for leagues and classes through the online "Rec Desk" portal. The Rec Desk portal includes a contact list of over 8000 potential participants and 85 instructors and coaches.

Community Input Overview

Community input for this report included a survey (online and paper, English and Spanish), focus groups, tabling events, one-on-one meetings, and discussions with the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI).

Community input began with the project design being discussed with the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) at its May 14th, 2024, and July 9th 2024 meetings.

Community input solicitations were designed to be in alignment with the Goals and identified Levels of Service. The survey was designed using the Survey Monkey app and included twenty questions. Surveys were publicized via a press release and social media outreach. Additionally, the surveys were promoted and available via “tabling” events at two Sundays in the Park and the Pumpkin Fest. A total of 283 surveys were completed.

One-on-one meetings were held with representatives from the Bureau of Land Management (Cow Mountain) and the US Army Corps of Engineers (Lake Mendocino). Although there is no public access to BLM property within the area of interest, input from BLM was requested as they provide a significant recreational opportunity in the region and additional access points could bring the recreation area into the area of interest.

A total of 10 stakeholder focus groups were convened. The focus group design, recruitment, and facilitation were done in collaboration with facilitator Jen Dalton of Kitchen Table Consulting. The focus groups included stakeholders representing Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center, business community members, a real estate group, climate action and healthy communities, LatinX, County of Mendocino employees, competitive sports enthusiasts, Ukiah Unified School District, and elected officials. The same focus group questions were presented to the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) and the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Committee (DEI).

On September 10th, 2024 the PSC Community Forum included a facilitated discussion using the Focus Group questions. This publicly noticed and publicized meeting was offered both in person and remotely and had an attendance of 15 and included Spanish language translation.

The DEI Commission provided input at their regularly scheduled and publicly noticed October 23rd meeting.

Community Input Summation

Focus Groups

Universally, stakeholders expressed appreciation for the opportunity to provide input. When asked about the quantity of parks, an immediate request for more parks was frequently expressed. This likely has more to do with the popularity of parks rather than a true need for more parks. When asked for more detail on the need for “more parks” it often emerged that it was more specifically a greater diversity of park features that was of interest. On further questioning, most groups saw a true need for more parks on the south side of Ukiah outside current City limits. The need for parks in the Wagenseller area was also noted by many focus group members. The quantity of parks question preceded the diversity of *features* question about parks so both questions elicited lists of desired

safe during daylight hours. This was biased by gender with one participant stating, “sure, I feel safe, but I’m six foot four.” The Great Redwood Trail and Low Gap Park were spoken of as parks that feel less safe, but this too was by no means universal. Most comments regarding perceived danger focused on a general discomfort with homeless or people under the influence with little concern expressed about robbery, violence, or gangs. Some participants expressed surprise that others did not feel safe. It also should be noted that a number of parents qualified their positive statements of perceived safety with the qualifier “but I don’t want my child to be there alone.” Restrooms were called out as a potentially unsafe place and a need for single stall, individual restrooms were desired to avoid being trapped in an enclosed place with a potential assailant. One group suggested the need for a greater police presence only to be countered with “not everyone feels safer with the police.” The presence of park staff, rangers, or park “ambassadors” was seen as a good option for increasing perceived safety. Improved lighting was also mentioned as a means to improve safety.

It should be noted that the facilitators generally steered the conversation away from homelessness. The facilitators took the position that homelessness is a separate issue that effects all public spaces and that parks “neither create nor solve homelessness.” The issue of homelessness did come up at all the focus group meetings and while no one was prohibited from speaking about it, most participants seemed to agree it is a subject that requires its own separate discussion and its own separate solution. There was no dispute, and this report acknowledges that homelessness negatively impacts the perception of safety and park cleanliness thereby decreasing user enjoyment of parks.

The final focus group question was *“Lack of funding is a barrier. Many communities set up special districts or pass bond measures to pay for parks. Do you think that might be a good option for here?”* Few participants categorically ruled out assessing additional taxes to support parks. However, many felt that “now is not a good time” and a lack of trust that additional taxes would not be diverted away from parks for other uses. Many participants expressed a willingness to pay additional taxes if they could be assured the money would be exclusively earmarked for parks and recreation. The Real Estate Focus group expressed the most resistance to new taxes with concern that property owners pay an unfair share of taxes. The use of fundraisers, grants, and donations were suggested by virtually all groups. There was little or no discussion of Public / Private partnerships or “pay for play” options.

One-on-One Meetings

One-on-one meetings were set up with Poppy Burkhead from the US Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) at Lake Mendocino and Shane Garside of BLM. Staff met with Lake Mendocino’s Operations Project Manager Poppy Burkhead on August 6th, 2024. Lake Mendocino offers many recreational opportunities including two camping areas, boat-in camping, approximately 15 miles of hiking and biking trails, two disc golf courses and multiple playgrounds. Some of the trails are in the 700-acre wilderness area, where native wildlife can be viewed. There are five large day-use areas with covered picnic shelters and barbeques. For on-the-water recreation, there is boating, swimming and water skiing. Fishing for large and small mouth bass, strippers, crappie, blue gill and three varieties of catfish is a popular activity.

In recent years the lake level has become more variable with extended periods of low water level due to drought. During these periods of low water, fishing and boating become unavailable. Additionally, efforts to assure adequate water flow to the Russian River has led to storing greater amounts of water creating periods of flooding. Flooding has submerged the boat launch areas and the access road to the largest area of campgrounds leading to the majority of their campsites being closed. Fishing, boating, swimming, and camping have all been significantly curtailed due to the unpredictability of the lake level. The USACE has entered a partnership with the Greater Ukiah Business and Tourism Alliance (GUBTA) to explore options for improving recreational opportunities at the Lake.

While Lake Mendocino provides regional park opportunities in the City of Ukiah's Area of Interest, very few residents live within walking distance of the park's features. The USACE is interested in installing a "destination playground" in the hopes that it will draw tourists to the park. Although a large playground for 5-12 year-olds would have appeal to local families as a regional destination, it does not meet the community need for "accessible" (within a half mile) parks.

A one-on-one meeting with Assistant Field Manager Shane Garfield of the BLM was convened on August 14th, 2024. Although there is no public access to BLM property within the area of interest, input from BLM was requested as they provide a significant recreational opportunity in the region.

Cow Mountain provides over 50,000 acres of open space. The North Cow Mountain Recreation (non-motorized) Area is located within the Mayacamas Mountains, east of the city of Ukiah and west of the city of Lakeport, in Northwestern California. The recreation management area consists of approximately 26,000 acres of public land that is managed for non-motorized use. The recreation area boasts almost 30 miles of hiking, biking, and equestrian trails. South Cow Mountain is contiguous and located immediately to the south. South Cow Mountain is open to motorized vehicles and boasts over 90 miles of trails and roads.

The western boundary of North Cow Mountain is within the City of Ukiah's Area of Interest, but no trailheads are within the Area of Interest. Further, the only legal shooting range on Cow Mountain is in the middle of the non-motorized area. Unregulated, illegal shooting is rampant and a serious deterrent to users from the Ukiah Valley. The lack of a convenient trailhead and overly steep trails further reduce the recreational appeal of the trails. Mr. Garfield acknowledged these issues and stated that moving the shooting range is not an option, and staffing for enforcement is extremely limited. The benefits of establishing a trailhead on the west side of the property were discussed.

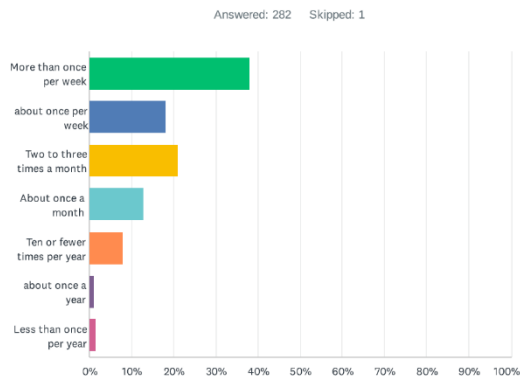
Surveys and Tabling



A 20-question survey was developed using the online Survey Monkey application. The questions were designed to align with this project’s Levels of Service and Goals. The survey was available in English and Spanish and advertised via a press release, on social media, and via tabling events. Over 300 surveys were completed. The surveys were available at tabling events as well and participants were encouraged to discuss the questions and parks in general in one-on-one interactions.

The majority of respondents (76%) live in the greater Ukiah Valley node and are frequent users of the park. Generally speaking, the more often people used parks, the more likely they were to fill out the survey, a bias that should be considered. Over 40 percent felt we need more parks, but in the comments section there were many statements like “we could always use more parks.” Some respondents also noted that having well dispersed parks is as important as having more parks. Seventy percent of respondents expressed that the parks are clean and well maintained with only

Q2 How often do you go to Ukiah Valley area parks?



thirteen percent disagreeing with that. The question regarding park cleanliness specifically stated “other than homelessness” do you feel the parks are clean and well maintained. Many respondents used the comment areas in the survey to bemoan the negative impact of people experiencing homelessness. For the authors of the survey, it was important to try to separate the success of the City in routine maintenance of the park as opposed to the issues related to mitigating the impact of homelessness. Survey responses did seem to indicate that the Parks maintenance team is doing a good job on routine maintenance.

The survey indicated that for the majority of users park use is a social activity. Less than one in five respondents reported “always” or “usually” going to the park alone. This is contrasted with over sixty percent stating they “always” or “usually” go with “my family or a larger group of friends” and forty-three percent “always” or “usually” going with one or more friends. This suggests a potential need for more facilities to support group use.

The survey indicated that the parks are not overcrowded, and the available space is adequate to meet community needs. Additionally, sixty percent of respondents feel the parks provide a “sense of place and history.” Thirty percent had no opinion on this question leaving less than ten percent who disagreed.

Seventy one percent of respondents stated they feel the parks are safe enough to use. Less than fifteen percent disagreed. However, when asked about specific parks, only forty three percent stated they feel safe in all the parks. A third of respondents do not feel the Great Redwood Trail is safe while more than seventeen percent deem Riverside Park, Oak Manor Park, and Low Gap Park unsafe.

Understanding the recreational interests of users will help City of Ukiah staff to plan for and provide the appropriate park features and recreational programs. The survey asked participants to cite their top three recreational interests. "Trail Use" and "Picnic/Relax/Hangout" both were cited by fifty seven percent of respondents. These were followed by "River Access" (31%) and swimming (28%) as the most popular activities. All the rest of the options were selected by five to fifteen percent of participants. Interestingly, this included pickleball with only twelve percent choosing it as one of their top three activities. These results suggest strong community interest in nature-based outdoor recreation.

Approximately two thirds reported taking recreation department classes and activities in the last "few years" while ninety percent stated they would take a class if the time and activity suited them. Not surprisingly, there was significant interest in most of the recreation options provided. Similarly interest in team or competitive sports was spread fairly evenly across the provided options.

Fifty one percent of respondents agreed or strongly stated support for a potential tax to pay for parks and recreation support. An additional twenty five percent of respondents neither agreed nor disagreed with only thirteen percent disagreeing or strongly disagreeing. The self-selection of the survey no doubt biased the results with a high percentage of frequent park users more likely to support a parks tax than might the general population.

The survey was also skewed with women twice as likely to participate as men. Three quarters of respondents were well distributed by age between thirty and sixty or older. Nineteen percent were under thirty and a small percentage declined to state. Despite efforts at engagement, only thirteen percent of respondents identified as Hispanic and three quarters as White/Caucasian.

A small sampling of typical survey comments:

"I think a hard-packed sand (or something non-slippery like that) walking trail just inside the stone wall at Todd Grove Park would be a welcomed improvement. It would be a mostly shaded area for walking at any time of the day especially in the summer. Maybe other parks would like to have such a feature also."

"I think it would be awesome if lights could be installed (where possible) to illuminate grass areas and basketball courts for after work recreation during the winter. I would support special district taxes to support these improvements"

"The south end of town could use another park. Also, easier/more access to rivers would be amazing."

"The south side of Ukiah deserves more park access, the areas of the Ukiah valley with the highest percentage of Latino residents have the lowest access to safe parks/recreation activities."

"I would really like the city to expand the riverside park to make use of the river there for more swim activities.....even to create a large beach area. It seems a shame that we don't have access to the Russian River for families in the summer."

Next Steps – Case Studies

The City of Ukiah’s existing parks largely meet community needs for those living within the City limits. However, survey and focus group input suggest residents would like both more parks and additional features like dog parks, pickleball courts, and lighting. Further, the areas immediately to the north and south of the City are underserved. Beyond the Greater Ukiah node, population densities are too low to support park development. Many of these areas may be relatively close to current or future open spaces, but otherwise, these residents will need to travel to a park in the Greater Ukiah node.

This section will discuss opportunities to expand the City’s park system to meet current and future needs. Table 4 provides a Capital Improvement Project list of potential acquisitions and park feature improvements or additions associated with this section’s recommendations.

Connectivity

Each individual park offers a different set of recreational opportunities and ideally, a system of parks will provide all the varied opportunities a community desires. A parks system with good connectivity will ensure that the sum of recreational opportunities is greater than its parts. By allowing users to combine experiences and transform travel to, from, and between parks from a task to part of the experience increases the overall impact of the park system.

Great Redwood Trail - Linear parks provide the most obvious example of enhancing parks through connectivity. The Great Redwood Trail (GRT) will one day span from the south to the north side of the Area of Interest. In addition to serving as a recreational space it will serve as a transportation corridor. The completed path will serve as an alternative transportation “arterial” or major route. The trail is currently open to the public from Commerce Drive to Brush Street and construction is under way to extend to the southern city limit with a grand opening planned for Fall of 2025. The Ukiah section of the GRT lacks landscaping, shade, and amenities. The City of Ukiah’s GRT Master plan (2020) provides guidance for the addition of park features along the trail. The City is currently working with the Great Redwood Trail Agency to create new sites to access the trail.

Orr Creek Greenway – The Ukiah Bike and Pedestrian Master Plan (2015) and the Low Gap Park Trail Plan (2016) describe the benefits of creating a multi-use path along Orr Creek from Low Gap Park to the Russian River (Figure 5). This path would cross the GRT and add an east-west arterial corridor for bicyclists and pedestrians in addition to the north-south GRT arterial. This path would connect the recreational opportunities at Low Gap Park, Ukiah High, Pomolita Middle School, and the Softball complex.

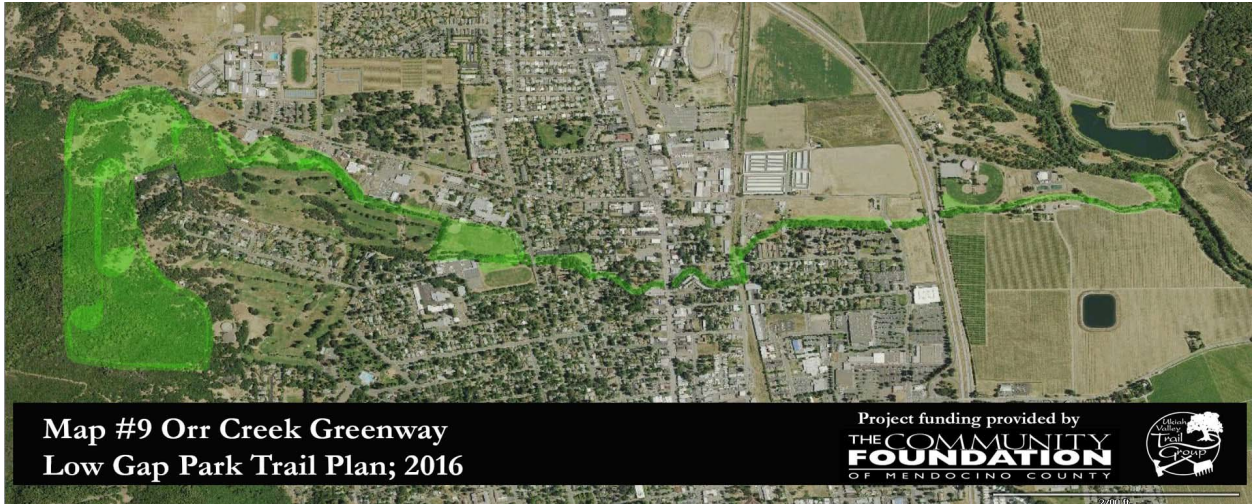


Figure 5 Orr Creek Greenway

Cooper Lane Connection

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Park Development Opportunities North Ukiah

The north end of the Greater Ukiah node is underserved by parks. A park located in the vicinity of the west end of Lover's Lane could provide most of the underserved area in Figure 5 with access to a park. Alternatively, a park on Ford Road would provide good access to about half the homes in the underserved area. New housing developments on the north end of the node would require the addition of parks.

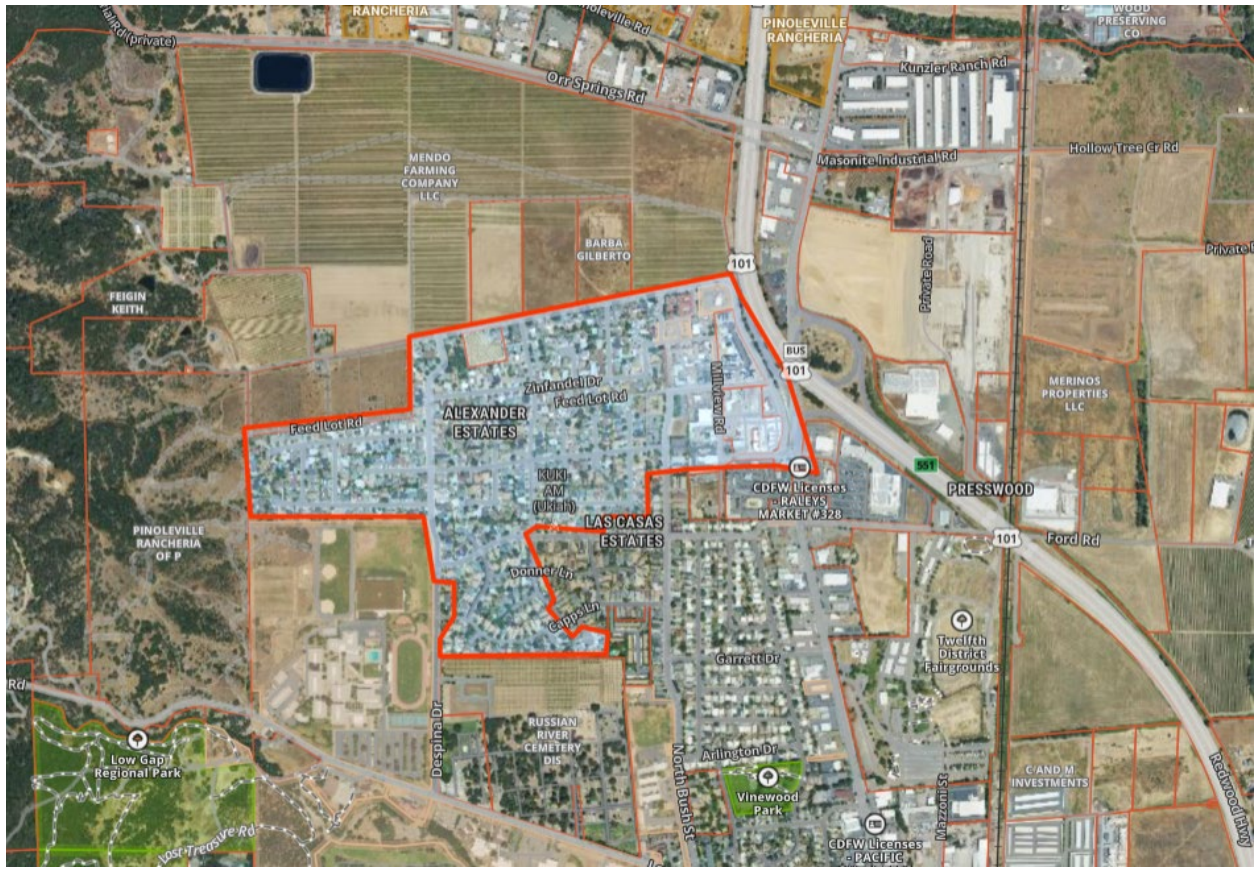


Figure 5– Homes on the north end of the Greater Ukiah node greater than a half mile from a park outlined in red.

South Ukiah – The south side of the Greater Ukiah node has a relatively high population density with most of the residents in a severely disadvantaged community (CA State Parks Fact Finder). Assuring all residents in the area live within a half mile of a park and have a diversity of park features will likely require the creation of three new parks. Further, a strong argument can be made that to achieve equity, one of the parks should be a large community park reminiscent of Todd Grove Park. The city owns property on the end of Norgard Lane which provides a second likely park option. The proposed Bella Vista development on the south end of the Greater Ukiah node may present an opportunity for the third park in the area (Figure 6).

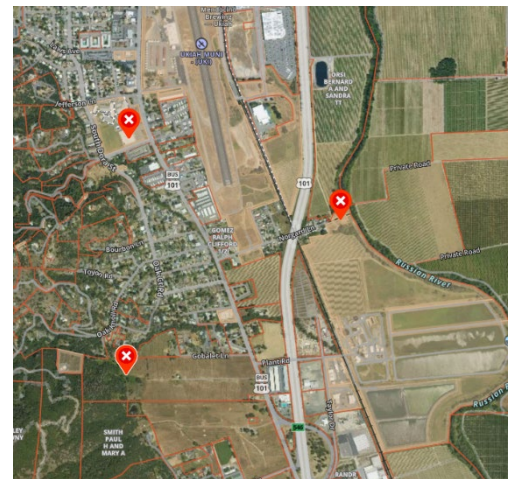


Figure 6 Potential South Side Park Locations

Wagenseller Neighborhood Park Opportunities

There are five identified but unsecured options for meeting the park needs of the Wagenseller neighborhood, all with pros and cons. In no order of importance or feasibility, the first option would be to develop a section of the Great Redwood Trail (GRT) sufficiently to meet community needs. This option cannot happen until the GRT is “railbanked” and there is no identified timeline for this to occur. However, once railbanked this would provide an affordable and suitable option. The second

option would be to create an underpass or overpass across highway 101 to allow access to the softball complex. A few additional features would allow this park to transition from a special use park to a neighborhood park. However, the financial and bureaucratic hurdles to this option are very high. The third option would be to build a new park in the Brush Street triangle. Should this area be developed, the inclusion of a park could be a condition of development. The fourth option is to acquire property from the International Church of the Foursquare Gospel. However, it is unknown if the church has any interest in selling. The fifth option would be to create a public-private partnership with the Rural Community Housing District to open and improve the grounds for public use to meet the neighborhood's needs.

Open Space Opportunities

Results of this study's survey showed a strong predilection for trails and outdoor, passive use recreation like hiking and nature viewing. Preservation of open space presents a number of associated co-benefits including watershed protection, carbon sequestration, and improvements to air quality. Recreation benefits are enjoyed by residents who recreate in the area while the economic benefits of increased tourism extend to the entire community. Open space preservation that is opened to public recreation would generally create a designation of regional park.

Western Hills Open Space

The City of Ukiah has acquired over 700 acres of open space now named the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area (WHWPA). A management plan was adopted by the City Council in 2024. The management plan defines the western hills as ranging from the valley floor to the ridge near "lookout peak" and from highway 253 north to Low Gap Road. Although the City has only acquired 700 acres, there is recreational and environmental benefit to preserving the entire area. Linking the WHWPA via trail to Low Gap Park would greatly extend the ease of access to the area and the hills to the west of Lovers Lane would be a natural extension to be added to the area if feasible.

Landfill Site Open Space– The City also owns approximately 170 acres of undeveloped oak woodland immediately to the north of the old landfill at the end of Vichy Hills Drive. This area has potential as an open space "trail" park.

Cow Mountain Open Space Access

The hills to the east of the Ukiah Valley also hold potential for open space preservation. The western edge of the BLM's Cow Mountain recreation area extends close to four miles and holds a host of opportunities for land

WHWPA Vision Statement

Creating an Open Space Preserve, Balancing Resource Management, Fire Risk Abatement, and Public Engagement

Our vision for the WHWPA is to establish an Open Space Preserve that harmoniously integrates resource management, fire risk abatement, and public access for healthy outdoor recreation. We aspire to protect native plants and wildlife communities, prevent erosion, and maintain water quality. Simultaneously, we aim to engage the public in citizen science, education, and passive recreation while ensuring the protection of historical resources and providing essential infrastructure for the benefit of our community.

acquisitions or public access easements to extend land preservation and open space recreation from Cow Mountain to the valley floor.

River Access Opportunities

The Russian River bisects the Sphere of Influence and skirts the east side of the city of Ukiah. Traditionally, the river was freely accessed by residents for recreation. However, over the last two to three decades, private property owners have been increasingly unwilling to allow free access across their properties for public river access. River access is available at Riverside Park and at the Vichy Springs Bridge – Fishing Area.

Riverside Park allows river access but lacks infrastructure to ease entry. River levels vary greatly and the best spots for accessing the river flood most years. The post flood detritus limits use and raises a challenge for any riverside improvements. Further, the presence of illegal encampments discourages use. Few people take advantage of the access points at this time.

The County-owned “Vichy Springs Bridge – Fishing Area” is a 2.7-acre parcel located directly under the Perkins Street overpass bridging the Russian River, and allows access to the west bank of the river. The property was acquired in a settlement agreement in 1991, following negotiations over rights-of-way for a new bridge and approach routes on East Perkins Street at the Russian River crossing. The settlement terms allowed the County to own and maintain limited access to the area but prohibited any recreational development. The Vichy Springs Bridge is intended only for day use fishing access.

Should the City develop their Norgard Lane property as a park it would be possible for people to enter the river at Riverside Park and float to a take-out spot at Norgard Lane. Improved signage, strict enforcement of no-camping regulations, and prompt post flood clean-ups would make river access more tenable.

Unmet Park Feature Needs

Community input and staff evaluations identified a variety of park features that are not currently available in the Ukiah Valley. Dog parks are arguably the single most important missing park feature. The high percentage of dog owners combined with a paucity of dog run areas or parks leads to the unsanctioned use of City Parks as de facto dog parks. The unsanctioned “off-leash” use of areas does not serve dogs or their owners well and leads to conflict with other users.

The need for pickleball and skating areas both received the support of vocal and organized proponents. However, the results of community input suggest these are not the most popular activities. This is not dismiss the need of the features, but should be considered when prioritizing limited funding.

Trail use was the most popularly desired activity identified in the survey and efforts are underway to expand the trail system. The next most desired activity was “picnicking and hanging out.” The rentable group picnic areas are frequently reserved suggesting a need for more group areas, particularly those that provide shade.

New parks and improvements to existing parks should be pursued with a strong consideration of the impacts of climate change. Shade and permeable surfaces should be included whenever

feasible, particularly for play areas. The lack of shade on the Ukiah section of the Great Redwood Trail substantially decreases the number of users while missing an opportunity for carbon sequestration. Additionally, the provision of lights at parks can allow for expanded hours and use during relative cool of mornings and evenings. Indoor facilities are desired but exceedingly expensive. An emphasis should be placed on finding or acquiring small areas for additional neighborhood basketball hoops and multi-use soccer courts.

Low Gap Park is in desperate need of maintenance. The County of Mendocino conducted a Parks Needs Assessment in two phases in 2020 and 2022⁴. The authors calculated a need for over a million dollars in maintenance simply to address the park's health and safety concerns. They calculated a need for an additional fifty thousand dollars to allow for "minimum function", and another five-hundred thousand dollars for "future improvements."

Finally, the City of Ukiah's municipal pool has aged to a point that maintenance is verging on unfeasible and unaffordable. Modern pool design also provides a wide range of advantages unavailable with the existing facility. Even without the pressure of climate change, a high quality and affordable municipal pool is an essential component of a complete park system in the Ukiah Valley. Planning and preparation to provide a modern pool facility should be undertaken as soon as possible.

Funding

Funding for acquisition and development of current and future parks can come from donations, fundraising, sponsorships, grants, or taxes. Successfully funding all the desired projects will likely rely on all these funding sources. Donors do not typically give to municipalities. However, supporting non-profits can be a valuable partner in helping the City of Ukiah fund projects. City parks currently benefit from the support of the Ukiah Valley Trail Group, the Sanhedrin Chapter of the Native Plant Society, Ukiah Little League, the Rusty Bowl BMX, Ukiah Lion's Football and Cheer, and the Alex Rorabaugh Recreation Center. These groups tend to have their own agendas and solicit funds or contribute in-kind labor to meet their own priorities. These groups should be supported, thanked, and encouraged as they provide tremendous benefit to the City. The UVTG, Rusty Bowl, and Youth Little League all provide park features that would otherwise be unmet. The City would benefit from a non-profit with a mission to provide general support for parks or a non-profit focused on one or more of the City's priority park projects. The Public Spaces Commission could potentially foment the creation of a non-profit to support parks.

The City leans heavily on sponsorships to fund events. Utilizing sponsors to support park infrastructure however requires much larger contributions and therefore is more challenging. Soliciting sponsors for individual features at a park may be a fruitful approach. The cost of installing a new playground, dog park features, or a single trail could be offered at a level in line with the cost of the feature. Should the opportunity arise to create a new park, a donor/sponsor may be willing to contribute enough to merit an offer of naming rights. Additionally, this kind of sponsorship could be used as a required match in a grant application.

A wide variety of grants are available to support the creation and development of parks, but the competition is fierce. The City has made a commitment to this revenue stream by hiring a Grant Manager who works full time pursuing and assisting other staff in their pursuit of grants. Over a half million dollars in grants have been used in City parks in the last three years. City staff are well aware of available grant opportunities and make a practice of searching for new grant opportunities.

The final funding opportunity comes through the assessment of taxes. Park maintenance and incremental improvements are funded by the City's general fund. Most significant additions, feature replacements, and improvements rely on grant funding. Additional assessments could be used to finance bond measures or provide ongoing funding specifically for parks. Many communities establish special park districts to obtain needed park funding.

Special Districts are authorized and created by the Local Area Formation Commission (LAFCo) and are set up to cover a specific mapped area. A special park district could be set up to cover the Sphere of Influence, the Area of Interest, or some other customized area. Property taxes are the most common item taxed, but sales taxes or luxury taxes among others are options. Setting up a special park district does not require an election, but taxing the residents of the district would.

Conclusions

On-site staff assessments of the parks concurred with community input in determining the Greater Ukiah Node parks to be well maintained and in overall good shape. The one exception was the County managed Low Gap Park. While residents desire a greater diversity of park features, they also expressed overall satisfaction with existing park diversity of features. Desirable park features that are not represented in City parks include dog parks, pickleball, courts, skating venues, neighborhood basketball courts, and river access. The majority of people living in the City limits live within a half mile of a first tier, community, neighborhood, or regional park. Staffing for the parks is adequate to maintain existing facilities. Additional funding will be needed to expand, create new, or improve existing parks.

While few parks exist outside the Greater Ukiah Node, the total population and population densities do not support the creation of new parks. Residents choosing to live in rural areas and lightly populated nodes should not expect the City of Ukiah to attempt to provide parks in their vicinity even should the area be annexed into the City limits. The City can however work to expand the amount and access to open space. Trails and passive recreation provide an affordable and popular park and recreation opportunity. The Russian River also provides a valuable opportunity to affordably improve Ukiah Valley recreation.

Should annexation occur to the boundary of the Greater Ukiah node, or to include the entire Sphere of Influence, will not make a significant difference in current park needs. In either case population densities should support the maintenance of new parks on the north and south side of the current City limits. However, the capital investment required to acquire the land and build the parks will require grant funding, fund-raising, and or the creation of a parks district.

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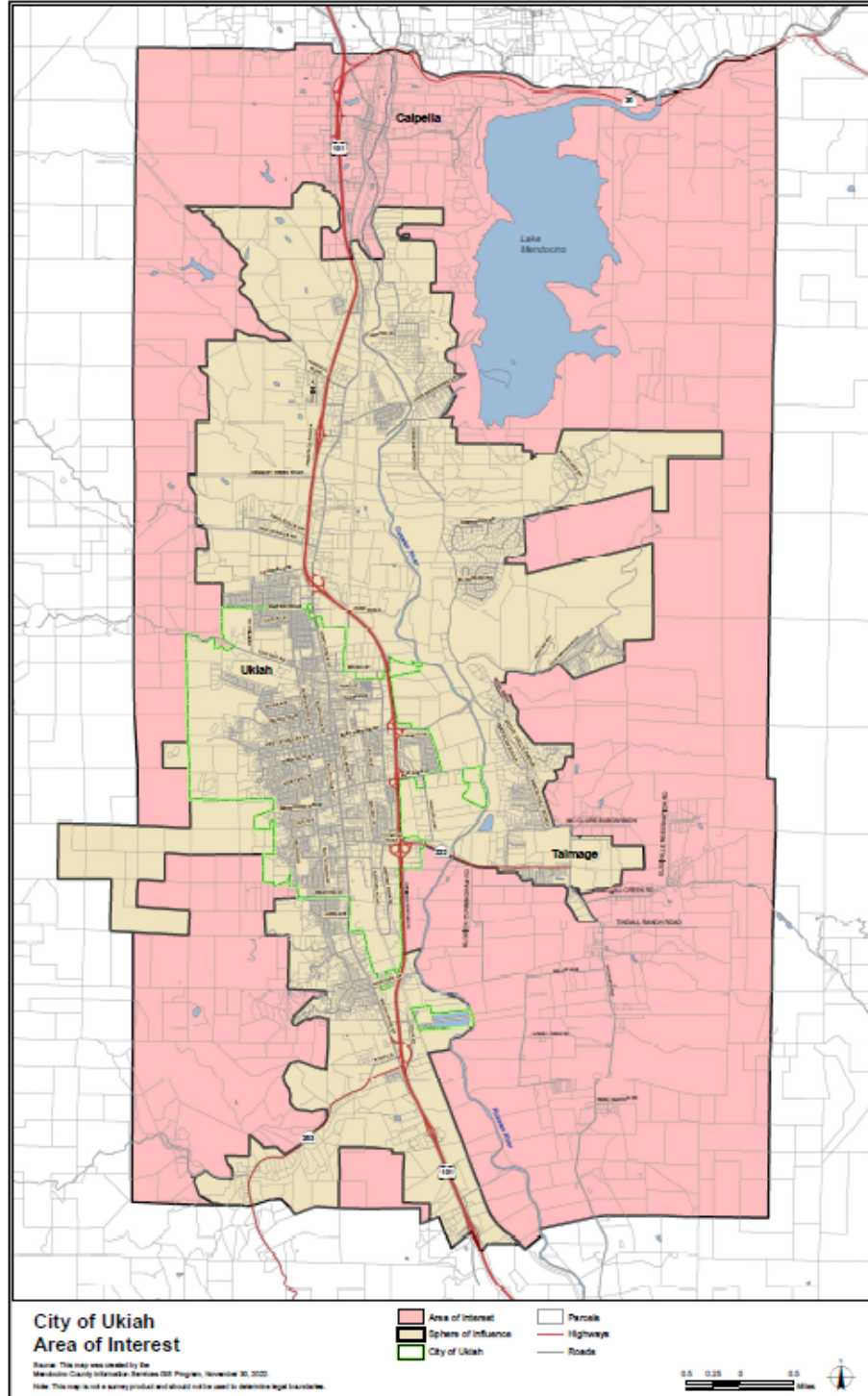
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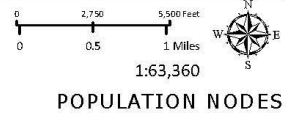
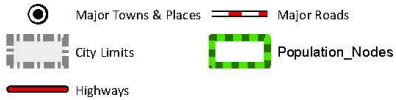
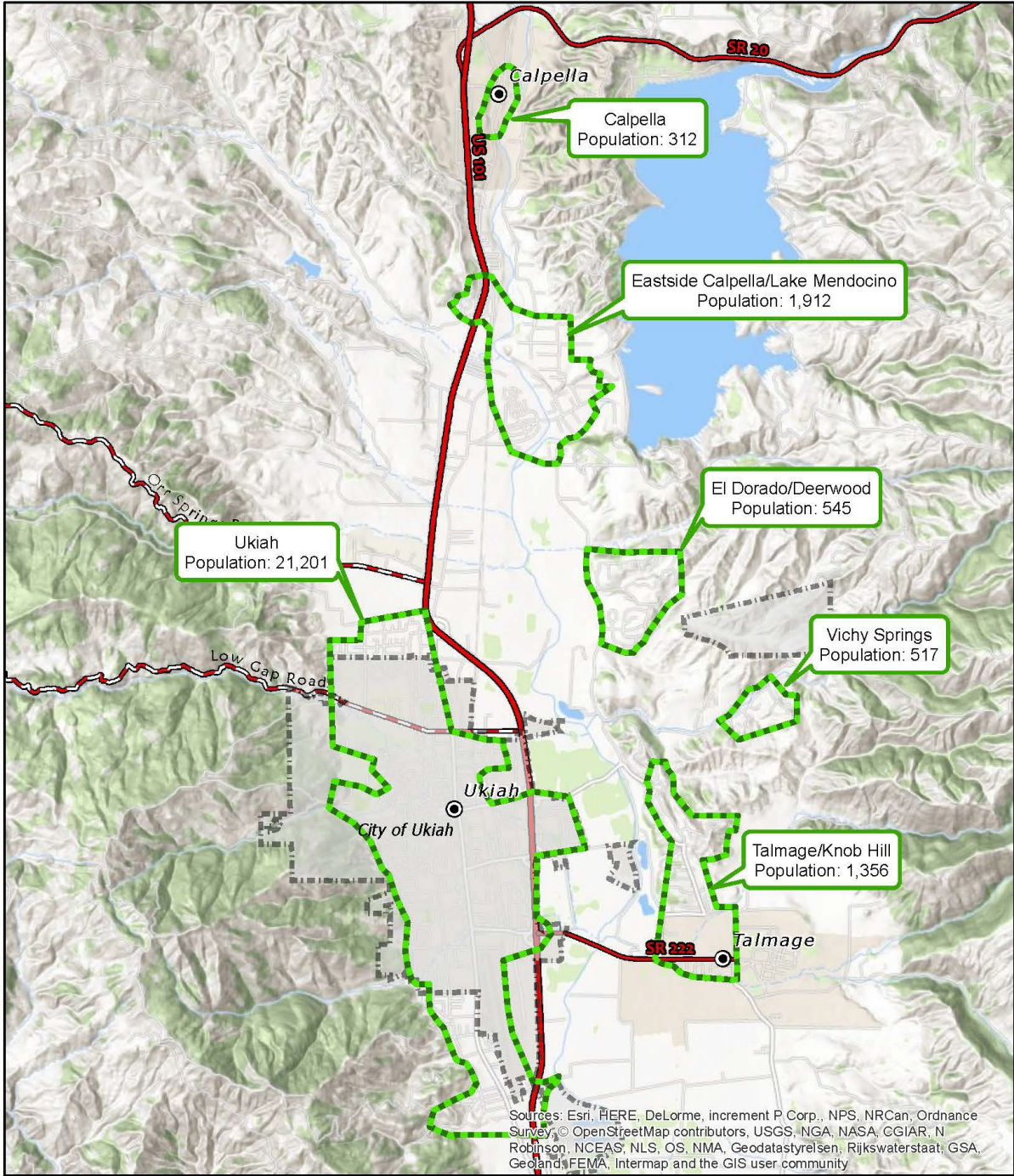
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Maps

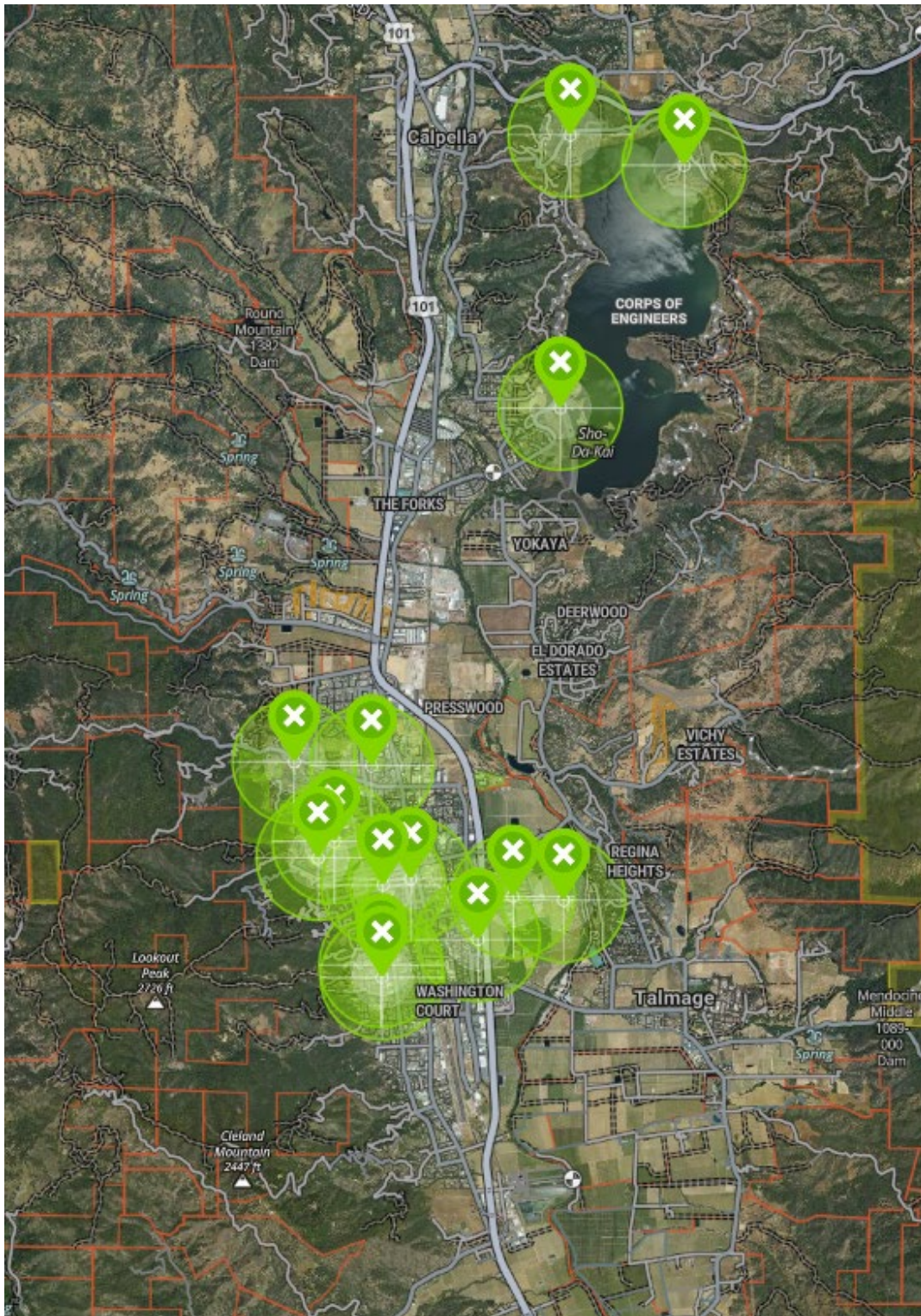


Map 1 - City of Ukiah Area of Interest and Sphere of Influence



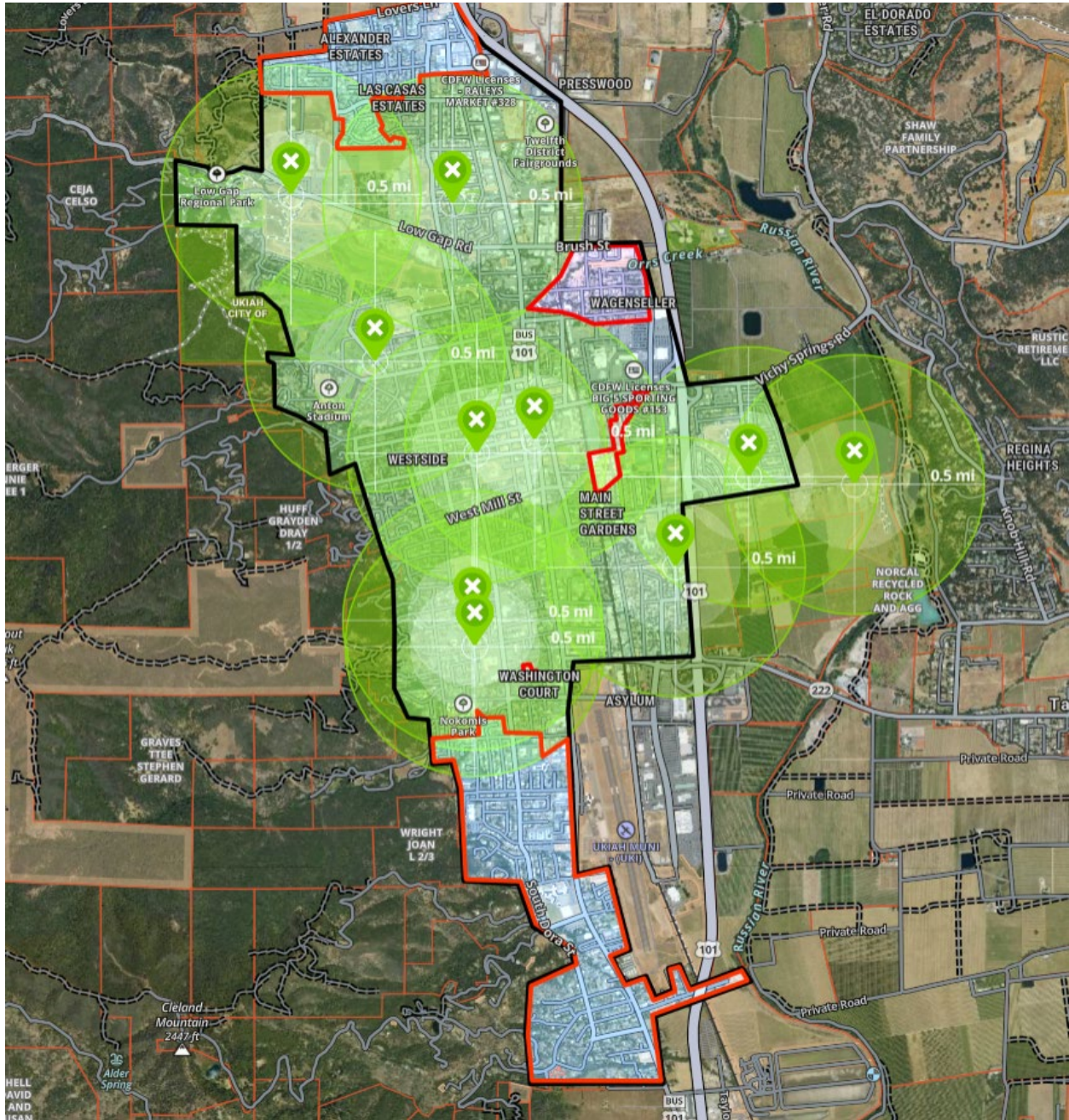
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Map 2 – Population nodes with populations.



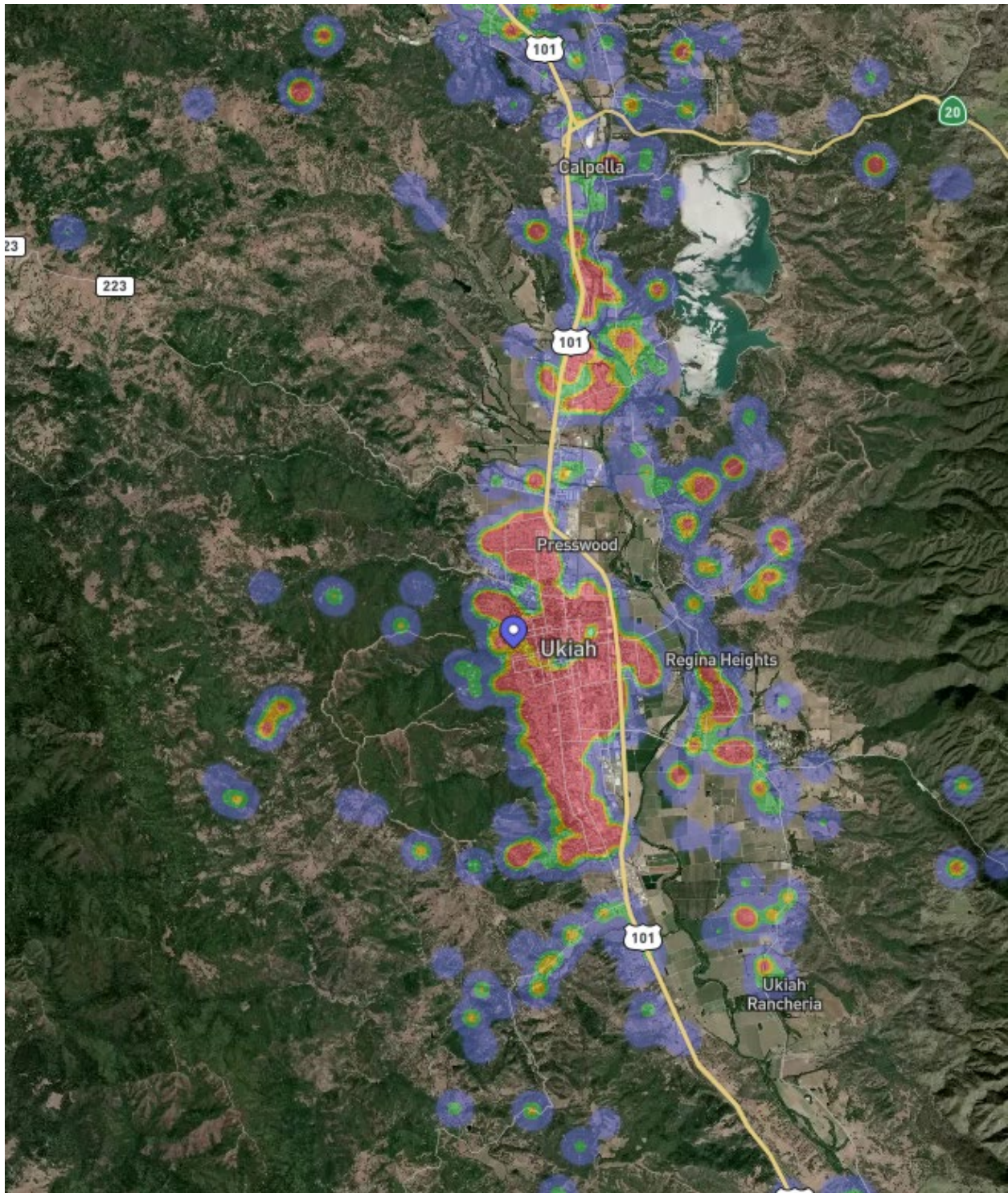
Map 3; First Tier, Neighborhood, Community, and Regional Park Locations and half mile radii.

Alex R. Thomas Plaza, Low Gap Park, McGarvey Park, Oak Manor Park, Observatory Park, Riverside Park, Todd Grove Park, Vinewood Park, and Lake Mendocino gateways.



Map 4 – Parks in Relation to Greater Ukiah Node

- Green – Parks and half mile radii
- Black – Greater Ukiah Node
- Red – Area Underserved by Parks



Map 5 – Heat Map of Todd Grove Park User Origins.

Heat map of Todd Grove Park visitor originations demonstrating the usage of City parks from throughout the Area of Interest.

Tables

<i>Pocket Park</i>	<i>PP</i>	<i>Very small park, may have a bench.</i>
<i>Mini Park</i>	<i>MP</i>	Small, single-purpose improved area generally equipped for use by small children. Usually less than one acre.
<i>Neighborhood Park</i>	<i>NP</i>	Combined playground and park area generally for non-organized activities. May include a restroom.
<i>Community Park</i>	<i>CP</i>	Designed for organized activity with users traveling from some distance. Includes parking, sports fields and restrooms.
<i>Special Use Park</i>	<i>SUP</i>	Specialized use recreational areas that do not fit another category, such as dog parks and skate parks.
<i>Linear Park</i>	<i>LP</i>	A park along a travel corridor, generally narrow and long.
<i>School Park</i>	<i>SP</i>	School-owned facilities with limited availability. Only active sport and recreational use areas contribute to school park acreage in this assessment.
<i>Regional Park</i>	<i>RP</i>	Larger park which may be more isolated from population nodes. May be limited to trails and outdoor recreation, but may have additional facilities.
<i>Open Space</i>	<i>OS</i>	<i>An undeveloped or minimally developed large area conserved for habitat and general conservation value. May include trails.</i>

Table.7_.Park.Category.Descriptions

Park	Area (City vs SOI)	Park Type	Acreage	Quality of 1/2 mile walkability (1-5)	less than 1/4 mile from bus stop
Alex R. Thomas Plaza	City	CP	>1 Acre	3	X
Alex Rorabaugh Center & Fields (County) - UUSD	SOI	SP,SUP	±10 Acres	2	X
City Rail Trail	City	LP	± 3 miles	4	X
Gardner Park	City	PP	>1	3	X
Giorno Park/Anton Stadium	City	SUP	12	3	X
Grace Hudson Museum	City	SUP	>1 Acre	4	X
Low Gap Park (County & City)/City View Trail	City	RP	±80 Acres	4	X
McGarvey Park	City	NP	>1 Acre	4	X
Oak Manor Park	City	CP	>1 Acre	4	X
Observatory Park	City	NP,CP	2.5 Acres	4	X
Orchard Park	City	MP	>1 acre	2	X
Orr Creek Greenway at Oak and Commons	City	LP	±3 Acres	4	X
Riverside Park	City	RP	38 Acres	1	
Railroad Depot Park	City	PP	>1 Acre	2	X
Seminary Avenue	City	N/A	0.22 Miles	3	X
Todd Gove Park & Municipal Pool	City	CP	8.6 Acres	3	X
Ukiah Civic Center	City	NP	2.5 Acres	3	X
Ukiah Skate Park	City	SUP	>1 Acre	4	X
Ukiah Sports Complex	City	SUP	10.3 Acres	0	
Vinewood Park	City	NP	4.7 Acres	2	
Western Hills - Open Space Acquisition	City	OS ?	± 639 Acre	1	
Watershed Park	City	OS ?	>1 Acre	1	X
Vichy Springs Fishing Area (County Park)	SOI	SUP		1	
Landfill Site (not developed or open)	SOI		283	1	
Norgard Property (not developed or open)	SOI		2.4	1	
Mill Creek Park (Outside SOI)	SOI	RP	424	0/1	
Cow Mountain (No access in SOI)	SOI	RP	25000	0	
Lake Mendocino	SOI	RP	3165	1	

Alternative Transportation Infrastructure for Parks in Area of Interest

1 point for each

- Compete sidewalks in half mile
- Bike lane access to park
- MTA stop within 1/4 mile
- low traffic volume

Table 2 Bike, Pedestrian, and Bus Friendly Parks.

Future Park Needs and Capital Improvement Projects		Cost Estimate	
Location	Features	Low	High
Cooper Lane Connection	Connecting Path	\$ 100,000	\$ 200,000
Cow Mountain Open Space Access	Acquisition	\$ 1,000,000	\$ 2,000,000
	Trail Construction	\$ 200,000	\$ 500,000
Dog Park	Undetermined location	\$ 100,000	\$ 500,000
Great Redwood Trail Current Footprint	Landscaping and Benches	\$ 25,000	\$ 50,000
GRT(Post Rail Bank) Amenities	Landscaping and Benches	\$ 50,000	\$ 100,000
	Shade Structures and Trees	\$ 50,000	\$ 150,000
	Community Event Space	\$ 150,000	\$ 400,000
	Pollinator and Native Plant Garden	\$ 25,000	\$ 100,000
	Public Art and Murals	\$ 40,000	\$ 200,000
	Restrooms and Trailheads	\$ 150,000	\$ 400,000
	Playgrounds, Parcourse	\$ 100,000	\$ 250,000
Landfill Trails	Trail Construction	\$ 300,000	\$ 1,000,000
Low Gap Park*			
	Health and Safety	\$ 1,095,000	\$ 142,350
	Minimum Function	\$ 52,500	\$ 68,250
	Future Improvements	\$ 513,000	\$ 666,900
Montgomery Wards Park	Acquisition (~2.6 acres)	\$ 300,000	\$ 500,000
	Demolition	\$ 300,000	\$ 500,000
	Park Installation	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000
Norgard Lane Park	Park Installation	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000
Northside Park	Acquisition	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000
	Park Installation	\$ 300,000	\$ 1,000,000
Orr Creek Greenway	Trail Construction West Section	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 3,000,000
	Freeway Over/Under pass	\$ 1,500,000	\$ 5,000,000
	Trail Construction East Section	\$ 150,000	\$ 250,000
Pickleball court		\$ 200,000	\$ 500,000
Russian River Access	Boat Ramps	\$ 25,000	\$ 150,000
Todd Grove Municipal Pool	Pool Reconstruction	\$ 8,000,000	\$ 13,000,000
Small Park Southside	Acquisition	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,500,000
	Construction	\$ 350,000	\$ 1,000,000
Wagenseller Park	RCHD Partnership	\$ 350,000	\$ 500,000
	Acquisition	\$ 500,000	\$ 1,000,000
	Park Installation	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000
Water Treatment Plant Trails	Trail Construction	\$ 30,000	\$ 50,000
Westen Hills Trails	Trail Construction	\$ 500,000	\$ 2,000,000

Table 4 – Capital Improvement Estimates (bold denote priority projects).

*** Costs from Mendocino County Parks Needs Assessment**

AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT



SUBJECT: Discussion of the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area's Potential as a Community Forest

DEPARTMENT: Community Services **PREPARED BY:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. WHWPA Management Plan F2025 DRAFT Update

Summary: Approve recommended action to update the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area Management Plan and consider renaming the property.

Background: Community forests are protected forestlands that contribute to healthy, flourishing communities. Importantly, they offer residents and community members a direct say in how these lands are stewarded over time. These assets are being nurtured across the country as they are increasingly recognized as land-based economic development tools that deliver positive outcomes to the residents, visitors, and businesses located in their service areas. Benefits from community forests include economic development, improved individual and community health, wildlife habitat preservation, and water supply protection. The key aspect of a community forest is local community control of how the asset is used. Typically, community forests are provided permanent protection through conservation easements.

The City of Ukiah acquired approximately 700 acres of open space now referred to as the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area (WHWPA). Although, the term “community forest” was never used, the acquisition was justified with arguments that were directly aligned with the principles of a community forest. The City Council adopted a WHWPA Management Plan in February of 2024. The plan includes three sections outlining goals and objectives for Resource Protection, Fire Risk Abatement, and Public Uses and Access. However, the plan does not expressly outline how the plan and the property will be administered or specify the need for community involvement.

Discussion: The WHWPA largely meets the definition of a community forest. However, Staff have noted two missing components. First, although the City is using the Public Spaces Commission as the de facto source of public oversight, it is not required by any City policy. Second, although it is generally assumed the property is intended to be conserved in perpetuity, no legally binding conservation measure is in place. Adding these two objectives to the management plan would clearly define the WHWPA as a community forest.

The name Western Hills Watershed Protection Area was derived by Staff as a means to clearly and accurately refer to the property. It has been noted that the name is not particularly memorable.

Staff seek PSC approval to present the City Council with a recommendation to update the WHWPA management plan to include Objective 17 “Provide Permanent and Binding Conservation for the WHWPA” and Objective 18 “Provide Public Oversight and Management” as detailed in the redline version of the draft management plan update (Attachment 1). Staff further seek guidance on designating the WHWPA a community forest. Finally, the PSC may want to consider suggesting an updated name for the WHWPA.

Recommended Action: Approve recommended action to update the Western Hills Watershed Protection Area Management Plan and consider renaming the property.



~~Western Hills Watershed Protection Area
Management Plan~~ Western Hills
Community Forest Management Plan

Western Hills
Watershed ~~Protection~~
~~Area~~ Community
Forest Management
Plan



Adopted February 7, 2024
2025 Update DRAFT

City of Ukiah
300 Seminary Drive
Ukiah, CA 95482
January 2024

Project Location

The Western Hills Watershed Protection Area (WHWPA) is located in eastern Mendocino County in the foothills rising from the Ukiah Valley in the Northern Coast Mountain Range. The WHWPA currently includes 4 non-contiguous areas totaling approximately 750 acres. The largest section is centered on the ridge climbing to the west of Redwood Avenue and ranges between a tenth of a mile to 1.3 miles wide and spans 2.2 miles from east to west for a total of ~ 600 acres. Additional non-contiguous properties include the City owned portion of Low Gap Park (~105 acres), a parcel at the headwaters of Gibson Creek (~35 acres), and an approximate 13-acre parcel near the corner of Helen Avenue and Doolin Creek Road. Public access trail easements connect the Doolin Creek Property to the largest property on the Redwood Ave Ridge.

For the purposes of this plan the “western hills” extends from highway 253 at the south, to Masonite Road on the North, and from the valley floor to the ridge above Robinson Creek on the south and Orr Creek’s headwaters to the north (Attachment 1). If and when the City obtains additional properties within the described western hills boundary, they will be added to this plan as an amendment.

The WHWPA extends from the valley floor at 760 feet to its highest point at Lookout Peak at 2,726 feet in elevation. Additional properties may be added as opportunities for acquisition arise. A map of the current protected area is available as Attachment 2.

Overall, the WHWPA is steep with slopes ranging from 30-70 percent. The vegetation is overgrown in some locations and wildfire has been suppressed for decades. Looking to the west from the highest ridge, views of Pine Mountain and the headwaters of Robinson Creek can be seen. Looking to the east provides views of Lake Mendocino, the Ukiah Valley, and the mountain tops of Sanhedrin, Hull, Snow, Red, and Konocti Mountains. Two forks of Doolin Creek flow east out of the central and southern parts of the WHWPA. The headwaters of Gibson Creek lie in the northwesternmost corner of the WHWPA and an unnamed creek in the northeastern parcel of the WHWPA flows east toward Hillcrest Avenue.

WHWPA Management Plan

This Management Plan defines the priorities and goals for the WHWPA to ensure continuity in management decision making. Once approved by the Ukiah City Council, the overarching goals of property ownership should rarely if ever change. This plan is further intended to guide staff in day-to-day activities and to provide criteria for the operations, maintenance, ~~and~~ management, and administration of the Preserve.

The plan acknowledges the benefits of local control and community involvement. “Community Forests” are protected forestlands that contribute to healthy, flourishing communities. Importantly, they offer residents and community members a direct say in how these lands are stewarded over time. These assets are being nurtured across the country as they are increasingly recognized as land-based economic development tools that deliver positive outcomes to the residents, visitors, and businesses located in

their service areas. Benefits from community forests include economic development, improved individual and community health, wildlife habitat preservation, and water supply protection.

The key aspect is local community control of how the asset is used. Typically, community forests are provided permanent protection through conservation easements.

In keeping with the primary goals of protecting the WHWPA's scenic resources and biodiversity, soil and aquatic resources, and ecological functions, most of the management actions should either directly or indirectly implement the natural resources goals.

The Management Plan was designed to protect the conservation values of the WHWPA while providing the opportunity for the future development of recreational, educational, and utility support opportunities that are compatible with protection of natural resources. This document is intended to provide guidance for balancing multiple goals.

The actions and policies of the Management Plan are organized into ~~four~~three categories with multiple topic areas within each: Resource Preservation, Fire Risk Abatement, ~~and~~ Public Uses and Access, and Administration and Public Oversight.

Purpose and Vision of City of Ukiah Open Space Designated Properties

The City of Ukiah is committed to protecting the purity and integrity of the Ukiah Valley Aquifer that supplies water to residents and the flora and fauna of the Ukiah Valley, as well as to the Russian River. Protecting the watershed created by the western hills from development was a primary purpose for the City's acquisition of the WHWPA. The City will continue to work with land owners and land trusts to expand the footprint of the WHWPA through acquisitions and conservation easements in the Western Hills as roughly identified in Attachment 1. Additional but secondary reasons, or goals for the acquisition included habitat and watershed protection, utility support, and public access. All plans and activities should balance these secondary goals while assuring the ascendancy of watershed protection.

Vision Statement

Creating an Open Space Preserve, Balancing Resource Management, Fire Risk Abatement, and Public Engagement

Our vision for the WHWPA is to establish an Open Space Preserve that harmoniously integrates resource management, fire risk abatement, and public access for healthy outdoor recreation. We aspire to protect native plants and wildlife communities, prevent erosion, and maintain water quality. Simultaneously, we aim to engage the public in decision making, citizen science, education, and passive recreation while ensuring the protection of historical resources and providing essential infrastructure for the benefit of our community.

Resource Preservation

- Objective 1** *Establish a Management Culture of Continual Improvement and Increased Resource Knowledge and Understanding.*
- Objective 2** *Locate WHWPA Facilities to Avoid Rare Plants, Sensitive Natural Communities, and Habitat for Wildlife*
- Objective 3** *Control Erosion, Protect Water Quality, and Maintain Facilities*
- Objective 4** *Control Dust during Construction and other Management Activities*
- Objective 5** *Revegetation after Soil Disturbance*
- Objective 6** *Best Management Practices for Hazardous Materials Handling and Pollution*
- Objective 7** *Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species*
- Objective 8** *Prevent Spread of Sudden Oak Death and Other Plant Pathogens*
- Objective 9** *Best Management Practices for Use of Pesticides and Herbicides*
- Objective 10** *Seek Opportunities to Expand the Footprint of Protected Watershed*

Fire Risk Abatement

- Objective 11** *Reduce Fire Risk to the WHWPA through Fire Abatement and Vegetation Management Activities*
- Objective 12** *Protect Habitat during Fire Abatement and Vegetation Management Activities*

Public Uses and Access

- Objective 13** *Provide Safe Public Access for Citizen Science / Education, Volunteer Management, and Recreation*
- Objective 14** *Monitor for, and Protect if Found, Historic or Archeological Resources*
- Objective 15** *Provide Water Storage, Power Generation, and Communication Infrastructure*
- Objective 16** *Provide and Protect Access to Native American Culture Bearers to Nurture Areas for Harvest and Traditional Uses*

Administration and Public Oversight

Objective 17 Provide Permanent and Binding Conservation for the WHWPA

Objective 18 Provide Public Oversight and Management

General Program Objectives, and Resource Conservation Objectives

The following Project Objectives and Management Tasks are intended to guide the management of the WHWPA and to protect and enhance native habitats and protect sensitive biotic resources (such as riparian zones and creeks, sensitive natural communities¹ and habitat for native wildlife and plant species); protect cultural resources; and potentially expand access to the Protection Area. This plan assures activities on the property will minimize impacts to less than significant levels. A Mitigation Monitoring and Reporting Plan shall be produced and implemented in coordination with facility development.

Project Objectives

Resource Preservation

Objective 1 Establish a Management Culture of Continual Improvement and Increased Resource Knowledge and Understanding.

- Seek opportunities to fund and carry out property surveys to better understand and map the WHWPA.
- To the greatest extent possible begin with high level, broad scale surveys to be used to identify areas of concern, such as areas with rare plants or sensitive natural communities, and then focus subsequent surveys on areas of heightened concern.
- To the greatest extent possible collect and collate studies into a single searchable source.
- Seek opportunities to collaborate with partner agencies to further the knowledge and understanding of the project.
- Seek formal and informal opportunities for staff education.

Objective 2 – Locate WHWPA Facilities to Avoid Rare Plants, Sensitive natural communities and Habitat for Wildlife

The City shall use the following design standards to minimize impacts on native vegetation and wildlife communities:

- To the greatest degree possible site roads, trails, and other park infrastructure out of sensitive habitat areas.
- Maintain buffers between new trails or park infrastructure and drainages.
- Limit removal of existing native vegetation during site development.
- Design trails to avoid mature trees and plan revegetation as needed to maintain native canopy cover and understory species.
- Limit the use of fences. When fencing is essential, use wildlife-friendly fencing.

Management Task 2A: Avoid Loss of Special-Status species and their Habitats

The City shall ensure that the following protection objectives for special-status plants and species of local concern and their habitat are implemented during management activities in the WHWPA.

- Maintain a list of special status plants to be updated at least every three years to monitor for newly listed species
- Avoid removal and minimize trimming of Raiche’s Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos stanfordiana* spp. *raichei*) and Redwood Lilly (*Lilium rubescens*) during vegetation management activities. Train crews to recognize this species prior to each vegetation clearing effort, and have a trained supervisor oversee all work in areas where this plant occurs.
- Ensure that Red bellied newts (*Taricha rivularis*) are protected during vegetation management activities. Train crews to recognize this species prior to each vegetation clearing effort, and have a trained supervisor oversee all work in areas where this plant occurs.
- Prior to any park development in areas beyond existing trails and roads, the City shall conduct a botanical survey to document if special-status species are present. Surveys shall be conducted at the appropriate time for plant identification and shall be conducted by a botanist experienced with Mendocino County plant species and natural communities. If special-status plants or their habitat are not identified during initial site surveys, no further mitigation is necessary under this objective.
- If any special-status plant species or sensitive natural communities are found in areas proposed for park development, project plans shall be adjusted to avoid impact to the species. The City shall consult with a qualified botanist to determine appropriate setback distances and protection objectives.
- If special-status plant species or sensitive natural communities cannot be avoided, project-specific protection objectives (e.g., transplant, seed collection, propagation) shall be developed and implemented.

- Any herbicide application to treat non-native plants must ensure that no native plants are affected. A thorough review of invasive plant management best practices should be undertaken and consultation with the California Invasive Plant Council² should be considered prior to application.

Management Task 2B: Protect Birds During Construction and Other Management Activities

The City shall ensure that the following protection objectives for birds are implemented for construction, ground disturbing, and/or vegetation management activities:

- Work outside of the critical breeding bird period (February 15 through August 31) including construction projects and during ongoing land management (e.g., vegetation trimming and removal, etc.). If activities must occur during this breeding period, work areas shall be surveyed by a qualified biologist prior to commencing. Surveys shall be required for all human-related ground disturbance activities in natural habitats and for vegetation trimming and removal. The surveys shall be conducted within one week prior to initiation of vegetation clearing, tree removal and trimming, or other construction activities. If the biologist finds no active nesting or breeding activity, work can proceed without restrictions. If active raptor or owl nests are identified within 100 feet of the construction area or active nests of other special-status birds (e.g., passerines, woodpeckers, hummingbirds, etc.) are identified within 50 feet of the construction area, a biologist shall determine whether or not construction activities may impact the active nest or disrupt reproductive behavior. If it is determined that construction would not affect an active nest or disrupt breeding behavior, construction can proceed without restrictions. The determination of disruption shall be based on the species' sensitivity to disturbance, which can vary among species; the level of noise or construction disturbance; and the line of sight between the nest and the disturbance. If the biologist determines activities would be detrimental, the nesting area and 250-foot buffer for larger nesting birds (e.g., owls, raptors, herons, egrets) and 50-foot buffer for small nesting songbirds shall be adhered to until the nest has been vacated.
- If the work area is left unattended for more than one week following the initial surveys, additional surveys shall be completed. Ongoing construction monitoring shall occur to ensure no nesting activity is disturbed. If state and/or federally listed birds are found breeding within the area, activities shall be halted, and consultation with the CDFW and USFWS shall occur to determine if any additional protection objectives are needed.
- For fire risk abatement fuel management, nesting bird surveys shall be required for all fire risk abatement vegetation management in late winter through spring. All burn piles shall be burned outside of the bird nesting season (February 15 through August 31). If activities must occur during this period, burn activities shall be reviewed and approved by a qualified biologist before commencing.

Objective 3 - Control Erosion, Protect Water Quality, and Maintain Facilities

The City shall maintain roads, trails, and any other approved infrastructure to ensure long term viability and utility of the infrastructure while ensuring erosion control, sediment detention. Site maintenance activities shall occur in accordance with the *Handbook for Forest, Ranch, & Rural Roads* (2015) and the following objectives:

- Protect disturbed areas against erosion. When a road project involves grading or work within or adjacent to a stream, a spill prevention and clean-up plan, Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (if disturbance is greater than one acre), or similar document (Erosion Control Plan) shall be prepared and implemented during construction activities to protect water quality. The plan would address polluted runoff and spill prevention policies, BMPs that are required to be available on site in case of rain or a spill (e.g., straw bales, silt fencing, erosion control blankets, spill response kit), clean-up and reporting procedures, and locations of refueling and minor maintenance areas.

- Dispose of all debris, sediment, rubbish, vegetation, or other construction-related materials in a location approved by the City. No materials, including petroleum products, chemicals, silt, fine soils, or substances deleterious to the function of a watercourse, water quality, or biological resources, would be allowed to pass into, or be placed where it can pass into stream channels.

- Cover stockpiled soils when rain is expected while materials are temporarily stockpiled. Cover stockpiles with plastic that is secured in place to ensure the piles are protected from rain and wind. Silt fencing or wattles would be installed on contour around all stockpile locations.

- Follow Ukiah Valley Trail Group's Trail Maintenance and Design Guidelines for all trail construction and maintenance. (Attachment 3)

- Minimize the amount of soil disturbance and avoid trail alignments in seeps or wet areas.

- Install temporary erosion control measures such as wattles before construction begins and remove once the site has been stabilized with native vegetation or other method.

- Maintain vegetated filter strips at the base of slopes and along trails to allow surface water to slow down and for sediment to be retained.

Management Task 3A -Maintain roads and facilities to minimize sedimentation and maintenance costs.

- Perform an annual survey of road conditions after the end of winter rains.
- Note and document maintenance needs that will be required prior to the next rainy season.

- All road work shall be completed in accordance with the Handbook for Forest, Ranch, & Rural Roads (see Reference List).

Project Objective 4 - Control Dust during Construction and other Management Activities

The City shall implement the following dust control objectives in areas where soil or vegetation has been disturbed and during construction activities:

- Cover open-bodied trucks when used for transporting materials likely to give rise to airborne dust.
- Use water or chemicals to control dust during construction operations or clearing of land.
- Apply water or suitable chemicals on materials stockpiles and other surfaces that can give rise to airborne dusts.
- Limit vehicle speeds on dirt roads to not more than 12 miles per hour.

Objective 5 – Revegetation after Soil Disturbance

The City shall implement the following objectives in areas where soil or vegetation has been disturbed by management activities:

- Implement soil protection objectives, including seeding or planting, promptly with appropriate native species and covering with weed-free straw mulch, and/or installing biodegradable erosion control fabric on slopes.
- Use seed or container stock of local origin for plantings. Seed or propagules for revegetation would be collected from the property itself if a viable source is present. Where this is not possible, propagules shall be from within the Russian River watershed with exceptions being made only after review by a qualified staff member or consultant. Within these geographic parameters, collections shall be made with the goal of capturing natural genetic variation (e.g., collect from a range of elevations and from plants exhibiting varied phenology).
- Include native plant species with high value to local wildlife and/or butterflies and other pollinators in planting palettes as appropriate to the site. Ideally, the area should be surveyed in advance to identify and mimic the species naturally occurring on the site.
- For management actions that have removed native vegetation, evaluate post-construction revegetation success on individual site conditions based generally on the following: 1) establishment of native trees and shrubs at a ratio of 2:1 living after five years (or the ratio mandated by regulatory permits), 2) establishment of herbaceous cover equal to that of adjacent undisturbed ground within three years, and 3) no increase in invasive species populations (or no greater cover of invasive species than that of adjacent undisturbed ground).

- Enhance native butterfly habitat by incorporating larval host plants and nectar plants into restoration palettes as appropriate.
- Include a mixture of plant types (i.e., shrubs, vines, perennials, and herbaceous species as well as trees) in planting palettes to maintain or improve the structural diversity of habitats.
- Use limited organic, weed-free amendments if required to help establish restoration vegetation for soils that have been disturbed and require additional organic matter or nutrients to support native plants. Organic fertilizers shall only be used above the normal high-water mark of any adjacent waterways. No chemical fertilizers shall be used.

Objective 6 - Best Management Practices for Hazardous Materials Handling and Pollution Prevention

The City shall employ Best Management Practices for staging, maintenance, fueling, and spill containment of potentially hazardous materials used on the property. The City shall ensure that all equipment used onsite is inspected for leaks. Vehicles shall be parked and fueled in a designated staging a minimum of 50' away from creeks, drainages, and other water sources including wetlands and seasonal wetlands.

All equipment shall be properly cleaned before entering the Preserve, and spill prevention kits shall be available onsite.

Objective 7- Prevent the Spread of Invasive Species

The City shall prevent the spread of invasive weeds and other species to the extent feasible.

Invasive Plants

Weed control methods shall include, but would not be limited to:

- Clean plant material and soil from the tires and undercarriage of vehicles and equipment (e.g. mowers) that have traveled through weed-infested areas before they leave those areas.
- Cleaning may be done with a hose if water is available and/or with a scrub brush or stiff broom.
- Train staff and WHWPA volunteers to recognize invasive species and report new infestations promptly to Director of Community Services or designee.
- If resources are available, educate residents immediately adjacent to the WHWPA about invasive species and encourage use of locally native plant species in landscaping..

Invasive Animals

- Monitor for the invasion of pigs, feral cats, turkeys and other non-native animals with the assistance of trail cams and quarterly site tours.
- Intervene early and aggressively to exclude invasive animals from the property.
- Develop a plan for trapping and depredation to be available and ready for implementation should invasive animals be discovered.

Objective 8 – Prevent Spread of Sudden Oak Death and Other Plant Pathogens

The City shall be responsible for protecting against the spread of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) and other plant pathogens through implementation of the following requirements:

- Survey the property for, and map locations, where SOD is present.
- Before purchasing any nursery stock for restoration plantings, confirm that the nursery follows current Best Management Practices for preventing the spread of SOD (consult the [California Oak Mortality Task Force](#) for current standards).
- Inspect all plant materials for symptoms of SOD before bringing onto the property.^x
- Train management staff on host species, symptoms, and disease transmission pathways for *Phytophthora ramorum* and other *Phytophthora* species, and on Best Management Practices to prevent the spread of SOD, including:
 - Clean equipment after working in forest and woodland habitats, including chainsaws, boots, and truck tires (spray with a 10% bleach solution or other disinfectant, then rinse).
 - Work in forest and woodlands in the dry season instead of the wet season when spores are being produced and infections are starting. Avoid or minimize pruning oak, tanoak, and bays in wet weather.
 - Leave potentially infected downed trees on site instead of transporting the material to an uninfected area. Where infection is already known to be present, leaving *P. ramorum* infected or killed trees on site has not been shown to increase the risk of infection to adjacent trees. Allow removal from the property only if fire risk is high or for aesthetic or safety. If infected material is removed from the site, dispose of at an approved and permitted facility within the quarantine zone encompassing the 14-county infected quarantine zone.
- If necessary to improve safety or reduce fire hazards, infected trees can be cut, branches chipped, and wood split. Do not leave cut wood and chips in an area where they might be transported to an uninfected location.

- Educate WHWPA users about objectives to prevent the spread of SOD. Provide signage at major trailheads explaining that SOD occurs on the property, showing typical symptoms and explaining that it can be spread by WHWPA visitors, especially in wet winters, during rainy and windy weather. This may be based on existing public educational materials such as those developed by the California Oak Mortality Task Force. Request that WHWPA visitors:
 - o Stay on established trails and respect trail closures.
 - o Avoid entering areas that appear to be diseased, especially in wet, muddy conditions. If avoidance is not possible, follow the sanitation practices described below.
 - o Avoid transporting SOD on shoes, vehicles, or other transport. After traveling through an infected area, clean up and disinfect. For instance, hikers should remove mud from shoes using an old screwdriver, stiff brush, and/or towel. Further disinfect shoes by washing with soap and water or spraying with a 10% bleach solution.

Objective 9 – Best Management Practices for Use of Pesticides and Herbicides

The City shall minimize the use of pesticides and herbicides to the extent feasible as directed by the City of Ukiah’s Integrated Pest Management Plan. The City shall ensure that any use of pesticides is done according to manufacturers’ recommendations and only as part of the City’s Integrated Pest Management Plan to protect natural resources and conservation values.

Use pesticides with caution to prevent contaminated runoff. A surfactant-free formulation shall be used any time pesticides or herbicides are used within a riparian area. Herbicide application shall be done under the guidance of a certified pest control applicator and according to the manufacturer’s instructions.

Objective 10 Seek Opportunities to Expand the Footprint of Protected Watershed

The City shall collaborate with private property owners, land trusts, and other interested parties to expand the total acres of protected watershed within the Western Hills.

Fire Risk Abatement

Objective 11 – Reduce Fire Risk to the WHWPA through Fire Abatement and Vegetation Management Activities

The City shall collaborate with the Ukiah Valley Fire Protection District, Mendocino County Fire Safe Council, and CalFire to undertake fire reduction and mitigation programs. The following harm reduction programs and efforts shall be pursued:

- Convene regular meetings to ensure collaboration and communication between the partner agencies.
- Develop a priority list of fire mitigation measures to be implemented as funding is available.

- Maintain a log of fuel load management and fire mitigation project completion.
- To achieve the fire hazard reduction goals, the City shall develop a Fire Risk Abatement Plan. The work plan shall include a description of the current and target conditions of the treatment area, map and photos of the treatment area; identify immediate and long-term goals, timeline for implementation, access points, disposal methods, and target species. Fire Risk Abatement Plans may cover a period of 1 to 5 years. The Fire Risk Abatement Plan shall follow the natural resource and fire management recommendations set forth in the WHWPA Management Plan. Once the plans are developed, implementation will proceed as described in the plan.

Maintenance and Management Task 11A - Reduce Fire Risk on the WHWPA During Maintenance or Patrol Activities

The City shall implement the following measures to reduce fire risk on the WHWPA during maintenance activities:

- Prohibit vegetation management for ongoing WHWPA maintenance or fire risk abatement during red flag days according to the National Weather Service.
- Require all equipment and vehicles used on the WHWPA to be equipped with spark arrestors or other means of controlling backfiring.
- Limit use of power tools for maintenance or other activities during periods of high and very high fire danger.
- Limit driving onto the Preserve during periods of high and very high fire danger.
- Prohibit parking or driving over flammable material such as grasses and dry brush.
- Maintain clear, unobstructed access along the fire and emergency access road by trimming back encroaching vegetation and promptly responding to and removing any trail obstruction
- Ensure that fire department staff or other entities overseeing fuel load management activities participate in the annual staff meeting and communication protocol.
- All vehicles driven onto the WHWPA shall be equipped with a fire extinguisher, chain saw and associated safety equipment, standard fire-fighting equipment (e.g., shovel, McLeod, fire extinguisher), and a first-aid kit.

Objective 12 – Protect Habitat during Fire Abatement and Vegetation Management Activities

The City shall fully maintain habitat quality and complexity during fire abatement and vegetation management activities consistent with protecting public safety. The following habitat protection objectives shall be implemented:

- Develop and maintain a trail and road system to increase emergency access routes and serve as small fire breaks. WHWPA areas along the emergency access routes shall be maintained for emergency vehicle travel while retaining as much vegetation as possible. Established and maintained corridors reduce the chance of emergency road building.
- Roads and trails provide a good access area for shaded fuel breaks and should be considered as priority areas for fuel load management.
- Once established, trails should be evaluated and recommendations for trail clearing widths should be established on a case-by-case basis.
- Prior to vegetation management activities, establish permanent photo points to illustrate before- and after-treatment conditions. Provide typical views of treatment locations for five years after treatment. Use photos to review changes in habitat conditions. Photos shall be taken at the same month each year – for example, in May or June when new leaves are present on plants. If undesirable changes, such as decreased plant density or non-native plant invasion are noted, the City shall review practices and revise as needed to protect natural resources.
- Conduct biological trainings and surveys prior to vegetation management activities.
- Engage personnel familiar with native plant identification and wildlife requirements to guide vegetation management and fuel reduction work on the ground.
- Allow maintenance vehicle access only on the fire and emergency access road and existing trails.
- Maintain habitat complexity, especially along drainages and riparian corridors outside the emergency access corridor. This will require maintaining a balance between providing diverse, multistory forest and woodlands for wildlife utilization and plant community diversity and the need for fire risk abatement and emergency services access.
- If vegetation management is needed along drainages for public safety, ensure that the special ecological values of the habitat are maintained. Work only on sites that are accessible without driving off-road or off-trail, dispose of cut vegetation without blocking drainages, minimize ground disturbance, and maintain duff and native canopy.
- Limit ground disturbance during all vegetation management activities. Where bare ground is exposed as a result of work, promptly treat to prevent erosion, establish native plant species

including ground cover, grasses, and shrubs, as appropriate, and limit colonization by invasive plant species; Seeding recommendations should be developed and added to this plan as an Appendix.

- Unless there is a threat to public safety or increased fire risk, retain decaying and dying trees, limbs, snags, and debris piles for wildlife habitat. Snags should be left standing at not less than six per acre. If a downed tree crosses over a trail, cut and move to the side.
- In areas of tree die-off, trees can be felled and limbed. A minimum of six snags per acre should be retained for habitat preservation.
- Engage a professional botanist or vegetation ecologist to review fire hazard reduction practices every five years to ensure that vegetation removal is not negatively affecting native plant community species composition or health, or wildlife communities.

Public Uses and Access

Objective 13 – Provide Safe Public Access for Citizen Science / Education, Volunteer Management Assistance, and Recreation

The City shall develop and implement plans to allow public access to the WHWPA. Public access may be permitted to allow for Citizen Science and Education, Volunteer Activities, and / or Recreation. The following public access objectives shall be implemented:

- Develop and implement policies and procedures for public access to pursue research, citizen science, and / or education to be added as an appendix to this document.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for volunteer assistance in the management of the WHWPA to be added as an appendix to this document.
- Develop and implement policies and procedures for public recreational access to the WHWPA.
- Coordinate with Human Resources to limit liability.
- The use of motor vehicles by the public will be restricted to the greatest degree possible. Motor vehicle use for the sole purpose of recreation shall be prohibited.

Objective 13A – Provide Safe Public Trails for Passive Recreation

The City of Ukiah shall construct and maintain trails for public access for passive (non-motorized) recreation. The minimal environmental impact of trails is self-mitigated by the trail's environmental education and health benefits. Trails shall not exceed 5 miles per 100 acres to maintain this balance and distribute any impacts of construction and use.

- Trails shall be built to conform with current best practices of sustainable trail design.
- Equal emphasis shall be provided in the development of both mountain biking and hiking trails.
- Hiking only, biking only, and shared use trails should be considered.
- Trails shall not be open to equestrians until adequate parking is secured, and a plan for the additional maintenance necessitated by equestrian use is in place.

Objective 14 – Monitor for, and Protect if Found, Historic or Archeological Resources

The City shall remain vigilant for the discovery of previously unknown Historic or Archeological Resources. In pursuit of this objective the City shall;

- Seek funding for and obtain an Archaeological survey of the WHWPA.

Management Task 14A; Identify and Avoid or Minimize Impacts on Historic Resources

Should subsurface historic materials be encountered during construction, the City shall ensure that trail maintenance, or resource management activities, the piece of equipment or crew member that encountered the materials shall stop and the find shall be inspected by a qualified historian/archaeologist. Project personnel shall not collect historic materials. If the historian/archaeologist determines that the find qualifies as a unique historic resource for the purposes of CEQA (Guidelines Section 15064.5(c)), all work shall be stopped in the immediate vicinity to allow the archaeologist to evaluate the find and recommend appropriate treatment. Such treatment and resolution shall include either modifying the project to allow the materials to be left in place or undertaking data recovery of the materials in accordance with standard archaeological methods. The preferred treatment shall be protection and preservation. If the resource is determined to qualify as historic under CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5(a), and the management action would impair the resource, such impacts on the resource shall be avoided. Management activities shall be implemented to avoid impairment of the historic resources. Objectives to protect historic resources may include, for example, temporary protective barriers or construction worker training.

Management Task 14B: Identify and Avoid or Minimize Impacts on Archaeological Resources

The City of Ukiah shall ensure that if previously unknown archaeological materials are encountered during construction, trail maintenance, or resource management activities, the piece of equipment or crew member that encountered the materials shall stop, and the find shall be inspected by a qualified archaeologist. Project personnel shall not collect archaeological materials. If the archaeologist determines that the find potentially qualifies as a unique archaeological resource for the purposes of

CEQA (Guidelines Section 15064.5(c)), all work shall be stopped in the immediate vicinity to allow the archaeologist to evaluate the find and recommend appropriate treatment. Such treatment and resolution shall include either project modification to allow the materials to be left in place or undertaking data recovery of the materials in accordance with standard archaeological methods. The preferred treatment shall be protection and preservation.

Management Task 14C: Procedures for Encountering Human Remains

If human remains are encountered, project personnel shall stop all work in the immediate vicinity. The Mendocino County Coroner and a qualified archaeologist shall be notified immediately so that an evaluation can be performed. If the coroner determines the remains are Native American and prehistoric, Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) shall be contacted so that a “Most Likely Descendant” can be designated, the appropriate Tribal representative can be contacted, and further recommendations regarding treatment of the remains can be provided. The City of Ukiah shall ensure that if human remains or funerary objects are discovered during soil-disturbing activities, the City shall ensure that all work stops in the vicinity and that the Mendocino County Coroner is notified. A qualified archaeologist shall evaluate the remains. If human remains are of Native American origin, the Coroner shall notify the Native American Heritage Commission (NAHC) within 24 hours of identification, pursuant to California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98. NAHC would appoint a Most Likely Descendant (MLD). A qualified archaeologist, the City of Ukiah, and the MLD shall make all reasonable efforts to develop an agreement for the treatment, with appropriate dignity, of any human remains and associated or unassociated funerary objects (CEQA Guidelines Section 15064.5[d]). The agreement shall take into consideration the appropriate excavation, removal, recordation, analysis, custodianship, and final disposition of the human remains and associated or unassociated funerary objects. The PRC allows 48 hours to reach agreement on these matters. If the MLD and the other parties cannot not agree on the reburial method, the City shall follow California Public Resources Code Section 5097.98(b), which states that “the landowner or his or her authorized representative shall reinter the human remains and items associated with Native American burials with appropriate dignity on the property in a location not subject to further subsurface disturbance.”

Management Task 14D: Avoid or Document Paleontological Resources

The City of Ukiah shall ensure that if a paleontological resource is discovered during construction, trail maintenance, or resource management activities, all ground-disturbing activities within 50 feet of the find shall be temporarily halted. Activities may be diverted to areas beyond 50 feet from the discovery. The City shall notify a qualified paleontologist who will document the discovery, evaluate the potential resource and assess the nature and significance of the find. Based on scientific value or uniqueness, the paleontologist may record the find and allow work to continue or recommend salvage and recovery of the material. The paleontologist shall make recommendations for any necessary treatment that is consistent with currently accepted scientific practices.

Management Task 14E; Consult with Native American Tribes if Previously Undiscovered Artifacts are

Discovered

In the event any Native American archaeological artifacts are discovered during implementation of management activities, the City shall contact and consult with local tribes who have a traditional and cultural affiliation with the Project area. If the tribe(s) considers the resource to be a tribal resource, the City shall consult with the tribe to develop appropriate mitigation objectives in accordance with Public Resources Code 21080.3.2.

Objective 15 Provide Water Storage, Power Generation, and Communication Infrastructure

The City of Ukiah's Water and Utilities Departments contributed to funding for the WHWPA acquisition with the understanding that water storage and power generation were potential uses of the property. While watershed protection is the primary goal of the property, the placement of water tanks and limited power generation infrastructure should be considered when feasible with mitigations for the use as determined by CEQA reviews such as Mitigated Negative Declaration or Environmental Impact Report.

Objective 16 Provide and Protect Access to Native American Culture Bearers to Nurture Areas for Harvest and Traditional Uses

The City shall develop and implement plans and policies to allow safe and secure access to Native American culture bearers who wish to nurture areas for harvest, harvest for personal and family use, and for the pursuit of other traditional uses.

Administration and Public Oversight

Objective 17 Provide Permanent and Binding Conservation for the WHWPA

The City shall assess options for ensuring legally binding permanent conservation and select and obtain the best possible means of protecting the WHWPA in perpetuity.

Objective 18 Provide Public Oversight and Management

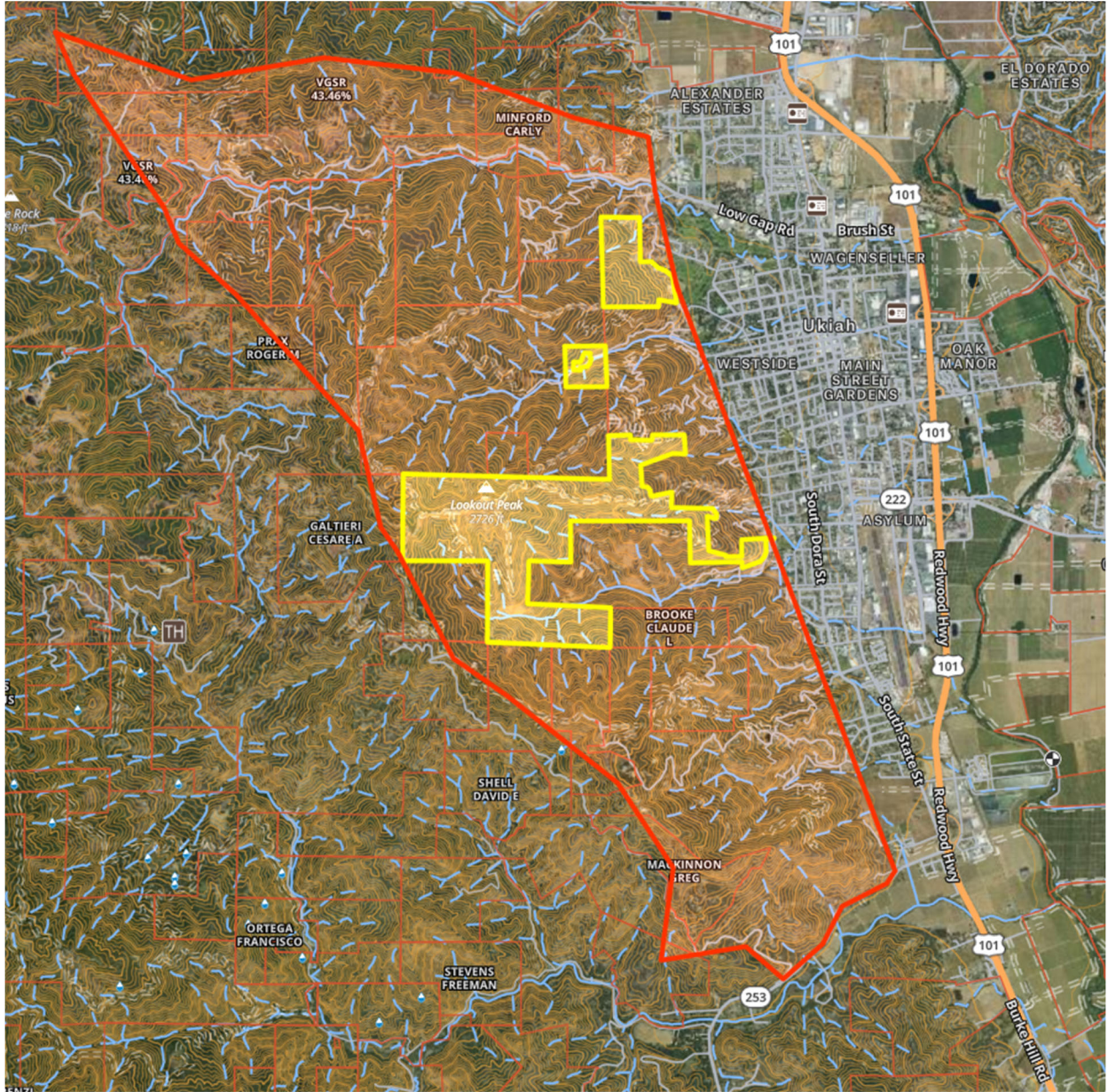
The Public Spaces Commission (PSC) will serve as the Citizen Advisory Board to the WHWPA. The PSC will determine a process for monitoring the conservation status and report any issues to the City Council. Staff will prepare and report on the status to the WHWPA at least annually.

- Engage the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) to serve as the Public Advisory Board for the WHWPA.
- Recruit at least one land management professional to serve on the PSC.

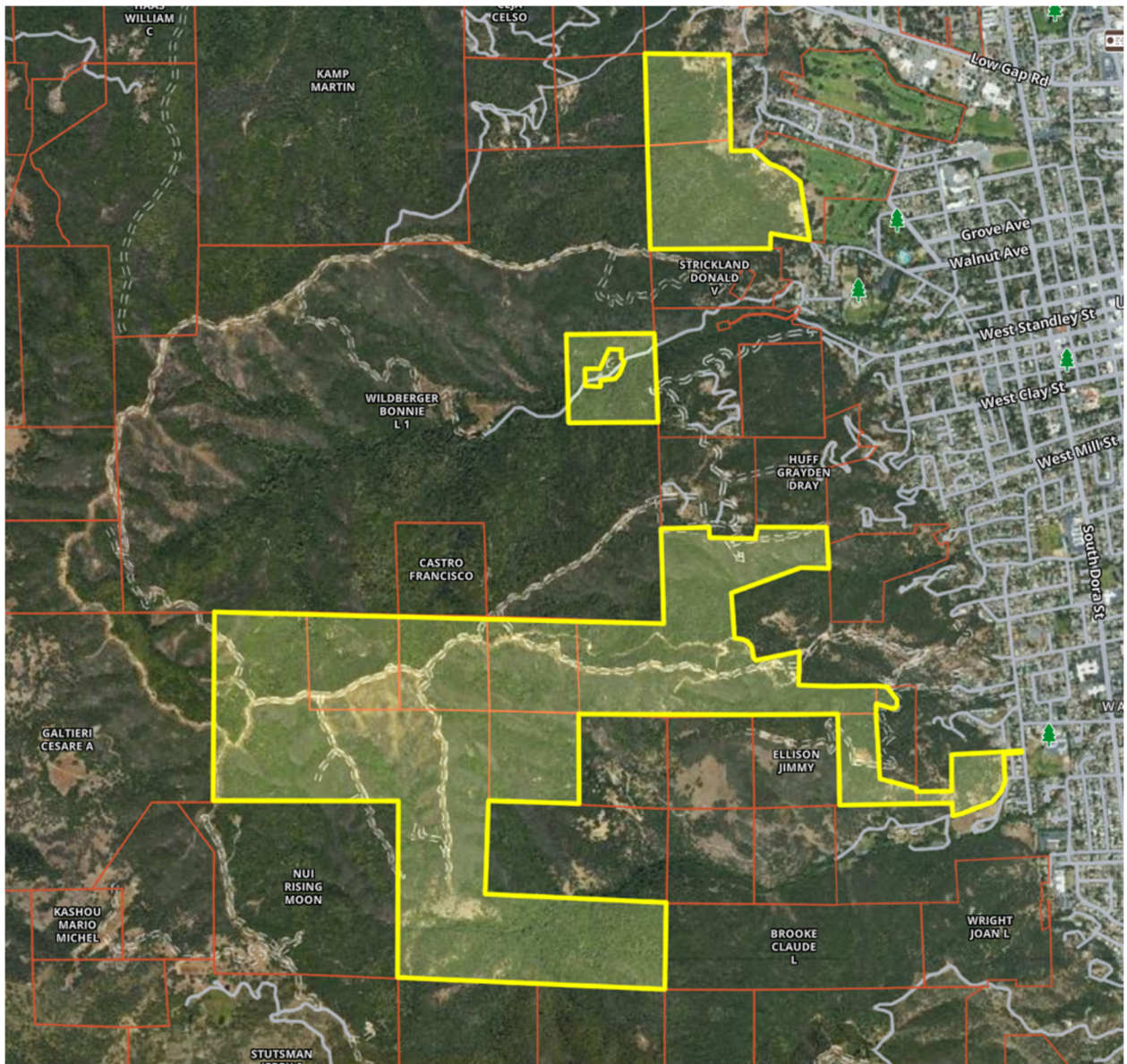
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Attachment 1 – Western Hills of Ukiah



Attachment 2 – Western Hills Watershed Protection Area Map (1/9/2024)



Attachment 3

Ukiah Valley Trail Group Philosophy and Design and Maintenance Standards

Trail Philosophy: Central to the Ukiah Valley Trail Group's approach to trails is the recognition that our world is one of finite resources and, since demand for these resources is increasing steadily; insightful management is of utmost concern. The Inland Mendocino County Trail system must be designed to utilize resources in ways that benefit all non-motorized users. This entails providing adequate accommodation and accessibility, rather than focusing on individual user groups. The increased sharing of resources sometimes creates friction between the diverse user groups vying for more trail space. This Trail Plan acknowledges that a certain amount of friction is inevitable and therefore focuses on planned communication to minimize the differences and optimize the benefits derived from these precious resources.

Plans for optimal use of trail resources must be in concert with the objective of natural and cultural resource protection. Any decisions on resource use affect not only local residents and visitors, but our natural and cultural habitat as well. If we make responsible decisions concerning preservation of our resources, we will succeed in our custodial duties to the environment while at the same time providing enjoyment for current and future generations. Through well designed, constructed and maintained trails we will accomplish optimal public access while accommodating resource conservation.

Providing the public with increased access to trail and greenways is not enough; we must also strive to promote the abundant benefits that derive from them. Trail benefits include recreation, transportation, energy conservation, environment and habitat protection, fire suppression, improved physical and mental health, and local economic benefits. Informing the public of the significant benefits expands public awareness of the advantages that trails and greenways offer to the individual and the community. Gaining public support thereby encourages policy makers to support trails and greenways and to increase funding to better manage the trail system.

Improving relationships and interaction between government entities and the private sector will be necessary for the effective development of a well planned and managed trail and green-way system. Open communication between all levels of government and interested parties enhances the finding of common objectives by making individuals and groups part of the solution. Linking communities and trail advocates in trail planning minimizes land use conflicts and allows for optimal resource use. Joint planning emphasizes the development of interconnected trails in natural settings and a united effort creates a stronger voice for advancing trail proposals.

Goals: The goals for the Lake Mendocino Trail Plan should include 1) generalized goals for the development of a quality local trail system, 2) specific goals for the Lake Mendocino trail system, 3) goals for how the Lake Mendocino trail system will link, and be a part of, the greater Ukiah Valley Trail System and 4) goals for using trail improvements and quiet-use recreation ethics as a tool for ecosystem

restoration and preservation.

The general goals that define a quality trail system include:

1-Adequate mileage

- Moderate strong bike or horse riders ride 15-20 miles in a day
- Endurance riders will ride 100 miles in a day
- There are approximately 24 miles of trail in the Ukiah Valley

Lake Mendocino currently has approximately 16 miles of trail and is near to maximum capacity. Small increases are necessary but can be mitigated with road closures and road to trail conversions. Employing a “stacked loop” design can maximize the trail experience within the capacity.

2- Connectivity

- A single recreation area is unlikely to meet all the community’s needs.
- Trails that connect the various areas are therefore necessary.
- Connectivity allows trails to fulfill a transportation role.
- Lake Mendocino Trails do not currently connect with any other trail systems.
- Priority should be given to approving trails that link Lake Mendocino to outlying areas.

3- Variety of environments

- An example of each of the area’s micro-ecosystems should be included, such as Riparian, oak woodland, mixed hardwoods etc.
- Trails should include sunny areas, which will be more desirable in the winter, and shady areas for summer use.

4- Variety of trail experiences

- Different trail users appreciate different trail characteristics.
- Equestrians generally prefer wider trails.
- Mountain bikers generally prefer lots of rolling ups and downs with lots of turns.
- Runners tend to prefer gentle grades.
- Advanced users desire more “technical” or challenging trail - narrower with a rougher, more uneven tread.

A quality trail system will provide a variety of trail experiences. A small trail system should focus

first on trails that meet the needs of the majority of users.

5- Easy Access/Options

- Users need to be able to get from home to trail quickly and start their experience.
- The first trail from the trailhead should be an easy trail, wide and smooth - suitable for all users.
- As users delve further into the system, the trails should increase in difficulty.
- “Stacked loops” of trails allow users to return by a different route while providing a variety of options.

6- Signage / Mapping

- All trails should be named and signed.
- All trailheads should have an information kiosk.
- Maps should be readily available for all trails.

7- Sustainability & Maintenance

- Trails need to be well maintained.
- Trails designed to sustainable standards require much less maintenance.

UVTG Design and Maintenance Standards

Definitions

Reroute – a trail maintenance project that starts and ends on a single existing trail and abandons the trail between those points will be termed a reroute.

Trail - A trail is specifically designed, designated, developed, and maintained as a recreational corridor for the exclusive use of non-motorized vehicles. It is typically not more than 4 feet wide, unpaved and generally requires users to travel single file.

Use Trail - A Use Trail is a trail that has been created without a planning process and or approval by the

repeated historic exploration of users.

Multi-Use Trail - A multi use trail is a trail that is open to non-motorized users including hikers, runners, equestrians, and bicyclists. All trails in the Lake Mendocino property will be multi use unless compelling reasons are presented to necessitate partial closure. (Such as the Shakota trail which is currently closed to equestrians.)

Road - Any transportation corridor designed for motor vehicle use and open to motor vehicle use. Although roads may be necessary for maintenance, further road building should be avoided and road closures should be pursued where possible. A road may be used for recreation but is not a trail.

Fire Break -Although trails act as small firebreaks and have been known to stop fires and can be used as locations to start backfires, a firebreak is not a trail.

Trail Maintenance and Repair² - Maintenance and repair of existing trail is performed to return the trail or trail segment to the standards or conditions to which it was originally designed and built, or to improve it to comply with more current design standards to achieve sustainability. The act of maintenance and repair includes but is not limited to:

- Removal of debris and vegetation from the trail corridor, clearing encroaching brush and grasses, removing rock slides, etc.- Maintenance of trail tread such as filling ruts and entrenchments; reshaping trail bed, repairing trail surface and washouts; installing rip rap; constructing retaining wall or cribbing
- Erosion control and drainage, replacing or installing necessary drainage structures, water bars, culverts; realigning sections of trail to deter erosion or avoid boggy/marshy areas.
- Repair or replacement of existing trail structures.
- Upgrades and short reroutes to improve sustainability and decrease maintenance needs.

Trail tread and slope characteristics

1. Trail Width:

Trail beds shall be built and maintained with a goal of being three feet wide. Topographical, vegetation, or resource constraints may require sections that are less than three feet.

Rationale: Allows users to pass by each other safely.

2. Rolling “Contour” Trails:

Trails shall be built with the contour of the topography (plus or minus 10%) utilizing side-slopes and avoiding flat areas as much as feasible.

Rationale: Building trail along fall lines or in flat areas creates erosion. “Contour” trails allow water to sheet off the trail and flow downhill.

Keeping trails on hillsides keeps them out of flatter, wetter areas. Trails built in wet areas are not sustainable. Users tend to walk along edge of trails, creating trail widening. Wet areas are more prone to soil compaction and displacement.

“Contour trails create changing view sheds that add to the enjoyment of the trail.

3. Average trail grade less than or equal to 10%:

The average slope of the trail will be less than or equal to 10%, some slopes will be greater and some less. Side slope, soil type and natural obstacles will determine the grades for each individual section of trail. Sections that are over 10% should be short and followed by a relatively flat section or grade reversal.

Rationale: Most soil types can withstand up to 10% grades.
Minimizes user-caused erosion.
Allows for possible reroutes at a steeper grade if there is a future problem such as a slide.
Accommodates undulations/grade reversals.
Feels comfortable to most trail users.
Grade reversals after steep sections allow the user to recover from the increased effort.

4. Sustainable trail alignment - Trail grade does not exceed “half-rule”:

The grade of the trail should not be greater than half the grade of the sideslope that the trail traverses.

Rationale: Prevents erosion caused by water flowing down the trail rather than flowing down the hillside.
Guides individual trail planning segments to fit the topography.

5. Maximum trail grades should be less than 15%:

Rationale: Although this rule might occasionally need to be broken, at least for short segments of trail, our observation is that most of the existing trails at Lake Mendocino are sustainable up to a grade of 15%. Higher grades, especially in areas exposed to weather, have suffered more erosion and damage from users.

6. Incorporation of grade reversals:

Trails should incorporate frequent grade reversals every 10 to 50 feet, depending on soil type and topography.

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10. References:

The following references will be used as resources to establish best practices and resolve questions not covered in the above. Additional references will be added upon availability.

Weber, Peter(Ed). 2007 *Managing Mountain Biking: IMBA’s Guide to Providing Great Riding* International Mountain Biking Association. Boulder CO ISBN978-9755023-1-X

Birkby, Robert. 2005 *Lightly on the Land: The SCA Trail Building and Maintenance Manual. 2nd edition.* The Mountaineers Books. Seattle WA ISBN

Felton, Vernon. 2004 *Trail Solutions; How to Build Sweet Single Track.* Johnson Printing, boulder CO ISBN 0-9755023-0-1

Parker, Troy Scott, 2004. *Natural Surface Trails by Design.* NatureShape, Boulder,CO. ISBN0-9755872-0-X

Steinholz, Robert & Vachowski, Brian. 2001. *Wetland Trail Design and Construction.* USDA Forest Service Technology and Development Program Misoula, MT 8E82A3

Birchard, William & Proudman, Robert 2000 *Appalachian Trail: Design, Construction, and Maintenance. 2nd Edition* Appalachian Trail Conference Harper’s Ferry WV

Demrow, Carl & Salisbury, David 1998. *The Complete Guide to Trail Building and Maintenance, 3rd Edition*.
Appalachian Mountain Club Books. Boston, MA ISBN1-878239-54-6

AGENDA SUMMARY REPORT



SUBJECT: Review, Update as Necessary, and Approve a 2025 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule

DEPARTMENT: Community Services **PREPARED BY:** Neil Davis, Community Services Director

ATTACHMENTS:

1. DRAFT 2025 PSC Outreach Plan
2. 2025 Schedule DRAFT

Summary: Recommend the City Council approve the 2025 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule.

Background: The Public Spaces Commission charter outlined in Division 1, Chapter 4 of the Ukiah City Code defines the duties and powers of the Public Spaces Commission. Item D of the Duties and Powers section states the work of the Commission “shall be guided by the Community Outreach Plan.” And that the Commission “shall prepare and annually update a Community Outreach Plan” to be approved by City Council. Further, “the Community Outreach Plan will guide the methodology, scheduling, and tracking of the Commission’s community engagement.”

Community Outreach plans were adopted for 2022, 2023, 2024 with few changes from the original document. As the Public Spaces Commission enters its fourth year it is now time to review, consider updates, and approve a Community Outreach plan for 2025. The Duties and Powers section of the Commission’s charter requires a minimum of six regular meeting per year two of which should be community forums. The 2024 plan was presented and approved by the City Council last spring.

Discussion: The Public Spaces Commission is entering its fourth year. The 2024 Community Outreach Plan called for 1) biannual community input forums, 2) a Quarterly Public Spaces E-Newsletter, 3) four PSC planning meetings, 4) Staff support of PSC working groups, and 5) an annual update to this plan. Additionally, a Gantt timeline document was prepared to outline the schedule and to aid PSC activity tracking.

In the last year all meetings were appropriately noticed, and all meetings were held with a quorum of commissioners. The Commission has discussed, heard reports, and made recommendations on Oak Manor Park Hours of Use, Friends of Observatory and Friends of Ukiah Parks, McGarvey Park Landscaping, Observatory Park Landscaping, Ukiah’s potential as an Outdoor Recreation Hub, and an update on Riverside Park.

Unfortunately, for the second year in a row, Staff have been unable to fulfill the goal of producing PSC e-newsletters. Staff maintain an active and robust social media presence and continue to send general information emails. No commissioners or members of the public have commented on the lack of e-newsletters. For this reason, Staff recommend rescinding the e-newsletter requirement.

This coming year Staff plan to hold a series of public input meetings to inform the plans for a new park at the end of Norgard Lane. Staff recommend a Community Forum should be scheduled for July with four or more additional public meetings to be held within a month of the PSC forum. A more in depth presentation on the Norgard Lane Park planning process will be placed on the PSC’s March agenda.

Staff have prepared an updated draft 2025 Community Outreach Plan (Attachment 1) and a draft 2025 PSC Schedule (Attachment 2) for commissioner review and consideration.

Staff recommends adopting the attached 2025 Community Outreach Plan and Gantt timeline for Staff presentation to the City Council in February.

Recommended Action: Recommend the City Council approve the 2025 Community Outreach Plan and Schedule.

Public Spaces Commission Community Outreach Plan

1/2025⁴

The Mission of the Public Spaces Commission (PSC) is to foster a culture of informed community participation in the planning and implementation of the wise use of public spaces. The seven-member PSC shall have the power and duty to solicit, collate, and analyze public input on the wise use of public spaces and; provide recommendations and advice to both staff and the City Council based on said input. Additionally, PSC members in collaboration with staff may choose to form “working groups” to explore and formulate advice or recommendations on specific areas regarding the wise use of public spaces.

In support of the PSC mission, City staff will;

1. Convene Biannual Community Input Forums
- ~~2. Prepare a Public Spaces E-Newsletter for off meeting months (6x per year)~~
- ~~3.2. Convene four time per year Public Input Forum planning meetings.~~
- ~~4.3. Provide staff support to working groups on mutually agreed upon topics.~~
- ~~5.4. Assist the PSC in an annual update to this plan.~~

Public Spaces Biannual Community Input Forums

The Public Spaces Biannual Community Input Forums will be held as hybrid in-person and online events. Meetings will be planned to cover two to four prearranged topics with time available for discussion of an unplanned topic at attendee consensus request. The PSC will work with staff to decide upon topics and presenters. City staff will prepare presentations that will include Q&A sessions after the presentations. Forums will be recorded and available on the City YouTube Channel

~~Prepare a Public Spaces E-Newsletter for off meeting months (6x per year)~~

~~E-Newsletter will cover the same topics as Community Input Forum to allow for an additional medium for distribution. E-Newsletter may contain additional material. E-Newsletter will be distributed to an interested parties list and be available online.~~

Convene four time per year PSC Public Input Forum Planning and Workgroup meetings

These meetings will allow PSC members the opportunity to work with staff to plan the Community Input Forums and to report on PSC working group activities.

Working Groups

PSC members will be encouraged to form Working Groups both among themselves as well as with members of the public to pursue areas of interest and to the benefit of effective City management. All working groups should have a City Council member of staff “sponsor” to ensure a collaborative approach.

2025 Schedule (Proposed)

Attachment 2

All Dates Second Tuesday of the Month.

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September
2025 - PSC Proposed									
Planning / Work Group Meetings	1/14/2024				5/13/2023		7/8/2024		9/9/2024
Biannual Community Forum			3/11/2024						

October	November	December
	11/11/2024	