CUPERTINO CITYWIDE PARKS, OPEN SPACE, & RECREATION MASTER PLAN 2016

trends analysis

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LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING

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INTRODUCTION

State, regional, and national social, economic, environmental, and recreational trends will impact the demand and the delivery of recreation services in the City of Cupertino. Trends analysis identifies changing social patterns that shape societal characteristics, preferences, and interests. As a forecasting tool, it can be used to predict potential demand for amenities and services for recreation, leisure, and park pursuits. Assessing demographic and recreation trends provides useful planning data to anticipate changing interests and needs and to create spaces and programs to serve those anticipated needs.

Key demographic trends shaping the City of Cupertino include aging Baby Boomers, aging in place, the Sandwich Generation, increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, the emerging impact of the Millennial Generation, and childhood obesity. Trends in recreation programming include life sports, health and wellness, unstructured play, and non-traditional sports. Other recreation trends include environmental stewardship, health and disease prevention, fostering social connection, and technology.

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DEMOGRAPHICS TRENDS

Aging Baby Boomers

The aging of the population is a significant trend of both national and regional scale. Aging in place is a trend among a majority of mature adults, Baby Boomers, and seniors today and is reflected in Cupertino's high median age. Retirement age residents belong to one of three distinct adult age generations. Both the Greatest Generation (90 and over) and the Silent Generation (age 69 to 89) are generations who lived through the Depression era and World War II and place importance on stability. The third group, the Baby Boomers, were born between 1946 and 1964 and are between the age of 51 and 69. Baby Boomers are a significant and sizeable demographic: seventy-six million American children were born between 1945 and 1964. Now entering retirement age, this group is a more active adult demographic and will place greater demand on City services and programming. According to the 2010 Census, Cupertino Boomers comprise approximately 30.5% (age 45 to 64) of the City's population, with Retirement Age Adults (age 65 and over) comprising 13% of the population. The 45 to 54 age group subset is the largest subset at 18.0% of the population alone, or 11,242 people. It is additionally expected that Mature Adults and Retirement Age Adults will increase to 32.1% and 14.9% of the population, respectively, according to 2020 projections.

Generational trends of Boomers include a positive perception of age and an interest in moderate activity as a way of maintaining physical health. These older adults have a youthful self-conception as evidenced by the fact that over 63% of Baby Boomers state they feel younger than they are.[1]   A study from the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP) found that 87% want to take better care of their physical health, 72% plan to spend more time on their interests and hobbies, and 47% want to do more volunteering.[2]   As Baby Boomers approach what was formerly retirement age, most do not plan to retire like the generations before them. A recent study by the Council on Active Aging found that 7 in 10 Americans plan to work following retirement from their mainstay career. An additional 14% plan to continue their work as volunteers.[3]

These trends will influence delivery methods for traditional "senior" services. In the past, senior and adult programming, activities, and classes have been offered during the workday. As more seniors continue working, it will be important for programs, activities, and facility hours to be adapted. This may include offering more adult classes that target this working population in the evening or on weekends.

Furthermore, this generation's priorities of personal physical health and activity result in increased demand for spaces, services, and a variety of programming. To respond to the trend of "Active Aging," which recognizes the importance of improved quality of life for older adults through fitness and wellness activities, the City should expand fitness programs to serve diverse fitness and wellness needs. Boomers, who as a generation embrace physical activity and personal health, seek more integration between fitness, wellness, and everyday living. Meeting the needs of the Baby Boomer generation includes providing wellness and fitness classes and programming. Recent trends in the fitness and recreation industry find growing adaptation to meet the needs of a burgeoning 50 and over population, as evidenced in the efforts of The International Council on Active Aging (ICAA). Top activities consistently popular among active older adults include:

- Walking
- Yoga
- Water exercise
- Functional strength training: developing and/or maintaining the ability to continue easily performing everyday tasks
- Pickleball

It is important to recognize that the older adult is a population that spans nearly five decades. To support this demographic, planning should consider the provision of quality facilities in which to offer outstanding programs for residents 50 years of age and older.

Sandwich Generation

In the U.S. nearly half (47%) of adults in their 40s and 50s have a parent age 65 or older and are either raising a young child or financially supporting a grown child (age 18 or older). One in seven middle-aged adults (15%) is providing financial support to both an

1   Zapolsky, Sarah. "Baby Boomers Envision Retirement II: Survey of Baby Boomer's Expectations for Retirement." AARP. May 2004
        < http://www.aarp.org/work/retirement-planning/info-2004/aresearch-import-865.html>.
2   "Work Trends: Americans Attitudes About Work, Employers, and Government." John J. Heldrich Center for Workforce Development, Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey Center for Survey Research and Analysis, and the University of Connecticut. 2005
        <www.heldrich.rutgers.edu/Resources/Publication/192/WT16%20Press%20Release.pdf>.
3   Ibid.

aging parent and a child.[4] The term "Sandwich Generation" describes this population of adults who provide some care for a parent and are either raising or supporting their own children. It is estimated that 20 million Americans are currently doing so, with that number expected to double in the next 10 years.

The Sandwich Generation's presence shows that offering a variety and mix of programming opportunities for all ages and abilities is ideal. The traditional senior center model no longer meets the diverse recreational, social, and physical needs of today's seniors, or those of multigenerational households. As an alternative to traditional senior centers, multigenerational centers are designed to serve the needs of senior adults in a single location, along with the needs and interests of children and adults. Outdoor settings and programs can, similarly, accommodate a wide range of physical abilities and age preferences, as well as groups of users.

Diversity

Cupertino is home to a diverse racial and ethnic population and is considered a "majority minority" population. According to 2015 estimates, 70.5% (42,386) of the population identifies as Asian, while 25.2% (15,145) identifies as White. This is an increase from 2010, when 63% of the City's population was of Asian ancestry. Research shows that the Asian American population is extremely heterogeneous, and use patterns cannot be generalized. It additionally finds that higher income, higher education, U.S. citizenship, and greater linguistic acculturation have been found to correlate to greater outdoor recreational participation among Asian Americans.[5]

Recreation is often a means of preserving cultural heritage and traditions, especially for non-native born and immigrant members of the community.[6] Understanding and accommodating cultural activities and preferences is one way for the Department to encourage participation and address their needs. For example, there is reported high interest in activities such as cricket and tabla drumming in Cupertino and such interest

may be particularly high among the City's Indian American community,[7] who comprise the second largest Asian racial group in Cupertino (Chinese Americans are the largest group). In 2010, Cupertino became the first city in the Bay Area to open a cricket pitch built to international standards, indicating that the City and Department have been responsive to the community's recreation needs.

Youth and Childhood Obesity

Childhood obesity, a pandemic to households across the U.S., has gained significant awareness in recent years as a major national public health concern. In 2012, more than one third of U.S. children and adolescents were overweight or obese.[8] The percentage of inactive 6 to 12 year olds (youths involved in no physical activities over a 12-month period) rose to 19.5% in 2012 from 16% in 2007, according to a survey by the Physical Activity Council.[9] The health consequences for children resulting from the disappearance of play and physical activity include greater risks of lung disease, diabetes, asthma, and cancer.[10] If current trends in obesity and physical inactivity continue, current youth will be the first generation in American history to face a shorter life expectancy than their parents.[11]

To sufficiently motivate children and youth to increase their level of physical activity, experiences should be enjoyable. Studies indicate that children and adolescents are more likely to become physically active and fit if they have a wide range of accessible, safe, and affordable recreation opportunities. This includes providing a wide range of sports and recreational activities, and the instruction of necessary skills by competent, knowledgeable, and supportive adults. Programming trends for children and adolescents include programs that are designed to engage children in physical activity, introduce children to leisure activities, and to teach skills that they will maintain throughout their adult life. The specific activity matters less than having the ability and opportunity and access to these programs.

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4   Parker, Kim and Eileen Patten. "The Sandwich Generation: Rising Financial Burdens for Middle-Aged Americans." *Pew Research Center: Social and Demographic Trends*. 30 Jan. 2013 <www.pewsocialtrends.org/files/2013/01/Sandwich_Generation_Report_FINAL_1-29.pdf>.

5   Winter, Patricia, Jeong, Woo, and Godbey, Geoffery. "Outdoor Recreation Among Asian Americans: A Case Study of San Francisco Bay Area Residents." Journal of Park and Recreation Administration. Vol 22: Number 3. 2004. *United States Department of Agriculture* <http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/winter/psw_2004_winter001.pdf>.

6   "Park and Recreation Trends in California." *California State Parks*. 2005 <http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/recreation_trends_081505.pdf>.

7   Fernandez, Lisa and Joe Rodriguez. "Indian Population Diversifying Bay Area's Asian Population." *San Jose Mercury News*. May 2011 <http://www.mercurynews.com/ci_18046364>.

8   "Childhood Obesity Facts." *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*. Aug. 2015 <http://www.cdc.gov/healthyschools/obesity/facts.htm>.

9   "2013 Participation Report." *Physical Activity Council*. 2013 <http://www.physicalactivitycouncil.com/PDFs/2013_PAC_Overview_Report_Final.pdf>.

10 "An Epidemic: Overweight and Unfit Children in California Assembly Districts." *California Center for Public Health Advocacy*. Dec. 2002 <http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/ policy_briefs/study_documents/Full_Report1.pdf>.

11 "Obesity Threatens to Cut U.S. Life Expectancy, New Analyses Suggests." *National Institutes of Health*. 2005 <http://www.nih.gov/news/pr/mar2005/nia-16.htm>.

The percentage of overweight/obese public school students reported for the City of Cupertino in 2010 was18.4%, the tenth lowest in the State.[12] Additionally, in 2014, 82.1% of public school 5th graders and 82.2% of 7th graders were considered to be at a healthy weight or underweight. This information suggests that Cupertino residents have a desire to be fit and healthy as evidenced by low childhood obesity rates. Programming that includes activities promoting health, nutrition, and wellness will continue to be of interest.

The City's role in providing sports and movement activities, neighborhoods that promote walking, riding bikes, and active play, and creating high-quality programs such as farm-to-school programs, nutrition and cooking classes are factors contributing to the low obesity rate. The City's shared use agreements with schools and school districts to make school recreational facilities available to the public outside of school hours is also an important factor in addressing physical activity, especially in underserved neighborhoods.

Millennial Generation

The Millennial Generation, also referred to as Generation Y or Echo Boomers, includes Americans born between the years of 1982 and 2000. Millennials are now between the age of 15 and 33 years. In Cupertino, Millennials constitute 17.3% of the population.

This generation is the most educated generation of Americans, is the most ethnically diverse generation in U.S. history, and possesses the most disposable income.[13] Often raised with more sheltered and regimented upbringings than previous generations, Millennials tend to value structured and social, team-oriented activities in their recreational pursuits. They can be a group considered over-structured and over-programmed. This generation is "less accustomed to unstructured play than previous generations and apprehensive of the outdoors [spending] most of their time indoors, leaving home primarily to socialize with friends and families."[14] Additionally, this generation "places a 'high value on teamwork and belonging.' They start working in teams at an early age, and

'tend to be more inclusive, optimistic and tech-savvy than their elders.'" They are seen as tech-savvy, socially conscious, achievement-driven people with more flexible ideas about work and play.

Millennials are reshaping their communities through their impact as young, urban, working professionals. This generation is entrenched with technology and can be challenging to engage in outdoor activity. They are also very aware of social media and use this as a primary source of recreation and communication. Programming that targets this demographic should provide highly structured activities and programs with goals, opportunities to exercise and recreate in a social, group setting, and integration with technology and social media. For Cupertino, this may mean increased "hot spots" in parks and facilities, integrating programs with social media, and creating spaces that encourage group gathering, such as benches, close in proximity and facing each other.

According to an article by the National Parks and Recreation Association (NRPA), Millennials desire:

- Variety: They want to try and experience everything and create bucket lists for adventures, trips, and a broad range of activities. Park and open space with opportunity for multiple recreational uses, such as bike and running trails, may help attract this generation.
- Creature Comforts: They desire the outdoor experience without giving up convenience and some indulgence, evident in blending nature with luxury through activities such as "glamping" (a trend of camping with amenities).
- Competition: Millennials see competition as an incentive and providing online components to outdoor activities, such as ways to earn reward points, may keep them interested.
- Dogs: Dogs are becoming recognized as extensions of family units, especially with Millennials. Dog-friendly outdoor amenities should be considered to keep this demographic engaged.[15]

12   Babey S. H., et al. "Overweight and Obesity among Children by California Cities-2010." UCLA Center for Health Policy Research and California Center for Public Health Advocacy. Jun. 2012. *California Center for Public Health Advocacy*
     < http://www.publichealthadvocacy.org/research/overweightdocs2012/Overweight-2010_CCPHA%20Study_FINAL.PDF>.
13   "Here Come the 'Millennials': What You Need To Know To Connect With This New Generation." *California State Parks*. Mar. 2010
     <www.parks.ca.gov/pages/795/files/millennials%20final_3_08_10.pdf>
14   Ibid.
15   Hornick, Scott. "7 Ways to Make Your Parks Millennial Friendly." *National Parks and Recreation Association*. 19 Aug. 2015
     <http://www.nrpa.org/blog/7-ways-to-make-your-parks-millennial-friendly/>.

RECREATION & PROGRAMMING TRENDS

Recreational trends in programming include a broad range of influences, based on activity level, user interests, lifestyles, and user goals.

Programming Trends

Life Sports

Life Sports focus on activities that are fun and provide a social connection, and include activities that an individual can participate in at varying ages. Programming for Life Sports focuses on activities individuals can enjoy as they recreate and exercise. Such activities may include softball, soccer, Zumba, Cane-Fu, pickleball, tennis, cycling, golf, walking/jogging, and dance. The purpose of Life Sports is to keep individuals engaged in health and fitness activities while learning skills that can be applied throughout their lifetime.

Therapeutic & Mind/Body Recreation

These are activities that focus on health and wellness, such as stress relief, nutrition, and mind/body connection. Programming examples include Tai Chi, yoga, and meditation. Therapeutic & Mind/Body Recreation reveals that classes targeted at cognitive and mental health are important for all age segments.

Unstructured Outdoor Recreation

Unstructured outdoor play and recreation space are significant trends. Parks and open space are primary unstructured environments that offer this recreational need. According to California State Parks, Baby Boomers prefer parks as their location for outdoor activity. The nation's most popular fitness activity, walking for exercise, also supports the notion that unstructured outdoor play (and environments that are conducive to this) is a strong recreational preference. Recreation Management survey respondents ranked the following as the top five features in new park and recreation construction:

- Playgrounds
- Park structures, such as shelters and restroom buildings
- Open spaces, including gardens and natural areas
- Outdoor sports courts, such as basketball and tennis
- Trails

This list reflects a growing trend towards unstructured play, access to green spaces, and outdoor fitness. Linking parks together with green corridors and trails may encourage mobility, accessibility, socialization, fitness, and an appreciation of the natural environment and simultaneously support wildlife habitat and the City's sustainability goals. The ability to encourage spontaneous "play" environments is of increasing importance in park design.

Non-Traditional Sports

Participation in non-traditional team sports is a national trend. According to 2015 data provided by the Sports & Fitness Industry Association (SFIA), there is a shift towards greater participation in the following sports:

- Field Hockey
- Lacrosse
- Rugby
- Volleyball (beach/sand)[16]

These sports stand apart from traditional team sports such as baseball and soccer.

Gender Neutrality

As issues of gender and transgender rights gain heightened national awareness, communities and institutions nationwide are adopting the practice of gender neutrality, defined as creating an environment in which distinguishing roles based on an individual's sex or gender is discouraged. Municipal parks and recreation departments are charged with providing healthy and safe recreation programs and services to all community members. In response, parks and recreation departments are reevaluating policies, facilities, and programs to encourage gender neutrality and not obstruct participation. In a national survey of 6,450 transgender and gender nonconforming individuals, slightly more than a quarter (26%) reported having been assaulted due to their gender identity, according to the National Recreation and Park Association. To address this, research suggests that equitable access to parks and recreation facilities and services can be encouraged in agency culture, policies, and facilities and programs. Examples of these include:

- Creating a welcoming and inclusive work environment and culture.
- Providing training to staff on the agency's anti-discriminatory culture.
- Implementing bullying and harassment training.

16   "2015 Sports, Fitness, and Leisure Activities Topline Participation Report." SFIA. 2015.

- Updating policies that might affect program and facility access. Program forms, for example, often ask participations to choose M/F. This can be amended to be open-ended. Additionally, program enrollment can often require identity documents, which might not include the preferred gender of the participant.
- Revising program descriptions and offerings to be gender neutral. For example, "boys" and "girls" programs, as well as Co-Ed programs, should accommodate gender identity, not gender sex.[17]

General Recreation Trends

Fostering Social Connection

Cities throughout the State and the nation are working to address issues of social alienation and physical inactivity through community design. As inactivity and social isolation increase, so does the incidence of obesity, heart disease, diabetes, depression, and mental illness. Thriving public spaces promote the familiarity and social bonds that make neighborhoods safer and healthier. For parks and recreation departments this means making parks usable and vibrant social meeting places. The Project for Public Spaces study discusses the attributes that most social places share. The report explains that:

> "a good place provides a range of things to do ('uses and activities'); is easy to get to and connected to the surrounding community ('access'); is safe, clean, attractive ('comfort and image'); and, perhaps, most important, is a place to meet other people ('sociability')" [18]

In promoting social recreation, an important factor is the design and provision of environments for a range of age groups, physical abilities, and ethnic/cultural interests. In addition to making facilities and parks social meeting places, many recreational departments are promoting inclusiveness in the design of these spaces. A highlight of this is responding to the needs of extended families and members of the Sandwich Generation by making parks and facilities multigenerational family destinations.

An application of broadened inclusivity in community design is seen in park play structure design. Parks and play equipment can be designed to allow use by community members with physical restrictions and special needs, as well as older adults. Playgrounds can feature equipment that is accessible, fun, and easy to use by those who require mobility assistance. Using firmer material alternatives to sand and wood chips and the utilization of ramps supports this. Outdoor fitness equipment, designed for adults and seniors of all ability levels, additionally combats obesity and inactivity. Park design can also combine active and passive uses and provide for a variety of leisure activities within close proximity of each other for a mix of recreation uses and users.

An additional ideal for the promotion of social recreation is the utilization of spaces, indoors and out, in creative, fun ways. Introducing fitness trails (also known as parcourses) into recreation corridors, Tai Chi in parks, and foot golf in golf courses are examples of ways to interest and engage a new series of leisure users.

Parking and transportation are additional factors to current park and recreation uses. Non-vehicular access to recreation is a growing priority. This can be addressed, in part, by the location of housing and parks. Market demand for housing near transit is expected to increase. According to the University of Southern California Population Dynamics Research, people aged 55 and over are more likely to prioritize public transportation, walking, access to shops and services, and multifamily housing than do other age groups.[19] Thoughtful expansion and enhancement of the City's pedestrian-bicycle network can also help address this. Cupertino updated its Bicycle Transportation Plan in 2015 and plans additional review in 2016.

Environmental Stewardship

Growing environmental awareness has led to emergence of stewardship and sustainability as important trends. Sustainable building and community design, construction, maintenance, and operations, standardized by the U.S. Green Building Council's LEED Program (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design), is now frequently a target in planning efforts. The City of Cupertino encourages the use of renewable and energy efficient technologies, materials, and systems for all new City building and renovation projects. This may slightly increase capital costs; however, the long-term benefits include a reduction in operating cost and a better environmental impact.

17   Oakleaf, Linda. "Social Equity in Parks for the Transgender Community." *Parks & Recreation Magazine*. October 2015
      <http://www.parksandrecreation.org/2015/October/Social-Equity-in-Parks-for-the-Transgender-Community/>.
18   "Good Places." *Project for Public Space*. 2012. < http://www.pps.org/reference/goodplaces/>.

19   Myers, Dowell and John Pitkin. "The 2010 Census Benchmark for California's Growing and Changing Population." Feb. 2011 *University of Southern California Population Dynamics Research.* <https://www.usc.edu/schools/price/research/popdynamics/pdf/2011_Pitkin-Myers_CA-2010-New-Benchmark.pdf>.

The City and Department are committed to environmental stewardship and have made great strides to supporting environmental resources and natural preserves through the facilities and programming of McClellan Ranch Preserve and the Stevens Creek Corridor. These environmental education sites connect the City's rich farming history and current and future nature resources to current and future generations to experience and enjoy.

Health & Disease Prevention

The prevalence of obesity and diabetes, a steadily aging national population, and other factors have led to disease prevention and improved health becoming key motivations in recreation and exercise. A study released by The Trust for America's Health and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation projects that one half of American adults will be obese by 2030.[20] Nearly 26 million Americans have diabetes, according to 2011 estimates from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and as many as 1 in 3 U.S. adults could have diabetes by 2050 if current trends continue.

Research has also shown that the availability of opportunities to engage in physical activity is positively correlated to the amount of physical activity people engage in. Physical barriers, safety concerns, and distance to parks and recreation facilities can prevent users from access. In 2014, the average distance in miles to the nearest park or open space for Cupertino was 0.25 and for the County 0.30. Additionally, according to the Santa Clara County Department of Public Health, 63% of Cupertino adults met recommendations for aerobic physical activity in past month, compared to 58% for the County.[21] This reveals that Cupertino residents have good general access to parks, in terms of distance, and are generally health-aware through their exercise and activity.

Offering programming that promotes the health benefits of recreation and provides health, lifestyle, and nutrition education, should be considered. To promote a healthy lifestyle, medically oriented programming with experienced, qualified professionals may be of interest to a growing segment of the population with health-related fitness and wellness needs. Private-public partnerships with hospitals and medical providers should be explored for consideration. For example, Apple has introduced a "wellness center," a medical "one-stop-shop" located at their headquarters in Cupertino. According to Fortune Magazine:

"The head of HR says 43,000 employees have already visited the center, which opened about a year ago (2013) and employs seven doctors plus a large team of chiropractors, physical therapists and dieticians. …Doctors work out of a central 'pod' in the middle of the building, surrounded by a circle of examination rooms, which they enter through a different door than their patients. …The average wait time for an appointment is no more than five minutes (in fact, the 'wait' room is actually just called 'reception')."[22]

Technology

The use of technology as a method of communicating and receiving information has become prevalent. Technological and communication devices such as smartphones have greatly impacted social and recreational habits, from personal fitness tracking to "Instagramming" to GoPro video recording. One design and space planning response to the integration of technology is seen in Makerspaces. Makerspaces are community-operated workspaces designed to encourage participants to gather and share resources, knowledge, network, and work on projects. These projects can be technical or artistic in nature, and combine the creativity and resources of both. Common activities include computer app or game development, digital arts, machining, and crafting.

Baby Boomers, in addition to younger generations, are also embracing technology, changing the definition of "traditional" mature adult programming. Technology-oriented adult programming examples include:

- Computer classes and training
- Brain fitness programs through apps and games
- Virtual exercise and fitness technology, such as virtual touring and bike tours, Fitbit use, Wii-style games with golf, tennis, and bowling
- Educational use with Smartboards, Skype, classes, and programs
- Smart home technology and its applications

20   "F as in Fat: How Obesity Threatens America's Future 2010." *Trust for America's Health*. Jun. 2010 <www.healthyamericans.org/reports/obesity2010/>.
21   California Protected Areas Database, 2011; Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation, 2012; Santa Clara County Public Health Department, 2013-14 Behavioral Risk Factor Survey <https://www.sccgov.org/sites/sccphd/en-us/Partners/Data/Pages/Cupertino.aspx>.
22   Lev-Ram, Michael. "Apple Unveils New Perks to Attract Talent." *Fortune Magazine*. 2 Oct. 2014 < http://fortune.com/2014/10/02/apple-employee-perks/>.

SUMMARY

Cupertino is perceived as a very desirable place to live and work in California. Maintaining this quality for community members and employees is the basis of the master plan. Recreation and park programs and services are an important element of this level of community satisfaction. Continued and expanded public facility and park stewardship along with creative and diverse programming will help keep Cupertino a top choice place to live, work and play into the future.