

Irvine Parks Master Plan Executive Summary

Irvine's public parks are among the best in the nation. Of America's hundred largest cities, the nonprofit Trust for Public Land recognizes Irvine as the eighth most successful at providing quality facilities and ample and accessible parkland, bolstered by above-average per-capita spending on park and recreation services (Trust for Public Land 2016). This ranking places our community in a "Top Ten" list that includes such cities as New York, Washington, D.C. and San Francisco.

Much of this success in parks and recreation stems from Irvine's history of master planning, and from the guiding principles of our *Community Parks Master Plan*. Since 1988, the *Community Parks Master Plan* has ensured that residents and visitors have access to public parks that are well-distributed throughout the community and that support a wide array of active and passive recreation opportunities.

While the 1988 plan has been instrumental in developing our public park system, Irvine has grown and matured significantly in the nearly thirty years since the plan was adopted. To keep pace with evolving demographics, recreation needs and community expectations, the *Parks Master Plan (Master Plan)* has been compiled to replace the aging 1988 plan and to identify opportunities to further enhance Irvine's quality public park system over the coming decade and beyond.

What is the *Parks Master Plan*?

The *Master Plan* is a visioning document rather than an implementation plan. It identifies potential policy changes and upgrade and/or enhancement projects that could gradually be implemented to improve the public park system. The *Master Plan* identifies potential enhancement projects at the City's fifty-six public parks, focusing on recommendations that could enhance park and recreation opportunities for Irvine residents. Not all of these projects can or should be implemented over the coming decade; however, the *Master Plan* includes prioritization criteria that can help City decision-makers identify projects to include within the annual Capital Improvement Program (CIP) budget.

This Plan is envisioned as the first phase of a comprehensive work plan designed to address future investment in the City's parks and park facilities:

Phase I: Parks Master Plan

- Policy Recommendations
- Visioning

- Site-Specific Opportunities
- 10 Year Blueprint Plan
- Potential Funding Sources

Phase II: Implementation Plan

- Cost Estimation
- Project Prioritization
- Timeline Projection

Phase II will commence once a *Master Plan* is approved. Phase II will build off Master Plan recommendations (including the Blueprint Plan) to identify priority projects and to assess cost implications.

The *Master Plan* offers recommendations for City parks, including public neighborhood and community parks. It offers recommendations on the development of new public and private parks, honing lessons from Irvine's history of park planning and applying new findings from the *Master Plan* community engagement process. It also offers recommendations related to the City's preserved open space areas, although it is important to consider that access to these sensitive habitats is limited in many areas, consistent with state and federal conservation agreements. Additionally, the *Master Plan* acknowledges that the Orange County Great Park (OCGP) will be a vital community resource as it is developed according to its own site-specific master plan. As such, the *Master Plan* focuses on the remaining public parks in the City's portfolio.

Master Plan Findings

Following an extensive community engagement process in which more than 2,000 responses were collected from Irvine residents, workers and visitors, the proposed *Master Plan* has confirmed that community members are satisfied with the existing park system. This general sentiment mirrors a Resident Satisfaction Survey that found that ninety-five percent of residents are satisfied or very satisfied with City efforts to provide park, athletic and aquatic facilities (True North Research, Inc., 2013).

Common themes, desires and interests emerged throughout the community outreach phase. Collectively, these emerged as eight community values:



Connectivity and
Access



Diversity



Education



Evolving Needs



Flexibility



Health,
Wellness, Outdoors



Partnerships



Standards and
Maintenance

The proposed *Master Plan* identifies ways that these values could be incorporated and celebrated via park enhancement projects.

A range of potential site enhancements have been identified for each of the City's fifty-six public parks. Recommendations are also provided for community facilities located in public parks. Listed enhancements do not represent an exhaustive catalog of potential projects; rather they offer example scenarios for implementing *Master Plan* findings within existing park sites. These recommendations, along with descriptions of new or emerging "Park System Innovations" are provided in Chapter 3. This Chapter also identifies potential innovations for consideration and potential funding sources that could help finance park enhancements.

Overall, the *Master Plan* acknowledges that a quality park system is a benefit to all residents and visitors. Irvine's public parks are already among the best in the nation, and over the coming decade, there are opportunities to enhance the system even further to support community needs and expectations.

Upcoming Additions to Irvine’s Public Park System:

Planned Parks	Acreage	Planned Amenities
Portola Springs Community Park	32.51	Pickleball, Soccer, Softball, Tennis, Native Garden, Playground, Approximately 12,000-square foot Community Center
Gateway Community Park	40.9	Softball, Soccer, Tennis, Basketball, Handball, Sand Volleyball, Playground, Approximately 28,000-square foot Gym/Community Center
Los Olivos Community Park	12.47	Softball, Soccer, Basketball, Tennis, Playground, Approximately 6,000-square foot Community Center
IBC Neighborhood Park(s)	TBD	TBD

What Would Residents Like to See More Of?

Top 5 Responses: “In addition to what is already provided today, which of the following park and facility elements would you like to see more of in Irvine in the future?”	
Nature Trails	16.69%
Indoor Gymnasium and Fitness Space	9.21%
Off-Street Trails and Bikeways	8.95%
Areas for Special Events and Festivals	8.31%
Dog Park/Run	7.74%

Based on feedback from Community Intercept Events and Community Workshop #1

Why Do People Visit Irvine Parks?

Top 5 Responses: “What are your top reasons for visiting parks in Irvine?”

Physical Activity/Exercise	21.25%
Experience Nature/Enjoy Scenic Beauty	14.93%
Gather with Family/Friends	12.88%
Participate in Other Programs or Activities	12.29%
Visit Playground	10.84%

Based on feedback from Community Intercept Events and Community Workshop #1. Top 5 represent 72% of responses.

Favorite Parks in Irvine

Top 5 Responses: “Pick your favorite park.”

Bommer Canyon Community Park	21.77%
Colonel Bill Barber Marine Corp Memorial Park	17.01%
Heritage Community Park	10.20%
Northwood Community Park	8.84%
Turtle Rock Community Park	8.16%

Park Pulse: Participants' Favorite Parks

