



# Capitola Recreation Strategic Plan

February 13, 2020



Prepared by:  
BluePoint Planning  
1950 Mountain Blvd, #3  
Oakland, CA 94611



# The Strategic Plan

In 2019, the City of Capitola identified the need and opportunity to develop a strategic plan for the Capitola Recreation Division to direct future growth and to explore ways to expand recreation services to the community. This Strategic Plan was developed in collaboration with Division staff, a representative advisory group - "Core Team", a community survey, and consultant assistance. The Strategic Plan was designed to do the following:

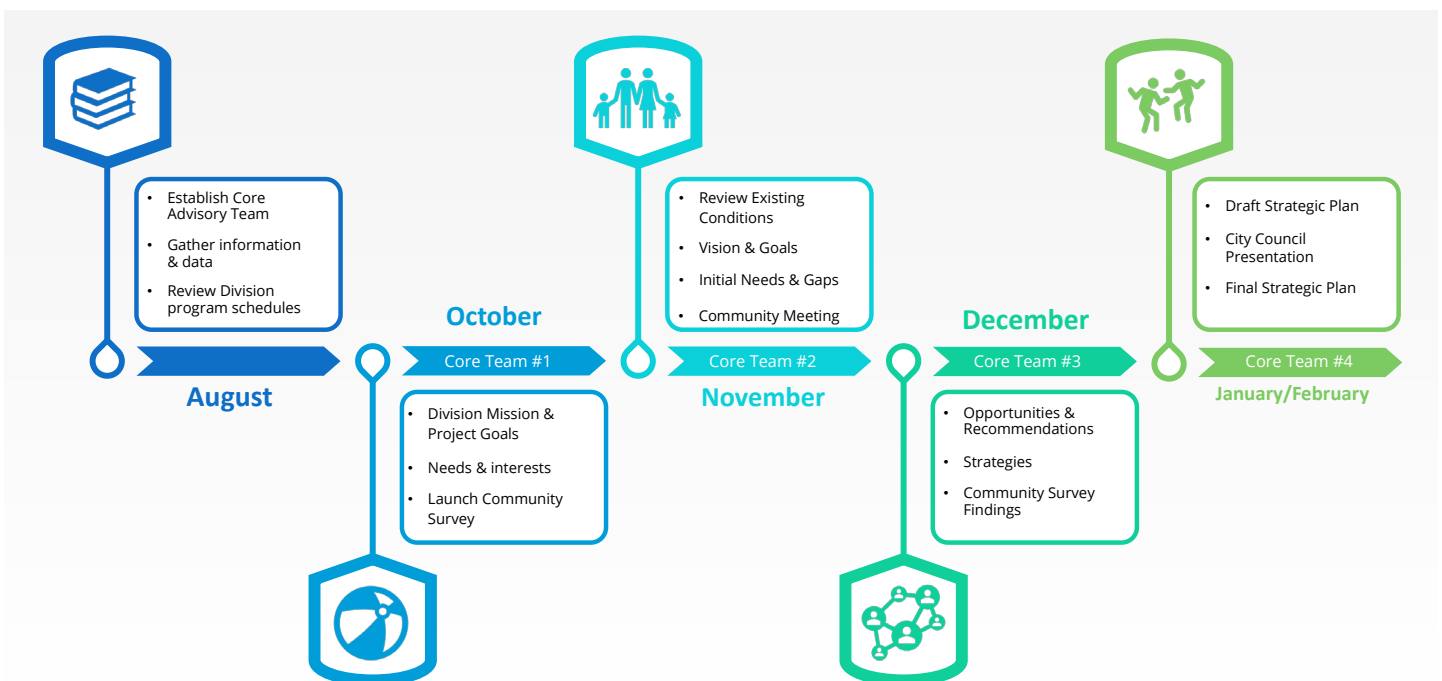
- Create a 5-year roadmap for the Recreation Division to meet community needs
- Establish strategies to maximize the use and function of the parks and facilities
- Identify which programs the Division should grow or add
- Create connections and efficiencies with other City community services
- Communicate the Division's priorities to the community

## About Capitola Recreation District

The Recreation District serves the residents within the City of Capitola and the Soquel Unified Elementary School District, a population of approximately 25,000 people. The Recreation Division currently offers a robust Class program operating out of the Jade St Community Center and other sites around Capitola and the County. We provide Junior Guard and Camp Capitola summer programs for youth, field rentals, and coed softball. These programs have been the foundation of Capitola's recreation division.

## Process

The Strategic Plan was developed over a six-month period and included four meetings with the Core Team, a diverse group of community representatives, a community survey, and a workshop. Below is a graphic of the process. The next step is to develop the specifics of how and when to enact the Strategic Plan.



# S.W.O.T. Analysis

An important part of the Strategic Planning process was to assess Strengths, Weaknesses, Threats and Opportunities (SWOT) of the Division. The staff as well as the Core Team helped to identify and uncover the most critical issues that needed to be considered in the Strategic Plan. The follow is a summary of those findings.

## Internal Division Strengths & Weaknesses

## External Opportunities & Threats

### Strengths

- Junior guards program!
- Instructor model that enables lots of new adult classes and programs
- Affordable and fun summer camp
- New afterschool program!
- Willingness to explore new ideas and options
- Community center is used as efficiently as possible
- Good relationship with the School District

### Opportunities

- Potential to add more youth opportunities, holiday camps, and cooking classes
- Expand Food Truck and similar events
- Build awareness of the programs and Recreation Division
- Expand access with an updated fee structure and subsidy program
- Partnerships with School and Library
- Putting parks, events and recreation programming in one Division
- Potential new development

### Weaknesses

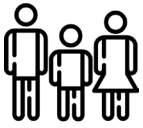
- The community center needs to be upgraded and its dividing walls aren't soundproof
- There are limited programs for youth, particularly non-competitive ones
- The website is not as accessibility or usable as needed
- Fee structure and lack of scholarship program
- Parks and large events are separate from recreation
- Division organization is not optimized for best results and operation

### Threats

- The community has a lack of awareness of the Recreation Division and its programs
- Kids are "aging" out of the programs and there are not enough programs for teens and millennials
- The Division is not recession proof and long-term economic sustainability
- Ensuring affordability and access for all families and District residents.

# Trends

The Strategic Planning process included considering major local, regional, and national trends that the Plan should address in establishing a vision and goals. The following are the highlights of those trends



## Intergenerational

Programs and activities that encourage multi-generational activities are growing in popularity and supporting deeper learning by sharing experiences across age groups.

>> For Capitola this may mean programs at the library pairing high schoolers with older residents to help with computers, or community events welcoming to all ages.



## Health & Wellness

Access to parks and recreation directly help improve a community's health and wellness, combating obesity, heart disease, mental illness, and much more.

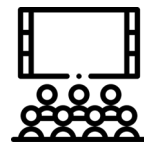
>> For Capitola this means integrating opportunities for exercise in classes, in the parks, for all ages and abilities. It also could mean health related classes, or wellness camps.



## Nature & Environment

Access to and appreciation of the natural world and the importance of the environment are strong trends that can be amplified by programs and parks.

>> By bringing parks into the Recreation Division, it offers the potential for classes related to wildlife viewing, environmental education classes, and creation of amenities such as community gardens.



## Art & Culture

Parks and recreation department are integrating arts and culture into their programming and parks, expanding participation for all ages.

>> By consolidating Events into the Recreation Division, there is the opportunity to connect the Arts and Culture Commission to the community recreation community, enhancing both.



## Technology

Technology and digital access is everywhere. Parks and recreation can use technology and create places of respite from being always on.

>> Creating a more intuitive website to provide greater access to programs and activities is a big opportunity as is a future digital tools to find parks, activities, rent facilities, or share information about events.



## Build community

Recreation sponsored events and programs help to build a sense of community and lasting connections to fellow residents.

>> Optimizing the park space, and increasing the number of events, will all serve to bringing greater awareness to the Division activities and enhancing the sense of community.

# District Recreation Programs

Currently, the Capitola Recreation District primarily develops and operates programs at the Capitola Recreation Center at Jade Park. In addition, the District manages the rental of fields for sports, summer camps, and the Junior Lifeguard program. Recently, they have started an afterschool program in partnership with the Soquel Elementary School District at the New Brighton Middle School.

Their programs include activities for adults and youth, as well as community events. Programs include youth and adult dance classes, a wide range of arts and crafts, music classes, adult wellness classes such as meditation, pilates and yoga, youth sports including skateboarding, and tennis. Community events include movies in the community center, clothing exchanges, and food truck nights.

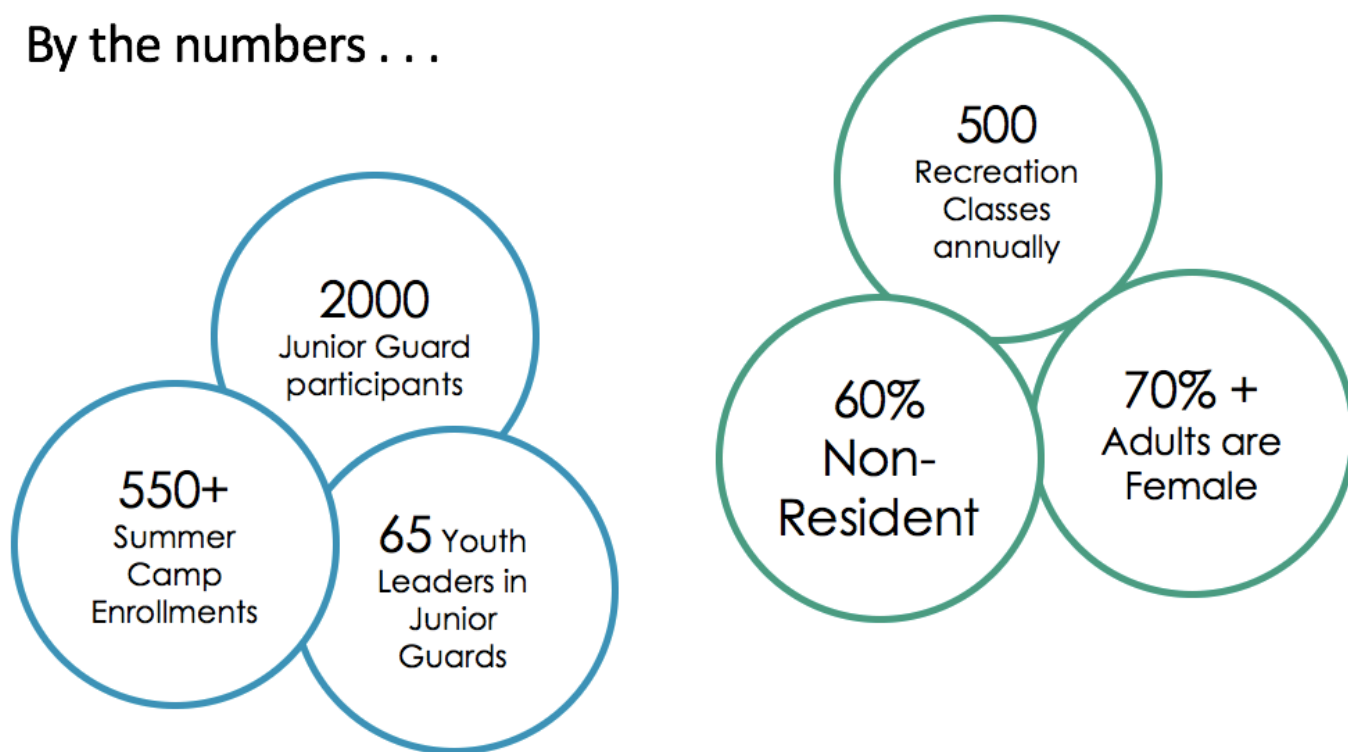
## District Population Characteristics

The District includes the City of Capitola and extends to the Soquel Elementary School District. Over 60% of the District's population is within the ages of 25 to 64, with about 22% under the age of 19. The average annual median income of the District is \$68,000, with the City of Capitola's being substantially lower. The median age is 42, with an average household size of 2.43. As with many communities, the District is getting older, with fewer younger people. There are plans in the city for new housing, which will add population and likely attract some younger families.

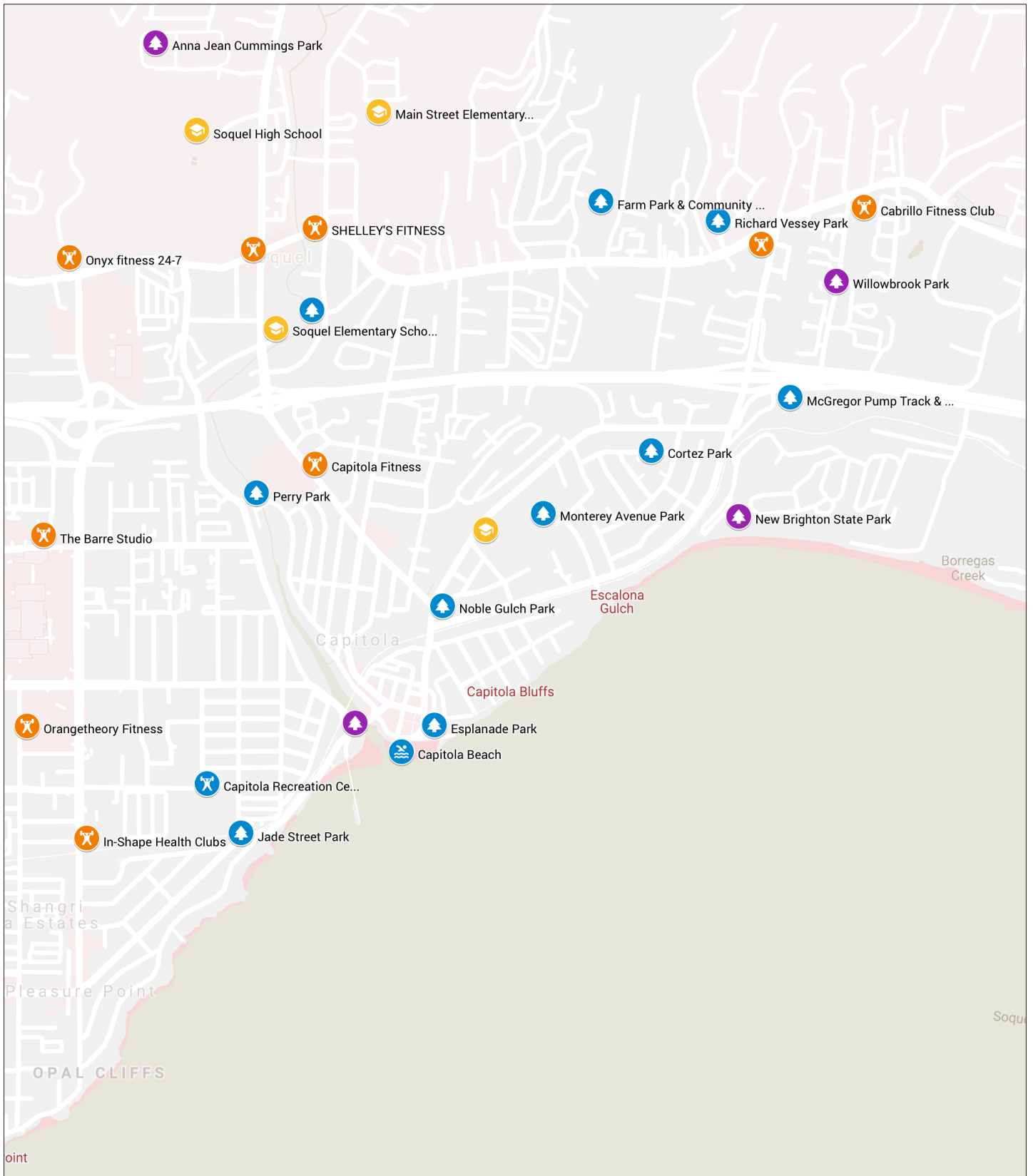
## Who uses the Programs now?





The District offers approximately 500 classes annually. The majority of participants are female over the age of 55. During the summer, the Division serves a larger number of youth, particularly with the Junior Guards and summer camp program. There is an opportunity for the District to broaden its appeal and increase the diversity of people who participate.

### By the numbers . . .



# District Parks and Other Providers



- |   |   |
|---|---|
|  Capitola District or City Facility  |  School District Facility    |
|  County or other Government Provider |  Commercial Fitness Provider |





# Capitola Recreation & Park Division Strategic Plan Framework

## Our Mission

The Capitola Recreation & Parks Division is committed to providing safe, affordable, intergenerational, and fun recreational activities and facilities to support the health and well-being of people of all backgrounds and ability levels.

## Our Vision

We provide recreation programs and facilities that are progressive, evolve, and are responsive to the needs of the entire community.

## Our Values

<b>Community-Oriented</b>	<b>Collaborative</b>	<b>Innovative</b>	<b>Efficient</b>	<b>Affordable</b>
Respond and anticipate community needs, informing and shaping programs for all.	Work hand and hand with city and regional partners to provide the best services possible.	Strive to incorporate innovative thinking in all aspects of the operation of the division.	Use resources, facilities, and staff efficiently to get the greatest benefit possible.	Provide a range of opportunities for all residents that are affordable and fully accessible.

### Goal 1: Efficient & Effective Division

By 2022, transform the division into an umbrella organization for programming parks, events, and recreation that is resourced, efficient, and effective.

### Goal 2: Affordable & Accessible

Annually update and refine recreation programs and event offerings to ensure they are balanced, relevant, affordable, and accessible to all community members, regardless of age, socio-economic status, or ability.

### Goal 3. Maximize Facilities

By 2022, complete an assessment of all city recreation and park facilities and prioritize renovations, additions, and ongoing maintenance to maximize function and flexibility to support the Division's mission.

### Goal 4. Partnerships

In 2020, establish partnership agreements with the school district, library and other city organizations to secure use of facilities and shared use to expand ability to provide a range of services.



# Key Initiatives



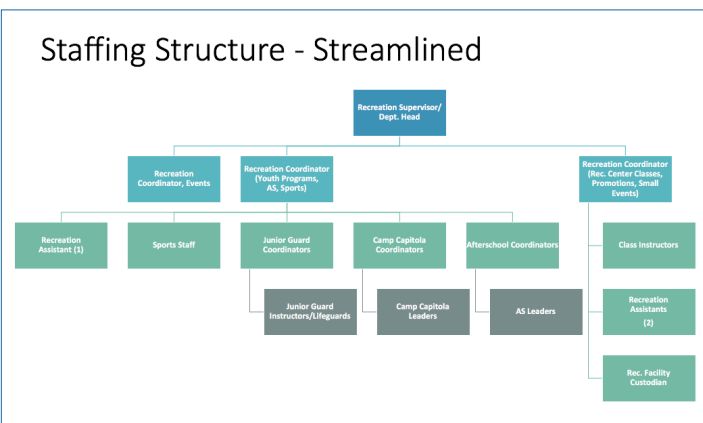
## Add Park to the Recreation Division

Currently Capitola Parks are housed under Public Works. The Strategic Plan has identified moving Parks in to the Recreation Division as a key initiative to help better serve District residents. The proposal would ensure that parks are continued to be maintained by Public Works, with the Recreation Division overseeing their management in support of programs, programming, and in collaboration with Public Works identifying future enhancements to improve function and use. This change would increase the activation, use, and function of the parks.



## Integrate Events Staff into the Recreation Division

Major events in Capitola are primarily managed by a single staff person within the Arts and Culture Commission that is separate from the Recreation Division. This move would help to improve coordination and align with other City events operated out of Recreation. Further, uniting these efforts in one Division will allow for better communications to the community and awareness of the events.



## Streamline Recreation Division Organization

The Recreation Division has not had a comprehensive update of staffing titles, positions, and structure for a long time. The result has been a reduction in efficiencies and lack of ability to operate effectively. The addition of Events and Parks, and the plan for future growth offers the right time to reassess the structure and to develop one more in line with a modern recreation department.

# Goal 1: Efficient & Effective Division

By 2022, transform the division into an umbrella organization for programming parks, events, and recreation that is resourced, efficient, and effective.

## Goal 1. Strategies

S.1.1 Plan for the operational needs of City organized events and assure they are appropriately resourced by incorporating into the Division in coordination with the Art & Cultural Commission as appropriate.

S.1.2 Develop a process for Recreation to incorporate programming and enhance community participation in Parks in coordination with the Public Works Department.

S.1.3 Evaluate Division's role in the issuance of Special Event Permits in coordination with the Police Department.

S.1.4 Build a new Division organization, including incorporating the addition of Events and Parks, clearer job titles, and resources to support activities.

S.1.5 Establish budgetary parameters for a new department structure and needs for fundraising, grants, and general fund allocations.

## Goal 2: Affordable & Accessible

Annually update and refine recreation programs and event offerings to ensure they are balanced, relevant, affordable, and accessible to all community members, regardless of age, socio-economic status, or ability.

### Goal 2. Strategies

S.2.1 Establish a cost recovery policy that enables more affordable access to programs for all residents of all ages with reasonable fees, scholarships, and revenue generation targets.

S.2.2 Explore need and roles of a Committee Advisory Group to provide input and feedback on new programs and activities and to support relevant and valuable services.

S.2.3 Expand and develop relationships with educational organizations outside of the City to promote internships and increase availability of teen programs.

S.2.4 Optimize the use of parks, facilities, and partner locations to pilot and offer programs throughout the City.

S.2.5 Systematically evaluate and update programs and program offerings to ensure that they serve the community as a whole.

## **Goal 3. Maximize Facilities**

By 2022, complete an assessment of all city recreation and park facilities and prioritize renovations, additions, and ongoing maintenance to maximize function and flexibility to support the Division's mission.

### **Goal 3. Strategies**

S.3.1. Inventory existing City Recreation and Parks and Facilities, survey the community and conduct a Needs Assessment.

S.3.2 Prioritize facility upgrades to support program offerings, improve efficiencies, and broaden services to the community.

S.3. Identify and help develop additional park facilities and recreation programs associated with new developments or other available resources.

## Goal 4. Partnerships

In 2020, establish partnership agreements with the school district, library and other public organizations to secure use of facilities and shared use to expand ability to provide a range of services.

### Goal 4. Strategies

S.4.1 Cooperate with School District to establish a long-term memorandum of understanding (MOU) regarding the shared use and programming of City and District facilities.

S.4.2 Establish a MOU with the library for programming and use of facilities at the new Capitola Library.

S.4.3 Foster relationships with other public and private recreation, event, and park providers to coordinate and amplify opportunities to serve residents.

S.4.4 Pursue grants and other funding with partners, building on the benefits of shared resources and cooperative services.

