

GOALS, OBJECTIVES, AND INITIATIVES – DRAFT – updated 9/10/24

The following goals, objectives, and accompanying initiatives expand on the guidance found in the El Dorado County General Plan for parks and trails and were derived from stakeholder and community input and reflect needs based on best practices and regional trends. Their collective purpose is to provide direction for how parks and trails should be planned, operated, and maintained so that current and future decisions about these resources are consistent with the County’s long-range vision for parks and trails.

Goal 1. Preserve and enhance access to natural areas and resource-based recreation, including rivers, trails, and open space.

The County features publicly-owned open space lands and recreation from El Dorado Hills to South Lake Tahoe. These natural amenities significantly influence the type of recreation that occurs and reduces the demand for traditional park-type uses. The County recognizes the recreational value that open space lands provide to the County’s system of trails and natural areas to connect with and enjoy nature. Open space must preserve landscapes and enhance riparian areas, vegetation and tree protection, wildlife habitat and corridors, scenic view protection, and provide natural areas for residents and visitors to explore.

Objective 1.1. Prioritize the development of parks, trails, and recreation programs that increase access to the South Fork of the American River and Cosumnes River.

Initiative 1.1.1. Seek grant funding opportunities to fund site development and amenities at beach areas.

Initiative 1.1.2. Continue to partner with agencies and entities that conserve land and manage open space and to ensure sufficient public access wherever feasible. Continue to acquire property for parking and ancillary use for public access, and take a lead role in enhanced access on lands controlled by El Dorado County and its partners.

Initiative 1.1.3. Support State and Federal goals to provide new visitor access points to the South Fork of the American River to increase river recreation opportunities.

Initiative 1.1.4 Support trail development by County partners to increase river access and provide recreational opportunities along riverways.

Objective 1.2. Connect people to nature through enhanced access to open spaces for walking, hiking, biking, horseback riding, and nature observation and education.

Initiative 1.2.1. Where feasible with respect to environmentally sensitive areas, establish trailheads for natural walking trails at open space areas with staging and parking areas, and restrooms.

Initiative 1.2.2. Contribute to the development of open space management plans to address appropriate access and connectivity. Connect regional open spaces through trails, greenways, wildlife corridors, and open space connections. Plans should be created and updated for properties or groups of properties within a contiguous area with progress tracked over time.

Initiative 1.2.3. Position the County's regional open spaces as a destination for recreation activities through better communication, mapping, and volunteer support.

Initiative 1.2.4. Support parks, open space and trail planning efforts of local municipalities, special districts, and state and federal agencies to meet community and regional goals.

Initiative 1.2.5. Incorporate QR codes at trailheads for access to digital trail maps and safety information that can be downloaded and used off-line where cell service is not consistent.

Objective 1.3 To the extent possible, maximize the use of outdoor destinations by enhancing accessibility for popular recreation opportunities.

Initiative 1.3.1 Prioritize outdoor recreation facilities that support the broadest cross-section of the population and have high participation levels (hiking, biking, and horseback riding).

Initiative 1.3.2. The use of El Dorado County parks and trails for organized events, classes, and group activities that support the health of individuals and communities will be encouraged, with appropriate provision made for maintenance, safety, capacity, and cost recovery.

Initiative 1.3.3. Improve trailheads and access to open space trail systems and year-round recreation opportunities, including access to off-road trails and winter activities in the Tahoe Basin and the West Slope.

Initiative 1.3.4. Support recreation program providers through permit coordination and promotion of events, programs, and other opportunities via the Parks office and social media.

Objective 1.4: Protect natural areas, people, plants, animals, and surface and ground water from contamination by harmful pests, pollutants, wildfire, and other hazards.

Initiative 1.4.1. Adopt a Comprehensive Integrated Pest Management Plan (IPM) to provide for vegetation management along trails and in parks, where feasible, to prevent erosion, and minimize the need for fertilizers, pesticides, and herbicides.

Initiative 1.4.2. Strengthen and build relationships with State Parks OHV Division, Placer County, and the US Forest Service through regularly scheduled meetings and forums to improve integrated information, use of grant funding, mapping, volunteer coordination, etc. on the Rubicon Trail, to maintain water quality and trail access.

Initiative 1.4.3. Consider strategies to reduce brush and minimize wildfire risks. Coordinate other open space management strategies with resiliency and wildfire prevention planning to reduce the risk of wildfire.

Initiative 1.4.4. Utilize recycled materials, as feasible, to reduce energy use and repurpose material. Through the procurement process utilize goods that are made of recycled materials when available.

Initiative 1.4.5 Include bear-resistant receptacles for material trash, recycling, and composting in parks, along trails, and trailheads.

Initiative 1.4.6. Address and decommission user created or unauthorized trails as appropriate.

Initiative 1.4.7. Use the Parks webpage and trail signage information to communicate warnings, skill level, best use, etc. for recreation areas.

Initiative 1.4.8. Utilize map kiosks to orient trail users and use regular and consistent signage along trails to identify connections and help users navigate the trail system and to facilitate emergency response.

Initiative 1.4.9. Coordinate for access to locked gates and facilities for emergency response to fire and other disasters.

Initiative 1.4.10 In collaboration with American River outfitters and the private boating community, identify improvements to the River Management Program and to enhance safety and user experience.

Initiative 1.4.11. Partner with the El Dorado County Agricultural Department to develop, document, implement, and update a coordinated plan to detect, map, and control harmful non-native invasive weed infestations in the NPWMA region using methods of integrated weed management.

Goal 2: Manage recreational opportunities within a regional context to accommodate public access, leverage funding, and provide interconnected trails.

A complete understanding of the County's parks and trails system requires an understanding and acknowledgment of the facilities and services provided by the County's partners. In addition to County-owned parks and trails, other agencies and organizations contribute to the recreation system within the County, to the benefit of all. Federal agencies, State agencies, cities, recreation districts, utility districts, other public entities, non-profit and non-governmental organizations, and county schools each provide particular facilities and programming independent of County Parks. Limited funding and specialized recreation needs reinforce the need for the County to partner with other agencies to provide the highest quality and value to residents and visitors. Working together the partners are able to create a well-integrated regional system of recreation facilities and satisfy the current and future needs of

residents and visitors. Moving forward, the County should not only participate in opportunities, but to be a leader in bringing organizations together to provide for recreation.

Objective 2.1: Link existing trails, regional trail networks, parks and open spaces, and community destinations through a system of paved and unpaved trails.

Initiative 2.1.1. Regularly meet with local, regional, state, and federal coalitions, agencies, and organizations to manage trail planning efforts and identify opportunities to coordinate projects and leverage resources to create a core regional trail system.

Initiative 2.1.2. Work with the El Dorado County Department of Transportation (DOT), Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor Joint Power of Authority (SPTC JPA), California Department of Transportation (Caltrans), Tahoe Transportation District, Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA), and other agencies to identify additional routes and trail connections for paved, shared-use paths and unpaved or native surface multi-use trails. Each trail type serves a different user and a different need, and alignments of each may vary to meet all trail needs.

Initiative 2.1.3 Facilitate the collaboration of local regional partners for trail development and maintenance.

Initiative 2.1.4 Develop and maintain an updated regional GIS map database of existing and proposed trails. Share with partner agencies and trails advocacy groups.

Initiative 2.1.5 Emphasize projects that improve the safety and access for diverse trail users of all abilities.

Initiative 2.1.6 Where appropriate, design trails to serve as fuel breaks and coordinate alignments with CalFire and wildfire resiliency planning.

Initiative 2.1.7 Incorporate the goal for a regional trail network into other planning documents to facilitate funding, partnerships, and development.

Initiative 2.1.8. In coordination with the SPTC JPA, determine the capability of each segment of the Sacramento-Placerville Transportation Corridor within County boundaries to accommodate railroad tracks, paved trail, and natural single-track uses to guide future trail route development.

Objective 2.2: Locate Class I, Class II, and other paved surface trails to be accessible to neighborhoods and public places such as schools, parks, and civic areas to encourage walking and cycling as a mode of transportation as well as recreation.

Initiative 2.2.1. Coordinate priority trail projects with adjacent public agencies including El Dorado County Transportation Commission (EDCTC), El Dorado County Department of Transportation (DOT), to create regional connections throughout the county as well as exploring trail alignments that connect to adjacent cities and counties.

Initiative 2.2.2. Parks Division provides input on grant applications pursued through DOT to focus new trail priorities to evaluate needs and prioritize trail gaps and connections between existing trails to add to the active transportation network.

Initiative 2.2.3. Prioritize development to allow access to trails throughout the County, with the long-term intention of closing the remaining gaps in the bicycle and pedestrian networks in unincorporated areas within the County.

Initiative 2.2.4. Incorporate trail projects currently listed within the Department of Transportation Annual Capital Improvement Program into a comprehensive Parks and Trails Capital Improvement Program.

Initiative 2.2.5. Study the appropriateness of allowing electric bikes and develop policies to address safety concerns with the use of E-bikes and other emerging technologies for both recreation and transportation on trails.

Initiative 2.2.6. Incorporate transit and travel information into the Park's website to encourage the use of transit or biking to trailheads.

Objective 2.3: Establish or preserve right-of-way and install improvements for multi-use natural trails for walking, biking, and horseback riding.

Initiative 2.3.1. Under the direction of staff, engage volunteers and non-profit groups to assist in building and maintaining trails.

Initiative 2.3.2. Develop natural surface trail standards to be used by staff and volunteers in trail construction and maintenance.

Initiative 2.3.3. Connect existing or forthcoming trails with the goal of creating an uninterrupted unpaved natural “single track” allowing for biking, walking, and horseback riding from the West to the East County lines. The natural trail may align in some areas with a paved trail, but may also diverge as appropriate for users.

Objective 2.4 Strategically pursue new park development based on local community need, and with consideration of recreation planned or already provided by other organizations and agencies in the area.

Initiative 2.4.1 Manage recreational opportunities in coordination with other parks and recreation areas so that recreational opportunities in El Dorado County complement nearby opportunities.

Initiative 2.4.2 Calculate recreation acreage standards pursuant to the General Plan considering all publicly-accessible parkland, including opportunities provided through partner agencies.

Initiative 2.4.3 Encourage partnerships with El Dorado County agencies that promote programs for disadvantaged groups.

Initiative 2.4.4 Establish regular meetings with the City of Placerville and El Dorado County Parks & Recreation agencies, the El Dorado County Office of Education, the U.S. Forest Service, and other park districts and jurisdictions to continually review common natural resource and recreation issues and to coordinate programs, activities, and facilities.

Initiative 2.4.5 Continue to accept, encourage, and promote donations to fund capital projects, amenities, and maintenance projects.

Objective 2.5: Collaborate with local and regional agencies on multijurisdictional projects and improvement standards to provide continuity of service regionally.

Initiative 2.5.1 Co-locate parks with school sites where practical, to support shared use and improve accessibility.

Initiative 2.5.2 Develop digital and printed countywide trails mapping that includes partner agencies and organizations.

Initiative 2.5.3 Continue to engage with non-profits, schools, and local sports leagues to make use of funding or land to meet the demands for sports fields.

Initiative 2.5.4 Lead Rubicon Trail partner agencies and organizations in pooling resources and leveraging the strengths and capacities of all involved agencies and user groups to reduce duplication of efforts.

Initiative 2.5.5 Document school partnerships with joint-use agreements to plan for better connections between school children and parks and open spaces.

Objective 2.6: Work with partners to preserve open space for public use and to accommodate public access, educational experiences, and resource protection.

Initiative 2.6.1 Develop Open Space design standards to include staging and parking areas for all users, including horse trailers, directional signs, restrooms, and fire fuels reduction and maintenance.

Initiative 2.6.2 Co-locate new assets with new or existing facilities, including schools, libraries, and areas of concentrated employment to share construction and maintenance costs, provide efficient delivery of services and create multipurpose destinations.

Initiative 2.6.3 Coordinate access to open spaces with the efforts of nearby providers, such as the American River Conservancy (ARC), Placer County, City of Placerville, the Federal Bureau of Land Management, and the United States Forest Service, to maximize connectivity and opportunities for an integrated regional trail network.

Initiative 2.6.4 Where appropriate, incorporate a natural surface shared-use path for bikers, equestrian users, walkers, and runners.

Initiative 2.6.5 Enter into partnerships or agreements with other federal, state and local agencies such as Placer and Amador Counties, BLM, U.S. Forest Service, and CAL FIRE to clarify management responsibilities, share resources and more efficiently address road maintenance, fuels reduction, interpretive programs, law enforcement, emergency response, and/or other operational needs.

Initiative 2.6.6 Encourage and support the acquisition of connected open space through the Division's role in planning and land development. Focus conservation easement acquisition efforts within areas not currently fragmented and encourage new developments to preserve or expand open space connections.

Objective 2.7 Guide the development of regional amenities, trails, and new parks and ensure best use of financial resources with focus on development project coordination.

Initiative 2.7.1 Formalize County and Community Service District development approval procedures to provide adequate review of proposed park improvements to make sure they are consistent with this Master Plan in terms of the quality of land, and type and quantity of improvements.

Initiative 2.7.2 Ensure new development has provided funding for expansion of the current parks, trails, and open space system and anticipates funding needed for on-going maintenance and capital replacement.

Initiative 2.7.3 Ensure that parks, trails, and open spaces proposed in specific plans create a network or a connected system.

Initiative 2.7.4 Encourage the development of privately-owned and maintained feeder trails in lieu of public trail easements in areas that have limited potential to serve the larger community.

Initiative 2.7.5 Encourage small, single-neighborhood parks to be developed, maintained, and funded under private ownership with maintenance costs provided by a special district or homeowner's association.

Initiative 2.7.6 Conduct a Park Impact Fee Nexus Study with the intent of assessing a regional park and trail development impact mitigation fee.

Goal 3: Prioritize maintenance of public assets and improvements to existing parks and trails to continue to provide safe and diverse recreational experiences.

Maintenance of existing parks was a high priority for participants in the outreach process for this Master Plan, as parks and trails become community “third places”, mainstays in active lifestyles, and provide regular access to nature. Ongoing maintenance and strategic renovations and improvements remain a priority for the program, though identifying funding for maintenance is a challenge. To meet this goal going forward, the County must strive to anticipate ongoing needs, keep up-to-date on innovative solutions, and prioritize safety, access, and the security of ongoing funding.

Objective 3.1: Invest in providing amenities at key parks and trailheads, prioritizing based on each community’s interests and improving access for all physical abilities and life stages.

Initiative 3.1.1. Adapt park facilities to provide a variety of appropriate improvements to encourage physical activity and social engagement, with special emphasis on facilities that meet the requirements of people with special needs including physical, developmental, behavioral, and sensory impaired.

Initiative 3.1.2. Incorporate facilities such as inclusive play equipment, multigenerational play facilities and outdoor fitness equipment park amenities to address recreation needs for users of all ages and abilities.

Initiative 3.1.3. Consider seniors and those with limited mobility when planning for spacing of benches and shade along walking trails.

Initiative 3.1.4. Include places to gather and connect with others on various scales from small family gatherings to larger group events at regional parks, where feasible, expanding their use and purpose.

Initiative 3.1.5. Optimize operating times for parks to make it possible for people with diverse work and school schedules to utilize them.

Initiative 3.1.6. Develop multi-purpose facilities where practical to accommodate changes in facility needs over time, such as sports fields that can accommodate both soccer and lacrosse and sports courts to serve both tennis and pickleball.

Initiative 3.1.7. Monitor use of sports fields and courts at existing parks and remain open to renovations to repurpose amenities in favor of community requests and recreation trends.

Initiative 3.1.8. Design bike and pedestrian facilities and access points to maximize safety.

Initiative 3.1.9. Upgrade amenities in parks, including playgrounds, shelters, restrooms and multi-purpose fields, to ensure ADA compliance and engage a range of users, including special needs children.

Initiative 3.1.11. In cooperation with the Parks and Recreation Commission, and with guidance from the goals and objectives in this Master Plan, analyze existing park plans that have yet to be fully implemented and reevaluate priorities for implementation of improvements.

Objective 3.2: Prioritize funding for ongoing maintenance needs over the lifetime of the asset or improvement.

Initiative 3.2.1. Identify training opportunities for staff to stay up-to-date with new techniques, practices, and materials to support safety, efficiency, and sustainability in all aspects of facility renovation and maintenance.

Initiative 3.2.2. Keep all maintenance equipment in good working order, and fund repair and replacement as a top priority.

Initiative 3.2.3. Identify opportunities to acquire surplus or excess materials or unwanted equipment from other agencies and County departments.

Initiative 3.2.4. For improvements, maintenance, and equipment, identify opportunities for the cost-effective reduction of energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions.

Initiative 3.2.5. Incorporate drought-tolerant, low maintenance native and adapted native vegetation, natural grasslands, and low water landscapes in the planting design of parks and functional landscape areas.

Initiative 3.2.6. Establish cost recovery policies and expectations for County programs and activities, including recommendations for those programs for which it is not realistic to expect fees to cover the cost of providing the program and those that should be covered by user fees.

Initiative 3.2.7. Strategically consider the value of grants against administrative responsibility and long-term maintenance of grant-funded projects.

Initiative 3.2.8. Establish and update a Five-Year Parks and Trails Capital Improvement Program to include long-term maintenance and renovation projects.

Initiative 3.2.9. Estimate the annual cost for maintenance expenditures and replacement needs over time, especially when considering a new facility or amenity.

Objective 3.3. Utilize a total asset management approach as part of a Capital Replacement Program to plan for maintenance and consider life-cycle and operations as part of maintenance planning.

Initiative 3.3.1. Produce an inventory and analysis of existing County lands for priorities listed in the Master plan, and a plan for each (disposal, hold for future use, develop and with what features).

Initiative 3.3.2. Comprehensively address the management and care needs of the natural environment and open space lands such as erosion control, invasive species, forest management, and wildfire prevention.

Initiative 3.3.3. Ensure sound fiscal principles are used when developing funding strategies, including funding for both one-time expenses and for on-going costs.

Initiative 3.3.4. Evaluate and update maintenance frequencies, and develop asset replacement schedules.

Initiative 3.3.5. Designate budget line items to fund annual preventative maintenance and reinvestment in facilities to maintain their functionality and prolong their life.

Initiative 3.3.6. Evaluate alternatives for facilities and amenities (such as recreation and aquatic centers or artificial turf and sports field lighting) based on appropriate locations, synergies with other park activities, potential partnerships, and cost effectiveness.

Goal 4: Engage the community to refine ongoing recreational needs, encourage participation, and promote volunteer support.

County recreation areas represent a primary interaction between a diverse swath of the public and local government, and stakeholder involvement will continue to be essential to the County's program. Parks and trails are public places that provide opportunities for people to interact with each other and share experiences that strengthen their sense of community and common interest. Residents take pride and ownership in County parks and trails as valued public places that enhance the quality of life, and in El Dorado County especially, this commitment plays an indispensable role in recreation. As citizens donate time to assist the Department in providing a product or service, limited funding for the program overall can be leveraged further.

Objective 4.1: Utilize the support of committed community members and volunteer efforts to the fullest extent.

Initiative 4.1.1 Wherever feasible, foster the ability for local organizations and businesses to sponsor or adopt park or trail projects as way to contribute to their ongoing improvement.

Initiative 4.1.2 Through a robust volunteer program, provide oversight to engage and train volunteers, track volunteer hours and projects completed to gauge effectiveness, plan for future opportunities, and leverage grant funds.

Initiative 4.1.3 Create a countywide volunteer program for natural trail construction and maintenance, coordinated by a specialized parks maintenance team to provide training to volunteers, tools and direct a crew for improvement annually.

Initiative 4.1.4 Provide motivational support for and retention of volunteers through calls to service and recognition of efforts.

Initiative 4.1.5 Create opportunities for community partners such as Scout troops, El Dorado Leadership Forum, and community service organizations to take on park, trail, and open space projects, as appropriate.

Initiative 4.1.6 In collaboration with user groups, identify improvements to the Rubicon trail program to enhance sustainable responsible use and improve the user experience.

Objective 4.2: Create forums for community input on park and trails to foster a stronger awareness of the common public purpose, value of these resources, and ongoing advocacy.

Initiative 4.2.1 Continue to utilize the Park and Recreation Commission as a public forum to gain insight from users on park and trail needs, as a conduit to staff and the Board of Supervisors.

Initiative 4.2.2 Solicit public input in the design phases for new park and trail facilities to ensure that they adequately reflect the recreation values and preferences of those who will use them.

Initiative 4.2.3 Develop opportunities for volunteers to serve as “Park Ambassadors” or guides to enhance the park visitor experience and educate park and trail users about rules and regulations, function as sources of information for users, reinforce appropriate park use, and focus on improving the quality of the visitor’s experience.

Initiative 4.2.4 Consider opportunities for volunteers to participate in trail mapping and assessment efforts to update and track maintenance needs of trails.

Initiative 4.2.5 Coordinate with Friends Groups for support of single facility or program that will better the community and their special interest.

Objective 4.3: Increase public awareness and engagement with County parks and trails through updating branding and marketing strategies.

Initiative 4.3.1. When designing a park feature, trailhead, or sign design, consider the history of an area, unique environmental factors and/or local character and identity.

Initiative 4.3.2. Utilize interpretive signage to educate visitors about the site’s history, impact and importance and create a sense of community pride in local heritage.

Initiative 4.3.3. Improve wayfinding by installing signs and maps at key junctions in the trail system and identifying parking locations.

Initiative 4.3.4. Work with the El Dorado County Chamber of Commerce to increase recognition of the County’s parks, open space and trail offerings, promote recreation opportunities, and broaden reach for enhance uses of public spaces.

Initiative 4.3.5. Update the County parks and trails website to allow residents and visitors to quickly and easily find park, trail and open space opportunities and up-to-date information on park offerings and events.

Initiative 4.3.6. Develop parks and trails branding guidelines and consistently use the branding guidelines in all signage and promotional materials.

Goal 5: Invest in and support the promotion of recreation features in recognition of the importance of recreation as a draw for tourism and quality of life for residents.

Tourism and visitation are economic drivers throughout the County, due in large part to the wealth of opportunities for recreation in all four seasons. The County recognizes its role as the place that regional tourists “come to play” and that parks, trails, and recreation are integral to the economic prosperity of the County, and provide a draw for visitors. This unique tourism draw provides an opportunity for overall economic vitality and program cost recovery specific to the Parks Division. Implementing projects and promoting services that support the high volume of use of County recreation amenities by tourists will generate revenues that can be reinvested in the park and recreation system, without straining other County resources. Access to and enhancement of these spaces will also continue to add to the quality of life of residents.

Objective 5.1. Promote County parks, trails, and recreation as a regional destination, and fund improvements through tourism and recreation funds.

Initiative 5.1.1. Develop a parks and recreation funding policy in budget policy, dedicating a portion of transient occupancy tax (TOT) to parks, trails, and open spaces.

Initiative 5.1.2. Develop a policy for concessions, food trucks, and sidewalk vendors to operate at parks and trailheads.

Initiative 5.1.3. Through local Chambers or other partners, develop a user-friendly visitor guide accessible on a variety of devices and to include website upgrades, development of mobile applications (apps), local business training, integration with social media and increased use of established visitor information tools.

Initiative 5.1.4. Engage in marketing efforts by businesses and partner organizations to connect guests to the County’s world-class recreation, including the American River, Rubicon Trail, El Dorado Trail, multi-use regional trail system, open space, and park offerings.

Initiative 5.1.5. Evaluate the potential for user or parking fees for facilities that receive high visitor and tourism use.

Initiative 5.1.6. Consider strategies for identifying ongoing funding streams for maintenance and operations of parks and recreation, including user fees, events space rentals, and film fees.

Initiative 5.1.7. Establish guidelines to allow for selling of naming rights and advertising sales on new facilities, scoreboards, trash cans, playgrounds, at dog parks, along trails, on planters, and as part of special events to support the costs of operations.

Objective 5.2. With a focus on program costs and on-going maintenance, develop sports fields that may accommodate regional use for the benefit of local teams.

Initiative 5.2.1. Continue to pursue grant opportunities benefiting new or improved sports fields for development for communities with families and active adult sports leagues, primarily in the western portion of the County.

Initiative 5.2.2. Review and update facility rental charges for sports fields to offset maintenance and operating costs.

Initiative 5.2.3. In concert with the County Economic Development Program, identify needs to better position the County as a draw for non-local visitors for sports tournaments, which may substantially contribute to the visitor industry and provide positive economic impacts to El Dorado County businesses.