

Executive Summary

San Pablo Park Assessment Report:

A community-based participatory research and evaluation project

Prepared April 2015

1. INTRODUCTION

In October 2014, a collaborative team of residents and early childhood health organizations assessed 5 parks within the City of San Pablo to determine their suitability for young children and families to play and engage in physical activity. The partners included: the West County Regional Group—a parent advocacy group comprised of residents of San Pablo and West Contra Costa County; First 5 Contra Costa Children and Families Commission; and Healthy & Active Before 5 (HAB45)—a collaborative of Contra Costa agencies committed to promoting early childhood health. During follow-up workshops, the team analyzed the data, selected priority parks, determined priority issues, and developed recommendations for improvements.

2. ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Prior to assessing the parks, the team developed a park survey tool. The tool included nine assessment categories: family amenities, maintenance, safety, play equipment, innovative play atmosphere for young children, all-abilities accessibility, transportation access, young child experience, and parent overall rating. WCRG members and staff then identified and assessed 5 parks in fall of 2014 (Image 1). Following the completion of the assessments, project staff compiled the assessment data and facilitated a series of community workshops in early 2015 to identify quality parks and parks in need of improvement. The partners used data from the park surveys, the San Pablo Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force's *Community Action Plan*, local crime reporting, and U.S. Census Bureau to prioritize two parks in need of immediate improvement. Lastly, the partners and city staff conducted site-visits at the priority parks in winter of 2015 to inform the final recommendations.

3. FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Wanlass Park received the highest parent ratings of all the parks. This park rated relatively well in each survey area, particularly in Maintenance and Young Child Experience. Across all parks assessed, four thematic priority improvement areas emerged from the data analysis: safety, play equipment, bathrooms, and garbage. While the team found that all parks assessed need some improvement, the WCRG members and other stakeholders selected Davis Park and El Portal Fields as the priority parks in need of immediate improvement on behalf of young children. Both parks rated poorly in each of the priority areas (Table 1), and are located in neighborhoods with very high poverty rates, a relatively high concentration of young children under age 5,¹ and high rates of violent crime.² Furthermore, Davis Park and El Portal Fields were prioritized in response to the City's low park per capita rate.³ Both parks were identified as spaces with ample acreage available for development and recommended park improvements.⁴

Table 1: San Pablo Park Ratings

Park Name	Amenities	Maintenance	Safety	Play Equipment	Innovation	ADA Access	Transportation	Child	Parent
Wanlass	3.5	3.5	3.3	3.4	3.0	3.1	3.4	4.1	3.4
Brentz Lane	1.9	3.0	2.6	3.4	2.5	2.3	2.2	3.3	2.6
Davis	2.2	2.6	2.1	2.6	2.2	2.5	2.6	3.4	2.6
El Portal Field	1.5	2.4	2.4	1.2	1.4	1.4	2.1	1.5	1.7
Kennedy	1.3	1.5	1.4	1.1	1.6	2.3	1.8	1.3	1.2

Color Coding Key

4.00 – 5.00	3.00 - 3.99	2.00 - 2.99	1.00 - 1.99
No Improvement Needed	Needs Only Minor Improvement	Needs Some Improvement	Needs Major Improvement

¹ U.S. Census Bureau, 2008-2012 American Community Survey. Obtained by Contra Costa Health Public Health Epidemiology, Planning, and Evaluation Department, April 2015

² According to local crime data requested from the following police departments: San Pablo, Richmond, Contra Costa College, and Contra Costa County Sheriff

³ San Pablo park acreage per capita ratio is 0.7 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. The Municipal Code calls for 3.0 acres/1,000 residents. Community Action Plan: Raising Healthy Future Generations. Prepared for the Childhood Obesity Prevention Task Force, City of San Pablo. Submitted by ChangeLab Solutions, Oakland Ca. March 2014.

⁴ San Pablo General Plan 2013. Davis Park has 11.6 acres while El Portal Fields has 2.9 acres.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, the partners recommend that existing, low-rated parks, located in very low-income areas, and inhabited by a relatively high concentration of young children are prioritized for immediate improvements, with a focus on the four thematic priority areas. In particular, the partners recommend that Davis and El Portal Fields parks receive immediate improvements in the areas of amenities, maintenance, play equipment, and safety, with a specific focus on improvements that benefit young children (Table 2). The team encourages the City of San Pablo to allocate capital improvement funds for these recommended improvements and work with the partners to explore additional park improvement grant funding, as well as other revenue generating strategies. To address park safety concerns, the partners recommend that a community safety coalition is formed in partnership with the San Pablo Police Department and residents to implement a robust violence prevention strategy in the neighborhoods surrounding the priority parks. Lastly, the team recommends that the City of San Pablo examine citywide land-use policies, revenue generating strategies, and park development opportunities to increase the amount of open, green space available to its residents and families.

Table 2: Priority Park Improvement Recommendations by timeframe, issue area, and priority			
Priority Area	Term	Davis Park	El Portal Field
Safety	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. More surveillance cameras 2. More lighting 3. Park programming 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Lighting 2. Park programming
	Long	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fence along Wildcat Creek 2. Park patrols or rangers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Surveillance cameras 2. Park patrols or rangers
Amenities	Short	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. New water fountains by bathrooms 2. Stainless steel counter in bathroom 3. Bilingual signs with police and maintenance phone numbers 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Basketball courts 2. Additional pavement games 3. Bilingual signs with police and maintenance numbers
	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Existing bathrooms with Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) updates 2. Water fountains throughout park 3. Picnic tables and barbeque grills 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Water fountains throughout the park 2. Picnic tables and barbeque grills
	Long	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Additional bathrooms at 20th Street, near play structures 2. Walking path 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bathrooms 2. Walking path
Maintenance	Short	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste and recycling receptacles 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Waste and recycling receptacles
	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bulk waste mitigation strategies 	N/A
Play Equipment	Medium	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play structures at 20th Street 	N/A
	Long	N/A	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Play Structures

Image 1: San Pablo Park locations, parent ratings

