SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN
APPENDIX 1

THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

ParkScore® Index for the County of Santa Cruz, California
Prepared by the Trust for Public Land
November, 2017

As the leading U.S. organization that works to analyze and determine the value of urban parks, The Trust for Public Land has created a methodology to give a general rating of every major U.S. city's park system through its proprietary program called ParkScore®.

Santa Cruz County has a total population of 274,780 in 2017.[1] It is located in the mid-coast of California at the north end of the Monterey Bay. The county is 285,522 acres[2] making the density a little under 1 person per acre (0.96 people/acre). Of that acreage, 51,776 acres, or 18.1%, of Santa Cruz County are publically accessible parks, parkland, or open space. The county includes four incorporated municipalities. These are the cities of Capitola, Santa Cruz, Scotts Valley, and Watsonville (Table 1).

Table 1. *Incorporated cities of Santa Cruz County and populations*

City	Population[3]
Capitola	10,180
Santa Cruz	64,465
Scotts Valley	11,928
Watsonville	53,796

Each of these municipalities operate parks, recreation facilities, or open space of their own. In addition, there are four special recreation and park districts in unincorporated areas that provide different combinations of these services (Table 2). These are independent of city and county governments and are governed by a board of directors.[4]

Parkland in the unincorporated part of the county is managed by the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services. This agency manages significant acreage including neighborhood, community, regional, and rural parks, as well as coastal access points, trails, and cultural and recreational programs.

Table 2. *Parks, recreation, and open space amenities provided in Santa Cruz County*

2016 Service Review of Recreation and Park Districts Functions Provided	Parks	Recreational Facilities	Public Open Space
Cities			
City of Capitola	•	•	
City of Santa Cruz	•	•	•
City of Scotts Valley	•	•	•
City of Watsonville	•	•	•
Special Districts			
CSA 11 – Recreation and Parks	•	•	•
Alba Park, Recreation and Parkway District	•	•	
Boulder Creek Recreation and Park District	•	•	
La Selva Beach Recreation and Park District	•	•	
Opal Cliffs Recreation and Park District	•	•	•

[1] 2016 Forecast Census block groups provided by Esri
[2] U.S. Census Bureau
[3] American Community Survey (ACS), U.S. Census Bureau
[4] "Review of Recreation and Park Districts Services and Spheres of Influence." Local Agency Formation Commission of Santa Cruz County. March 2016. Page 2.

Along with parkland belonging to the county, the municipalities, and the special recreation and park districts, there are also a number of state lands. Approximately 1,500 acres are managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, primarily in ecological reserves focused on conservation and which are not accessible to the public. There are also a number of state forests, parks, and beaches, which are accessible and are a treasured part of the county. The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County also manages acreage in the county – much of which is not open to the public but some of which is.

Table 3. *Agencies owning or managing publically accessible parkland in Santa Cruz County*

Agency	Publically Accessible Acres[5]
Boulder Creek Recreation District	3.4
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire)	2,861
California State Parks	44,519
City of Capitola	39
City of Santa Cruz	1,753
City of Scotts Valley	108
City of Watsonville	190
La Selva Recreation District	2.4
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County	551.6
Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District[6]	n/a
Opal Cliffs Recreation District	.25
San Lorenzo Valley Water District	180
Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services	1,388
Santa Cruz City Water Department	180

Santa Cruz is the first county that the Trust for Public Land has scored using the ParkScore Index. As such, it is important to understand the above profile of the county as compared to the cities scored in ParkScore when considering the following analysis. The cities in ParkScore are the 100 most populous cities in the US, so some are operating in a very different setting than is Santa Cruz County. Some of the smaller ParkScore cities are similar in population to the county, but population density remains a significant difference as well. The median density of ParkScore cities is 5.75 people per acre.

Table 4 compares Santa Cruz County to selected ParkScore cities which are similar to the county in terms of population size or density.

Table 4. *Santa Cruz County compared to selected ParkScore cities*

Place	Population	Land Area	Population Density (people per acre of total land area)	Acres of Parkland	Parkland as Percent of the Land Area	ParkScore 2017
Santa Cruz County	274,780	285,522	0.96	51,776	18%	
Greensboro, NC	261,833	80,970	3.49	7,582	9%	44
Jersey City, NJ	266,010	9,468	28.69	1,677	18%	56.5
Henderson, NV	277,102	68,948	4.11	9,173	13%	61
Toledo, OH	278,254	51,643	5.41	3,128	6%	45
Anchorage, AK	305,446	1,090,997	0.28	914,138	84%	61.5

[5] Many of these agencies own and/or manage far more acreage than is denoted here. This table only reflects that which is publically accessible.

[6]The Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District encompasses 1,047 acres, but this mostly serves populations outside of Santa Cruz County. Only 4 acres fall within county limits. For this reason the District and associated land was not included in the analysis.

ParkScore® Scoring Index

Cities can earn a maximum ParkScore of 100. For easy comparison and at-a-glance assessment, each city is also given a rating of one to five park benches. One bench means the park system needs major improvement, while five benches means the park system is outstanding. In evaluating park systems, we consider land owned by regional, state, and federal agencies within the 100 most populous U.S. cities—including schoolyards formally open to the public and greenways that function as parks. The analysis is based on three important characteristics of an effective park system: acreage, facilities and investment, and access.

Acreage

ParkScore awards each city points for acreage based on two equally weighted measures: median park size and parkland as a percentage of city area. Factoring park acreage into each city's ParkScore helps account for the importance of larger "destination parks" that serve many users who live farther than ten minutes' walking distance.

Investment and Amenities

ParkScore awards each city points for investment and amenities based on two equally weighted measures: total spending per resident and an average of per-capita provision of four key park amenities - basketball hoops, dog parks, playgrounds, and recreation and senior centers.

- Spending per resident is calculated from a three-year average (FY 2014/2015, FY 2015/2016, and FY 2016/2017, depending on a city's fiscal calendar) to minimize the effect of annual fluctuations. Spending figures include capital and operational spending by all agencies that own parkland within the city limits, including federal, state, and regional agencies.
- Amenities were chosen because of the breadth of users served, the ubiquity of these amenity types, and the ease of accurate counting of these measures.

Access

ParkScore awards each city points for access based on the percentage of the population living within a ten-minute (half-mile) walk of a public park. The half-mile is defined as entirely within the public road network and uninterrupted by physical barriers such as highways, train tracks, and rivers.

Scoring

The scoring system recognizes the accomplishments of cities that have made significant investments in their parks without holding dissimilar cities to an unrealistic standard. It enables detailed analysis and allows cities to increase their ParkScore through incremental improvements to different aspects of their park systems.

To determine a city's ParkScore, we assign points in three categories: acreage, investment and amenities, and access.

- Acreage: 20 points for median park size, and 20 points for park acres as a percentage of city area
- Investment and Amenities: 20 points for spending per resident and 20 points for the average of the four key amenity scores (basketball hoops, dog parks, playgrounds, and recreation and senior centers)
- Access: 40 points for percentage of the population living within a walkable half-mile, ten-minute walk of a public park

Points for each statistic are assigned by breaking the data range established by our national sample into 20 brackets (with the exception of Access, which has 40 brackets), with the lowest bracket receiving the least points and the highest bracket receiving the most points. Each city's total points—out of a maximum of 120—are then normalized to a ParkScore of up to 100.

Outliers

To prevent outliers from skewing the results, the top bracket for each measure includes all values equal to more than double the median of the data range. For example, spending per resident in our 100-city national sample ranges from $21 to $279, with a median of $80. To control distortion from local anomalies, all cities that spend more than double the median value (i.e., $160 per resident) are assigned to the highest bracket and receive 20 points. With the top bracket thus defined, the parameters for the remaining brackets are established so that each bracket comprises an equal portion of the remaining data range. This protocol applies to all categories except access, which has no outliers.

Mapping

To map access to parks and open space, ParkScore first identifies gaps in park availability, and then determines which gaps represent the most urgent need for parkland.

Access gaps are based on a service area representing a ten-minute walk. To map park need, we combined three differently weighted demographic profiles:

- Population density – weighted at 50%
- Density of children age 19 and younger – weighted at 25%
- Density of individuals in households with income less than 75% of city median income – weighted at 25%

Each city's park need is mapped from data collected in the 2016 Forecast Census block groups provided by Esri.

Analysis of the ParkScore for the County of Santa Cruz and Municipalities

City of Capitola

The City of Capitola receives a score of 76, in a tie with the City of Santa Cruz for the highest scoring municipality. Capitola's parks are mostly small, but make up a not insignificant percentage (18%) of the city. Among this acreage is 160 acres at New Brighton State Beach. The city's parks are accessible within a 10-minute walk for 89% of the population. The city spends $151 per resident on its parks and recreation offerings, even higher than the county. The population is quite well served in terms of recreational amenities, with the lowest score in this area being for basketball hoops.

City of Santa Cruz

The City of Santa Cruz ties with Capitola in scoring 76 points. The city has small parks at a median of 2.3 acres, but a quarter of the city (25%) is parkland. This is echoed in the impressive 94% of residents who live within a 10-minute walk to a park. Some of this acreage (201 acres) is state parkland. The city also spends the most on its parks out of all the municipalities, at $164 per person. This is due in part to spending by California at the state parks of Seabright/Twin Lakes, Natural Bridges State Beach, and Lighthouse Field which fall within the city. The city has mid-range scores for amenities, with very low points for basketball hoops balanced out by full marks for 6 dog parks.

City of Scotts Valley

The City of Scotts Valley receives a score of 56. Scotts Valley has fairly large parks, with a median park size of almost 10 acres. Lodato Open Space (46 acres) and Skypark (32 acres) bring this score up. However the city's park offerings are concentrated in these large chunks; only about 4% of the city's land area is parkland and less than half (47%) of Scotts Valley residents can walk to a park within 10 minutes. The city invests well in its parks though, spending $140 per resident, and also scores very well in recreational amenities.

City of Watsonville

The City of Watsonville scores 51.5 due to a combination of factors including low spending. The city spends $50 per resident on parks and recreation, less than half of what each of the other municipalities and the county as a whole spend per resident. However, Watsonville has a significant 88% of its residents within a 10-minute walk of a park. The city also

receives high scores for its recreational offerings, outscoring all other municipalities and the county in nearly every category besides dog parks (though it still receives 19 out of 20 possible points here).

Santa Cruz County – Unincorporated
In addition to scoring each individual incorporated place in Santa Cruz County, the unincorporated portion of the county was also scored (and the county was ultimately scored as a whole, below). The unincorporated county receives a score of 48.5, and 2.5 park benches. It has a range of park sizes resulting in a median park size of 4.3 acres, and is 18% parkland. Much of this parkland is managed by the county, but also includes some large state parks and some preserves run by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. In the unincorporated portion of the county, 44% of residents are within a 10-minute walk to a park. While low, this is still fairly good considering the population density of 0.5 people per acre. Spending on parks in the unincorporated places is $92 per resident, and people living in these areas are fairly well served by recreational amenities.

Analysis was also done to examine the rural versus the urban unincorporated areas of the county, to take into account the differences in density and walkability in the more heavily developed areas around the municipalities and the rest of the county. In rural unincorporated areas, only 25% of the population is within a 10-minute walk to a park. In urban unincorporated areas, this access is 76%. This variance should be taken into account when considering specific areas, though the overall score for the county (below) provides a useful sense of the parks and recreation offerings for county residents overall.

Santa Cruz County - Countywide
Santa Cruz County was also scored as a whole, including all the above incorporated places as well as the unincorporated areas. These scores include all parklands, spending, and amenities pertaining to all parks agencies that own or manage public land within the county. This portrays how well the county as a whole is serving its residents in terms of parks and recreation, as well as allowing specific municipalities to be considered on an individual basis.

With a score of 57.5, Santa Cruz County as a whole scores slightly above the national median (51) according to the 2017 ParkScore Index. The county's median park size is fairly low (2.5 acres), reflecting that a lot of the parks in the county are small, ranging from pocket parks to neighborhood parks. However, the county is 18% parkland, double the national median of 9%. This reflects the large state parks and other preserves and open spaces available to residents which are partially a product of California's Open Space Easement Act.

Interestingly, 65% of people living in Santa Cruz County as a whole are within a ten minute walk to a park. This is in line with the national median score of 66%. Despite the obvious differences between Santa Cruz County and the large, dense cities in ParkScore, the county has about the same access to parks as many of the largest cities, and in fact does better than many as well.

The county is making significant investments in its parks and recreation; at $105 per resident it is above the national median of $80. Additional state dollars are contributed within the county, as well as the spending by the Santa Cruz County Department of Parks, Open Space, and Cultural Services and that of each individual incorporated area. The county has mid-range scores for amenities. A full 20 points are awarded for dog parks, and indeed dog parks seem to be a popular (or at least common) amenity in both the county as a whole as well as in all municipalities, all of which received full and nearly full (19) points.

Comparison
Santa Cruz County indicated some cities in California to compare their ParkScore against (Table 5). A detailed table of each city's score can be found at parkscore.tpl.org.

Table 5. *Selected California cities from the 2017 ParkScore Index, chosen by Santa Cruz County for comparison.*

City	ParkScore 2017 Ranking	ParkScore 2017 Score	ParkScore 2017 Park Benches
San Francisco	3	80	5.0
San Diego	14	69	4.0
Sacramento	21	63.5	3.5
Oakland	24	62.5	3.5
San Jose	24	62.5	3.5
Los Angeles	74	41.5	2.0
Fresno	90	33.5	1.5

The county's median park size is lower than that of most of the selected cities, with the exception of densely packed San Francisco (median park size: 1.6 acres). However, it does better than most in terms of parkland as percent of city area, with only San Francisco (20%) and San Diego (23%) scoring higher.

The county's parks are less accessible than most of the cities, partially because of its low density. It does score higher than Los Angeles (54%) and Fresno (61%) in terms of percent of the population that lives within a 10 minute walk to a park.

Most of the cities spend more on their parks per resident than the county does, again with only Los Angeles ($85) and Fresno ($38) spending less. With an average of 13 points in the overall amenities category, Santa Cruz County does better than most of the selected cities in terms of recreational offerings, with only Sacramento (14 points out of 20) scoring better.

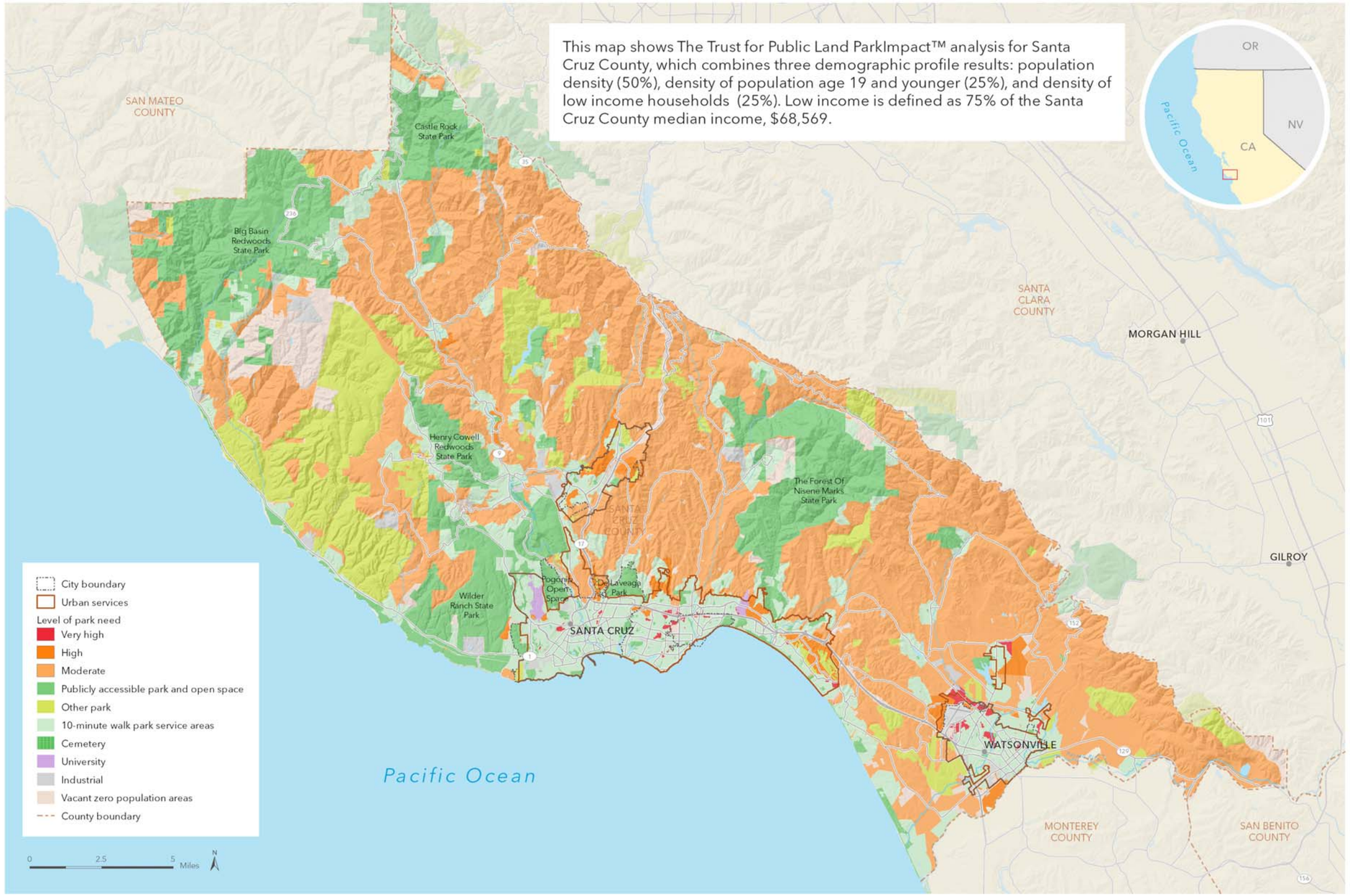
Conclusion

Santa Cruz County scores in the middle of the selected California cities, and slightly above average compared to the national medians in ParkScore. The county does quite well in comparison to many more dense and more urban places, and offers its residents a lot in terms of parks, recreation, and open space. Many small parks bring the county's score down, though this is balanced out by the high points in the Parkland as Percent of City Area category. The county could also increase investment in its parks; while the residents of the county are fairly well-served in terms of recreational offerings, the county spends slightly less per capita than its California neighbors, suggesting that an increase in moneys directed toward parks and recreation would be beneficial. The county can also increase park access for residents through strategic placement of new parks and improving access to existing ones in order to improve the park system. GIS analysis revealed areas in and around Watsonville and Capitola that are particularly high need in terms of access to parkland (indicated in red in the accompanying mapping analysis). These places, as well as those in darker orange in the unincorporated areas, can be used to inform future park planning efforts.

Santa Cruz County ParkScore® Index

		Acreage				Access		Investment & Amenities													
		Median Park Size		Parkland as Percent of City Area		Percent of Residents within a 10-Minute Walk to Park		Spending per Resident		Amenities: Basketball Hoops per 10,000 Residents		Amenities: Dog Parks per 100,000 Residents		Amenities: Playgrounds per 10,000 Residents		Amenities: Recreation & Senior Centers per 20,000 Residents		Amenities Average				
	City	Data (Acres)	Points/20	Data	Points/20	Data	Points/40	Data	Points/20	Data	Points/20	Data	Points/20	Data	Points/20	Data	Points/ 20	Amenities Points/20	Total Points/100	Park Benches	City
	Capitola	2.7	5	18%	19	89%	35	$151	18	2.0	6	9.8	20	2.9	11	2.0	20	14	76.0	**4.5**	Capitola
	Santa Cruz City	2.3	4	25%	20	94%	37	$164	20	0.9	2	9.3	20	3.3	12	0.6	7	10	76.0	**4.5**	Santa Cruz City
	Scotts Valley	9.8	19	4%	3	47%	11	$140	17	3.4	12	8.4	20	4.2	16	1.7	20	17	56.0	**3.0**	Scotts Valley
	Watsonville	1.4	2	5%	4	88%	34	$50	4	5.2	19	1.9	19	3.5	13	2.6	20	18	51.5	**2.5**	Watsonville
	Santa Cruz County - Unincorporated	4.3	8	18%	19	44%	10	$92	10	1.2	3	3.7	20	2.5	9	0.9	11	11	48.5	**2.5**	Santa Cruz County - Unincorporated
	Santa Cruz County - Countywide	2.5	4	18%	19	65%	21	$105	12	2.0	6	5.1	20	2.9	11	1.2	15	13	57.5	**3.0**	Santa Cruz County
3	San Francisco	1.6	3	20%	20	100%	40	$235	20	3.8	13	3.8	20	2.4	8	0.8	10	13	80.0	**5.0**	San Francisco
14	San Diego	5.7	11	23%	20	77%	28	$120	14	2.8	9	1.2	11	1.9	6	1.0	12	10	69.0	**4.0**	San Diego
21	Sacramento	5.5	11	8%	8	79%	29	$122	14	2.7	9	2.3	20	4.0	16	1.0	12	14	63.5	**3.5**	Sacramento
24	Oakland	2.5	4	12%	12	85%	32	$145	17	2.6	9	1.0	9	1.8	6	1.3	15	10	62.5	**3.5**	Oakland
24	San Jose	3.2	6	14%	15	75%	27	$147	18	1.6	4	1.0	9	2.7	10	1.1	13	9	62.5	**3.5**	San Jose
74	Los Angeles	4.8	9	13%	13	54%	15	$85	9	0.8	1	0.3	1	1.1	2	1.1	13	4	41.5	**2.0**	Los Angeles
90	Fresno	3.6	7	4%	3	61%	19	$38	3	3.6	13	1.2	12	1.5	4	0.3	4	8	33.5	**1.5**	Fresno
	National Median	5.0	9	9.3%	9	66%	22	$80	9	2.6	9	0.9	8	2.4	8	0.8	10	10	**51.0**	2.5	**National Median**
	National Maximum	16.6		84.2%		100%		$279		10.2		7.2		7.4		2.9		19	**87.5**	5.0	**National Maximum**
	National Minimum	0.6		1.5%		27%		$21		0.7		0.0		0.7		0.1		2	**28.5**	1.0	**National Minimum**

Scores are calculated based on the Trust for Public Land's 2017 ParkScore Index.



ParkImpact™ analysis urban services

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

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THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY PARKS STRATEGIC PLAN
APPENDIX 2

OUTREACH MATERIALS AND SUMMARY

HOW NEEDS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED

In order to identify the community and internal needs of the County Parks Department, staff conducted an internal assessment, a community outreach process, and reviewed findings from other relevant documents and plans.

Close to all of our permanent staff and approximately 1,000 members of the public participated in some way in the Strategic Planning process - through attending meetings, giving input to our draft, or filling out the online survey. All public input generated was compiled into a document and the data were used to generate our Values, Vision, and Strategic Priorities, Goals, and Objectives in the County Parks Strategic Plan. The processes for the internal assessment, community outreach, and review of other data are represented in the following three tables.

Table 1: Internal Assessment

Internal Assessment & Review		
Strategic Planning Project Team	The core team included the Parks Director, the Administrative Services Manager, and the two project leads. This team designed the process, tracked progress, and led the Strategic Plan Process. *Additional staff assisted with the public meetings, the layout of the plan, translation into Spanish, etc.*	• Met monthly • Encouraged cross-collaboration and whole department engagement • Achieved the goal of this Strategic Plan only with the help of the entire County Parks team
Staff Strategic Planning Meetings	A majority of permanent staff and many extra help staff across all five sections were included. *Gathered priorities and ideas for how the Department could improve and continue to evolve to meet various needs in the community.*	• A series of three staff meetings held in December 2016 and January, 2017 • A well-attended follow-up 'All-Staff' meeting held in August, 2017 • Informal one-on-one and small meetings • Supervisory staff input at a number of bi-weekly management meetings • 50-60 members of the parks staff participated in this strategic planning process
Strategic Plan Working Group	The Working Group was an advisory group composed of 10 members representing a variety of perspectives and interests. *Met periodically throughout the process to give input, to assist with public outreach, to assess what we heard from the community, to review data, and to give input to the draft plan.*	• Representation from both Watsonville & north county • Representatives from the Parks and Arts Commissions • Boulder Creek Recreation District, and the County were also represented • Note: See Acknowledgements section of the Strategic Plan for a list of members
Parks Commission	The County's Parks and Recreation Commission is an advisory committee to the County's Board of Supervisors. Meetings are open to the public. *Staff presented contents of the Strategic Plan to the Parks Commission throughout the process*	• Progress reports were included in the agenda packet for commissioners, and available to the general public • Members of the public as well as commissioners gave input to Strategic Plan materials periodically at these Parks Commission meetings.

Table 2: External Assessment

External Assessment & Community Outreach		
Stakeholder Outreach	Over 200 key stakeholders from various community groups were personally invited by Parks staff and Working Group members to give input into the Strategic Plan. *Stakeholders were invited to participate through attending one of the public meetings and/or filling out the online survey. We also encouraged them to alert their membership to do the same.*	• Stakeholders reached included community groups, advocacy organizations, partnering agencies, park user groups, and business and civic organizations • Invitations included a link to the online survey and information about the public meetings • Outreach materials were provided in both English and Spanish
Board of Supervisors and County Administrative Office	Each County Supervisor was invited to share thoughts on core issues heard from constituents related to the County Parks Department. In addition the Parks Department team coordinated with the early stages of the *Vision Santa Cruz County Strategic Planning Process* and solicited input from the County Administrative Office.	• All 5 supervisors attended the public meeting in their district and addressed constituents • The County CAO contributed information and advice to our Strategic Planning Team
Website & Online Survey	An open online survey was created for anyone interested in giving input into the strategic planning process, and promoted heavily through our networks. (See Stakeholder Outreach above.) *The survey was available in both English and Spanish and was open for responses from April 8 through June 2, 2017 on our Strategic Plan page of the Parks website.*	• 802 people responded to the survey in detail or simply added themselves to our mailing list • 676 respondents completed meaningful portions of the survey • Survey responses were completed from all parts of the County, as shown in Figure 1 Note: The survey was not intended to be scientific or to statistically represent the county. Since the respondents are self-selected and not a random sample, the results of the survey do not necessarily represent the entire county population.
Community Meetings	A series of five community meetings were held to solicit community input on vision and priorities for the Department for the Strategic Plan. Meetings were held throughout the county—in Ben Lomond, Watsonville, Davenport, Aptos and Live Oak. Meetings were publicized through: ✓ individual letters and emails to over 200 stakeholder groups and their membership ✓ Board of Supervisors' newsletters ✓ the County's and the Parks Department's websites and social media ✓ Next Door postings (a community-based social network website) ✓ the Parks Activity Guide ✓ flyers and handbills at parks and community bulletins ✓ flyers to school districts as feasible ✓ a press release - which generated several articles in local media	• Over 190 people attended a meeting • Participants were split into four groups for the comment period; each group rotated through a series of four stations • Stations were facilitated by parks staff and Working Group members and focused on: 1) vision and values, 2) parks and facilities, 3) programs and events, and 4) priorities • Facilitators asked a series of prompts or lead a series of exercises with each small group • Meetings included about an hour and fifteen minutes for public comment; all comments were recorded on a large note pad and compiled for this Strategic Plan • Some community meeting materials are included in the Community Meeting Materials section below. • Publicity materials were provided in English and Spanish. Spanish translation services were available at each meeting.

Table 3: External Review

Review of Local Relevant Plans and Documents	
To assess park needs in the county, staff also reviewed summaries of other related outreach efforts in the county in the last ten years, including those below:	
***Draft City of Santa Cruz Parks Master Plan 2030* (2017)**	This project included extensive outreach within the City of Santa Cruz about park needs for the city parks department, and includes results of two statistically valid polls related to parks issues.
***City of Watsonville Trails & Bicycle Master Plan* (2012)**	This project included community input and identifies needs for trails in the southern part of the county.
***City of Watsonville Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan* (2009)**	This plan includes a needs assessment for Watsonville parks, recreation, and trails, and was developed with extensive community meetings, focus groups and surveys.
***Monterey Bay Sanctuary Scenic Trail Network Master Plan* (2013)**	The Santa Cruz County Regional Transportation Commission (RTC) developed this master plan with community input to guide the implementation of the rail trail, which will be an off-street trail from Davenport to Watsonville along the Santa Cruz Branch rail line.
***Sustainable Santa Cruz County Plan* (2014)**	The County Planning Department created this plan to describe the vision, guiding principles, and strategies that can lead to a more sustainable development pattern in Santa Cruz County within the planning area of Live Oak, Soquel and Aptos, including policies related to trails and parks in the Plan's policies for open space and the bicycle and pedestrian network.
***Conservation Blueprint* (2011) by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County**	This project included extensive countywide outreach related to needs for open space and conservation.
Santa Cruz County Parks, Recreation, Agricultural Conservation and Open Space Project (2016)	This 'Needs Assessment, Revenue Feasibility and Governance' report was presented to the County Board of Supervisors on May 24, 2016. It includes an assessment of existing parks, recreation, agriculture and open space in the County, a statement of needs related to these topics, an assessment of existing and needed revenue, and potential governance structures for meeting these needs. Convened by the Santa Cruz County Parks Department, this report was created in a cooperative effort with Parks Directors from the cities of Watsonville and Santa Cruz, the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, the Resource Conservation District of Santa Cruz County, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and the Sempervirens Fund.
ParkScore Report (2018)	The Trust for Public Land completed an analysis of all of the public park land in Santa Cruz County, including City, State, County and other parks. The analysis included benchmarks on amenities, acreage, access and spending on parks, and compares the county to comparable areas in California and across the country.

RESULTS

The results of each of the community meetings and the online survey can be analyzed in a number of ways. To look at the community response as a whole, the priority ranking exercises from both the survey and meetings are combined and discussed as one section below. Additional findings beyond what is summarized in the Strategic Plan from the online survey and from the community meetings are also summarized in separate sections below.

PRIORITY RANKING RESULTS

Both the survey and the public meetings included an opportunity for participants to rank various topics in order of importance or priority to them. Results of the highest-ranking choices in these exercises are shown in Tables 4 through 6, which includes results from both the online surveys as well as the community meetings. These tables include the three choices that were ranked the highest (1), second highest (2) and third highest (3) summarized by each meeting, all the meetings combined, the online survey responses, and a combination of the five meetings and the online survey responses (overall total). The rankings are calculated through a weighted average of responses, where respondents' first choices are weighted the most, and last choices are weighted the least.

In the "Overall Total" column, meetings with more responses have more weight. For example, the online survey had many more responses than all of the meetings combined, so in the "Overall Total" column, the online survey is weighted proportionally more than the public meetings based on the greater number of responses. The following numbers of responses are represented in each category:

- Ben Lomond Public Meeting: 45 responses
- Watsonville Public Meeting: 20 responses
- Davenport Public Meeting: 24 responses
- Aptos Public Meeting: 24 responses
- Live Oak Public Meeting: 50 responses
- Total Public Meetings: 163 responses
- Online Survey: 616 responses
- Overall Total: 779 responses

In regards to the existing parks system (see Table 4) improving general maintenance ranked the highest overall. At the public meetings, improving public safety ranked the highest. Improving management and conservation of natural resources ranked high in all meetings and in the online survey as well. Integrating public art was consistently ranked lower than other options.

In regards to improving the parks system (see Table 5) creating and improving trail connections between parks ranked the highest overall. Providing access to County-owned open spaces ranked the highest at the public meetings. Since meeting participants learned a lot more about the parks system and had more introduction to the Strategic Plan than the online survey respondents did, they may have been more likely to notice open spaces owned by the County that do not currently have public access. Adding new uses to parks, and creating new neighborhood parks were also important to a lot of respondents. Creating new large regional parks consistently ranked lower than other options, indicating a perception that there is currently sufficient acreage of large regional open space in public ownership in the county or at least that acquiring new large parks is not as high a priority as other things.

In regards to park programming (see Table 6) increasing interpretive programs ranked the highest overall, followed very closely by increasing kids' after-school programs. All possible answers were ranked highly by some respondents, indicating that all of the options are important to some types of people.

Table 4: Highest Ranked Responses to Question "What needs/deserves the most focus in our existing parks?"*

	Public Meetings						Survey	Overall
	Ben Lomond	Watson-ville	Daven-port	Aptos	Live Oak	Mtgs Total	Online Survey	Overall Total
Integrate Art in Public Spaces								
Increase cleanliness							3	3
Increase Safety	1	1	2	1	3	1		
Increase number of programs and events		3		3	2	3		
Improve Management and conservation of natural resources	2		1	2	1	2	2	2
Improve general maintenance	3	2	3				1	1

*Numbers represent summary rankings where 1 is the highest, 2 is the second highest, and 3 is the third highest. Total columns represent a weighted average where meetings with more attendees were weighted proportionally more.

Table 5: Highest Ranked Responses to Question "What's needed to best serve county residents and visitors?"*

	Public Meetings						Survey	Overall
	Ben Lomond	Watson-ville	Daven-port	Aptos	Live Oak	Mtgs Total	Online Survey	Overall Total
Create More Large Regional Parks								
Add New Uses and Improvements	2	1		2			2	2
Provide Access to County-Owned Open Spaces	3	2	2	1	3	1	3	3
Improve and Add Amenities to Beaches and Coastal Access Points	3		1			2		
Create and Improve trail connections between Parks	1			2	2		1	1
Create Additional Neighborhood Parks		3	3	2	1	3		

*Numbers represent summary rankings where 1 is the highest, 2 is the second highest, and 3 is the third highest. Total columns represent a weighted average where meetings with more attendees were weighted proportionally more.

Table 6: Highest Ranked Responses to Question "What parks programming is most wanted/should be pursued?"*

	Public Meetings						Survey	Overall
	Ben Lomond	Watson-ville	Daven-port	Aptos	Live Oak	Mtgs Total	Online Survey	Overall Total
Increase Kids' After-School Programs			2	3	1	1	2	2
Increase Summer Programs for Kids and Teens		3					3	3
Increase Interpretive Programs	2		3		2	2	1	1
Increase Recreation Programs and trips for Adults and Seniors	3	1		2		3		
Increase Classes		2		1				
Increase Aquatics Programs					3			
Increase Family-Focused Special Events	1		1					

*Numbers represent summary rankings where 1 is the highest, 2 is the second highest, and 3 is the third highest. Total columns represent a weighted average where meetings with more attendees were weighted proportionally more.

Overall, people care a lot about improving their parks and programs. While the highest-ranked choices vary by meeting versus survey, and by geographic area, the highest ranked choices are sometimes not significantly higher than other choices. All of the possible choices were highest priority to some respondents and attendees. The forced ranking exercise is useful for respondents to get a sense of a need to prioritize some things over other things, and to have to make choices since resources are finite. However, the final summary of the results shows that each of these general priorities is important to someone.

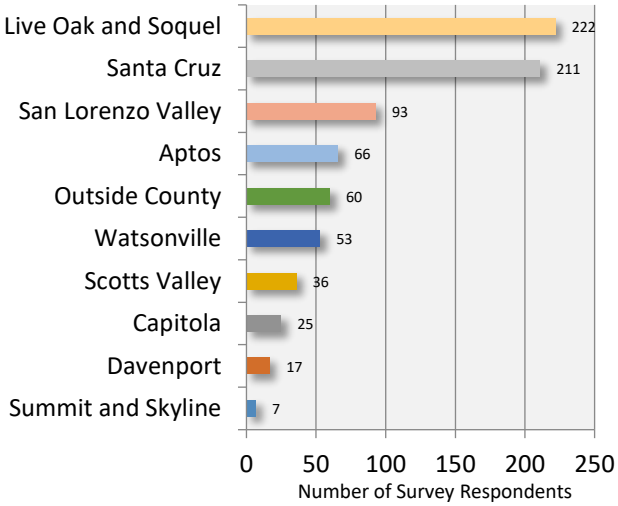
ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

The Parks Department created an open online survey for anyone interested in giving input into the strategic planning process. The survey had a broad reach as it was easily accessible to people throughout the county. Survey respondents also learned about the Parks Department, the parks system and gained more of an understanding of the parks system as a whole. Comments and information gathered in the survey were an important contributor to the key findings and needs summarized in the Strategic Plan.

The survey was available in both English and Spanish and was open for responses from April 8 through June 2, 2017. In that time, 802 people responded to the survey. Some of these respondents only completed the name and email sections. 676 respondents completed meaningful portions of the survey.

The survey was not intended to be scientific or to statistically represent the county. Since the respondents are self-selected and do not represent a random sample, the results of the survey do not necessarily represent the entire county population. Staff decided to make the survey available to anyone who wanted to complete it to ensure that there was a way for anyone who wanted to participate to do so. Survey responses were completed from all parts of the County, as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Survey respondent approximate locations by zip code

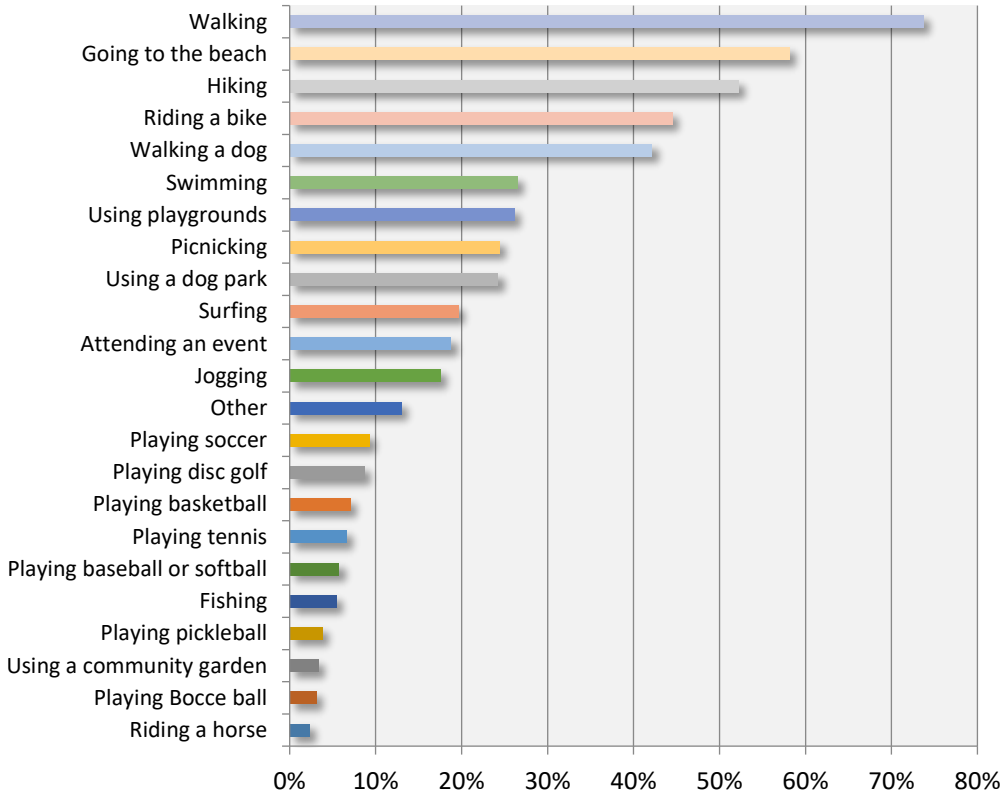


Comments from the survey are grouped into five themes as explained in the Community Response section of Chapter 5 in the Strategic Plan on pages 32-35. Priority ranking results from the survey are discussed in the previous Priority Ranking section of this appendix. A complete set of survey responses and comments is available upon request. Some additional general findings from the survey include the following:

- **County Parks Brand:** Santa Cruz County residents do not have a strong association with county parks as being distinct from city parks, state parks, or other parks. When asked to select from a complete list which "county park" you use the most, the most common answer (8.7%) was "other," and respondents listed a state or city park.
- **Popular Recreational Activities**: County residents value a variety of recreational opportunities in their parks. Based on survey responses, walking and going to the beach are the most common activities, but all types of recreation listed, plus many types not listed, were important. Figure 2 includes responses about typical activities people like to do in the parks.
- **Travel to Parks:** Most respondents (61%) typically drive to the parks, but a significant number typically walk (22%) and bike (15%).

- **Opinion of Parks Department**: Most respondents have a favorable or very favorable opinion of Santa Cruz County Parks (75%), while only 5% have an unfavorable or very unfavorable opinion.

Figure 2: Survey responses to typical activities in county parks



COMMUNITY MEETINGS RESULTS

The community meetings provided opportunities for a broad range of community input. General themes raised at all the meetings are summarized in the Community Response section of Chapter 5 in the Strategic Plan on pages 32-35. Priority ranking results from the community meetings are discussed in the previous Priority Ranking section.

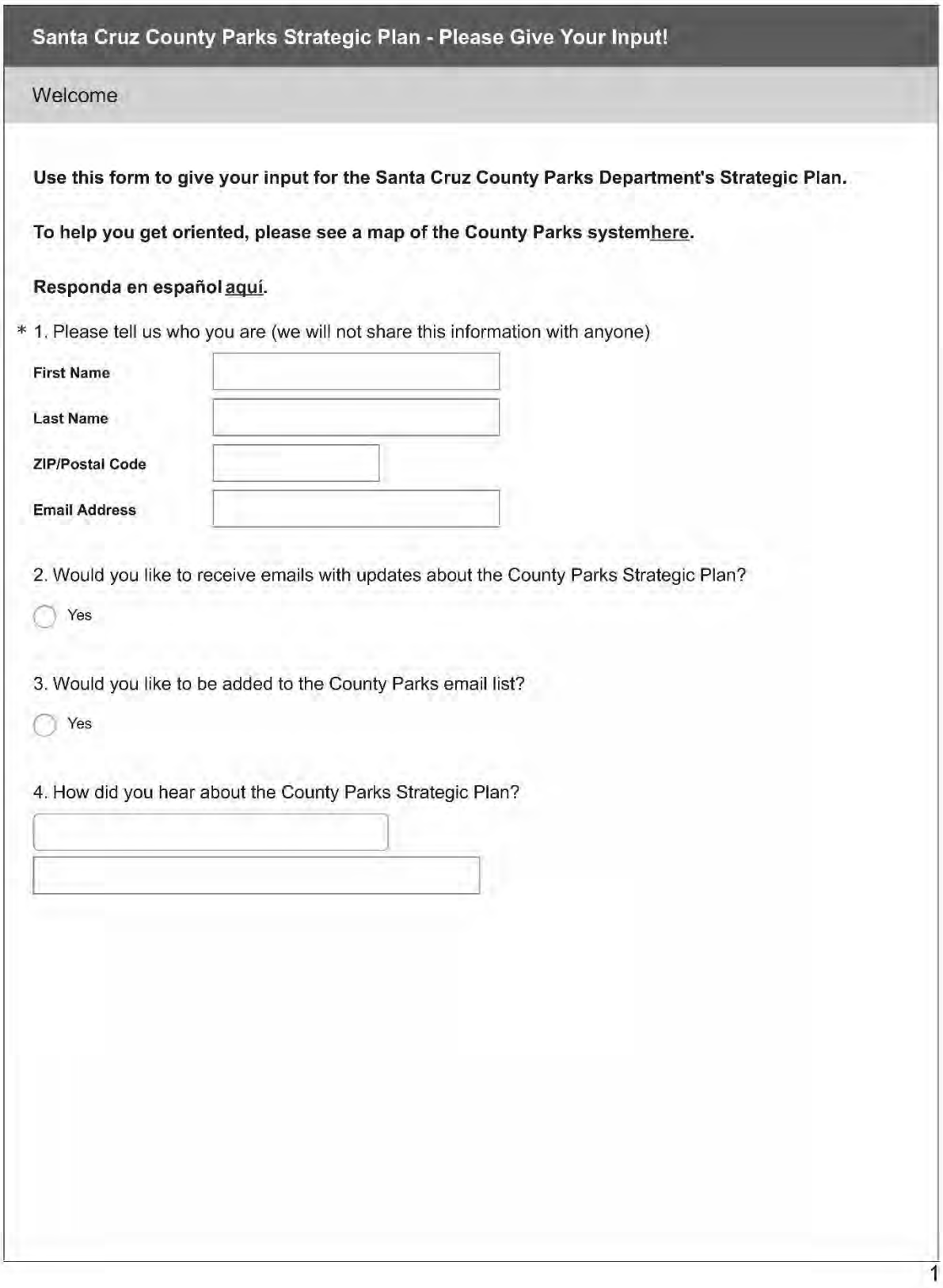
In addition to the themes common to all five meetings summarized in the Strategic Plan, each region of the County had specific issues that were most important to locals. These region-specific themes became evident as they were repeated by many participants and stood out as key themes to that community in each of the five meetings. Region-specific themes from these meetings are summarized by geographic area in Table 7. A complete set of public meeting comments is available upon request.

Table 7: Community Meeting Themes by Area

Area	Prominent Themes from Community Meetings
San Lorenzo Valley	• More trails and trail connections between parks • Improvements to access Miller Property • Opportunities for dogs and a dog park in SLV • Places to mountain bike and a bike pump track in SLV • More interpretive programs and features
Watsonville Area	• Additional uses at Pinto Lake such as sports facilities, aquatics, boating, interpretive materials, exercise equipment and facilities for youth programming • Increase in active youth recreation facilities and youth programming • Creation of additional beach access points and improved connections to existing beach access points in south county • Access to Bert Scott Estate and Freedom Lake • More sports facilities • A public pool or water feature and aquatics programs accessible to south county • Trail connections and coordination with City of Watsonville trail plans
North Coast	• Increased patrol, management and maintenance of north coast county beaches • Improved restrooms, parking, trash removal and amenities at all county beaches to accommodate increasing visitorship • Creating a biking and walking trail along the rail corridor between Davenport and Santa Cruz • Coordinated planning with State Parks and more planned and patrolled parking areas for beaches along north coast • County ownership, management, patrol and access improvements to Davenport main beach
Aptos	• More local neighborhood parks in Aptos to serve the local population to reduce residents' need to travel to other parts of the County • Addition of uses at existing parks (and completion of parks master plans) at undeveloped parks such as Polo Grounds, Aptos Village and Seacliff Village • More coastal access points and improvements to existing points in Aptos area
Live Oak and Soquel	• Safety and enforcement of rules on Live Oak beaches • More off-leash dog facilities • Interpretive signage, facilities and programs at county beaches • Improved park infrastructure and amenities at county beaches • Improvements to Moran Lake park such as trail improvements and connections, tree safety and interpretive signage • More active sports facilities such as all-weather fields for soccer, additional pickleball and tennis courts, basketball, and other sports facilities • More neighborhood parks

ONLINE SURVEY

The following survey was available through Survey Monkey online in English and Spanish.



Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan - Please Give Your Input!

Welcome

Use this form to give your input for the Santa Cruz County Parks Department's Strategic Plan.

To help you get oriented, please see a map of the County Parks systemhere.

Responda en español aquí.

* 1. Please tell us who you are (we will not share this information with anyone)

First Name

Last Name

ZIP/Postal Code

Email Address

2. Would you like to receive emails with updates about the County Parks Strategic Plan?

Yes

3. Would you like to be added to the County Parks email list?

Yes

4. How did you hear about the County Parks Strategic Plan?

1

Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan - Please Give Your Input!

Park and Programs

5. Which Santa Cruz county park do you use the most? (See a map of county parks here)

6. Which Santa Cruz county beach or coastal access point do you use the most? (see a map of county parks and coastal access points here)

7. Which County Parks program is most important to you or your family?

8. What is your favorite public art piece in a Santa Cruz County park? (See a map of public art sites here)

9. Which activities do you typically do when you visit the Santa Cruz county parks? (Check as many as apply)

- [ ] Walking
- [ ] Jogging
- [ ] Hiking
- [ ] Using playgrounds
- [ ] Playing tennis
- [ ] Playing basketball
- [ ] Playing soccer
- [ ] Playing baseball or softball
- [ ] Playing pickleball
- [ ] Riding a horse
- [ ] Riding a bike
- [ ] Using a community garden
- [ ] Swimming
- [ ] Picnicking
- [ ] Going to the beach
- [ ] Walking a dog
- [ ] Using a dog park
- [ ] Playing disc golf
- [ ] Fishing
- [ ] Surfing
- [ ] Playing Bocce ball
- [ ] Attending an event
- [ ] Other (please specify)

2

10. How do you typically get to the park or coastal access point that you use the most?

11. Generally speaking, what is your opinion of Santa Cruz County Parks?

◯ Very favorable ◯ Favorable ◯ Neutral ◯ Unfavorable ◯ Very unfavorable

3

Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan - Please Give Your Input!

Priorities

12. Which of the following things are most important to you? (drag items into order of importance to you - OR- pick numbers, with 1 being the most important)

- [ ] Increasing cleanliness in parks
- [ ] Increasing safety in parks
- [ ] General maintenance of existing park infrastructure
- [ ] Improving management and conservation of natural resources
- [ ] Integrating art into new and existing public spaces
- [ ] Increasing programs and events in existing parks

13. Which of the following things are most important to you? (drag items into order of importance to you - OR- pick numbers, with 1 being the most important)

- [ ] Creating additional large regional parks
- [ ] Adding new uses and improvements to existing parks
- [ ] Providing access to County-Owned open spaces (eg the Miller Property, the Pace Property, the Bert Scott Estate)
- [ ] Improving and adding amenities to beaches and coastal access points
- [ ] Creating and improving bicycle and pedestrian trail connections between parks
- [ ] Creating additional neighborhood parks

4

14. Which of the following things are most important to you? (drag items into order of importance to you - OR- pick numbers, with 1 being the most important)

	Increasing kids after-school programs
	Increasing summer programs for kids
	Increasing aquatics programs
	Increasing recreation programs and trips for adults and seniors
	Increasing family-focused special events
	Increasing classes (eg Spanish language, fitness, meditation, etc)
	Increasing interpretive programs (eg nature walks, history tours, stargazing, etc)

5

Santa Cruz County Parks Strategic Plan - Please Give Your Input!

Comments (Optional, but we would love to hear from you!)

15. What do you like most about Santa Cruz county parks?

16. Are there park facilities, amenities or programs you would like to see added to the county parks system? What and where?

17. What do you think would most improve the Santa Cruz county parks system?

18. Please share a memory you have from a county park or program:

19. Other comments for the County Parks Department:

THANK YOU!

Your input is important.

6

COMMUNITY MEETING MATERIALS

Community meeting publicity materials and the graphics available at each of the meetings are included in Figures 3 –10.

Figure 3: County Programs, Events and Public Art

Figure 4: County Parks, Facilities, and Coastal Access Points

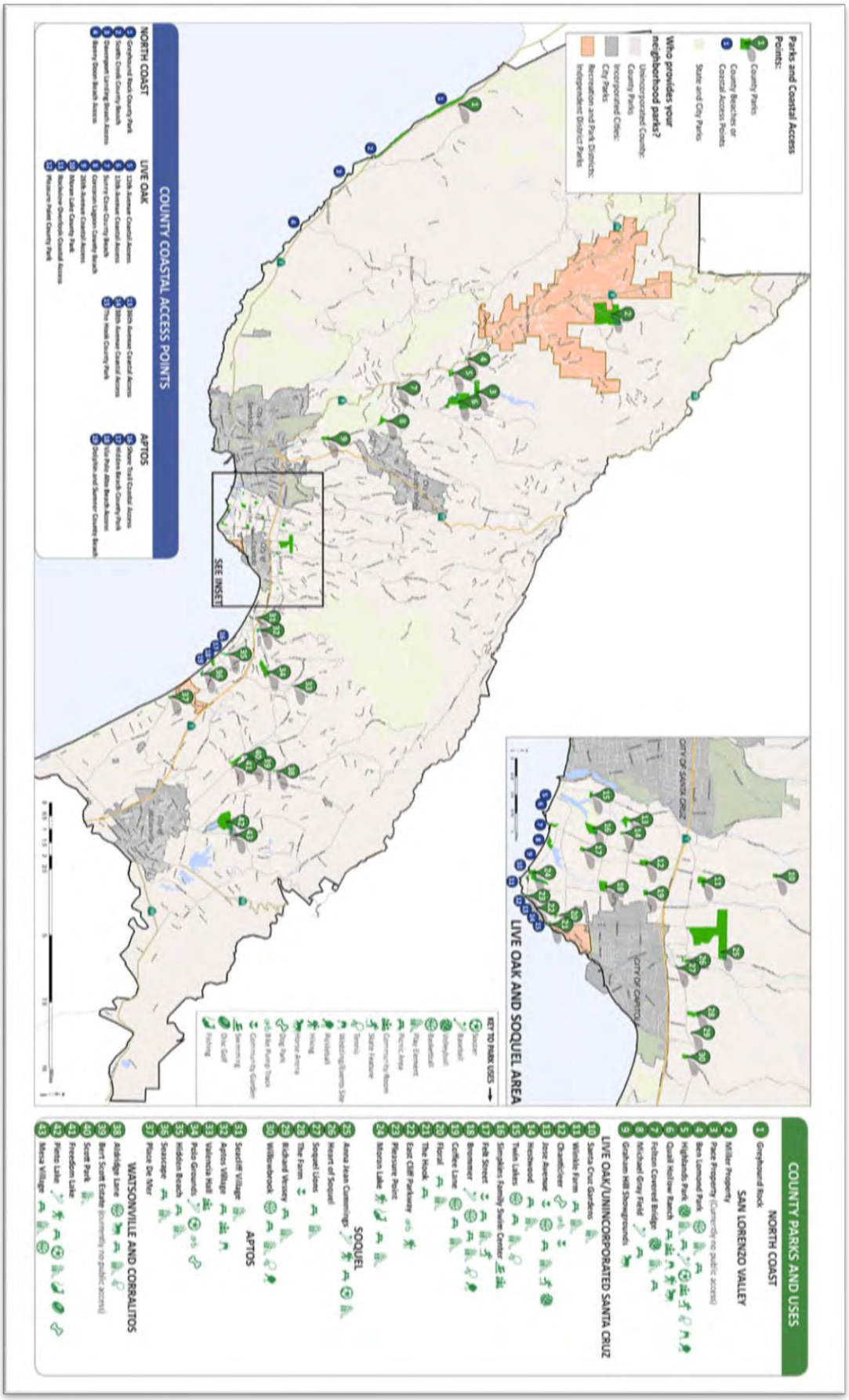
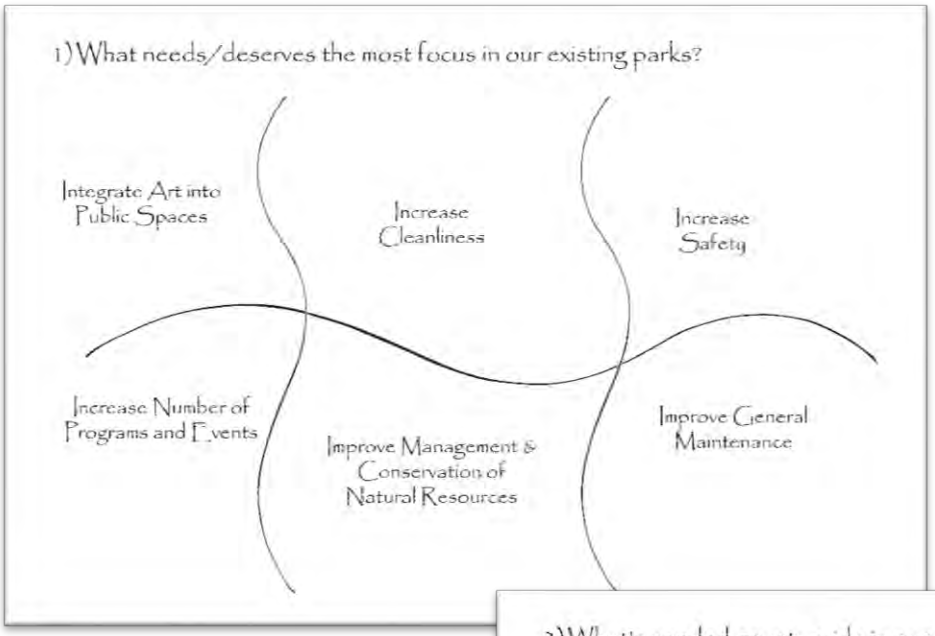
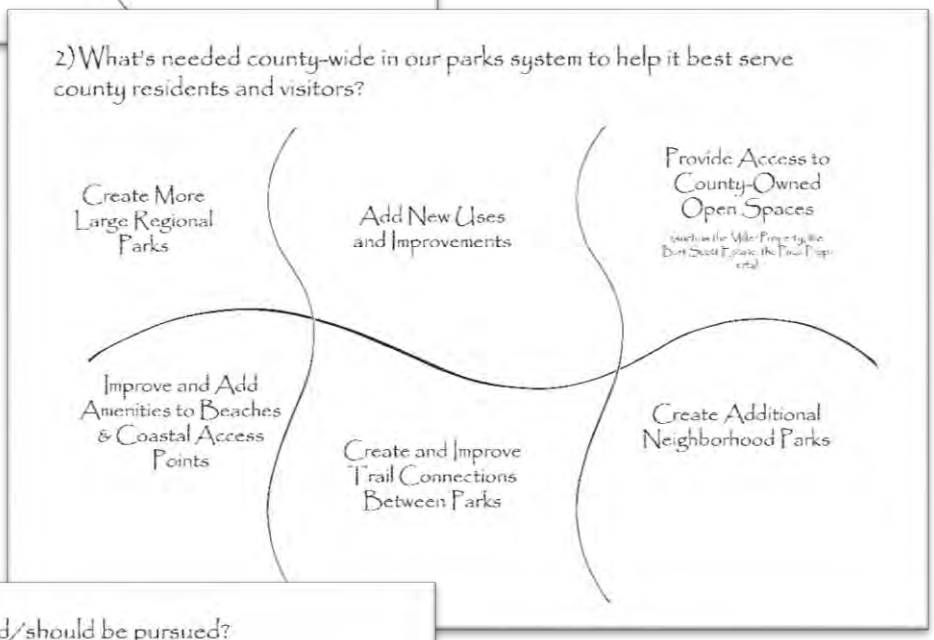


Figure 5: Community Meeting Priority Ranking Exercise Boards





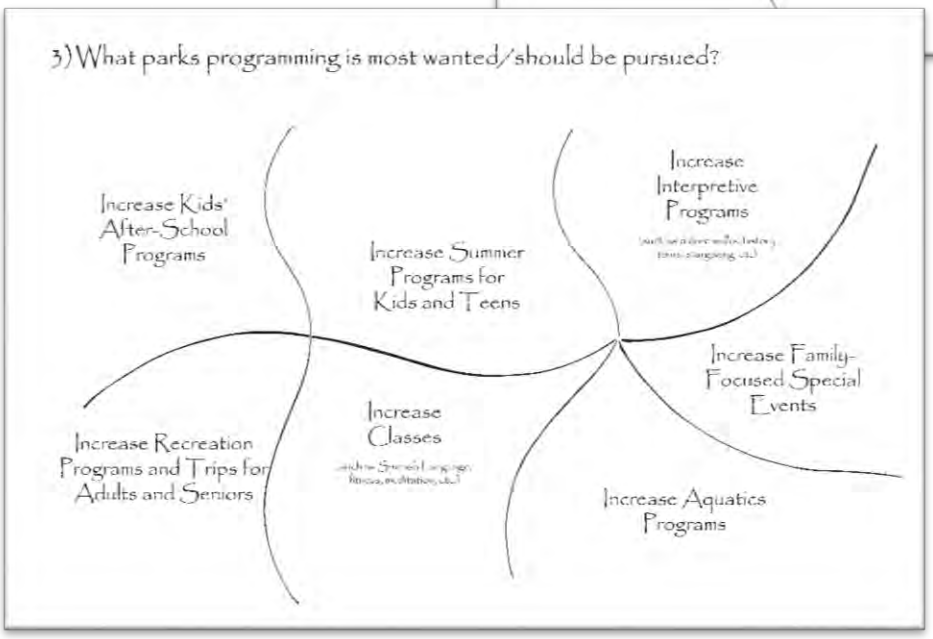


Figure 6: Publicity in the Activity Guide (mailed to residents of unincorporated County)

Figure 7: Community Meetings Publicity Flyer

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

PLEASE JOIN US!

YOUR COUNTY, YOUR PARKS

Public Meeting Dates & Times

Wednesday, April 26, 6:30-8:30 PM	Ben Lomond - Highlands County Park, 8500 Highway 9
Thursday, April 27, 6:30-8:30 PM	Watsonville - Civic Center Community Room 275 Main St. (upstairs)
Tuesday, May 2, 6:30-8:30 PM	Davenport - Pacific Elementary School, 50 Ocean St.
Saturday, May 6, 10:00 AM-12:00 PM	Aptos - Aptos Village County Park, 100 Aptos Creek Rd.
Thursday, May 11, 6:30-8:30 PM	Live Oak - Community Room at Simpkins Family Swim Center, 979 17th Ave, Santa Cruz

Strategic Plan Public Meetings

The Parks Department is holding a series of meetings throughout the county, and we need to hear from you and your neighbors! Your input is essential as we create the document that will help guide the department's work over the next decade. What do YOU want to see in YOUR County Parks? Please join us as we look to the future of our parks, programs, and facilities! Childcare and translation services (Spanish language) will be available.

Santa Cruz County Parks

Please RSVP for a meeting!

For more info. or to RSVP, please visit

www.scparks.com/strategicplan

Figure 8: Community Meetings Publicity Flyer (Spanish Version)

Figure 9: Know Your County Parks Department

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

Know Your County Parks!

YOUR COUNTY, YOUR PARKS

The Santa Cruz County Parks Department provides parks, coastal access points, and a wide variety of programs and activities for all ages throughout the county.

Regional Parks

Regional parks, located throughout the county, include Quail Hollow Ranch in Felton, Polo Grounds in Aptos, and Pinto Lake in Watsonville.

Neighborhood & Community Parks

Among the county's 29 neighborhood and community parks are Highlands Park in Ben Lomond, Brommer Park in Live Oak, Seascape Park in Aptos, and Aldridge Lane in Corralitos.

Simpkins Family Swim Center

The Swim Center, also a regional park, is located in Live Oak. Among the aquatic programs offered are swim lessons, recreation and lap swim, water exercise, and water polo, as well as the popular Pool Jr. Guards and Little Guards summer camps.

Coastal Access Points

Coastal access points include Scott Creek Beach near Davenport, Sunny Cove Beach in Live oak, and Hidden Beach in Aptos.

Community Events

Pictured here - Parks & Rex pool party, where dogs can take a dip in the pool; other events include the Holiday Art & Craft Faire and the Floating Pumpkin Patch.

Arts

The Percent for Art Program, art exhibitions at the Government Center, Artist of the Year, and Outside the Box are just a few of County Parks art-related programs.

Youth Programs

School-age youth can enjoy a variety of camps and programs, including Nature Adventure and Science Sleuths at Quail Hollow Ranch, Kreative Kids at Wilder Hall, and art and science camps at Aptos Park. Afterschool programs are held at Mar Vista Elementary and La Selva Beach clubhouse.

Adult & Senior Programs

Programs for adults and seniors include local day trips (pictured, trip to Harley Farms), water and dry-land exercise classes at the Swim Center, Spanish language and tap classes, interpretive hikes and workshops at Quail Hollow Ranch, and the Mall Walk Program.

Teen Programs

Zombie Camp (pictured), for ages 11-14, is held at Aptos Park. Also, teens can gain valuable job skills while having fun by volunteering as a Junior Leader at County Parks youth summer camps, as well as assisting with after-school programs.

Learn more and see a map which shows all parks in the County Parks system at www.scparks.com

Figure 10: Know Your County Parks Department (Spanish Version)

COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ DEPARTMENT OF
PARKS, OPEN SPACE AND CULTURAL SERVICES

¡Conoce Sus Parques del Condado!

SU CONDADO, SUS PARQUES

El Departamento de Parques del Condado de Santa Cruz ofrece parques, puntos de acceso costero, y una variedad extensa de programas y actividades para todas las edades por todo el condado.

Los Parques Regionales

Los parques regionales, ubicados por todo el condado, incluyen Quail Hollow Ranch en Felton, Polo Grounds en Aptos, y el Parque de Pinto Lake en Watsonville.

Los Parques del Vecindad y Comunidad

Entre los 29 parques del condado de vecindad y comunidad están Highlands Park en Ben Lomond, Brommer Park en Live Oak, Seascape Park en Aptos, y Aldridge Lane en Corralitos.

El Centro de Natación de Simpkins Family Swim Center

El Centro de Natación, también un parque regional, se encuentra en Live Oak. Entre los programas de natación ofrecidos son clases de natación, recreación en el agua y nadar en línea (lap swim), ejercicio en el agua, y polo en el agua, así como los campamentos de verano muy populares de Jr. Guards y Little Guards.

Los Puntos de Acceso Costero

Los puntos de acceso costero incluyen Scott Creek Beach cerca de Davenport, Sunny Cove Beach en Live Oak, y Hidden Beach en Aptos.

Los Eventos de la Comunidad

Fotografiada aquí – Parks and Rex Pool Party (fiesta de la piscina) donde los perros pueden mojarse en la piscina; otros eventos incluyen Holiday Art & Craft Faire y Floating Pumpkin Patch (una huerta de calabazas flotantes).

Arte

Percent for the Arts Program (el programa del porcentaje para el arte), las exposiciones de arte en el Centro de Gobierno, Artist of the Year, y Outside the Box (el programa de arte fuera de la caja) son solamente algunos de los programas relacionados con el arte de los Parques del Condado.

Los Programas para Niños

Los niños de edades escolares pueden disfrutar de una variedad de campamentos y programas, incluyendo Nature Adventure and Science Sleuths en Quail Hollow Ranch, Kreative Kids en Wilder Hall, y los campamentos de arte y ciencia en Aptos Park. Los programas despues de escuela son ubicados en Mar Vista Elementary y La Selva Beach Clubhouse.

Los Programas para Adultos y Personas Mayores

Los programas para adultos y personas mayores incluyen excursiones locales (en la foto, el viaje a Harley Farms), las clases de ejercicio en agua y tierra-seca en el Centro de Natación, las clases de español y de tap, los programas interpretativos de caminatas y talleres en Quail Hollow Ranch, y el Mall Walk Program.

Los Programas para Adolescentes

El Campo de Zombi (en la foto), para las edades de 11-14, está ubicado en Aptos Park. Además, los adolescentes pueden obtener habilidades valiosas de trabajo mientras se divierten como voluntarios en los campamentos de verano para niños con los Parques del Condado, así como ayudar con programas después de la escuela.

Obtenga más información y vea un mapa que muestra todos los parques en el sistema de Parques del Condado en www.scparks.com