

08

PARKS AND RECREATION

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08 PARKS AND RECREATION

Beautiful, accessible, and well-maintained parks, open space and recreation facilities, and quality recreational programs are essential amenities for an urban city like West Hollywood. They help create community and make the City more livable and attractive, provide a place of relaxation and relief from the urban environment, encourage physical activity and health, provide a forum for gathering and interaction, and reduce urban heat islands. Many urban areas – including West Hollywood – have both high demand for these amenities and limited options for providing them. This puts these elements at a premium and reinforces their importance for the overall success and health of the City.

STATUTORY REQUIREMENTS

This Parks and Recreation Chapter meets State of California requirements for an Open Space element of the general plan (California Government Code (CGC) Section 65561 and 65302(e)). The purpose of the required Open Space element is “to assure that cities and counties recognize that open space land is a limited and valuable resource which must be conserved whenever possible” (CGC Section 65561(a)).

The State requires that several types of open space be addressed in a general plan. These are identified as open space for 1) the preservation of natural resources such as habitat, 2) the managed protection of resources, 3) outdoor recreation, 4) public health and safety, 5) supporting the missions of military installations, and 6) the protection of certain places or features (CGC Section 65560). Of these types of open space land, West Hollywood’s open space is primarily used for outdoor recreation, provided by its park system as well as various landscape areas, medians, parkways, and memorials.

Over and above the State requirements for an open space element, this chapter also contains policy guidance about recreation services and facilities in the City.

CONTEXT

West Hollywood's parks and recreation facilities and programs are operated and managed by the City. In addition, a seven-member Public Facilities Commission, created in 1996, oversees parks, landscaping, streetscapes, medians, community buildings and facilities. The Commission makes recommendations to the City Council regarding repair, capital improvements, and policy priorities for this infrastructure.

City Parks

At the time of incorporation, the City of West Hollywood contained only three parks and limited other green open space. Since that time, the combination of increasingly high land prices and a limited amount of vacant land has continued to make park acquisition and development challenging. Nonetheless, the City found creative ways to add new parks and public space, including long-term leasing of public pocket park sites as part of private development projects.

As of 2010, the City contains a total of six parks, including two large community parks, two neighborhood parks (including a dog area), and two pocket parks. The City also has a variety of open spaces and community facilities used for recreational purposes. These are shown in Figure 8-1 and described in Table 8-1.

Plummer Park and West Hollywood Park are the two largest parks in the City. They each serve as recreational and cultural focal points for the community at large.

As of 2010, Plummer Park (8.5 acres) contains a community center which includes a Teen Center, Social Services Center for seniors and people living with disabilities (comprehensive services center), and meeting spaces. The park also contains an auditorium, a playground, picnic areas, fitness area, tennis and basketball courts, a tennis pro shop, and a preschool. Seniors, especially from the Russian-speaking community, are some of Plummer Park's most active users, often playing chess, walking, and socializing in the Park. The Helen Albert Certified Farmers' Market is held at Plummer Park once a week. The Plummer Park Master Plan, originally adopted in 1994 and updated in 2004, is guiding a major rehabilitation project at Plummer Park. Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2011, and will add over one acre of additional park space.



Plummer Park offers a playground and the Plummer Park Community Center, among other amenities.

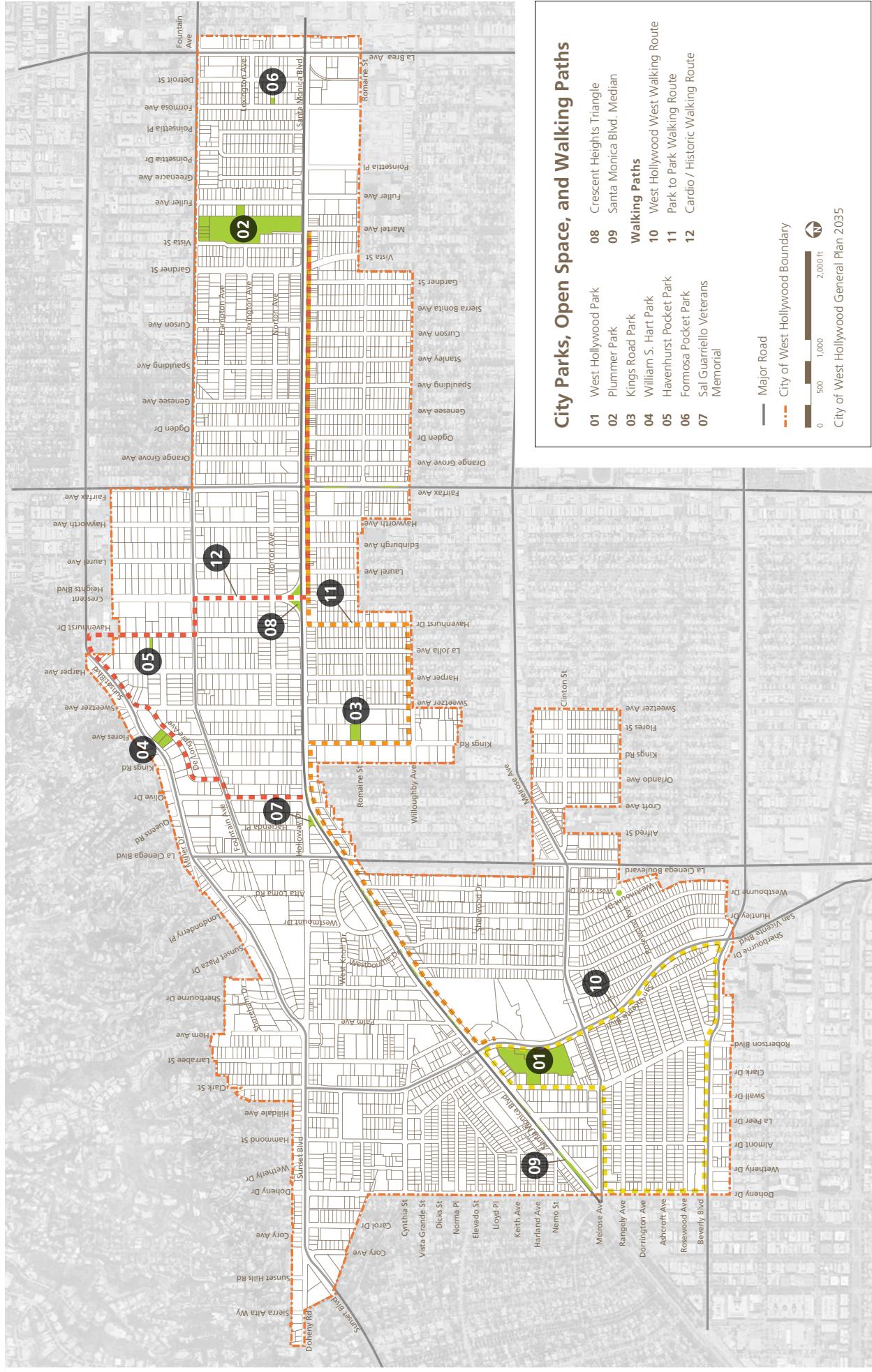
Table 8-1: Inventory of West Hollywood Parks (2010)

Name	Address	Acres	Facilities
Plummer Park (established 1937)	7377 Santa Monica Boulevard	8.5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plummer Park Community Center / CSC • Fiesta Hall • Great Hall and Long Hall • Teen Center • Meeting spaces • 1 pre-school • 1 and 1/2 basketball courts • 7 lighted tennis courts • 1 tennis shop/ restroom building • 2 parking lots • 1 playground and exercise equipment • Benches and tables • Open green space
West Hollywood Park (established 1960s)	647 San Vicente Boulevard	5.3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 auditorium • 1 swimming pool and pool house • 1 half (youth) basketball court • 2 full basketball courts • 3 lighted tennis courts • 1 park administrative office • 2 playgrounds • 1 picnic area (handicapped accessible) • 1 library with parking structure • 1 restroom building • 2 parking lots (one permanent, one temporary) • 1 tiny tot building • Benches and tables • Open green space
William S. Hart Park (acquired by lease 1989)	8341 De Longpre Avenue	0.75	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hart House • Off-leash dog area • Picnic tables • Parking lot • AIDS Memorial • Theater • Restrooms • Benches • Water feature
Kings Road Park (established 1996)	1000 Kings Road	0.50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Picnic tables • Community building • Playground • 2 water features • Benches and restrooms • Art in public spaces (visual art)
Havenhurst Pocket Park (established 2009)	1351 Havenhurst Drive	0.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boardwalk paths • 3 themed gardens • 2 water features • Benches • Drought-tolerant plantings • Art in public places (audio/visual art)
Formosa Pocket Park (established 2009)	1140 Formosa Street	0.11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circulation paths • Shade structure • 1 water feature • Benches • Drought-tolerant plantings • Art in public places (visual art)
Total Park Acreage		15.31	

Source: City of West Hollywood GIS December 2007, Existing Land Use Survey January 2008

Notes: This table does not include or reflect the City's green open space areas.

Figure 8-1: City Parks, Open Spaces, and Walking Paths



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West Hollywood Park (5.3 acres) provides an auditorium, outdoor sports facilities, a swimming pool, a tiny-tot facility, playground areas, picnic areas, and the West Hollywood Library. A rehabilitation project is under construction as of 2010 and includes a new library, active open space, three lighted tennis courts, and the addition of off-street parking. The project is being completed in alignment with the West Hollywood Park Master Plan, which describes the park as "an oasis of green within a dynamic city" and will add approximately 2.5 acres of additional park space. The Library project is scheduled to be completed in 2011.

Kings Road Park (.50 acres) is a neighborhood park that provides public gathering space in an atmosphere surrounded by mature trees, an open turf area, water features, public art, a children's playground area, a community meeting room, and restrooms. Hart Park (.75 acres) is a neighborhood park that is owned by the City of Los Angeles. The park is leased to and maintained by West Hollywood and includes a theatrical arts studio and learning center, an off-leash dog area, a water feature, and passive recreation areas.

The two most recent additions to the City's park system are Havenhurst Pocket Park (6,000 sq. ft.) and Formosa Pocket Park (4,600 sq. ft.). The parks have been designed as passive recreation areas and include water features, drought tolerant plantings, artwork, benches, and walking paths. The parks are unique as they are each situated over a subterranean parking garage and were developed through a public/private partnership with a residential development. The City retains use of the sites as parks through a lease arrangement with the property owners.

As of 2010, the City is considering a plan to open a small pocket park at 1343 Laurel Ave. that will add approximately 10,000 square feet of passive park space for public use. The site is intended to preserve and enhance the character of the existing site and is envisioned primarily for passive enjoyment for use by the surrounding neighborhood.

Small, passive, pocket parks, like Havenhurst and Formosa Parks, may be some of the most feasible parks to add to the City in the future. There may also be opportunities throughout the City to develop additional pocket parks and public plazas on underutilized lots or as part of new development projects. With proper landscape design that includes amenities such as shade trees and seating, pocket parks can be highly utilized community gathering spaces.



Pocket parks are a creative way to develop additional park space in a dense urban environment.

City Open Space

The City has developed and identified various strategies that offer a framework for residents, businesses, developers, civic leaders, and City staff to improve West Hollywood's quality of life. The Greening West Hollywood document (2006) identifies and supports a broad range of greening strategies to occur on an ongoing basis. Since this requires active City and community efforts, the Greening West Hollywood document encourages public and private participation in creating and improving open space.

Landscape areas such as the street medians, parkways, and other green areas throughout the City provide valuable public space. These areas provide wildlife habitat, reduce the heat island effect, sequester carbon, produce oxygen, and provide community gathering places during various special events.

The City has developed three "Wellness Walking Routes" along various City streets and sidewalks. The primary route runs between West Hollywood Park and Plummer Park and offers open space access and views along the way. Each route provides interpretive signage and route maps, along with directional indicators at key intersections. The Greening West Hollywood document, as well as other development standards, actively encourages the creation of more walking routes.

The Sal Guarriello Veterans' Memorial and the Crescent Heights Triangle, both located along Santa Monica Boulevard, offer more intimate green spaces amidst the hustle and bustle of the surrounding urban environment. They provide a place of remembrance and reflection, increase the amount of public green space in the City, and highlight the City's cultural and civic heritage.



The City also oversees a Community Garden Program that creates connections between community members and provides open space for residents and local businesses. Community gardening is expected to continue to play an important role within the community, though the shortage of available land within the City limits the program's size and number of participants. The ability to provide community gardening space is strongly susceptible to land values and real property development, and the current location of the Community Gardening Program is not permanent. Because of this, the City is developing initiatives to promote additional gardening elsewhere in the City, such as on private property balconies and rooftops and in soil-less gardens.

The Sal Guarriello Veterans' Memorial.

Community Facilities and Programs

The West Hollywood Library, operated by Los Angeles County, is located within West Hollywood Park. Its collection contains over 95,310 books, 45 magazine and newspaper subscriptions, and over 18,000 audiovisual titles. Special materials include local history materials, Spanish and Russian books, the Ron Stone HIV Information Center, a gay and lesbian materials collection, a Decorative Arts and Design area, a vast collection of large-print materials for Seniors and the visually-impaired, and a West Hollywood Room showcasing archives of the City's history. As of 2010, a new West Hollywood Library is under construction in conjunction with the rehabilitation of West Hollywood Park. It is intended to provide a landmark facility and centerpiece for the community; to showcase the City's rich intellectual, literary, and cultural diversity; and to embody the community's commitment to lifelong learning. The Library will spotlight West Hollywood's unique character.



The City sponsors an annual family-oriented Russian Style Festival.

The City's Teen Center in Plummer Park offers programs in sports, arts, music, special events, and excursions. Many teens also regularly participate in volunteer service projects that help them earn hours towards awards and scholarships. For young children, the City provides children's classes as well as seasonal day camps that provide a safe environment for youth to participate in supervised activities during breaks in the school year.

The City offers special a variety of special interest classes for youth and adults. The City also offers adult classes and programs through the Westside Adult School in language, citizenship, and computers. These activities help residents develop healthy lifestyles and participate in lifelong learning.

Plummer Park and West Hollywood Park are staffed year-round. The West Hollywood Pool, at West Hollywood Park, is also staffed year-round and offers a variety of programs and events for individuals of all ages. The pool is open throughout the year, with scheduled lap and recreational swim opportunities open to all. The Werle Building, near West Hollywood Park, is provided by the City for assorted uses such as 12-step meetings, special events, and other community meetings. For seniors, the comprehensive services center at Plummer Park provides educational and health lectures as well as social activities.

The City currently sponsors events throughout the year, such as Summer Sounds, Saturdays in the Park (informal gatherings for families with young children), an Annual Summer Games competition, Movies in the Park, an AIDS Walk, Veteran's Day Ceremony, Patriot's Day 9/11 Honorary Display, Russian Style Festival, Halloween Carnival, Gay Pride, an annual Book Fair, and Yom Hoshoa.



The City's parks offer vital spaces for play, relaxation and exercise.

GOALS AND POLICIES

PR-1: Improve, enhance, and expand parks throughout the City.

Intent: To enhance the attractiveness of City parks to all users, reduce the heat island effect, and increase park space.

- PR-1.1  Continue to enhance existing parks and recreational facilities, as feasible.
- PR-1.2  Seek to maintain a diversity of park spaces throughout the City, including recreation areas, hardscaped plazas, children's play areas, open fields, and dog parks.
- PR-1.3 Improve and update Plummer Park and West Hollywood Park according to the applicable Master Plans.
- PR-1.4 Ensure appropriate lighting and visibility in all park facilities.
- PR-1.5 Take practical steps to avoid adverse impacts from nighttime park activities on adjacent residences.
- PR-1.6  Promote physical activity through increased access to parks and open spaces, pedestrian- and bike-oriented routes to parks and open space, greening of public rights-of-way, and a variety of active and passive uses of parks and open space.
- PR-1.7  Consistent with State law, require that new development contribute fees for expanded park space, including public open space, green streets, and pocket-parks, when open space is not provided on-site.
- PR-1.8  Promote environmental sustainability and conservation when designing new parks or renovating, operating, and maintaining existing parks.
- PR-1.9  Actively seek opportunities to increase the supply of parks and open space, including on rooftops.
- PR-1.10  Prioritize public funding for the creation of new parks and open spaces.
- PR-1.11  As opportunities arise, consider purchasing parcels adjacent to existing parks to create larger parks.
- PR-1.12  Consider incentives or modify development standards to encourage new development to create on- or off-site open space.
- PR-1.13  When appropriate, work with local schools (public and private) to provide park and recreational space to the public through joint use of school grounds.
- PR-1.14  Utilize master plans to guide the increase, expansion, or improvement of park space.
- PR-1.15  Work with the adjacent jurisdictions of Los Angeles and Beverly Hills to increase access to open spaces for West Hollywood residents, as appropriate.
- PR-1.16  As opportunities arise, expand the number of designated walking routes.

Goal PR-2: Provide diverse recreational programs and facilities.

Intent: To meet the community's diverse needs and interests through a variety of social, cultural, and recreational programs, making West Hollywood an attractive and socially supportive place to live, work, and visit. Promote physical activity, and facilitate cultural exchange and community activity.

- PR-2.1  Continue to offer recreational programs to meet the needs of the community, including seniors, LGBT, Russian-speaking persons, youth, families, and persons with disabilities.
- PR-2.2  Provide recreational opportunities and access, particularly for youth and seniors, through City recreation programs, parks, and open spaces.
- PR-2.3  Design and program parks to accommodate unique social and cultural needs, with facilities that may include a variety of seating areas, passive and active use facilities, open and semi-sheltered open spaces, artwork, and programmed events.
- PR-2.4  Regularly notify residents of the types of recreation and programs available and encourage their participation.
- PR-2.5 As feasible, continue to produce and/or provide support for community-related special events.
- PR-2.6 Encourage, permit, and support special events organized by businesses, community groups, and non-profit agencies located within the City.
- PR-2.7 Conduct needs assessments and evaluate recreational programs as needed to gather information regarding community needs and priorities.

Goal PR-3: Provide high quality, functional, safe, and well-maintained parks, open space, and recreation facilities.

Intent: To ensure that the community is provided with excellent parks and recreation facilities that meet its diverse needs and interests.

- PR-3.1  Maintain high-quality parks, open space, and recreation facilities in a reliable, safe, and efficient way.
- PR-3.2  Utilize progressive techniques in the delivery of maintenance services related to parks, open space and recreation facilities.
- PR-3.3  Prioritize physical improvements to parks, open space, and recreation facilities based on regular monitoring and evaluation of their condition and the needs of the community.
- PR-3.4  As feasible, seek to implement best management practices for energy and water conservation when managing parks and recreation programs and facilities.