

Part V: Implementation & Financing

This part of the master plan addresses a number of considerations for plan implementation, accompanied by discussions of potential financial strategies. Funding, of course, is critical to successful implementation of any plan. The upkeep and enhancement of existing park units and the current condition of the County budget are the first order of business in this discussion; acquisition and other opportunities are also necessarily part of the discussion. To the extent possible, cost categories are matched with possible funding sources. Also discussed are various types of partnerships, which are important to the financial strategies and long-term success of the Yolo County parks and open space system.

15 Introduction

15.1 Existing Parks & Open Space Facilities

Parks and open space facilities require ongoing maintenance and upkeep. For existing Yolo County parks and open space areas, the extent of maintenance needs varies considerably. At the lesser end of the scale are the unimproved, largely natural open space lands, which generally require little maintenance or upkeep. For the more developed facilities, costs and staff time increase considerably depending on levels of improvements, infrastructure, landscaping, age of the facility, and degree of public use.

Additionally, within many County park facilities, infrastructure and furnishings need to be upgraded or even replaced. Examples include portable restrooms, water systems, and access improvements for persons with disabilities, as required by law.¹

¹ The Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA) generally requires that new construction and modification to be accessible to people with disabilities. For existing facilities, barriers must be removed if readily achievable.

A survey of existing facilities, conducted as part of the background work for this plan (see Appendix D), indicated that the County has not been able to adequately keep up with wear and tear at existing lands and facilities. In addition, the financial resources are insufficient to meet the needs of a growing population.

This plan recommends making maintenance and improvement of existing facilities a high priority for funding and implementation. Making the most of the County's existing assets is a prudent approach, both in the short-term as well as part of an overall, integrated strategy for addressing longer term needs.

15.2 County Budget Considerations

Like most local jurisdictions in California, Yolo County is under substantial fiscal pressure because of limits on property tax revenues (i.e., Prop 13, passed in 1978) and other limitations (including the passage of

Proposition 218 in 1996). This fiscal pressure affects all County departments and functions, not just parks and natural resource management. ²

The County is also to some extent financially impacted by its own land use policies, which, while supported by most County residents, favor preservation of agricultural land and open space over other uses that would likely generate higher tax revenues.

Table IV-1, Yolo County Parks 2003–2004 Budget Summary provides an overview of County Parks budget parameters. This overview helps to establish a baseline of revenue sources and expenditures that provides a basis for pursuing additional funding for parks and open space facilities in the County.

Currently, Yolo County funding for parks, recreation, and open space is primarily limited to general fund-based sources, user fees, various grant sources targeting habitat- or recreation-related improvements, County services to other departments, miscellaneous sales and donations, and concessionaire revenue.

² Proposition 218, the “Right to Vote on Taxes Act,” was approved by the state's voters in 1996. In general, the intent of this tax reform act was to ensure that all taxes and most charges on property owners are subject to voter approval. Prop 218: (1) limits the authority of local governments to impose taxes and property-related assessments, fees, and charges; (2) requires that a majority of voters approve increases in general taxes and reiterates (as required earlier by Prop 13) that two-thirds must approve any special tax; (3) requires that assessments, fees, and charges be submitted to property owners for approval or rejection; and (4) requires assessments to be limited to the special benefit conferred.

In this recent budget, General Fund contributions made up around 55 percent of the total operating budget of the operating budget in the 2003–04 fiscal year; supplemental revenue made up less than 45 percent.

Table V-1. Yolo County Parks FY 2003–2004 Budget Summary

FUNDING / REVENUE	AMOUNT (\$)
General Fund	425,283
Fees & charges	
Concession fees & user charges	231,585
State & federal revenue	98,427
Other revenue	
Grants (CALFED & Prop 12)	13,373
Total	768,668
EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT (\$)
Salaries & benefits	473,941
Supplies & services	281,182
Taxes & assessments	2,054
Building improvements	14,017
Intra-fund transfers	(2,526)
Total	768,668

Of the supplemental funds, user fees were the largest contribution, followed by funding derived from state grants such as CALFED; this grant funding is quantified separately because it is allocated for specific purposes and is not subject to discretionary use. Rents and concession fees were next at around \$77,000.

Salary and employee benefits were the primary expenditure for the County, representing approximately 61 percent of the total operating budget. The aggregate of services and supplies combined with a total of approximately \$164,000 in facility and grounds improvements is assumed to represent the amount of expenditure for deferred maintenance, landscaping of

certain County buildings, and park development – roughly 21 percent of the operating budget.

15.3 Future Parks & Recreation Opportunities

As noted previously in this plan, the County has both a responsibility and legitimate function in seeking to provide public parks and open space facilities to keep pace with the needs of its growing population. Existing County policies support an overall increase in parks and open space areas recreation, conservation, and open space amenities.

Future parks and recreation opportunities will be needed in the face of expected growth and development. As discussed in Section 13.1.5, this plan supports County participation in the State Parks and Recreation Department’s ongoing Great Central Valley Initiative, particularly for an agricultural heritage park.

From this perspective, and as reinforced by comments expressed by some members of the public during preparation of this plan, the current inventory of Yolo County recreational facilities is already at a deficit when matched against demand. This apparent deficit is a product of both the total amount of available lands as well as the percentage of the inventory that is developable as usable recreation lands. This situation will likely worsen over time with the expected growth in population unless the County can increase, enhance, and expand its recreational facility inventory.

Acquisition, however, is also expensive, and, as discussed, the County has limited financial resources. During this planning process, while many public comments suggested the need for new parks and

recreation activities, many other comments also emphasized the need to improve and maintain existing County park assets first before even considering new park facilities.

Also, as expressed in public comments, acquisition proposals raise significant concerns about private property issues and the potential effects of public recreation in proximity to ongoing agricultural land uses, as discussed previously in this plan.

In this context, this plan anticipates the creation of new public parkland and open space areas subject to the realities of the County budget, the availability of supplemental funding, and the positive resolution of site-specific ownership and land use issues. New public areas and opportunities should not depend only upon acquisition in title. Future parks and recreation opportunities are considered in this plan to encompass:

- Improvements and expansions of existing parks,
- Acquisition of interests in real property when mutually beneficial,
- Acquisition in fee title from willing sellers, and
- Partnerships with agencies, landowners, organizations, and other entities.

15.4 Feasibility & Priorities

This master plan identifies many potential strategies and actions, both for the existing set of parks and open space facilities, as well as in expansion, acquisition, and partnership efforts. Further evaluation, including public meetings held by the Parks, Recreation, and Wildlife Advisory Committee, as appropriate, will be needed

for implementation projects in terms of feasibility, costs and benefits, potential impacts, and funding.

As noted, maintaining and improving the existing parks and open space areas should be a high priority. Another high priority should be the creation of new community parks and facilities as part of new development projects within the County's unincorporated communities.

Beyond that, it is generally difficult to set priorities for new park facilities. An important, underlying consideration is the escalating cost of land. Acquisition opportunities, as they arise, should therefore be weighed carefully against other competing expenditures.

Implementation of individual projects will also involve variables that are difficult to predict, such as funding availability, agreements with other parties, and review and approval processes.

16 Financial Framework & Strategies

16.1 Anticipated Funding Needs

Five primary funding categories are typical to most park and open space systems, as described below.

16.1.1 Operations & Maintenance

Operations and maintenance is a constant line item in any parks budget. The needed budget tends to be a factor of scale and the condition of the existing resources. As the inventory grows, or as the level of facility development increases, the budget for operations and maintenance generally needs to increase accordingly.

16.1.2 Improvement of Existing Facilities

This category includes upgrades, replacement, modifications, habitat restoration and enhancement, and expansion of equipment, structures, furnishings, and use areas for existing facilities. Providing required access for persons with disabilities could be a substantial part of upgrades of existing facilities.

16.1.3 Serving the Existing Population

Facility operations and enhancement should strive to keep up with the needs of the current residents of the County in terms of their desires as identified through outreach processes. Yolo County has a significant amount of inventory of relatively underdeveloped park and recreational resources. These areas could be better used to serve the existing population.

16.1.4 Serving the Growing Population

Facility development, new opportunities, and land acquisition need to be considered

in anticipation of an increasing County population. As the population of the County grows, residents will likely expect more in terms of recreation and open space resources.

16.1.5 Deferred Maintenance

All park systems are subject to wear and tear through use and the aging of its resources and facilities. Based on the age of many of its facilities, Yolo County has considerable catching up to do in this category.

Depending on the age of facilities and frequency of repair and upkeep, deferred maintenance can be a widely variable cost. However, a rule of thumb suggests that, as maintenance lags significantly, deferred maintenance expenditures will ultimately absorb greater amounts of the total park budget proportionally.

16.2 Funding Sources & Mechanisms

A creative approach to funding is needed in the long run to effect positive changes in Yolo County's county-wide park system. A variety of funding sources should be considered.

Accordingly, this plan identifies a number of funding sources and mechanisms, including user fees, state grants, developer exactions, and district-level approaches. This plan recommends that County decision makers consider both longer range funding mechanisms, as well more immediate approaches. Also important are contributions that save the County money, such as in-lieu services through partnerships with other agencies and non-

profit groups, volunteer efforts, and landowner initiatives.

This multi-faceted funding approach would require allocation of County staff resources. Staff time would be needed to:

- Investigate, track, and pursue grant applications and funding;
- Oversee concessionaires, park leases, and user fee collection;
- Participate in major subdivision review and conditions of approval; and
- Coordinate with other agencies, special districts, non-profit groups, and private landowners.

16.2.1 General Fund

As noted above, County General Fund revenues made up around 55 percent of the total operating budget for parks, recreation, and open space. General revenues can be used for any valid local government purpose; the General Fund covers essential services such as police and fire protection, health services, and other government functions.

Without substantial new general revenues, few local governments in California are able to make substantial on-going commitments for major capital improvements or lands. With two-thirds majority voter approval, however, local governments can increase a tax or institute certain new taxes, such as a ¼ or ½ percent sales tax. The required two-thirds vote, however, is often difficult to achieve.

16.2.2 Federal & State Grant Funding

Given the limitations of funding parks and open space improvements locally, external grant funding is highly desirable. State and federal grants for parks, trails, open

space, wildlife habitat, and conservation have been important sources of funding historically in many jurisdictions. Under current economic conditions, however, federal and state grants should not be presumed to be reliably available on an on-going basis.

Federal funding for County parks and open space projects has been limited historically; the main source has been CALFED money. Other potential sources include various grants administered by the National Park Service. Some of these programs are administered by state agencies.

State grant funds in recent years have been a more significant part of the County parks and open space budget. Below are two examples.

State Grant funding, 2000. Proposition 12, the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act, responded to the recreational and open space needs of a growing population. This proposition was intended to help meet the need for “safe, open, and accessible local park and recreation facilities for increased recreational opportunities that provide positive alternatives to social problems.”³

Prop 12 provided funds in per capita, competitive, and direct grants to local parks and recreation agencies. Funds could be used for acquisition,

³ For additional information, see the Procedural Guide for the Per Capita Grant Program, Under the Safe Neighborhood Parks, Clean Water, Clean Air, and Coastal Protection Bond Act of 2000. State of California, The Resources Agency, Department of Parks and Recreation, 2001.

development, improvement, restoration, and other uses.

Under Prop 12, Yolo County was allocated \$601,000 to be used primarily for park maintenance and enhancement. Allocated funds must be spent by June 2008.

In 2002, the County Board of Supervisors approved a list of park improvement projects, which included property acquisition (Otis Ranch Open Space Park), paving and driveway improvements at several locations, campground upgrades (Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park), eradication of non-native plants (Grasslands Regional Park), and the purchase of portable toilets, benches, and barbeques at several park facilities.

State Grant funding, 2002. Proposition 40, the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002, was approved by voters in 2002. The program, which has several components, is managed by the State Department of Parks and Recreation. Under the Prop 40 Per Capita Grant Program, the County was allocated \$1.2 million for eligible projects.

A wide range of potential projects may be evaluated as candidate projects for this funding. By categories, these candidate projects may range from deferred maintenance to improvement of existing facilities, facility development, and land acquisition needs for existing and future populations.

Prop 40 Per Capita funding includes specific eligibility requirements for capital projects that provide land and facilities for recreational activities and services. Eligible projects for Prop 40 Per Capita funding include acquisition (from willing

sellers only), development, improvement, rehabilitation, restoration, enhancement, and the development of interpretive facilities, of local parks and recreational lands and facilities. Per Capita grant funds can only be used for capital outlay that provides land and facilities for recreational activities and services.⁴

For example, projects must have available land tenure status if acquisition is involved, and a project must not “substantially increase the County’s liability or cause a decrease in public safety” as a result of development or use.

Policies, improvement strategies, and other considerations developed in this master plan will be used among other factors in evaluating candidate projects for Prop 40 funding support, especially in terms of prioritization and project purpose. As discussed further below, project costs can be augmented by additional funding sources and partnerships.

16.2.3 User Fees

User fees are a commonly used way for a public parks provider to recover a portion of maintenance and operation costs. Reasonable user fees are typically accepted by the public, as long as park users feel that they are receiving comparable value in return.

A challenging aspect of user fees is the method of exaction. Fees may be assessed simply for vehicle entry, or they may be applied for specific activities, such as

⁴ For additional information, see the Procedural Guide for the 2002 Resources Bond Act Per Capita Grant Program. State of California, The Resources Agency, Department of Parks and Recreation, 2003.

camping, boat launching, or special group activities. However, there is often a correlation between increased staff hours and higher efficiencies in exaction. The least labor-intensive approach is the “iron ranger” type of fee collection. This system, which uses a fixed depository for payment, relies upon the honor system, and it is generally the least efficient in capturing all facility users. A person-occupied toll booth arrangement, on the other hand, may collect payment from more visitors; however, is more labor-intensive, and fee revenues may not support the staffing hours allocated if visitation levels are low.

An additional factor with regard to user fees is the relationship between fees charged and actual revenues gained. When the State basically cut fees in half for all State Park facilities in 2000-2001, there was an anticipated loss in revenue; however, the increased level of visitation resulting from the reduced fees actually created an overall increase in revenue. A careful comparison of other provider fees for like services and facilities is recommended to help ensure a good balance between visitation, fees charged, and total revenue gained.

16.2.4 Development Exactions & Impact Fees

Assisting unincorporated communities meet their recreational needs is an important aspect of the County’s roles as a provider of parks and open space facilities. One way this can be done is by ensuring that major subdivisions in unincorporated areas include parks and open space as part of their design, at the time they are approved.

Alternatively, the County could exact payment from developers in lieu of actual

park dedications, with the provision that these in-lieu payments only be used to fund the acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities to serve the new residential development. (See also section 16.4.4 below).

Similarly, development impact fees ⁵ can only be used to pay for parks and recreation improvements for new residents. Development exactions, dedications, and impact fees could be significant mechanisms for creating parks to serve the County’s unincorporated communities.

16.2.5 Special Tax

The Mello-Roos Community Facilities Act allows cities, counties, districts, and joint powers authorities to establish a Community Facilities District (CFD).

A CFD allows local governments to sell tax-exempt bonds to fund public services and facilities, such as streets, police services, fire protection, schools, parks, and cultural facilities. As such, these districts are a financing mechanism for public works or public services but do not deliver the services themselves.

Homeowners bear the burden of paying an annual special assessment tax, applied equally and uniformly to all properties. Establishing a district requires a two-thirds vote; nevertheless, many new residential developments in California have Mello-Roos fees. A key to the success for winning such a bond approval is in establishing a direct relationship between the benefits the district would

⁵ Chapter 5, California Government Code, (Sections 66000 et seq.), establishes rigorous requirements for exactions and development impact fees.

provide and the residents that would be subject to the special taxes.

This approach is probably better suited to incorporated areas with higher density housing, rather than more rural, unincorporated communities. A local example is the East Davis-Mace Ranch area in the City of Davis.

16.2.6 County-wide Assessment District Strategy

One type of longer-range funding mechanism is a County-wide assessment bond. Unlike grants or other multiple-sourced and targeted funding, which can only support prescribed or eligible projects, funding obtained through a broader assessment district can be directed toward identified funding gaps. Consideration of a County-wide assessment district park bond strategy may be appropriate in the future, once a successful track history of park facilities is established.

A County-wide park assessment bond would require a two-thirds majority vote to pass. Although the County's recent voting record shows that County voters generally support funding for parks and environmental efforts,⁶ State bonds require only a simple majority, and the support may not be sufficient for a local bond measure to prevail. Additionally, unlike state proposals that do not result in a direct financial burden on the public, the locally based bond may carry a cost burden to each resident, which tends to

⁶ In the past five years, there have been four state-wide propositions that have focused on parks and/or environmental protection. A majority of Yolo County voters approved these proposals as follows: Prop 12 (2000) by 65%; Prop 13 (2000) by 67%, Prop 40 (2002) by 58%; and Prop 50 (2002) by 52%.

make voter approval more difficult in such cases.

The argument in favor of such a County-wide District approach is that it could provide an annual stream of revenue for parks and park services that could substantially augment the current allotment available for parks through the General Fund. It could also help make the link between the community and resources whereby the community is making a conscious decision to invest in its park and open space resources, thereby reinforcing a sense of ownership and stewardship.

Several alternative methods could be employed for levying the fees, from a property-based assessment to a sales tax mechanism. Based on the likely unequal burden that could result from the larger property owners bearing higher costs than smaller properties, a sales tax assessment would seem to be a more equitable method.

16.2.7 Multi-Purpose Farmland, Open Space & Recreation District Strategy

Another option for consideration in long-range funding is the creation of a special county-wide district dedicated to the preservation of several interrelated land uses: farmland, open space, natural resources, and outdoor recreation.

Under this approach, formation of a Special District would need to be approved by the voters. The District's activities would be funded by a minimal sales tax (e.g., ¼ percent) over a set period of time (e.g., 20 years). The County Board of Supervisors would appoint an independent district authority to levy the sales tax and oversee expenditures. Preservation of agricultural land,

conservation areas and wildlife habitat, recreation areas, and open space would be primarily in terms of open space and conservation easements. The district would purchase interest in real property only from willing sellers. The District would have no power of eminent domain.

One model of such a district is the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, which operates essentially as described above.⁷ Creation of this nationally recognized District in 1990 was the result of public concern over urbanization and displacement of agricultural land and open space in Sonoma County. The activities of the District are focused on four areas: farmland, greenbelts, natural resources, and recreation.

In the long term, and with public support, a multi-purpose county-wide district strategy tailored to Yolo County could prove to be a good approach for accomplishing inter-related objectives in preserving agricultural land, open space, natural resources, and recreation areas.

16.2.8 Future Inter-Agency Regional Parks District Strategy

As suggested in this plan, there are potential benefits in forming and maintaining partnerships with other public agencies that provide parks, open space, and recreation facilities.

One potential long-range strategy would be a Inter-Agency Regional Parks District. Like other collaborations, a regional parks district would need to be evaluated carefully to ensure that the County would

receive value for its commitment (see further discussion in Section 16 below).

Potential teaming partners in this respect could be the incorporated cities within and adjacent to Yolo County, the adjoining counties, state agencies, federal land managers, and tribal government. A regional parks and open space district could have potential eligibility advantages to receive state grants. East Bay Regional Park District is an example of this approach.

16.3 Matching Financial Needs with Potential Funding Sources

Based on the opportunities and resource deficiencies observed through this planning process, the funding needs of the Yolo County parks and open space system have been grouped into the following seven categories:

- Deferred maintenance needs of County park resources and facilities,
- Unincorporated community park resources,
- Existing regional park upgrade and development needs,
- “Gateway sites” proposed in this plan,
- Other new park sites,
- Special JPA-type partnerships, and
- Operations and maintenance of all County park and open space assets.

These categories generally conform to the major categories of need identified through the development of this plan. Funding for deferred maintenance, parkland acquisition and development, and operations and general maintenance can come from a variety of sources. Typically, these sources are specifically

⁷ Additional information about the District is available at: www.sonomaopenspace.org.

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TABLE V-2. YOLO COUNTY PARKS & OPEN SPACE SYSTEM – FUNDING STRATEGY MATRIX

Category	Park Units or Location (& Representative Projects)	Needs & Assumptions	Existing Funding Sources	Potential Funding Sources
Deferred Maintenance	Many existing park units, including Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park (e.g., the campground) and Grasslands Regional Park	Significant facilities & infra-structure need to be upgraded; general care and upkeep; existing funds inadequate	General Fund; concessionaire revenues; user fees; Prop 12 and Prop 40 per capita (short term)	Special County-wide General Obligation Act; new Assessment District; existing or future State bond funds
Unincorporated Community Parks	Examples: Dunnigan & Esparto. Potentially, other unincorporated areas, e.g.: Madison; Yolo; Clarksburg; Guinda; Capay; Winters vicinity	Recreation demand & open space needs can be expected to increase with population growth	General Fund; Prop 40 per capita; (short term) developer impact fees; local community initiatives; NGOs	Quimby Act ordinance; developer dedications; developer impact fees; subdivision and other project exactions
Park Improvement & Redevelopment	Nichols Park (day use; re-design); Cache Creek (all-season bridge); Elkhorn (day use, trails); Capay Open Space (plan implementation); Camp Haswell (day use, structure renovation); Putah Creek (re-design); Grasslands (plan implementation)	All parks have these kinds of needs, particularly ADA associated needs but at the same time have limited funds to address these needs	General Fund; Prop 13 and Prop 40 per capita (short term)	Existing or future State bond act funds (Prop 13, Prop 50); fishing & wetland habitat (WCB funds); CDBG funds; public-private partnerships
New “Gateway” Sites	Middle Capay Valley; Yolo Bypass / West Sacramento; Delta area; western foothills, other	Land acquisition; firm commitments by cooperating partners, potential land use & environmental issues; permitting; trailheads & improvements	Prop 40 per capita (short term)	New Assessment District funding; JPA partnership; Federal transportation funds; state bicycle account; existing & future bond act funds
Other New Parks	Cache Creek recreation nodes; Woodland/Willow Slough Vicinity; Cache Creek Settling Basin	Major expenses with acquisition & development; potential land use & environmental issues; permitting	Prop 40 per capital & Prop 50; California River Parkways Grant Program; Future State bond initiatives	New Assessment District funding; developer exactions; WCB & County habitat funds; existing & future bond act funds; State Parks’ Central Valley Initiative Calif. Dept. of Parks & Rec. support
Special JPA-Type Areas	Sacramento River corridor; Putah Creek; Cache Creek	Partnership MOUs or equivalent. Admin. time & expense; funding mechanisms developed in partnership	New State bond initiative	WCB and other funds
Operations & Maintenance	Existing parks; future parks; system-wide		General Fund	Assessment district; existing or future State bond funds

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earmarked for special uses, such as state funds for wildlife habitats and corridors. Some funding sources involve added requirements, such as possible use restrictions, additional staff burden for management, or other limitations. A careful evaluation of the best selection for funding sources is appropriate. In future budgets, these categories may be convenient for accounting and budgeting purposes.

Table IV-1, Yolo County Parks Funding Strategy Matrix, presents a general strategy for funding based on these categories. Need categories, park units, and representative projects are matched with existing and potential funding sources. The matrix also includes notes on needs and assumptions.

16.4 Project Funding Clusters

One way to organize potential funding is through a “project cluster” approach designed to gather momentum for public support through the successful funding of visible projects. Funding contributions could come from an array of available sources. This framework of supplemental funds is envisioned as structured for specific project areas or “clusters” within the County – partially based on geographic similarities and partially based on the types of available funding.

The initial actions within each cluster would likely be limited in scope, as prescribed by the intent of the funding sources; however, this approach could help justify the additional public support needed to gain approval of a successful county-wide funding mechanism.

The following is a discussion of general groupings of project initiatives based on an optimum convergence of potential

funding, common resource features, and/or commonly shared improvements.

16.4.1 Sacramento River Area Cluster

One category would be a cluster of projects associated with the Sacramento River, including Knights Landing River Access, Elkhorn Regional Park, and Clarksburg Public Access. This could include a focus on habitat and water access improvements.

The rationale for this approach is the available funding categories that are specialized to these resource types – e.g., Wildlife Conservation (WCB) funds for habitat acquisition and restoration, WCB funds for water access, and the Department of Boating and Waterways (DBW) for various aquatic recreation improvements.

Because these funds are targeted to specific improvement types, other County-desired improvements within these resource areas – such as enhanced day use facilities, for example – would have to be delayed until funding could be secured that covered those improvements.

16.4.2 River/Stream Corridor Cluster

The second project cluster is the river/stream corridor-associated projects, including existing and potential future County resources along both the Putah Creek and Cache Creek corridors. An array of actions is suggested in this master plan, including upgrading existing facilities, new acquisitions, habitat restoration projects, invasive plant species removal, riparian corridor enhancement, and gateway facilities to adjoining public lands.

Depending on the scope of improvements and actions, different sources of funding

could be tapped for these actions. Habitat restoration, public access, trail corridors development, and invasive species removal all have specific funding sources available. There is also the potential for water management interests to contribute to this cluster of work, depending on whether the actions may contribute to improved water quality, water availability, and water management.

Local conservancy groups can also be tapped for organizational support and fund raising. Another in-kind support for this project cluster is the utilization of conservation corps-type groups to undertake portions of the work. Possible Tribal funding support may also be possible for this project cluster, in cases involving mutual benefits. Existing conservancies and conservation interests can also be tapped for various hands-on type support efforts and fund-raising for these projects.

16.4.3 The Partnership Cluster

The third cluster involves formalized partnership relationships with other entities as a means of combining available resources for common goals. This cluster has two basic options.

One partnership cluster could be directed towards the incorporated cities of Yolo County and would focus on development of public-serving facilities for day use and other recreational needs, such as family facilities and picnic areas. A joint powers authority-type agreement (JPA) or other formal arrangement would likely be needed to define the specific provisions for such a cooperative partnership.

This strategy would recognize the County's role in meeting the increasing public demand for recreation as driven by population growth in the County,

regardless of where the use occurs within or outside the incorporated areas. To the extent that the County is contributing to meeting the recreation needs of this population growth, this strategy is aimed in part at sharing developer fee funding sources that might otherwise be confined to only one jurisdiction.

The second partnership option is related to the various inter-agency partnerships, as described elsewhere in this master plan. Under joint powers arrangements, or as part of pass-through agreements, the County could work with Tribal organizations, redevelopment agencies, the cities, and other parties. Inter-agency agreements among West Sacramento, Yolo County, and City of Sacramento are conceivable for the park opportunities along portions of the Sacramento River.

A variation of the JPA partnership category is suggested as an expansion of the existing JPA for the Putah Creek area, including Solano Lake to Lake Berryessa. This collaboration would involve Yolo County, Solano County, the Bureau of Reclamation, the Department of Fish and Game, and non-profit groups such as the Upper Putah Creek Discovery Corridor. Finally, a partnership should be considered for lower Putah Creek, involving the University of California Davis, the City of Davis, Yolo County, and non-profit groups such as the Putah Creek Council.

16.4.4 The Unincorporated Communities Cluster

Unincorporated communities in the County currently include: Dunnigan, Capay, Esparto, Guinda, Madison, Knights Landing, Clarksburg, Rumsey, Zamora, Brooks, Yolo, and Monument Hills. As residential lands in

unincorporated areas are developed according to the County General Plan, money should be set aside for parks per the County Code and other applicable regulations. Also, through their own initiative, unincorporated communities may identify parkland, and the County could apply money from the fund. One of the challenges in meeting maintenance needs are the constraints of Prop 218 (see section 15.2).

This plan recommends that the County adopt a developer exaction/impact fee type of ordinance (such as a Quimby Act⁸ implementation ordinance) applicable to these unincorporated community areas. Additionally, support can be recruited from the local community or special district because of their vested interest in meeting local parks and recreation needs.

16.4.5 Volunteer & Service Organization Cluster

Another cluster could be structured around the various service type clubs and volunteer citizen organizations. Yolo County has a high rate of citizen interest and participation, with significant focus on conservation- and land use-related

⁸ California Government Code Section 66477, known as the Quimby Act (1975), authorizes local jurisdictions to adopt ordinances requiring developers of residential subdivisions to dedicate land and/or pay in-lieu fees to provide for the development of new, or the rehabilitation of existing, park facilities as conditions of subdivision map approval. The local ordinance specifies acceptable uses or restrictions on expenditures of such funds and provides standards or formulas for determining the exaction. The exactions must be closely tied to a project's impacts as identified through nexus studies, the General Plan, or impact analyses such as those required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA).

concerns. Direct costs often may be offset by donation and other in-lieu contributions, such as volunteer labor, equipment, and materials.

For example, community service organizations can raise funds to develop group picnic sites that would otherwise be beyond the County's facility development plan. There are numerous focus areas that could be candidates for this type of public-based support.

The "nearby nature" theme seemed to be one of the more resounding needs that emerged during the public workshop process for this plan. Projects that offered outdoor recreation opportunities in close proximity to communities would likely receive significant public support.

16.5 Other Sources

Additional funding for County parks, recreation, and open space may come from other sources. New State-wide propositions may be approved in the future that will provide grant funds for parks, recreation, and open space projects.

Money collected through the gravel mining fees can also be expended, in accordance with the County ordinance, for "long-term habitat restoration, the creation of open space and passive recreation opportunities, and restoration and stabilization of Cache Creek."

As in other jurisdictions throughout the state, the County may also benefit in the future from donations of lands or funds for parks and recreation facilities.

17 Cooperation & Partnerships

Partnerships and other forms of cooperative arrangements are potentially important strategies for leveraging funding for potential parks and recreation opportunities. Such cooperative ventures have been used in the past and may become even more useful in meeting future recreation needs in the County.

While partnerships with other entities are not automatic remedies to limited funds or resources, they can greatly expand implementation potential if properly structured. Possible partnerships, however, need to be evaluated carefully to ensure that the County will receive value for its commitment. Depending on the conditions or stipulations resulting from the partnership relationship – such as high burdens for maintenance without significant public benefit – the partnership could present liabilities as well as benefits.

17.1 Inter-governmental Partnerships

The first partnership opportunity involves other public agencies or jurisdictions, including federal, tribal, state, and local entities. Such partnerships are particularly important for this plan's "Gateway" opportunity concept, which is based on the proximity of other agency jurisdictions to existing or potential County resource areas.

Mutual assistance and benefits are the essential ingredients to these relationships; in general, there needs to be consistency in mission and goals for such relationships to be effective.

Examples of this type of partnership include public access collaboration with

the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Cache Creek Canyon Regional Park and Otis Ranch Open Space Park vicinity, as well as a potential new day use and Gateway site area near West Sacramento along the Department of Fish and Game Yolo Bypass Wildlife Area.

In these and similar instances, the County's role would generally be to collaborate on grant-funding applications, trails and access, and other essential improvements; in return, management of public use functions and management of the natural resources would be handled by others.

17.2 Public-Private Partnerships

Another category of partnership opportunities are arrangements where the County supports and works with the private sector – willing landowners, concessionaires, and non-profit organizations.

17.2.1 Opportunities with Landowners

This plan supports mutually beneficial partnerships with private landowners to provide additional recreation opportunities in the County. Landowners and the County can work together in a variety of ways, as discussed in the previous part of this plan. As noted (Part IV, Section 13.1.3), an example of a cooperative arrangement for public access on private lands is the Middle Mountain Foundation program in Sutter County.

The County can support these efforts primarily through administrative and regulatory means, such as sponsoring a website page that provides information about landowner-offered public

recreation. For certain specified uses, zoning ordinances and permit processes could be modified to streamline approvals. Assistance from non-profit organizations (see below) can also help facilitate implementation.

17.2.2 Concessionaires

Through agreements with rafting concessionaires, the County helps to provide a recreational opportunity in Cache Creek Canyon that is well enjoyed by many people each season.

Associated with this service, rafting concessionaires provide revenue to the County. From a budgetary perspective, concessionaire revenues provide a generally reliable revenue stream for the County. In 2004, income from the river rafting concessions brought in approximately \$65,000; in past years, the amount has ranged from \$75,000 to \$95,000. There is also some benefit to the County in the self-supervising management of the concessionaire-run facilities and areas.

Concessionaire partnerships also present some potential drawbacks. Contractual relationships require staff time to establish, administer, and maintain. In addition, concessionaires' objectives may differ from the County's resource management objectives. Additional costs can be incurred for County monitoring and clean-up work attributable to the concession activities, as well as incidental impacts, such as loss of revenue from non-concession recreation users who are turned away from concession user-dominated facilities.

Ideally, there is a middle ground in which the concessionaire can run their operations

with limited County supervision, and the scale and logistics of use can be shaped to not adversely affect access to the same or nearby County resources by the general public.

17.2.3 Volunteers & Community Support Groups

Yolo County is fortunate to have an engaged community with many active landowners and "grass-roots" groups interested in parks, recreation, conservation, and related matters. Accordingly there is a good potential for developing a volunteer base with various existing non-profit organizations and "friends" groups.

Two prime examples are the Putah Creek Council and the Cache Creek Conservancy, which have both developed funding for improvements, conducted clean-ups and native plant restoration, and raised awareness of value of local resources. During the public workshops for this planning effort, participants exhibited considerable interest in supporting Yolo County parks. This plan recommends that adequate County staff support be allocated to encourage participation by these groups and to assist in coordination possible projects.

Community support can also come in the form of public donation programs through an endowment program or more grass roots campaigns such as "Adopt a Park" programs. These programs tend to be successful when they are formed around a popular cause, and when a clearly defined affected community can support a specific agenda for improvements to serve that community.

