



# STAFFORD LAKE PARK MASTER PLAN

Marin County Parks  
RHAA Landscape Architects  
Final Draft — November 2017



# STAFFORD LAKE PARK MASTER PLAN

**Prepared For**  
Marin County Parks

**Prepared By**  
RHAA

**In Association With**  
LSA Associates, Inc.

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# INTRODUCTION





# 0.1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late 2013, as part of a county-wide park revisioning effort, Marin County Parks issued a request for proposals to develop an innovative, exciting and community-supported master plan for Stafford Lake Park. On behalf of the County, RHAA teamed with environmental planning consultants LSA Associates to produce the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan, a vision for the future of the park.

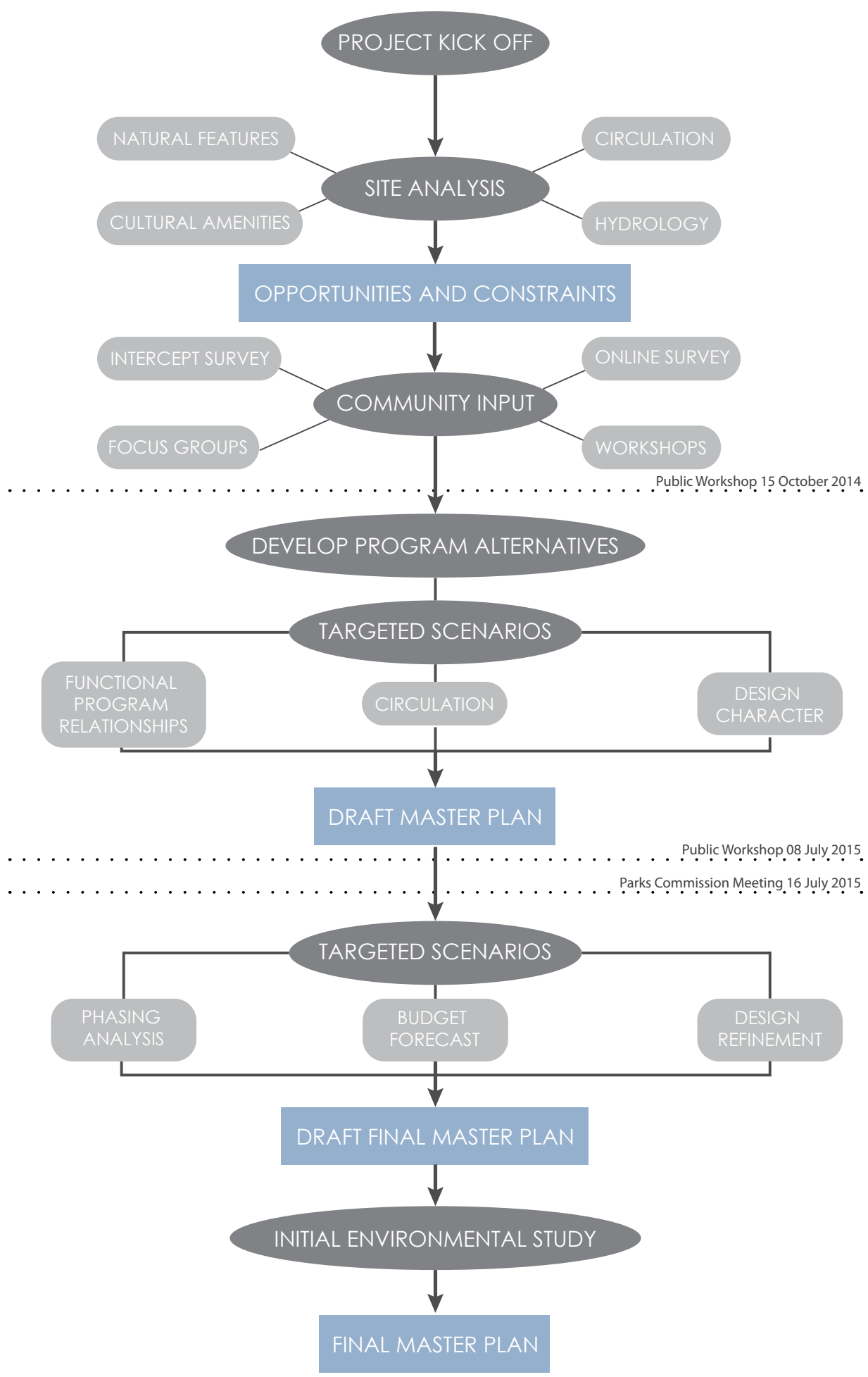
This document is the culmination of over a year's worth of research, analysis, outreach and design efforts. Prior to this master plan effort, Stafford Lake Park had remained mostly unchanged since its original development as a regional park in the 1970s. Building on the efforts of the recently opened Stafford Lake Bike Park, the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan presents an exciting new perspective on what Stafford Lake Park can eventually become.

The purpose of this report is to present a nuanced and appropriate design approach to future development at Stafford Lake Park. The report offers various recommendations that span from general infrastructural and circulation improvements to singular design elements. At root, this master plan aims to protect the natural, cultural, and recreational amenities that currently exist within the park while pushing forward new, complementary features and programs that infuse the park with new energy. An already beloved park, Stafford Lake Park will provide new opportunities for increased community engagement and potentially become an iconic facility worthy of civic pride.

These design and programming concepts are rooted in sustainability in all senses of the word - ecologically, economically and socially. Through engaged public outreach and community-driven design, the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan represents an updated vision that responds to the desires and requirements of a 21st century community.



- PROJECT INITIATION
- INVENTORY + ANALYSIS
- COMMUNITY INPUT
- PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT
- PRELIMINARY MASTERPLAN DEVELOPMENT
- FINAL MASTERPLAN DEVELOPMENT
- ENVIRONMENTAL DOCUMENTATION
- APPROVAL



## 0.2 PROCESS

The master plan process for Stafford Lake Park spanned a 15-month period from Project Initiation to the start of Environmental Documentation. The design process framework breaks down into seven general phases:

- Project Initiation
- Inventory + Analysis
- Community Input
- Program Development
- Preliminary Master Plan Development
- Draft Final Master Plan Development
- Environmental Documentation
- Final Master Plan Approval

At every stage of the process, RHAA met with Marin County Parks to present findings. Also crucial to this master plan effort was the continual community input received. Beyond the Community Input phase, RHAA continued to gather feedback at public meetings to understand various community priorities and receive feedback on whether design concepts met community goals and expectations.

### Permitting

Below is a list of permits that may be required for individual projects constructed at Stafford Lake Park.

**California State Permits**

- California Department of Fish and Wildlife Streambed Alteration Agreement
- State 401 Water Quality Certifications
- Stormwater Pollution Prevention Plan (SWPPP)
- US Fish and Wildlife Service Habitat Conservation Plan
- Army Corps of Engineers 404 Permit
- State Water Board’s Construction General Permit

(Left) Figure 0.1.1 Overview of the public process for the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan





# INVENTORY + ANALYSIS







# 1.1 HISTORY

For thousands of years prior to Spanish colonization, the Coast Miwok people occupied the area that is now Stafford Lake Park. The Coast Miwok subsisted as hunters and gatherers, living in small villages scattered around present-day Novato, Tomales, San Rafael, Petaluma and Bodega. Known for skilled basket weaving, flint knapping and clam shell beadmaking, the Coast Miwok inhabited the area until the arrival of Europeans who subsequently relocated them to missions.

With Mexican settlers moving into the area, the Stafford Lake Park area became incorporated into large land grants - specifically Corte Madera de Novato and Rancho Nicasio. The area was eventually owned by John Bernard Redmond, an Irish born cattle rancher renowned as one of the finest ranchers in the area. Though ownership changed over the years, the area remained cattle lands into the 20th century and to this day, Stafford Lake Park is surrounded by cattle ranches.

With the formation of the North Marin Water District in 1948 and growing development in neighboring Novato, the ranch that once occupied the area was sold to the water district and the valley became the lake we see today. Stafford Dam was constructed in 1951 and the area ceased to have any development in the name of protecting the watershed. North Marin Water District owns much of the adjacent land to Stafford Lake Park, including the golf course which has been leased to Indian Valley Golf Club.

In 1971, Marin County purchased land along the western edge of Stafford Lake to create Stafford Lake Park. About 20 acres of the 139 acre park were developed in the late 1970's into the recreational spaces that exist to this day, including the picnic areas, restrooms, play fields, and playground. In the 1990's, the hills to the south of the park became the site of the 22-hole disc golf course and has since been maintained by volunteers. In the summer of 2015, phase I of the Stafford Lake Bike Park opened to the public to much fanfare. Other than these examples, the remainder of the park has remained undeveloped to this day.





## 1.2 REGIONAL + LOCAL CONTEXT

Stafford Lake Park is located within northern Marin County approximately 3 miles to the west of Downtown Novato. Owned and managed by the County, the property is comprised of 139 acres of land along the western edge of Stafford Lake. Among the Marin County Parks, it is the most northern and largest in upland acreage. The park straddles the urbanized core of Novato and the more naturalized, rural lands to the west. Due to its relative vicinity to Sonoma County and San Francisco in addition to its particular amenities, Stafford Lake Park is a county park with local character and regional draw (see Figure 1.2.1).

Recent demographic and economic studies within Novato and Marin County suggest a growing yet shifting resident population. In terms of age distribution, Marin County is seeing an increase in both senior and youth populations relative to the general population. In terms of ethnic diversity, the county remains predominantly white, but is increasingly becoming more diverse. These demographic shifts will have huge impacts on how the community engages with public parks. As a major regional resource, Stafford Lake Park will need to address these changing user groups.

Stafford Lake is a surface water source reservoir owned by the North Marin Water District that supplies approximately 20% of Novato's drinking water. As a protected water source, there is no swimming or boating allowed at the lake. Fishing is allowed at the lake outside the 1,500 feet buffer from the dam and intake tower. The park experiences occasional flooding during large storm events near the riparian corridor, but the Stafford Dam overflow sets the water edge to +197.87 (NAVD-88).

# Regional Context

Figure 1.2.1 Vehicular Circulation



LEGEND

- Public Open Space
- Bike Path

Figure 1.2.2 Open Space + Bike Circulation





Figure 1.2.3 Urban Context

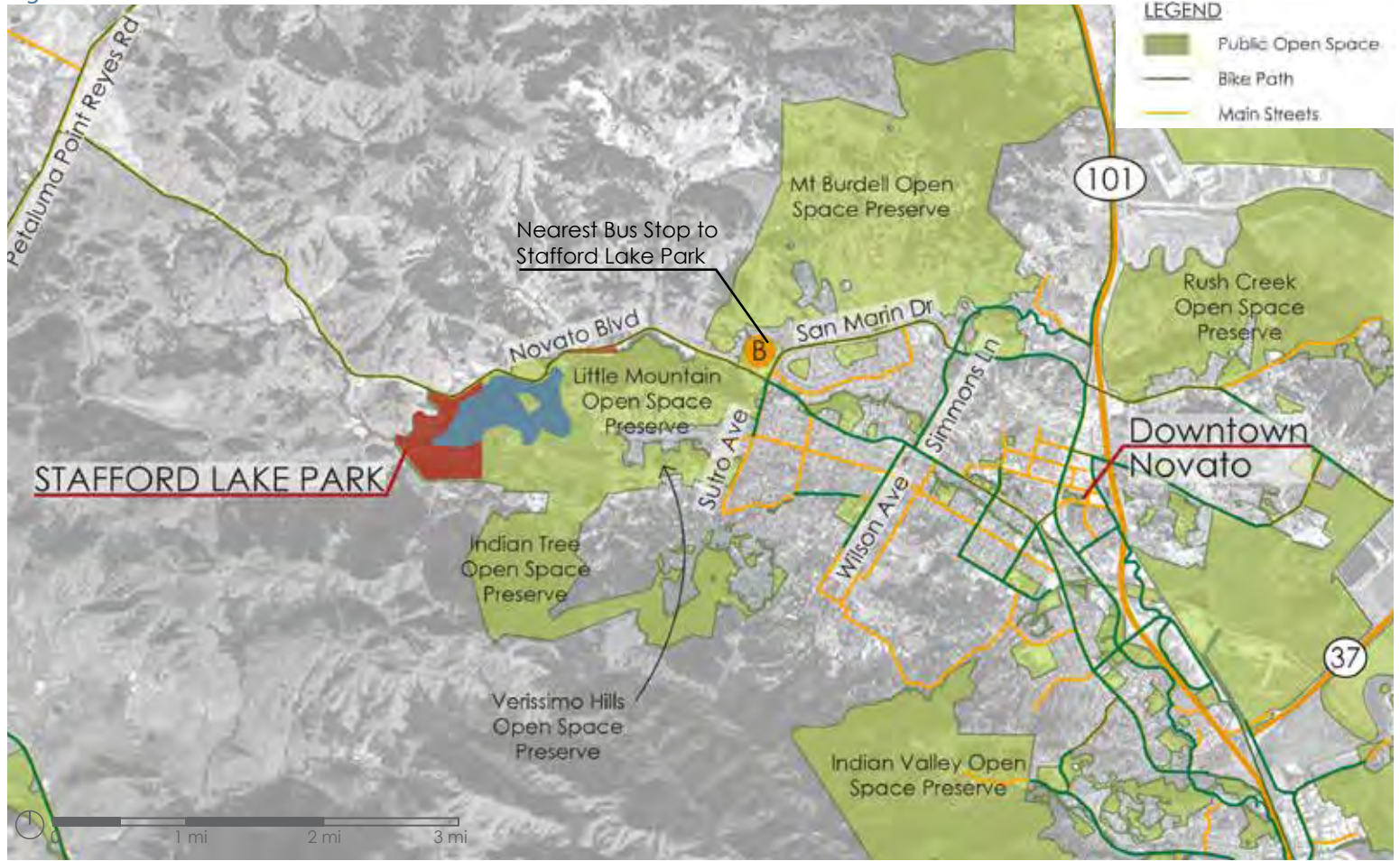


Figure 1.2.4 Connections + Neighboring Properties



## Local Connectivity

By car, Stafford Lake Park can only be directly accessed through Novato Boulevard. The majority of park users access the park from the east through Novato, although access from the west is available off Petaluma Point Reyes Road (see Figure 1.2.3). There is currently no direct public transit service to the park itself. The closest bus stop is approximately 2 miles from the park at the intersection of Novato Boulevard and San Marin Drive.

As with vehicular circulation, bicycle access to Stafford Lake Park heavily relies on Novato Boulevard. There is a separated, multi-use path on Novato Boulevard between the park and Sutro Avenue. Connectivity from key locations such as Downtown Novato is generally good, though regional connectivity relies on routes without designated bike lanes (see Figure 1.2.2).

A number of County Open Space Preserves and Novato City parks are located within a 3-mile radius of the park, providing opportunities for better interconnectivity between open spaces and other parks (see Figure 1.2.4). Park patrons have expressed the desire to connect Stafford Lake Park with these neighboring spaces, especially the redwood groves at nearby Indian Tree Open Space Preserve. Currently, there is little direct connection between various open spaces and preserves. The Novato Boulevard multi-use path directly connects between Stafford Lake Park and O’Hair Park/ Dogbone Meadow, but regional trail connection is spotty and not well marked. There is potential to connect Stafford Lake Park with neighboring trails and open spaces but would require easement agreements with North Marin Water District and adjacent private property owners. Currently, trail use within the park is restricted to pedestrians only. There are no dogs allowed in the park, except service animals, and there are restrictions on equestrian use and cyclists on trails.

### LEGEND


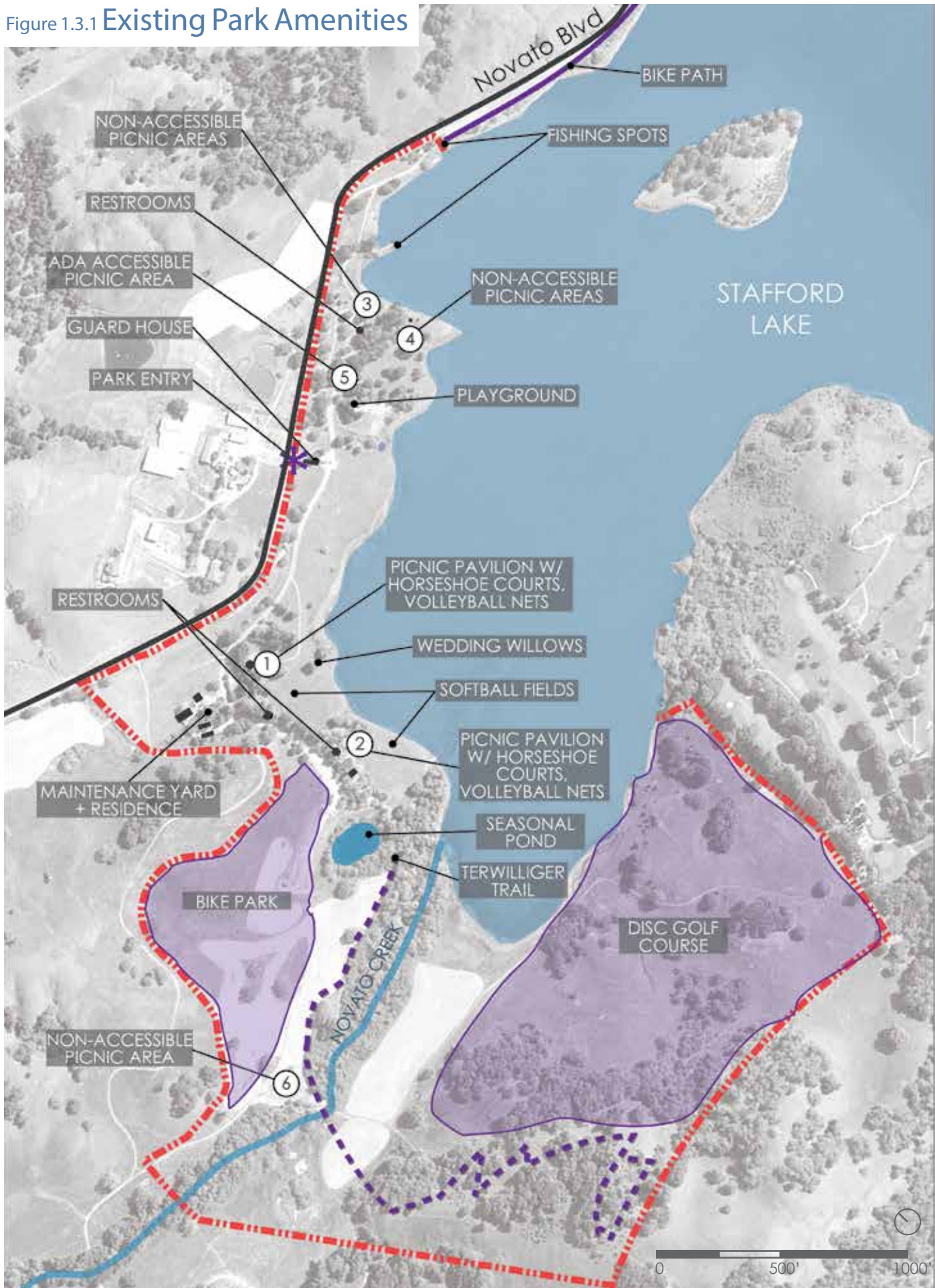
-  Stafford Lake Park
-  Marin County Open Space Preserve
-  North Marin Water District Land (Restricted Access)
-  City of Novato Public Open Space
-  Residential
-  County and Regional Trails
-  Separated Bike Path
-  Trailhead
-  Property Line



Figure 1.3.1 Existing Park Amenities





# 1.3 SITE INVENTORY

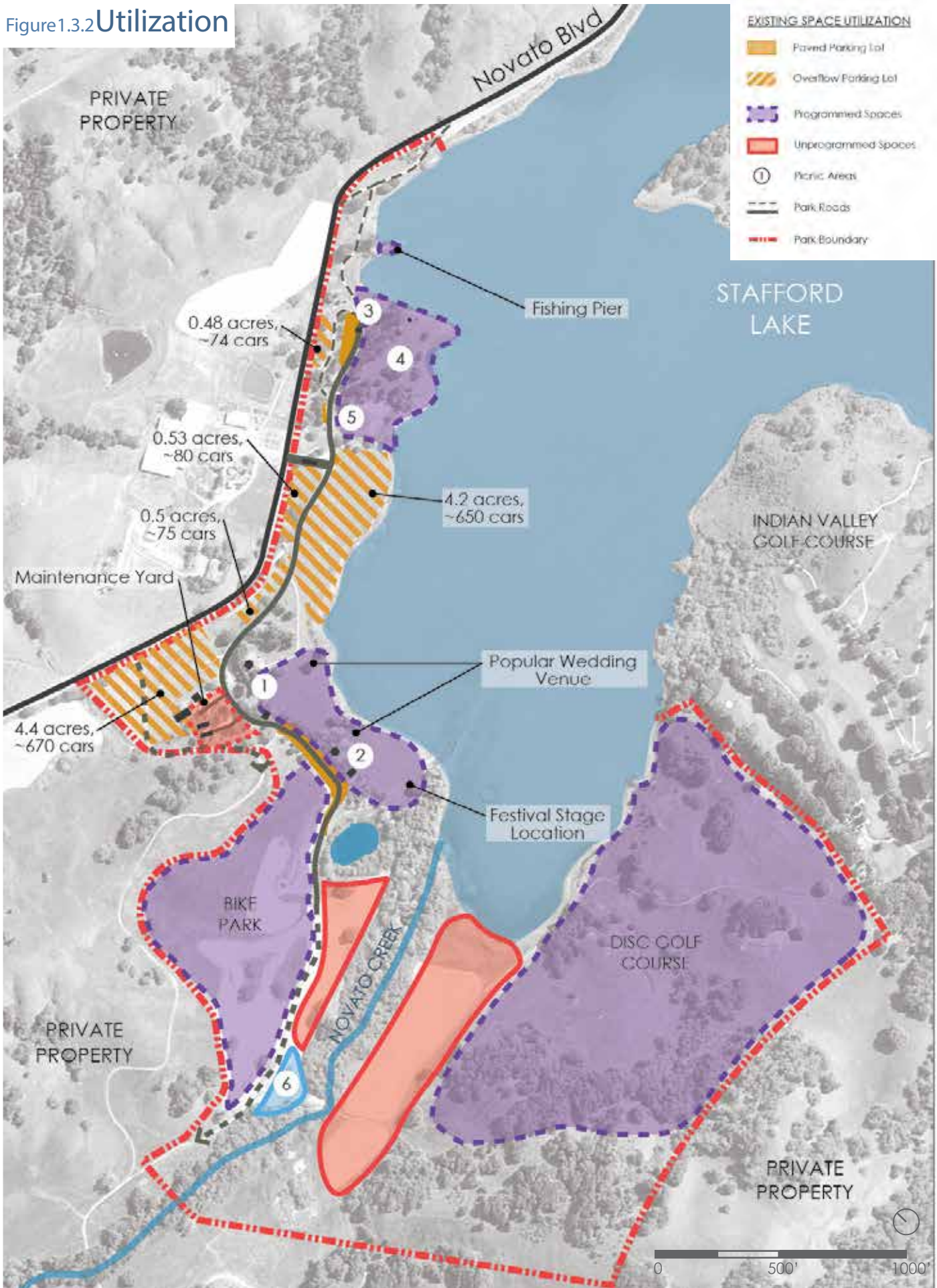
## Existing Conditions

Currently, Stafford Lake Park is a popular destination with local and regional appeal. Considered unique among Marin County's other regional parks, Stafford Lake Park retains much of its rural, undeveloped history. Its generally unprogrammed nature also lends itself to great flexibility in the types of events it hosts throughout the year. Throughout its 50+ year history however, the park has remained more or less unchanged. Much of the existing amenities are in need of renovation. The park's aging facilities potentially limit its continued appeal as demographics and recreational attitudes change.

The park can be divided generally into four types of conditions: 1) open meadow; 2) lakeshore; 3) wetland; and 4) uplands. Scattered throughout these zones are various recreational amenities.



Figure 1.3.2 Utilization





## Existing Uses, Amenities, and Programming

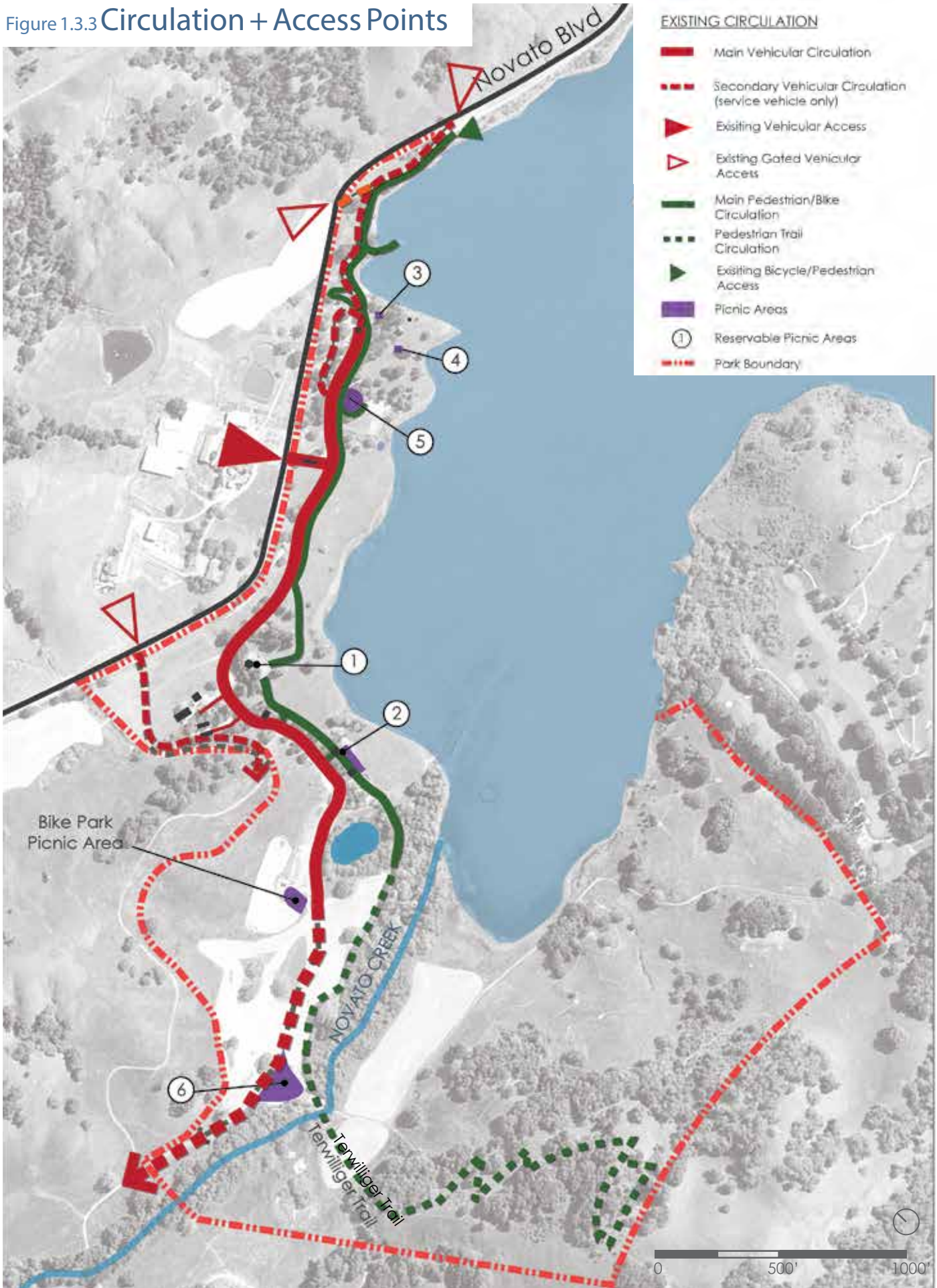
Stafford Lake Park's bucolic setting has made it a popular destination for a variety of user groups. The park offers lake fishing, picnic and barbeque areas, recreational amenities like a volleyball court and horseshoes, a playground, open lawn and nature trails. In addition, the Disc Golf course in the southern portion of the park is world-renowned with dedicated disc golfers visiting the site daily. The Bike Park also draws a regional crowd of bike riding enthusiasts (see Figure 1.3.2).

The park hosts an array of programs, ranging from family picnics and day hikers to large scale music events and other festivals. Its six picnic areas are heavily used during summer months. Picnic areas One and Two are especially popular with large picnic groups and special events. The park is a very popular wedding venue, consistently booked on weekends during warmer months. The park also has a diverse set of ranger-led and community group-organized park programs including outdoor movie screenings, educational, and stargazing events

A sample of the various events at Stafford Lake, such as raves (Top Left), weddings (Top Right) and Disc Golf (Bottom).



Figure 1.3.3 Circulation + Access Points



# CIRCULATION

## Vehicular

As previously mentioned, the only road to Stafford Lake Park is Novato Boulevard. Currently, Stafford Lake Park has only one vehicular entry and exit point. This access point is located toward the middle of the park off Novato Boulevard (see Figure 1.3.3). Upon entering the park and passing a small guard house, the road comes to a T, forcing drivers to turn either left or right. Internal vehicular circulation is linearly oriented, causing congestion for patrons trying to enter or exit the park at peak use periods.

Parking capacity at Stafford Lake Park is greatly dependent on the different events occurring at one time. During weekdays the park has ample parking in its designated lots. But on busy weekends and during large events or festivals, parking and subsequent vehicular circulation is congested. Even with adequate overflow parking, and the provision of additional gated entry points, poor internal vehicular circulation inside the park forces traffic backups on Novato Boulevard.

## Bicycle

The main bicycle route to Stafford Lake Park is a multi-use path along Novato Boulevard that begins at Sutro Avenue. Avid road cyclists also ride directly on Novato Boulevard, often using Stafford Lake Park as a rest stop or meet up spot for longer rides. Once inside Stafford Lake Park, there are no official bike paths. Other than special permitted events, bikes are prohibited from trails in the park. The recent opening of Phase I of Stafford Lake Bike Park has provided a welcome amenity for bikers, quickly becoming a popular spot within the park.

## Trails

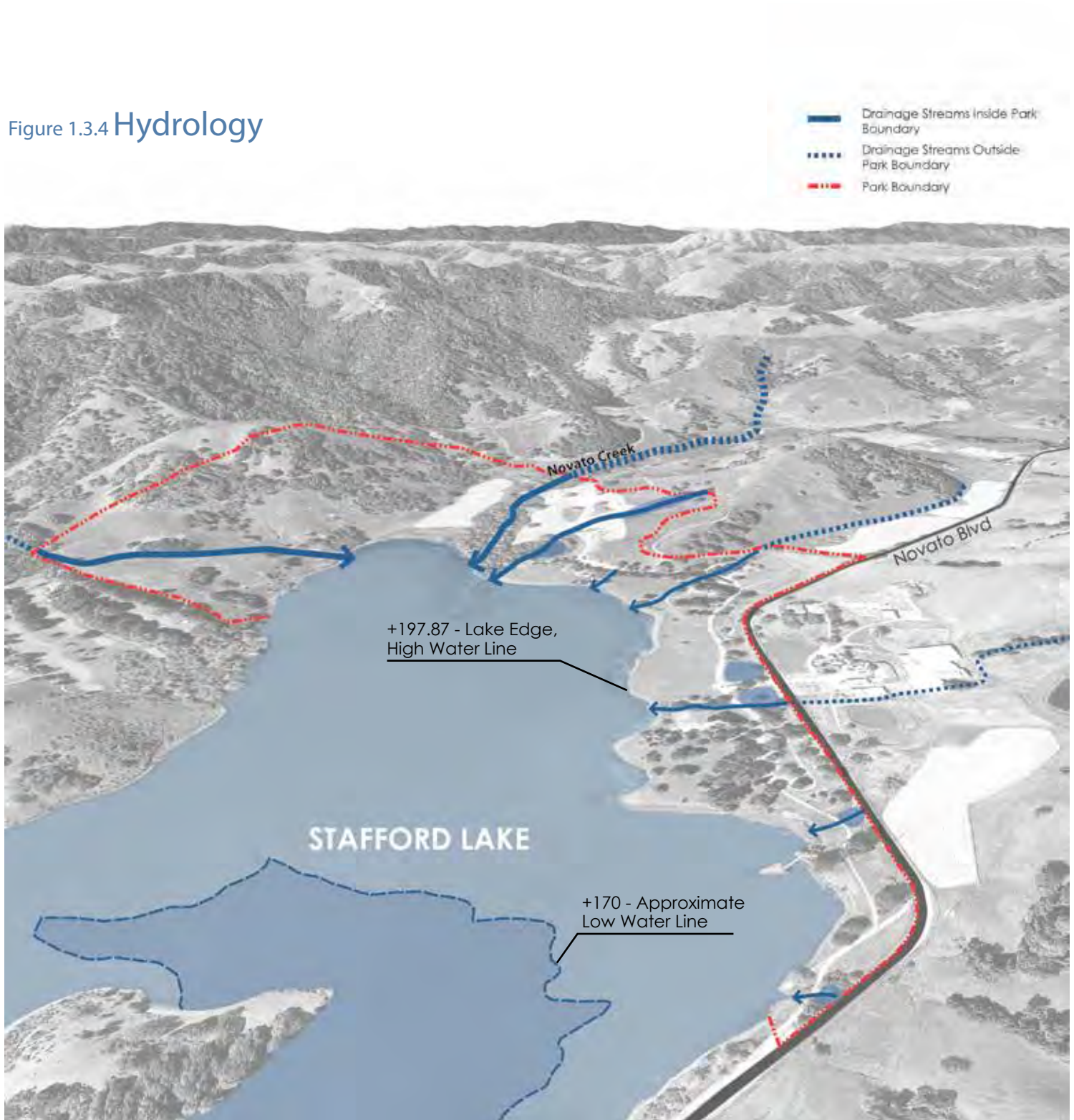
Currently, Stafford Lake Park offers one interior trail – the Terwilliger Nature Trail. The approximately 1.7 mile trail begins near Picnic Area 6 and climbs about 400 feet to eventually loop back down to the original trailhead. Unfortunately, though nearby trails exist outside the park that connect to the Indian Tree Open Space Preserve and beyond, Terwilliger Trail does not connect with them (see Figure 1.2.4). Additionally, there are currently no trails that fully loop around Stafford Lake. There is potential for a loop, however negotiation with neighboring properties like the Indian Valley Golf Course and North Marin Water District would be necessary.

## Public Transit

Currently, there is no direct public transportation to Stafford Lake Park. The closest bus stop is located at Novato Boulevard and San Marin Drive via Golden Gate Transit Route 54 or Marin Transit Route 251 (see Figure 1.2.3). From the stop, a patron would walk or bike approximately 2 miles to the easternmost entry of the park.



Figure 1.3.4 Hydrology



# NATURAL FEATURES + SYSTEMS

## Drainage + Flood Control

Stafford Lake is owned by the North Marin Water District. It is within the Novato Creek watershed, the largest in Marin County, draining to San Pablo Bay. The water from the reservoir is treated at nearby Stafford Lake Water Treatment Plant and supplies approximately 20% of Novato’s water. It is of upmost importance that the surface-water sourced reservoir is maintained to have the best water quality possible. In addition to Novato Creek, various drainage streams spill into the lake. NMWD has supported local nonprofit groups like the Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed (STRAW) in enhancing these drainage streams through habitat restoration projects like replanting riparian planting for biofiltration and installing straw wattles to help control erosion (see Figure 1.3.5).

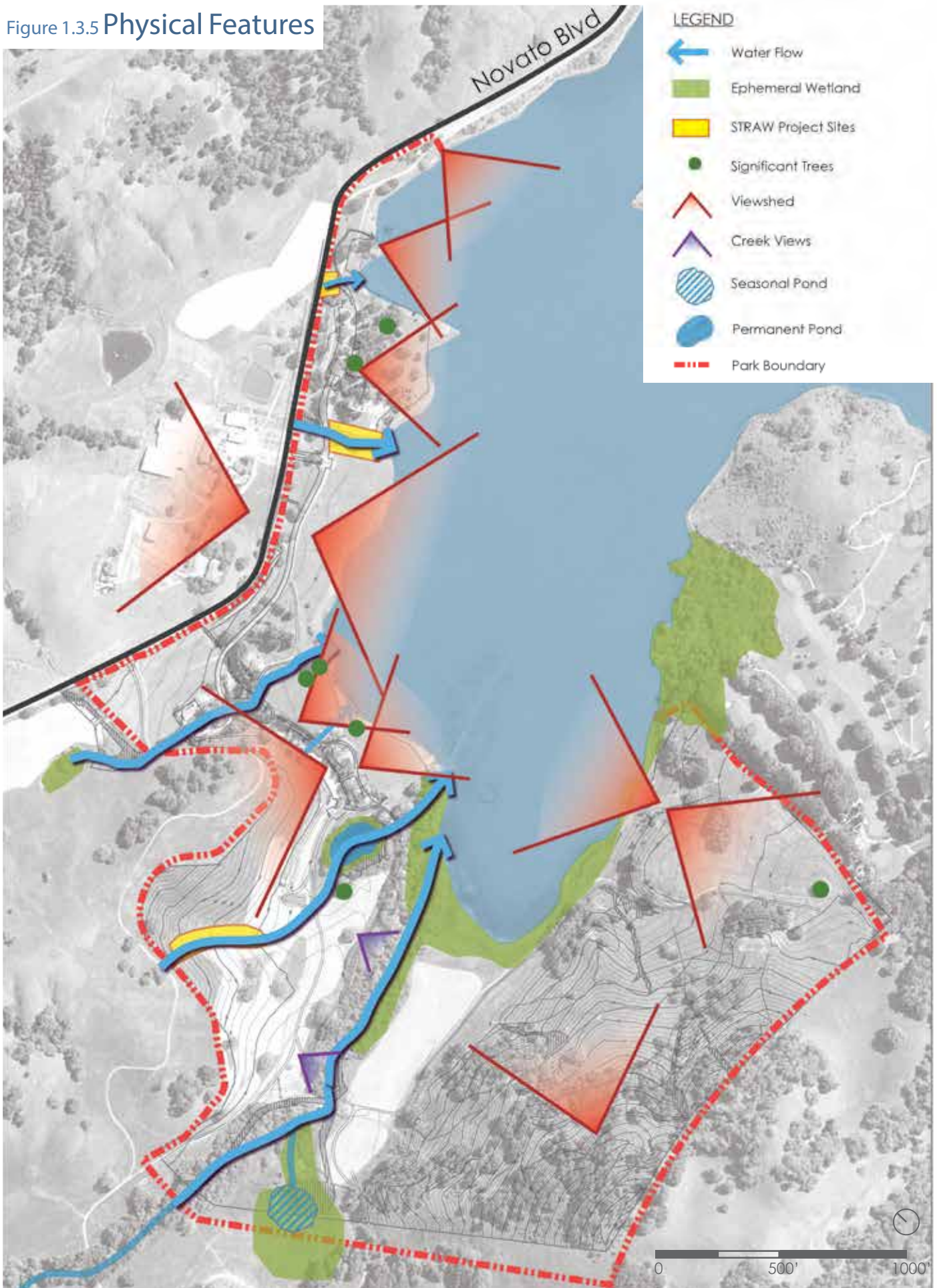
The Stafford Dam outlet is measured at an elevation of +197.87 (NAVD-88), thus setting the maximum high water line (see Figure 1.3.4). The park experiences occasional flooding during large storm events especially near riparian and drainage corridors. Lake water levels fluctuate throughout the year, though recent drought conditions have rendered the lake edge far smaller than its full capacity.

A view from the start of incline at the Terwilliger Trail. The green grasses denote the area of seasonal wetland.





Figure 1.3.5 Physical Features





## Site Vegetation

Stafford Lake Park has diversity in physical features; elevation, slope, and presence of water create frames for views and pockets for plant communities to develop.

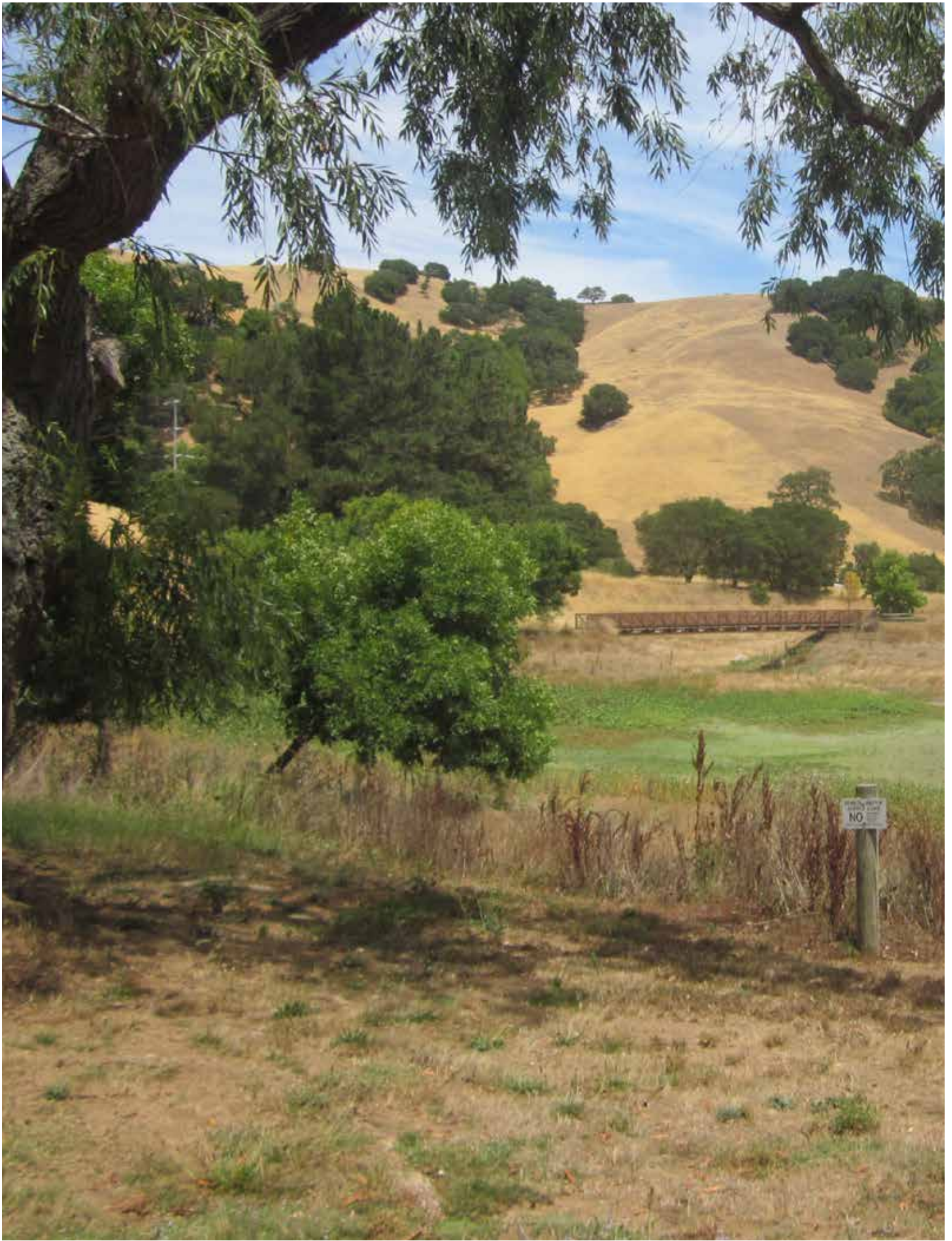
Valleys and depressions create the opportunity for ephemeral wetlands and creeks that flow into the larger lake during rainy seasons. A number of seasonal and permanent ponds are found across the park, fed from rainstorms. In these areas, a combination of emergent, riparian and upland plant species create a unique natural feature in a largely grassland park. Groups of riparian trees along these waterways frame views. In these ephemeral areas riparian vegetation dominates. In more permanent ponds and along the edges of Stafford Lake where land is permanently inundated, emergent species are prevalent.

Beyond the riparian and upland zone, native purple-needle grass and non-native grasslands cover much of the flatter areas and some of the slopes within the park. These rolling grasslands are a stage for scattered stands of native Oak woodlands. These Oak stands are part of larger Oak communities, making them significant and deserving of protection and preservation.

Significant trees within the park include the weeping willows between Group Picnic Areas 1 & 2 and the giant bay tree, a heritage tree, just west of the pond (see Figure 1.3.5). Blue and coast live oaks on site may also warrant heritage tree status. All significant and heritage trees in the park should be protected and celebrated.

## Views

The park's namesake water feature is often the focal point for views (see Figure 1.3.5). In addition to views toward Stafford Lake itself, the park also has fantastic views of the surrounding rolling grassland hills, which should be preserved and highlighted if possible.





# 1.4 CONSTRAINTS + OPPORTUNITIES

Following initial site analysis and a series of focus group meetings with stakeholders, RHAA compiled an existing opportunities and constraints diagram identifying key areas of focus for the master plan effort. Identified opportunities and constraints are broken down into 3 general themes: Circulation + Access, Areas of Interest, and Operations.

## Existing Constraints and Issues

The majority of site issues identified at Stafford Lake Park stem from poor auto circulation. The park entry station is located very near Novato Boulevard, causing vehicles to back up onto the road when parking fees are collected. Within the park itself, vehicular access is limited to a single roadway along the lake shore, making circulation difficult during large events. In addition, key features like group picnic areas and the Terwilliger Trail are not well-marked. These elements are important because the primary access to the park is by automobile - public transit does not serve the park, and the multi-use pathway extending from Novato is in poor condition and barely serviceable.

The other major site constraints are related to outdated facilities, fluctuating lake levels, and conflicting events occurring simultaneously in adjacent portions of the park.

## Potential Opportunities

Stafford Lake Park's inherent physical qualities are its greatest asset. The park is beloved for its rustic qualities and expansiveness yet much of the park is underutilized most of the time. There are great opportunities to highlight existing features while activating dormant space through new programming. Environmentally sensitive areas can be better protected as well as celebrated through interpretive signage and educational features.

As mentioned above, general circulation around the park can be greatly improved. The park's existing pedestrian circulation can be extended to create internal walking loops accessible to patrons of varying mobility. There is also potential to connect beyond the park itself, linking trails to open space preserves and other local parks. Vehicular circulation can be redesigned to allow more efficient flow in and out of the park.

Operational facilities are in need of update and through the master plan effort, park operations can be consolidated, relocated, and upgraded to meet future increased usage.

# Figure 1.4.1 Existing Issues

## Circulation

- (A)** Entrance location causing traffic back up
- (B)** Poor vehicular circulation
- (C)** No public transit option
- (D)** Bike path in poor condition
- (E)** Identity & wayfinding signage lacking
- (F)** Lack of structured creek crossing

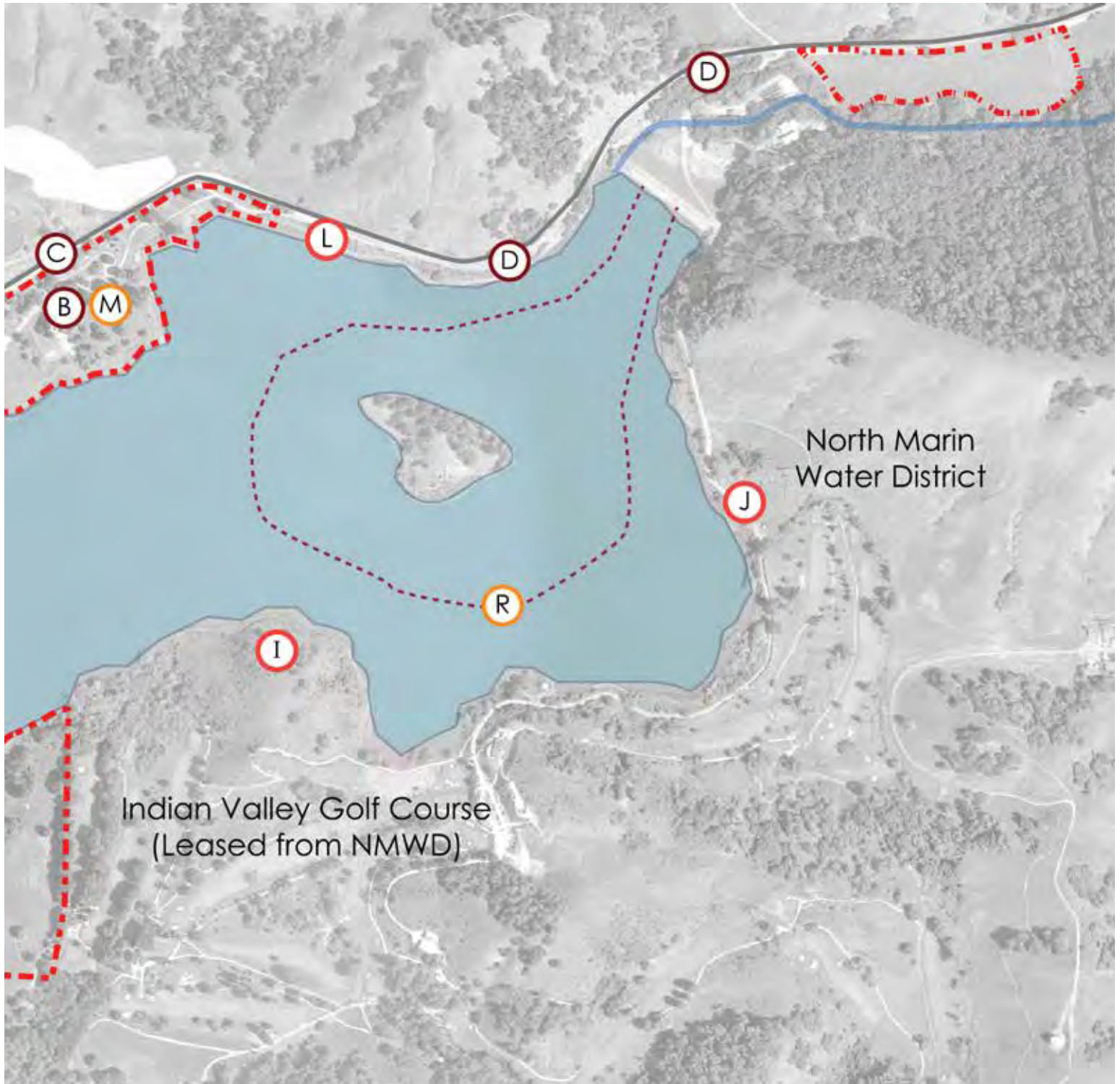
## Access

- (G)** Access to hiking trail not well marked
- (H)** Lack of vehicular access & parking limits use of field and trails
- (I)** No connection through golf course
- (J)** Steep slope limits trail access
- (K)** Lack of ADA access to many park amenities
- (L)** Lack of access & parking near fishing spots

## Areas of Interest

- (M)** Outdated playground & picnic areas
- (N)** Picnic areas conflict during simultaneous events
- (O)** Potential conflicting events between bike park and picnic area
- (P)** Maintenance yard/facilities in disrepair
- (Q)** Disc golf facilities with inconsistent signage upkeep
- (R)** Varying lake levels - low water during summer, time of highest use





Indian Valley Golf Course  
(Leased from NMWD)

North Marin  
Water District



# Figure 1.4.2 Potential Opportunities

## Circulation

- ① Potential alternative park entry/ exit point
- ② Improve bike path connection to Novato
- ③ Provide public transit to park
- ④ Improve creek crossing
- ⑤ Internal walking loop
- ⑥ Lake loop trail (on NMWD property)
- ⑦ Potential pedestrian bridge (on NMWD property)

## Access

- ⑧ Potential lake viewing/access (pending NMWD approval)
- ⑨ Potential creek viewing
- ⑩ Potential wetland viewing

## Areas of Interest

- ⑪ Activate underutilized space
- ⑫ Educational features
- ⑬ Enhance vista point
- ⑭ Good bird/wildlife viewing areas (some on NWMD property)
- ⑮ Celebrate heritage trees
- ⑯ Habitat restoration at Riparian Zones

## Operations

- ⑰ Enhance trash pick up facility
- ⑱ Potential maintenance yard relocation









# COMMUNITY INPUT







Various means of community outreach for the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan, such as Community Meetings in which attendees could voice interest in Programming Preferring exercises (Top Left) and site visits with intercept surveys (Bottom).



# 2.1 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

As part of the master plan design development effort, RHAA and Marin County Parks held a variety of public outreach events to gather community input that would help guide the design process to best serve the community. Throughout this phase, RHAA presented relevant analysis while community members in turn gave feedback on what aspects of the park they wanted improved or protected. The outreach efforts were varied in sample size and research method design but were all essential in discerning the diverse set of users and desires for Stafford Lake Park.

Public outreach spanned many months, starting in September 2014 and concluding in July 2015. The community input methods were:

- Intercept surveys
- Preferencing exercises at community workshops
- Online survey
- Focus group meetings

These outreach efforts became the foundation on which the initial programming studies were built. The following pages are a summary overview of the public engagement methods used in development of the final master plan report.

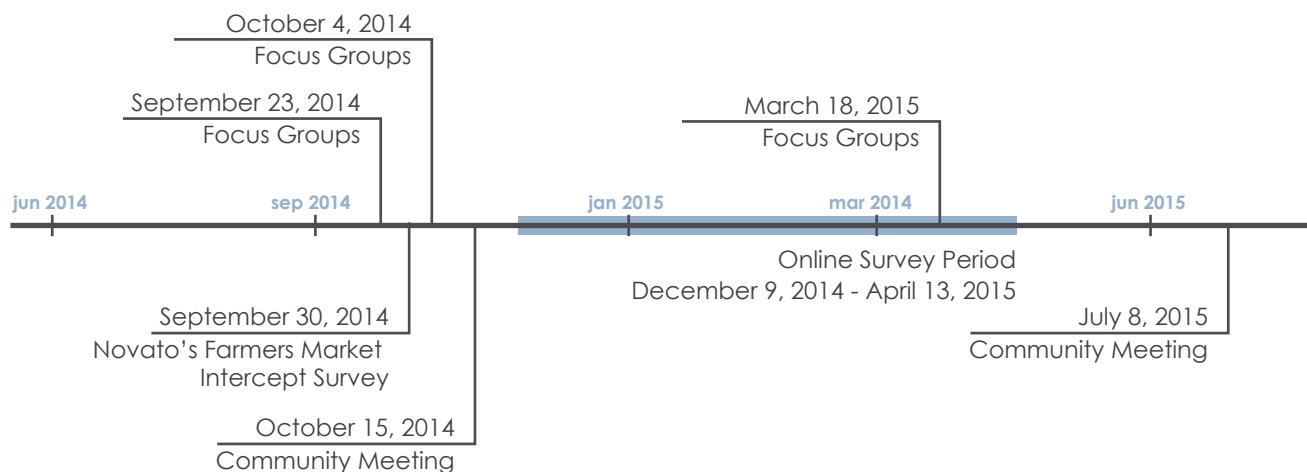


Figure 2.1.1 A timeline of public outreach during the Community Input phase of the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan.

# Public Outreach Summary

## Intercept Surveys

**Outreach Type:** Intercept Survey -  
Novato Farmers' Market

**Date:** September 30, 2014

**Total Respondents:** 125

**Summary:**

- Majority of respondents "**Very very rarely**" visit Stafford Lake Park (36%)
- 41% of respondents visit Stafford Lake **between once a month and once a year**
- **Majority** of respondents noted "**White**" as ethnicity (67%), followed by Hispanic (14%), Asian (11%), Black (7) and Native American (1%)
- **Half** of those who responded live in **households with multiple age groups**
- **84%** of respondents **live in Novato**
- Numerous comments regarding fee as deterrent to park entry

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**Outreach Type:** Intercept Survey -  
Stafford Lake Park

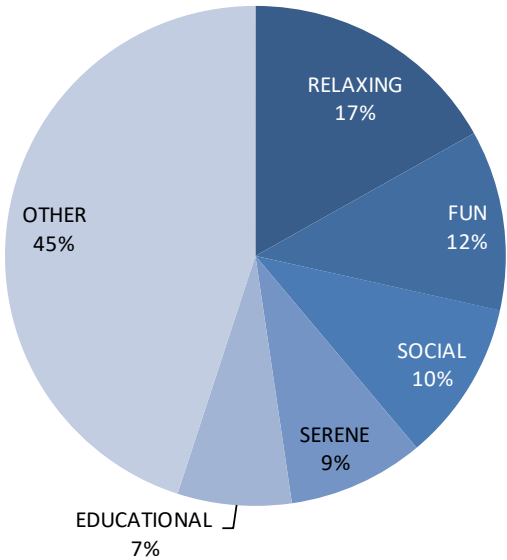
**Date:** October 4, 2014

**Total Respondents:** 29

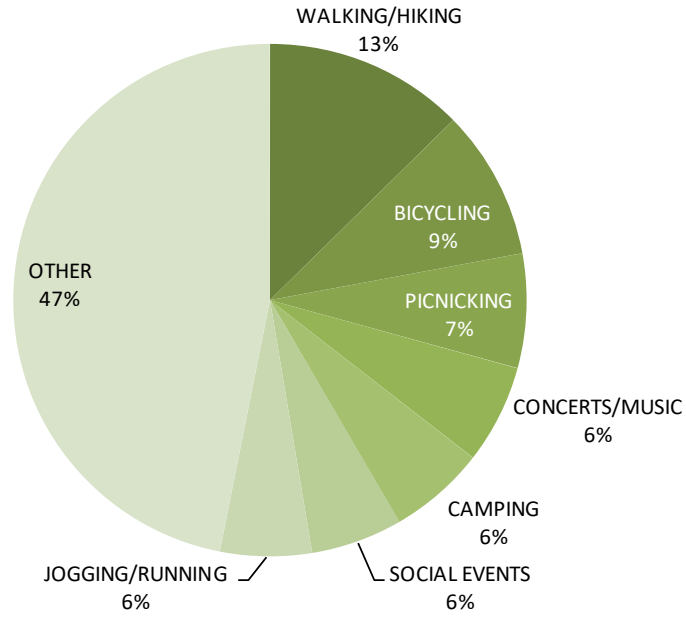
**Summary:**

- 21% of respondents visit **Once a week**
- 54% of respondents visit Stafford Lake **between once a month and once a year**
- **Majority** of respondents noted "**White**" as ethnicity (54%), followed by Hispanic (30%), Asian (8%), Native American (5%), and Black (3%)
- **Half** of those who responded live in **households with multiple age groups**
- **62%** of respondents **live in households with multiple age groups**
- **Majority** of those who responded **do NOT live in Novato**

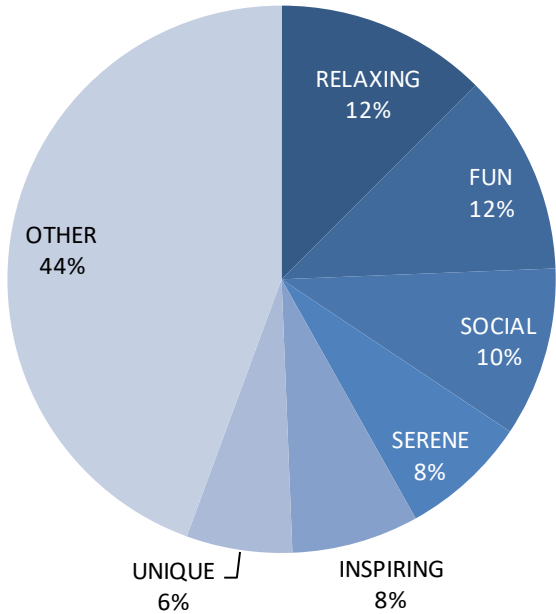
Desired experiences at Stafford Lake Park  
Sep 30, 2014



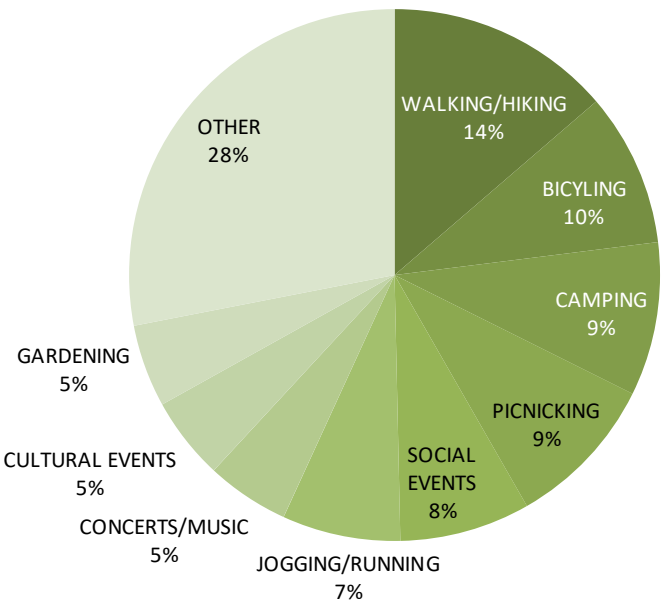
Common Activities at Local Parks  
Sep 30, 2014



Desired experiences at Stafford Lake Park  
Oct 4, 2014



Common Activities at Local Parks  
Oct 4, 2014



**MARIN COUNTY**  
**PARKS**  
PRESERVATION · RECREATION

**Stafford Lake Park Master Plan**

Help Marin County Parks Create a Vision for Stafford Lake Park!

**1. What types of facilities and programs influence your decision to visit local parks? (Check all that apply)**

- Children's play areas/features
- Special programs, such as film screenings or nature walks
- Gathering or picnic areas
- Outdoor meetings or conferences
- Wedding or event venue
- Dining at a restaurant or cafe
- Walking or biking paths
- Fitness classes or events, such as yoga or triathlons
- Water play
- Field sports, such as Frisbee, soccer, football, baseball

Other Reasons:

Next

A screen capture of the online survey.



# Public Outreach Summary

## Online Survey

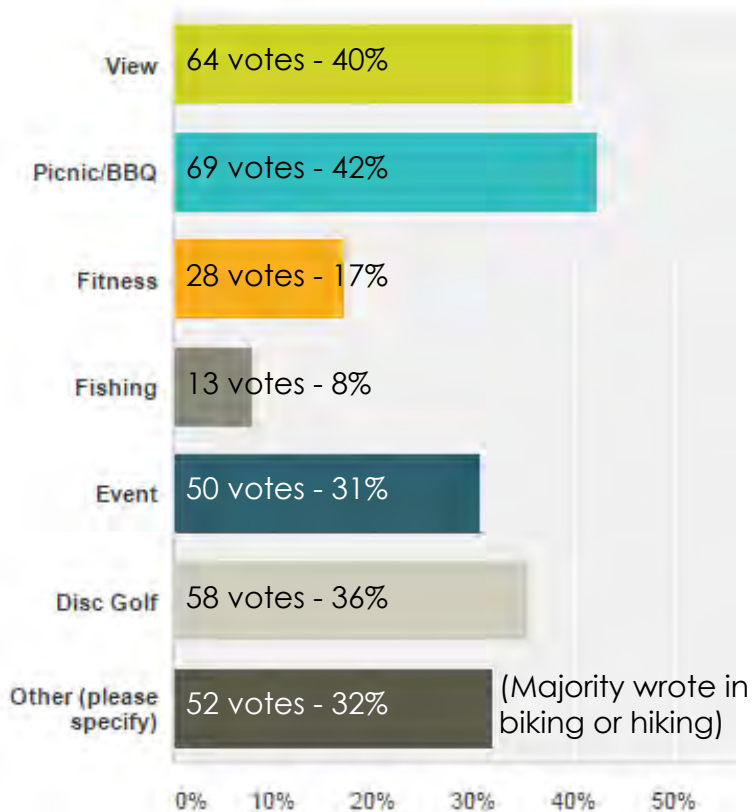
COMMUNITY  
INPUT

**Outreach Type:** Online Survey  
**Date:** December 9, 2014 - April 13, 2015  
**Total Respondents:** 207

### Summary:

- Among opposite adjective comparisons, respondents found Stafford Lake Park to be best described as **Active** (+1.09) and **Unique** (+0.47).
- 64% of respondents visit Stafford Lake Park either **monthly or yearly**.
- Respondents tend to visit Stafford Lake Park more on the **weekends** in the **mornings** and **afternoons**.
- Respondents visit local parks mainly for **walking/hiking** (81%), **gathering/picnic areas** (51%), **field sports** (43%) and **children's play areas** (40%)
- 43% of respondents **have children** in their household.
- Most respondents visit Marin County Parks **weekly** (56%). 87% of respondents visit at least **monthly**.

### Activities that drew people to Stafford Lake Park (three votes allowed)



# Public Outreach Summary

## Preferencing Exercise

**Outreach Type:** Preferencing Exercise at Community Meeting - Margaret Todd Center

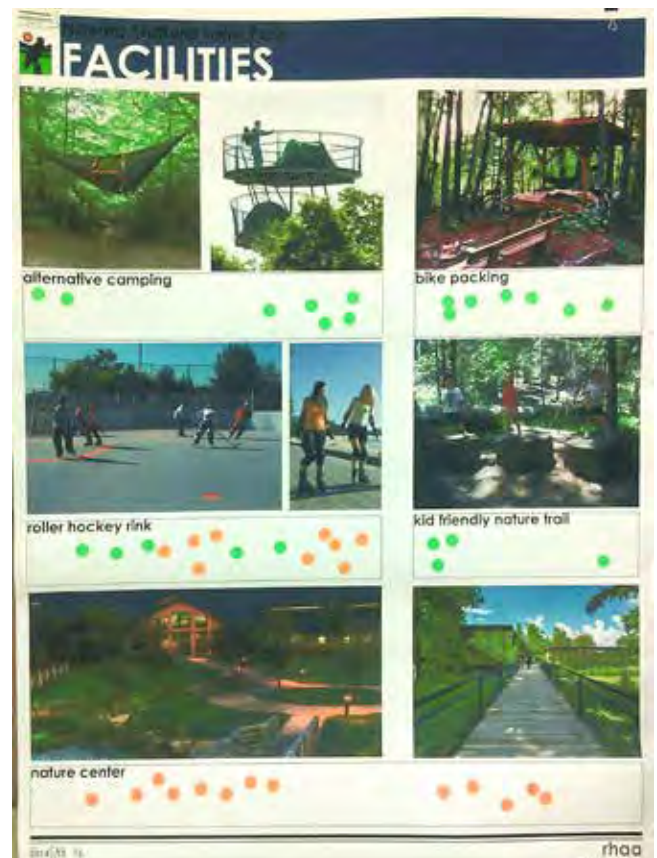
**Date:** October 15, 2014

**Total Participants:** ~40

### Summary:

- **Archery** (100% positive of 45 votes) and **disc golf** (97% positive of 29 votes) received the most positive reviews. The County has determined that archery is not appropriate at Stafford Lake Park, and is working with the archery community to find an alternative site in Marin.
- **Food trucks** (95% negative of 19 votes), **farmers' market** (88% negative of 17 votes), and **nature center** (100% negative of 13 votes) received the most negative reviews
- Participants voted more often and positively for image boards featuring **Active Recreation, Education, and Play**
- Post-It note 'Issues' comments mainly focus on **geese, access and signage improvements, and facility/parking improvements**

Photos of various preferencing exercises done at public workshops on October 15, 2014



# Public Outreach Summary

## Focus Group Meetings

**Outreach Type:** Focus Group Meetings  
**Date:** September 23, 2014 + March 18, 2015  
**Total Participants:** 40

### Summary

#### Marin Mommies + Novato Mothers Club

Issues -

- Bike path: unsafe transition across roads discourage use
- Goose droppings near playground: area needs fence to keep area clean
- Parking fee: deters daily visits for those who only come for the playground
- Lack of shade: important consideration at playground
- Lack of park destination other than large events



Opportunities-

- Stroller friendly loop path internally and around lake
- Destination playground: somewhere worth paying entrance fee, something people will travel distances to visit
- Bouldering park: suggestion from one participant as new destination-worthy amenity

#### Disc Golf + Bike Park Groups

Issues -

- Parking conflicts: Particularly when multiple events are happening at once; disc golfers defer to other patrons and park far away
- Shared spaces: potential conflict between trail users and disc golfers,
- Access to disc golf course: no official creek crossing, flooding witnessed at Rustic Meadows picnic area

Opportunities -

- Expanded disc golf course into flat meadow area, potential ADA accessible holes
- Views and natural features already huge draw to course
- Perimeter lake trail seems like asset
- New entrance with better circulation
- Par/exercise course





## County Park Staff

### Issues -

- Underutilized space: includes 16-acre lot and open meadows
- Traffic congestion: mainly at entrance, chokepoint that causes congestion on Novato Blvd
- Existing amenities in poor condition: includes playground, group picnic areas, parking lots, bike path and turf lawn
- Lake edge littered with goose dropping, lawn has gopher holes
- Creek floods due to overgrowth in creek channel, needs permanent creek crossing
- Poor wayfinding: entrance, disc golf course entrance, Terwilliger Trail, fishing spots
- Smells from neighboring uses (dairy farm): depends on temperature and wind

### Opportunities -

- Connections to nearby paths/trails
- Views: at picnic spots and in hills
- Residence: access easement and possible leasing deal
- Wetland pond, heritage trees & creek access: great wildlife viewing areas, potential for interpretive signage and bird blind



## North Marin Water District, Novato Parks & Rec, Novato United School District

### Issues -

- Water quality concerns: utmost importance to protect Stafford Lake water quality and treat surface water that flows to lake
- Bike path to park: concerns over connectivity and safety, potential to upgrade path to Class I path
- Fishing near Stafford Dam: trespassing into restricted areas to avoid paying fees
- Protect gatehouse: built by water district and volunteers in 1995
- Creek crossing: erosion and silt build up, need better crossing

### Opportunity:

- Water treatment infrastructure and habitat restoration as educational amenity that improves water quality
- Youth oriented programs: build on STRAW's success and provide similar programs
- More recreation activities within park like bocce ball, pickleball, community garden, informal amphitheater



Latino Focus Group

Issues -

- Duck and goose droppings: would be okay if separated from activity areas
- Lack of public transportation: unable to visit park because lack of transit option
- Not enough restrooms
- Litter: reports of trash left behind by other groups and not being picked up

Opportunity -

- Improved signage at entrance and within park
- Increased promotion of the park: greater community awareness
- Prep tables next to BBQs
- More activities for a range of age groups: inclusive but also separated from other park sites to maximize feeling of being in natural setting

Preferencing exercise summary -

- **Bright/colorful playground** (75% positive of 8 votes), **tree walk** (75% positive of 8 votes), and **zipline** (83% of 6 votes) received the most positive reviews
- **Farmers' market** (80% negative of 5 votes), **disc golf**, **large deck for events**, and **natural play materials** (all with 100% negative of 3 votes) received the most negative reviews
- Participants voted more often and positively for image boards featuring **Active Recreation, Facilities, and Play**

Environmental Groups - Native Plant Society & Marin Conservation League

Issues:

- Lake edge: concern that lake loop trail would disturb fragile habitat, must protect marsh habitat

Opportunity:

- Increase number of trees
- Habitat restoration: clean out invasive species
- Wayfinding improvements









## 2.2 COMMON THEMES

Community input was crucial to distilling the essence of Stafford Lake Park and how it could better serve the people of Novato and beyond. Some common themes arose, such as:

- Stafford Lake is not as frequently visited as other local parks.
- Entry fee and lack of awareness of the park were issues that prevented people from visiting the park more frequently.
- Natural features and beautiful views are important elements that draw people to Stafford Lake Park for various recreational activities such as hiking, biking, walking, disc golf, and picnicking.
- Children’s play is an important activity for many users of local parks.
- Inter- and intra-park connectivity was highly desired, such as a parkwide walking loop or lakewide loop trail.

This community feedback was the basis for the initial programming studies and was eventually incorporated into the park design alternatives developed by the design team.

The community giving feedback via post-it notes during Public Workshop #1 in October 15, 2014.

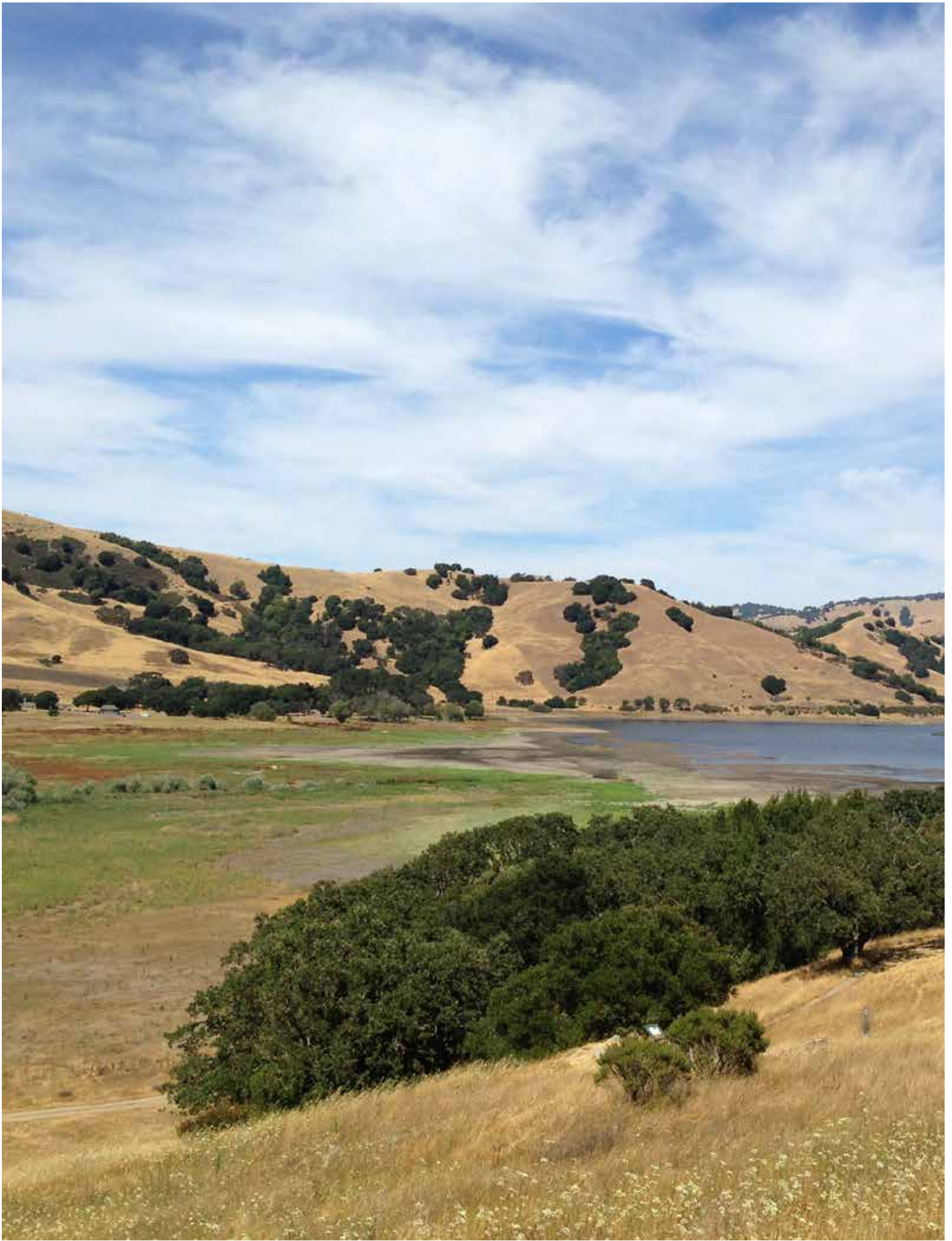




# MASTER PLAN







## 3.1 THE VISION

Over the past couple of decades, the Bay Area has exploded in population and economic growth. Marin County has also experienced these changes while remaining a highly desirable place to live. Cities like Novato and San Rafael have had steady increases in population, ushering improvements to transit connections and housing stock. Yet Stafford Lake Park remains relatively unchanged since its initial opening. Though it is much loved by its more frequent users, it remains a hidden gem to much of the neighboring county.

From the onset of this master plan process, the County and the design team have viewed Stafford Lake Park as a unique but underutilized amenity in a breathtaking setting. This master plan effort is the chance to celebrate the park through new programs and features that celebrate and elevate the existing natural amenities. The natural features and the existing uses in the park contribute to the vision of creating a master plan that focuses on alternative, nature-based recreation as well as traditional picnic and play. Exciting, “out of the box” recreation and educational opportunities activate the park’s underutilized areas while infusing the space with an adventurous spirit. Other established portions of the park would remain serene spaces for gathering and contemplation. Together, the vision for the park would protect the natural, cultural, and recreational amenities that currently exist within the park while pushing forward new, complementary features and programs that draw diverse populations.

Based on the initial site inventory, analysis and community input exercises, the design team came to the County with initial professional recommendations on improving connectivity and activating underutilized spaces. Together, the team identified desired and feasible programming and mapped potential locations. The internal charette allowed the design team to produce a variety of sketches, which were again presented to the County and combined into a preferred program framework. That framework informed the development of the final master plan.

Figure 3.1.1 Preferred Program Framework

### Active Recreation

- Bike Park (Existing)
- Destination Playground
- Swimming Lagoon
- Bouldering Course
- Nature Play Area

### Passive Recreation

- Existing Large and Small Group Picnic Areas
- Disc Golf Course

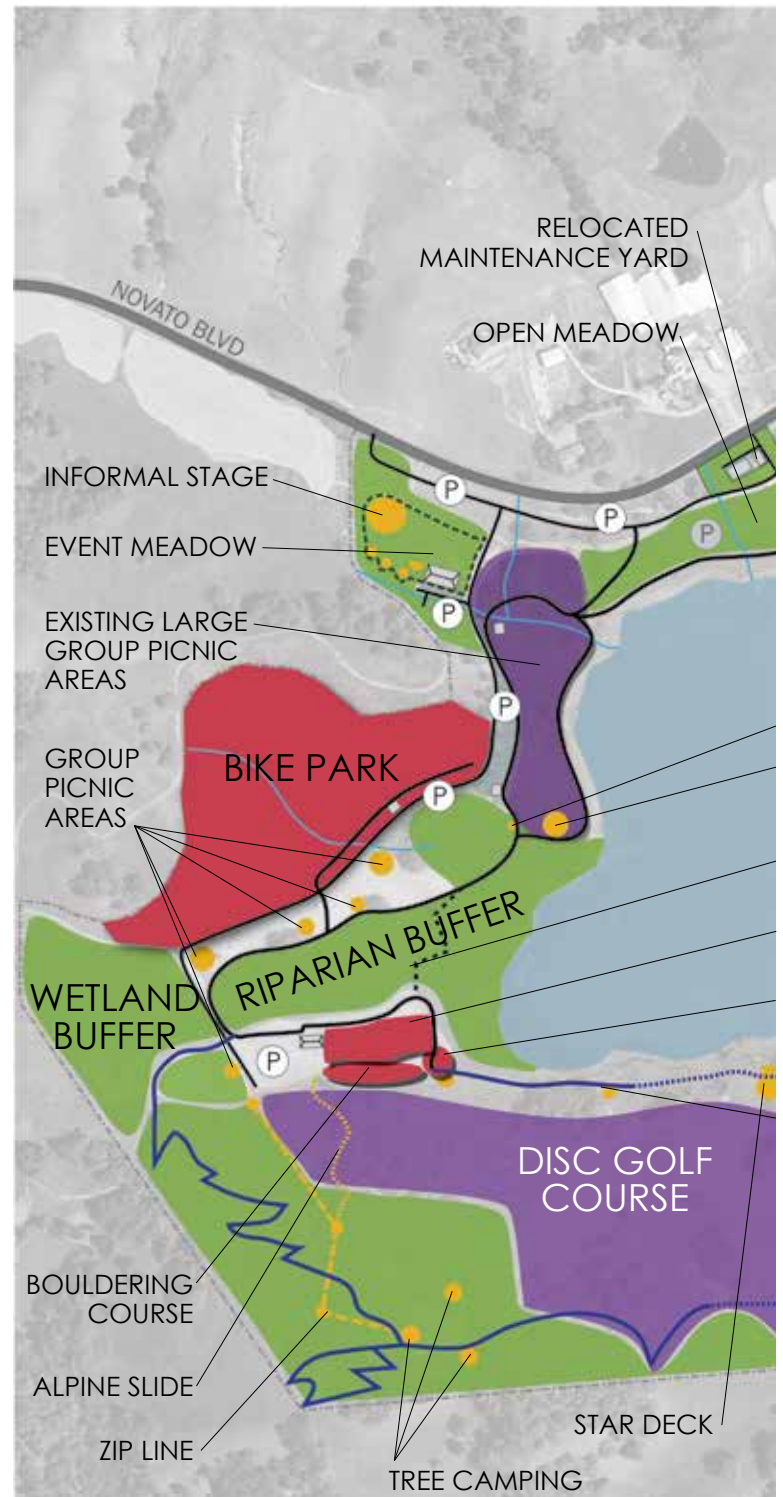
### Natural Areas

- Open Meadow
- Event Meadow
- Wetland and Riparian Buffer Area
- Trails and Disc Golf Course
- Creek Boardwalk

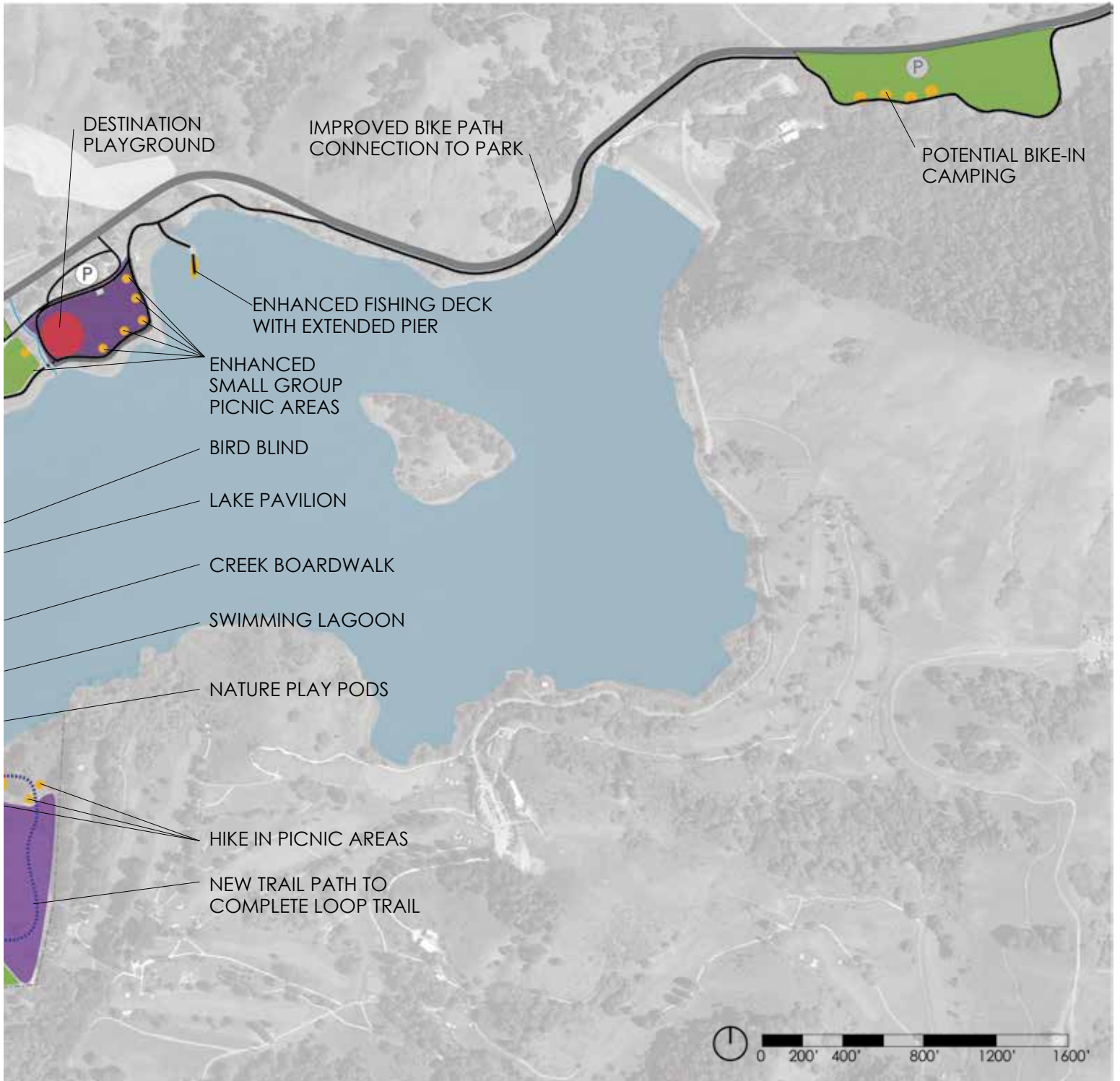
### Features + Facilities

- Enhanced Picnic Areas
- Enhanced Fishing Deck
- Informal Stage
- Lake Pavilion
- Star Deck
- Tree Camping
- Zip Line
- Bird Blind
- Bike-In Camping

- Ⓟ Formal Parking
- Ⓟ Overflow Parking







# Preferred Circulation Framework

Figure 3.1.2 **Vehicular Circulation**

Existing



Figure 3.1.3 **Bike + Pedestrian Circulation**

Existing



Proposed



Proposed

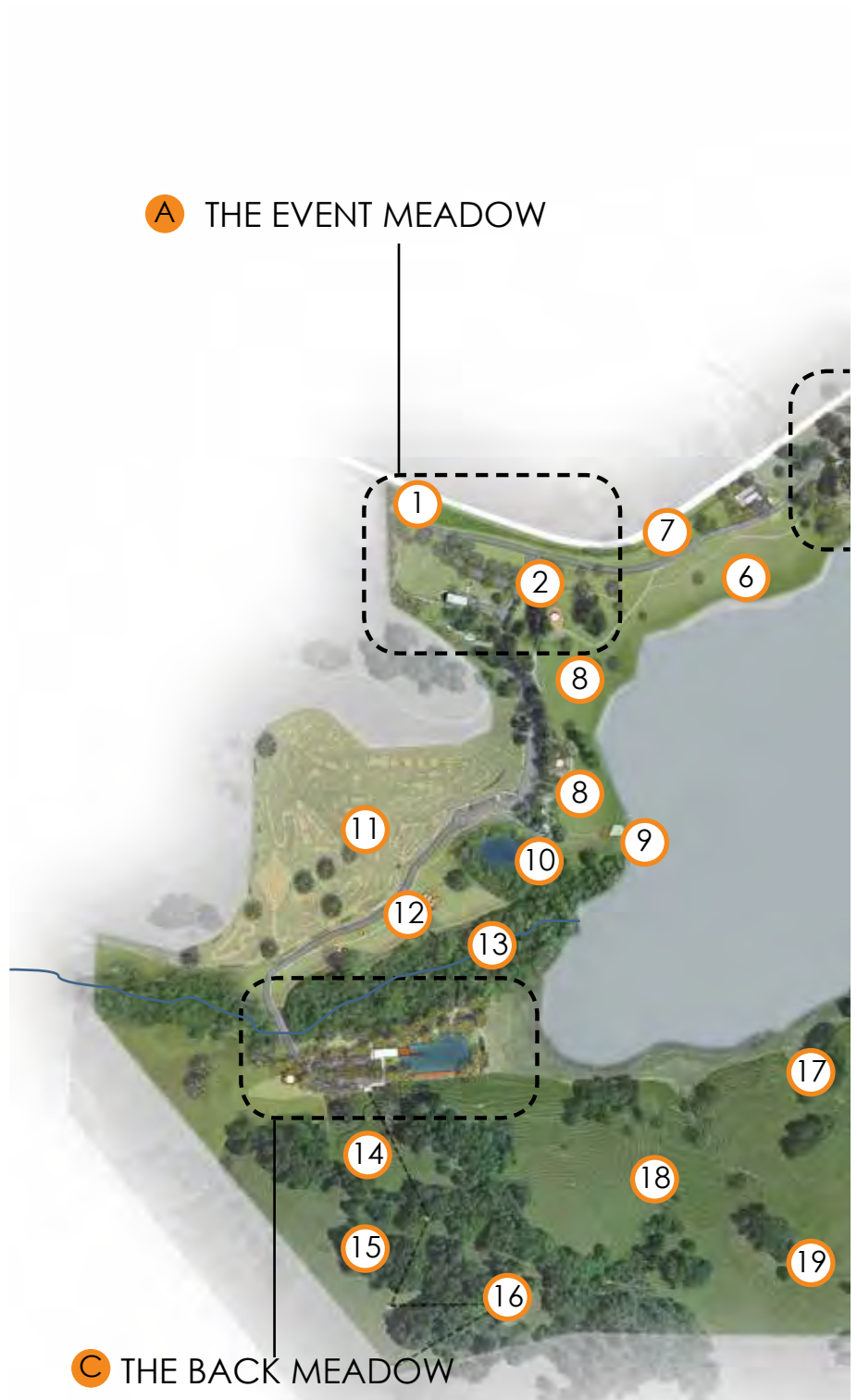


- Bike Path
- Bike Trail
- Main ADA Accessible Pedestrian Paths
- Non ADA Accessible Pedestrian Paths



Figure 3.1.4 Overall Park Master Plan

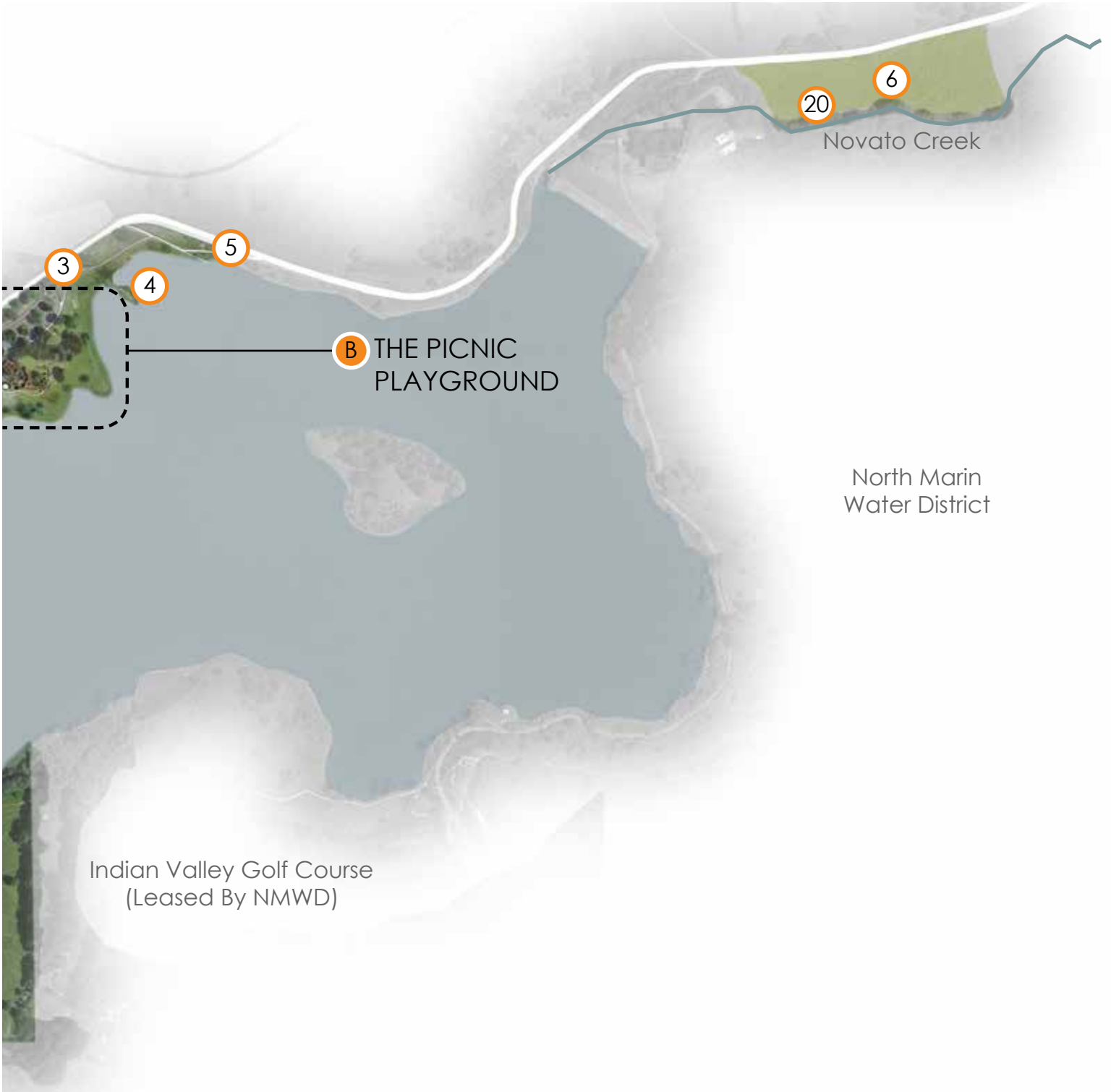
- 1 New Vehicular Entry and Exit
- 2 New Gatehouse
- 3 New Vehicular Exit
- 4 Enhanced Fishing Deck
- 5 Enhanced Bike Path Entrance
- 6 Open Meadow/ Overflow Parking
- 7 Relocated Maintenance Yard
- 8 Enhanced Large Group Picnic Areas
- 9 Lake Pavilion
- 10 Bird Blind
- 11 Bike Park
- 12 Small Group Picnic Areas
- 13 Creek Boardwalk
- 14 Alpine Slide
- 15 Zip Line
- 16 Tree Camping
- 17 Star Deck
- 18 Disc Golf Course
- 19 Improved Trail Connections
- 20 Bike-In Camping Areas



- A The Event Meadow**
  - Event Center
  - Informal Stage
  - Special Event Camping
  - Secluded Garden Areas

- B The Picnic Playground**
  - Destination Playground
  - Large Group Picnic Areas
  - Individual Picnic Areas
  - Bird Viewing Point

- C The Back Meadow**
  - Swimming Lagoon
  - Restroom + Changing Facility
  - Bouldering Course
  - Nature Play Pods
  - Large Group Picnic Area
  - Individual Picnic Areas



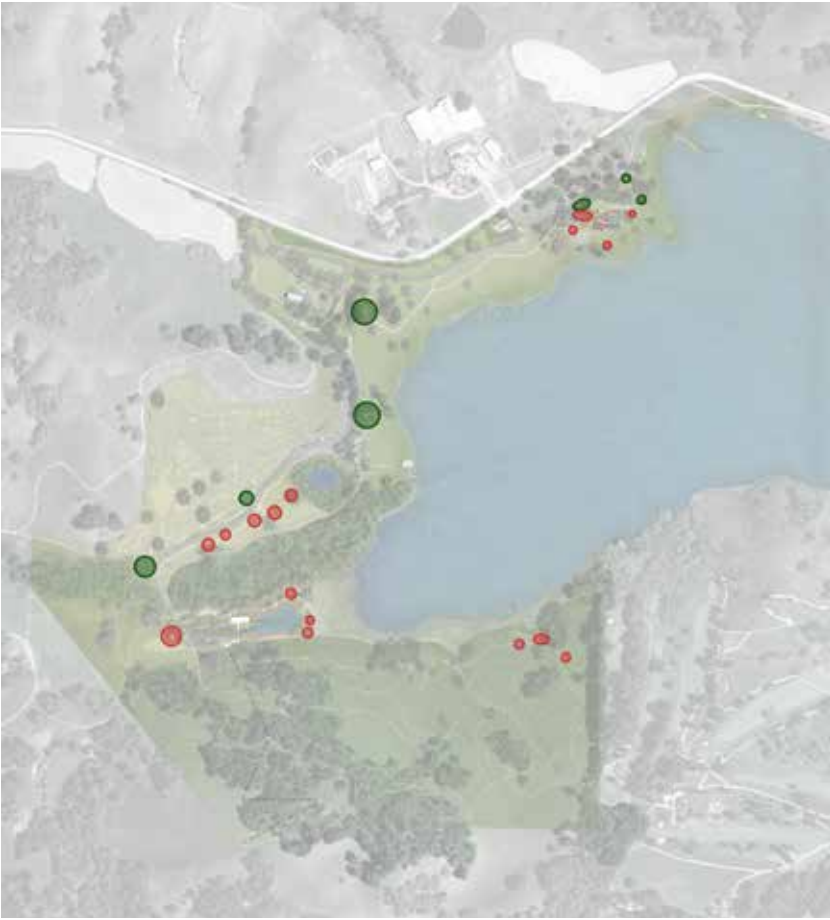


Figure 3.2.1 Picnic Areas

- Existing Picnic Areas
- Proposed Picnic Areas



Figure 3.2.2 Structures

- Existing Structure
- Proposed Structure



## 3.2 MASTER PLAN CONCEPT

### Overall Master Plan Improvements

The overall master plan improvements can be broken down into five general categories:

- General Park Improvements
- The Event Meadow
- The Picnic Playground
- The Back Meadow
- Miscellaneous Amenities

While interconnected, these features can stand as singular projects. Together, they represent the forward thinking possibilities of an updated Stafford Lake Park.

### General Park Improvements

A major first step in the master plan effort is to reconfigure the current vehicular circulation for improved movement and way finding while also allowing for more accessibility to the park features. Park access will push to the edges of the park, with the main access point at the northwestern corner along Novato Boulevard and an exit-only point at the eastern edge. While the existing gatehouse structure will be preserved and repurposed, a new gatehouse will be constructed near the Event Meadow.

New pedestrian and bicycle paths will supplement existing pathways to create internal walking loops that are wheelchair- and stroller-accessible. Additionally, improved trail connections within the existing Terwilliger Trail and disc golf course trails are proposed. These trail extensions will extend existing trails that dead-end to make a continuous trail loop. Any new trails will take care not to disturb the upland vegetation and will avoid any environmentally sensitive areas. Additionally, new interpretive signage will illuminate sensitive environmental and cultural spaces within the park.

The entire park will have an increase in individual and group picnic areas to supplement this popular park activity.

Figure 3.2.3 Detail Plan - The Event Meadow





- ① New Vehicular Entry and Exit
- ② Vegetated Buffer
- ③ Informal Stage

- ④ Special Event Camping
- ⑤ Events Center
- ⑥ Event Gardens

- ⑦ New Parking
- ⑧ New Gatehouse
- ⑨ Enhanced Existing Group Picnic





# Detail Plan - The Event Meadow

## New Gatehouse

A new gatehouse will be situated between the park road parallel with Novato Boulevard and the road leading to the existing group picnic areas 1 & 2. This new gatehouse configuration allows the park to be split into two sections, one without fee and the other fee-based. This will allow more regular, frequent trips for nearby residents turned away from visiting the park due to fees. A fee will be required to access the Event Meadow area and areas south of the new gatehouse.

## Events Center

The current site of the staff maintenance yard and trailer residence will be replaced with an event center structure. This structure will provide a flexible indoor space for special events, community meetings, exhibitions and other gatherings. The aim is to create strong indoor/outdoor connections between the multi-purpose room and terrace. The structure will also include restrooms accessible from the exterior. The structure design should make reference to the neighboring barn/ranch style architecture.

## New Parking Lot

A new parking lot with approximately 60 parking spaces will provide formal parking spaces for future events. The remaining open meadow also has the capacity for overflow parking during especially large special events elsewhere in the park.

View looking from the informal stage toward the proposed events center



## Informal Stage and Open Meadow

An informal stage with electrical power connection will anchor the northwestern portion of the Event Meadow. The surrounding open meadow area will remain as an open, flexible space for picnicking or informal recreation. The stage itself will be simple platform that can be outfitted with inset sleeves to accommodate a removable shade structure.

## Special Event Camping

Stafford Lake Park currently hosts an annual overnight campout for the local Girl Scout troops. To accommodate special groups like this, a space along the southern edge of the meadow will allow special event camping parties of approximately 50 people.

## Event Gardens

Currently a drainage swale is located adjacent to the proposed events center. With the proposed improvements, the drainage area can be become a garden space that supplements the events center. Areas near the drainage swale will have appropriate California native plantings while the areas outside the swale will have a naturalistic garden with low water use plantings and simple folly elements to discover.

IMAGE CREDITS | Left: dezeen.com; Right: bspoke.net



Events Center



Events Garden



Figure 3.2.4 Detail Plan - The Picnic Playground





- ① New Maintenance Facility Utilizing Existing Entry Station
- ② New Path
- ③ Open Meadow/ Overflow Parking
- ④ Restoration Planting Along Existing Swale

- ⑤ New Restroom
- ⑥ Individual Picnic Area
- ⑦ New Group Picnic Area
- ⑧ New Destination Playground
- ⑨ Enhanced Parking

- ⑩ New Park Exit
- ⑪ Bird Viewing Vista Point
- ⑫ Fishing Deck
- ⑬ Enhanced Bike Entry



# Detail Plan - The Picnic Playground

## Destination Playground

The destination playground will be the centerpiece of the Picnic Playground area, attracting both local and regional visitors. The new playground design will expand the current playground extents. The playground character will reflect the character of Stafford Lake Park itself, invoking a rustic, natural physical form. Play equipment will include custom-designed and standard climbing structures built around the existing mature trees on site. The playground itself will have various possible subareas including a tot lot, water play zone, willow hut village, play stage, and elevated play areas. Play elements will reference the park's local histories, with opportunities to showcase ranch- and Coast Miwok-themed features. The playground will also be designed with accessibility in mind, providing ADA accessible play equipment, multi-sensory engaging elements, and imaginative spaces for exploration and refuge alike.

With the reconfiguration of vehicular circulation and new gatehouse location, the playground will remain within the no fee zone of the park. The playground will be an inclusive space, drawing children and families of all backgrounds to an easily accessible and safe location.

View looking from the group picnic area toward the destination playground.





## Individual & Group Picnic Areas

The area will also include increased individual and group picnic areas scattered around the area. Adjacent to the new destination playground, an improved group picnic area will have a newly constructed BBQ counter along with several picnic tables. An additional group picnic area will be added just west of the redwood tree stand. New paths will connect to that space and there will be additional picnic tables and a separate BBQ counter and serving area.

Four additional individual picnic areas will supplement the existing two areas, allowing more intimate picnic venues. These spaces will be outfitted with freestanding BBQs.

## Extended Walking Paths

A new ADA accessible pathway will circumscribe the Picnic Playground area. The path will provide features that will engage with the surrounding environment such as individual picnic areas and a bird viewing vista point. The path itself will be a mini-loop within a larger park-wide pedestrian loop. Parts of the pathway will be a multi-use path that shares pedestrian and bicycle traffic.

## New Maintenance Yard & Staff Offices

Though it will no longer function as a gatehouse, the existing gatehouse building will remain and serve as part of the relocated park staff offices and maintenance facilities. Additional permanent structures will be designed to function as a maintenance yard but aesthetically refer to the local ranch vernacular architecture.

IMAGE CREDITS | Left: Photo by Marion Brenner, asla.org; Right: parks.smcgov.org/



Maintenance Yard & Staff Offices



Individual & Group Picnic Areas



Figure 3.2.5 Sample Detail Plan - The Playground

- |                       |                                |                  |
|-----------------------|--------------------------------|------------------|
| ① Roller Slide        | ⑦ Willow Tunnel and Stage Area | ⑬ Net Play       |
| ② Play Structure      | ⑧ Log Seating                  | ⑭ Spinner        |
| ③ Cocoon Swing        | ⑨ Sand Play                    | ⑮ Zip Line       |
| ④ Biggo Swing         | ⑩ Water Play                   | ⑯ Log Climber    |
| ⑤ Group Picnic Area   | ⑪ Musical Play                 | ⑰ Hut Village    |
| ⑥ Boulders with Slide | ⑫ Basket Tower with Slide      | ⑱ Animal Statues |





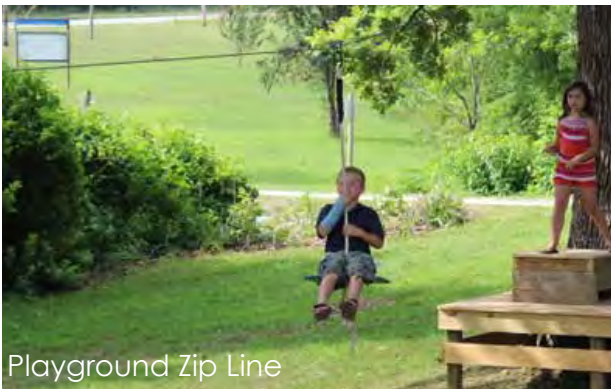


IMAGE CREDITS | Top Left: Photo by Marion Brenner via [asla.org](http://asla.org); Top Right: [parks.smcgov.org](http://parks.smcgov.org); Middle Top Left: Paige Johnson via [play-scapes.com](http://play-scapes.com); Middle Top Right: Jenny Fields via [pinterest.com](http://pinterest.com); Middle Bottom Left: [playforce.co.uk](http://playforce.co.uk); Middle Bottom Right: [landtrustn.org](http://landtrustn.org); Bottom Left: [eveningstarcamping.com](http://eveningstarcamping.com); Bottom Right: [landezine.com](http://landezine.com)



Figure 3.2.6 Detail Plan - The Back Meadow





- 1 New Vehicular Bridge
- 2 Group Picnic Area, Play Area + Restroom
- 3 Restroom + Changing Facility
- 4 Kiddie Lagoon

- 5 Zip Line Platform
- 6 Alpine Slide
- 7 Deck
- 8 Creek Boardwalk

- 9 Small Group Picnic Areas
- 10 Informal/ Nature Play Pods
- 11 Lagoon
- 12 Bouldering Course



# Detail Plan - The Back Meadow

## Roadway Extension & Back Meadow Parking Lot

Currently, the Back Meadow area at Stafford Lake Park is an open field inaccessible via car. In order to make improvements to this area within the park, it is necessary to first construct a permanent vehicular bridge and roadway connection to the site. A parking lot with approximately 64 spaces will be added to the Back Meadow.

## Swimming Lagoon

The iconic heart of the Back Meadow, the proposed swimming lagoon will be a one-of-a-kind feature at Stafford Lake Park. It will be naturally cleaned via planting specifically installed for bioremediation. The lagoon could have a lap swimming area along with a free swim zone. The site will be designed to ensure no cross contamination with the protected Stafford Lake. A kiddie lagoon is also proposed adjacent to the main lagoon. Wooden decks will surround portions of the lagoon providing a flexible breakout space.

A changing facility will also be constructed just west of the swimming lagoon. The building will house restrooms and locker rooms, with potential office space.

View looking from the bouldering course toward the swimming lagoon and Stafford Lake





## Bouldering Course

The Bouldering Course is located along the foot of the hillside just south of the Swimming Lagoon. Interspersed along the hillside, the bouldering course will consist of 12 climbable rock features built into the landscape. All boulders will be designed with the appropriate fall zone requirements. The flexibility in spacing allows for individuals and groups alike to enjoy the course.

## Nature Play Pods

Three nature play pod areas will be scattered along the path that circles the Swimming Lagoon. These play areas will have informal play elements that encourage nature play. These will provide informal play areas adjacent to proposed picnic areas.

## Individual & Group Picnic Areas

Three new individual picnic areas and one group picnic area are provided for the Back Meadow. Individual picnic areas will have picnic tables and a freestanding BBQ while the group picnic area will have a shade structure and BBQ counter and serving area.

IMAGE CREDITS | Top Left: eldowalls.com; Top Right: Bridgette Meinhold via inhabitat.com; Bottom Left: bahl.com/ ; Bottom Right: Caryn Humphreys via pinterest.com



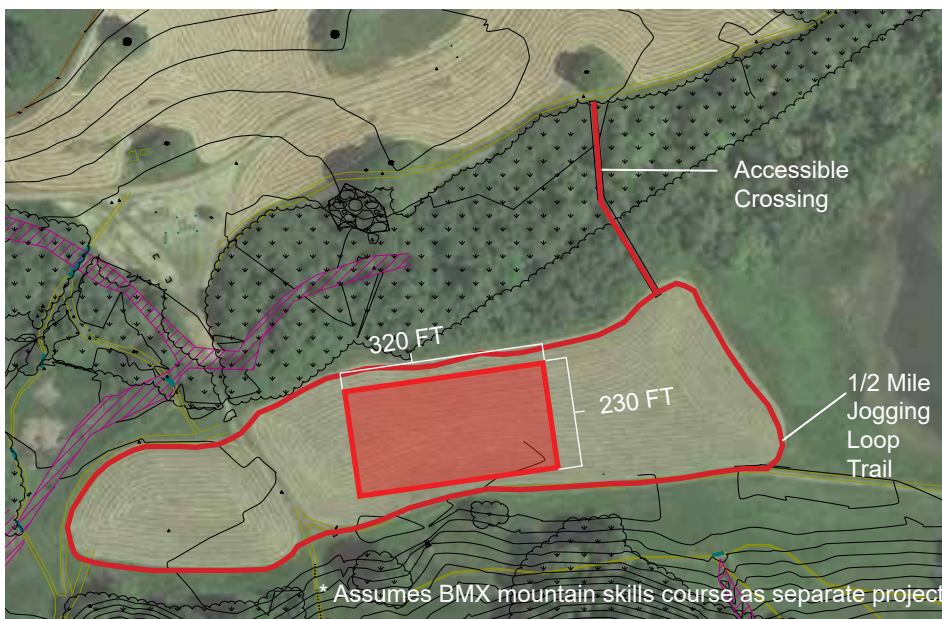


# The Back Meadow - Temporary Uses

Temporary Uses are activities or amenities that can be quickly built into the existing landscape with minimal impact. The 3 temporary use options for the Back Meadow are described below and illustrate ideas for these activities with suggested placement and dimensions in the landscape. The options are also universally accessible via an accessible crossing.

## Option 1: BMX Track with Loop Trail

The first option for temporary use is a one-half mile loop trail encompassing a BMX track in the heart of the Back Meadow. The loop is to be designed as a multiple use trail to accommodate bikers and joggers for fitness. In the center of the loop, the BMX track would be roughly 100,000sf. This size is large enough to accommodate a track with multiple turns, and accommodate potential racing events.



Bike/Jogging Loop Trail



BMX Track

IMAGE CREDITS | Right Top: Discovery Park via [activelynorthwest.com](http://activelynorthwest.com);  
Right Bottom: [foothillsbmx.com](http://foothillsbmx.com)

### Option 2: Ropes Course

Option 2 proposes to create a course traversing 18 elements connected by rope at 6 poles. The linear 'aerial rope adventure' is sited on a 60' x 30' area at the edge of the meadow. The elements will be separated by pathways and platforms ranging in height. The varying levels in course difficulty allows for individuals of varying abilities to enjoy this site amenity. The course will be designed with the appropriate safety requirements and features.

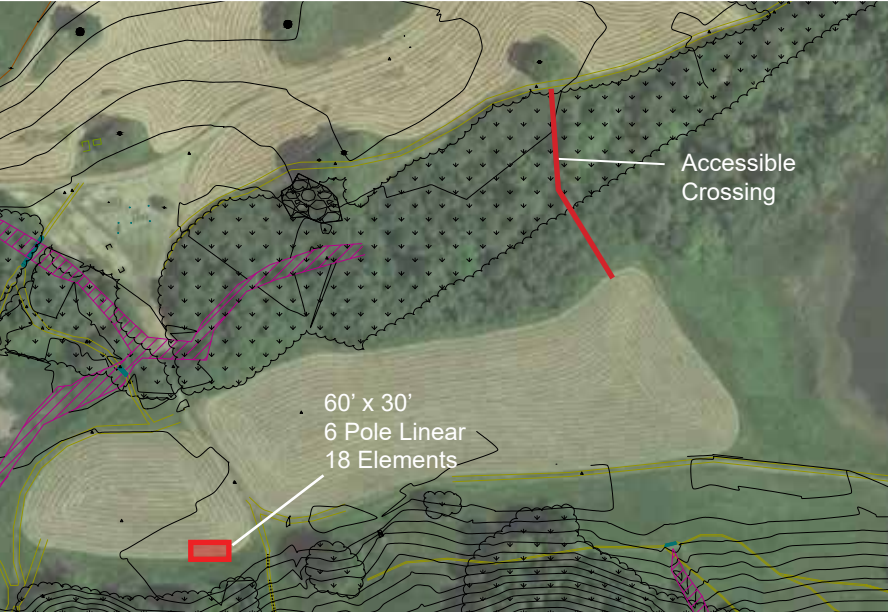


IMAGE CREDITS | Below Right: nomadsoutdooradventure.com



Ropes Course

### Option 3: "Ninja Warrior" Obstacle Course

The third temporary use is a 17,000sf "Ninja Warrior" style obstacle course which would accommodate individuals or groups in a challenging 10 element course. High and low elements are placed strategically in sequence to encourage fitness and fun. The course is sited adjacent to the lake and is at the terminal of the accessible crossing.

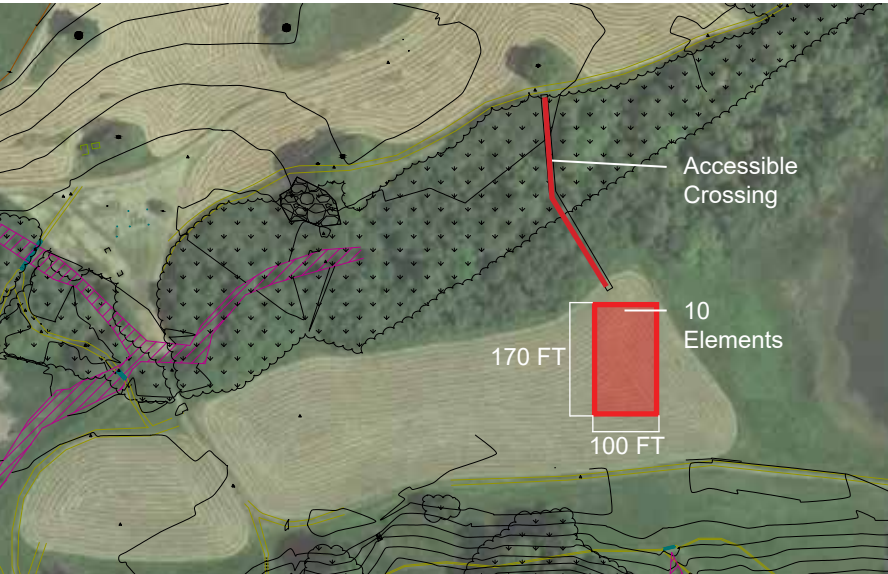


IMAGE CREDITS | Below Right: ninjawarriorblueprints.com



Obstacle Course



# Miscellaneous Amenities

## Lake Pavilion

The Lake Pavilion is located near the existing group picnic areas near the mouth of Novato Creek. The Lake Pavilion will provide close access to the lake edge without disturbing the surrounding habitat. It will also provide a beautiful venue for small events and meditative sessions alike. The pavilion's design will evoke an airy quality that will blend with the surrounding context.

## Fishing Boardwalk

The Fishing Boardwalk will improve and expand the existing fishing spot near the northeast portion of the park. The boardwalk will allow visitors access to deeper waters within the lake for better fishing potential. It will also provide more spaces for fishing. The pathway leading to the fishing boardwalk will also be improved.

## South Lake Edge Improvements & Star Deck

The South Lake Edge will have minimal improvements; these include adding three hike-in picnic spaces and a Star Deck. The Star Deck will have built-in telescopes, an informal classroom space, and radiant heating floor. The Star Deck could be outfitted with a solar powered heater.

## Bird Blind

A Bird Blind structure would be located near the existing Group Picnic area adjacent to the seasonal wetland pond south of the Bike Park. The simple structure will allow visitors to observe birds in an unobtrusive manner. The Bird Blind could also include interpretive signage, becoming part of the park's educational programs.



IMAGE CREDITS | Top Left: [imamuseum.org](http://imamuseum.org); Top Right: [granburyconcrete.com](http://granburyconcrete.com); Bottom Left: [enquiringminds-creativelearning.blogspot.com](http://enquiringminds-creativelearning.blogspot.com); Bottom Right: [nikdaum.com](http://nikdaum.com)



## Zip Line, Alpine Slide & Tree Camping

The proposed Zip Line, Alpine Slide and Tree Camping platforms offer exciting new means to engage with the hillsides at Stafford Lake Park. These elements will be designed to have a minimal impact on the existing terrain. These elements will complement the existing landscape and neighboring disc golf course without applying a heavy footprint. These features can also become revenue-generating concessions within the park.

## General Picnic Area Improvements

The existing Group Picnic Areas 1, 2, and Rustic Meadows will be renovated. Improvements will include a new shade structure, improved BBQ with serving counter and new picnic tables.

## Bike In Camping

The 16-acre lot to the east of Stafford Lake Park will remain an open meadow utilized as overflow parking with the exception of a portion along Novato Creek. Small areas will be cleared and used as overnight camp sites. As they will be close to the main bike path, the site will be oriented to bike-in and walk-in camping only.

## Creek Boardwalk

The new creek boardwalk will cross Novato Creek further east from the vehicular crossing, providing increased circulation options within the park. The boardwalk will allow visitors to engage with the creek without disturbing the sensitive habitat. It also provides interpretive opportunities for educational programs within the park.

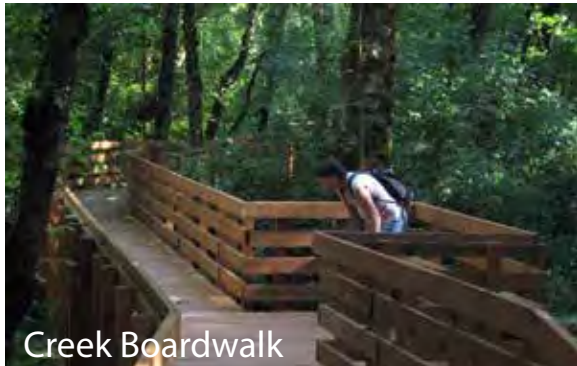


IMAGE CREDITS | Top Left: [koloziplines.com](http://koloziplines.com); Top Right: [dezeen.com](http://dezeen.com); Bottom Left: [2diamondlodge.com](http://2diamondlodge.com); Bottom Right: [americantrails.org](http://americantrails.org)  
MASTER PLAN

# Site Furnishings Recommendations

Site furniture at Stafford Lake Park should reflect the natural character of the park itself. The following guidelines are intended to outline the preferred approach to site furniture elements including benches, picnic tables, trash receptacles and fencing. The images below reflect the overall look and feel for the suggested site furnishings and should be used as a reference rather than specified elements. As a general rule of thumb, site elements should be simple, durable, easy to maintain, and convey a sense of rustic comfort.

## Fencing

Fences used at Stafford Lake Park should reflect the rustic, ranch culture of the surrounding area. Perimeter fences should be ranch style, split rail fences constructed with wood and metal mesh. Fencing around the playground and swimming lagoon areas should be smaller in scale but reflect similar design intent. Construction and materials should be chosen for easy maintenance and durability.



IMAGE CREDITS | Left: [hometalk.com](http://hometalk.com); Right: [norwoodproducts.com.au](http://norwoodproducts.com.au)

## Picnic Table

Picnic tables should demonstrate a design aesthetic consistent with the existing picnic tables found in Group Picnic Areas 1 and 2. Tables at group picnic areas should be constructed with heavy wood members at lengths of ten feet or greater. The tables are to be linear in form supported with two rough finish log posts, one at each end of the table. Tables at individual picnic areas should be 8 feet in length. Tables should also be ADA accessible when possible. Metal picnic tables may be used in special areas.



IMAGE CREDITS | Left: [Sonoma Probation Camp](http://Sonoma Probation Camp); Right: [creativepipe.com](http://creativepipe.com)



### Bench

Benches should be constructed with heavy timber and metal. Benches should look dense and substantial. Benches should have backs as well as armrests.



IMAGE CREDITS | Left: Sonoma Probation Camp; Right: Creative Pipe, Inc.

### Trash Receptacles and Dumpster Enclosure

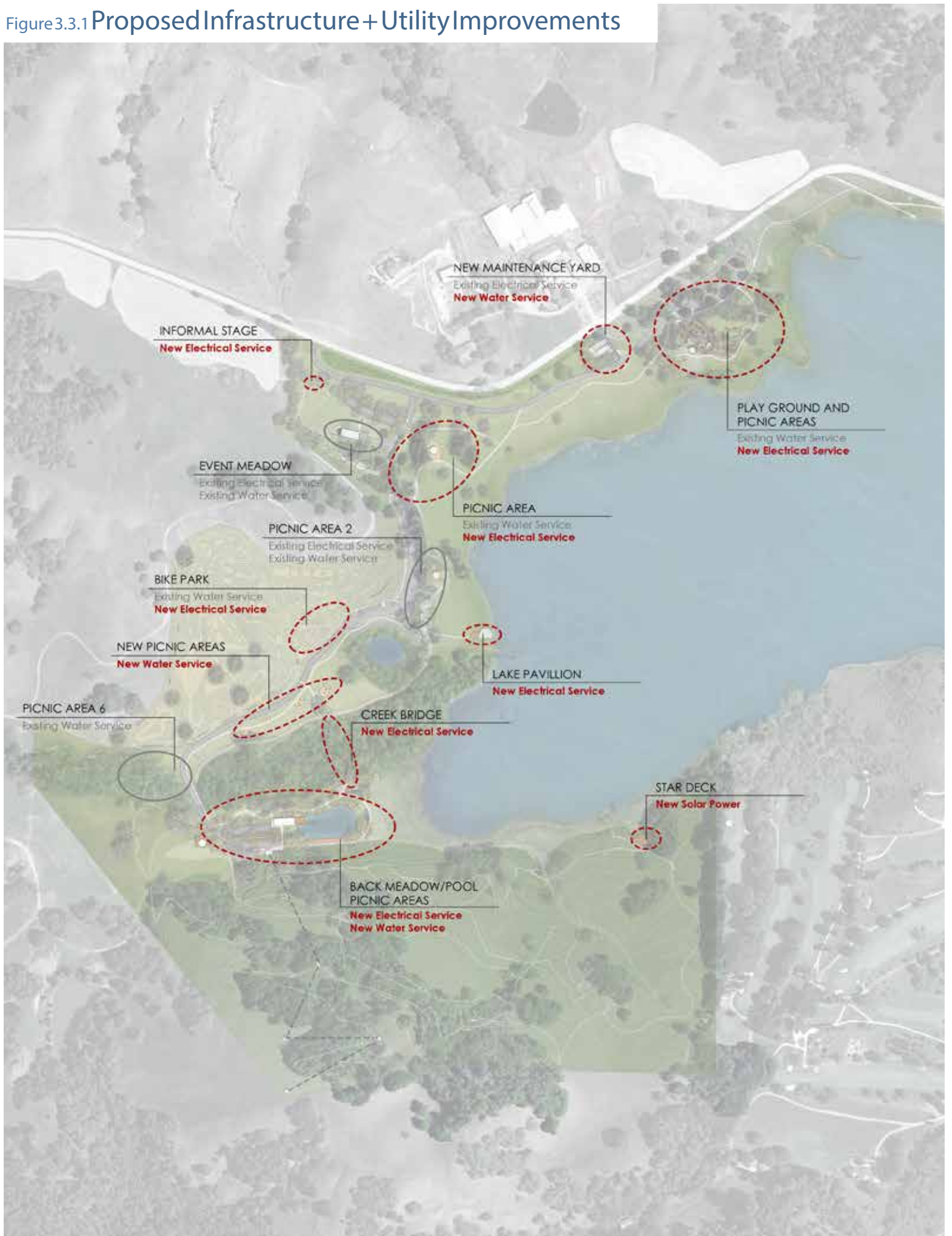
Trash receptacles should match the model and style currently used at Stafford Lake Bike Park. Two receptacles, one for trash and the other recycling, should be placed together when needed. The receptacles are designed to have a tamper-proof package and side-hinged doors for easy bin removal. Dumpster enclosures should use wood members and be designed to screen dumpsters in an aesthetically appropriate manner.



IMAGE CREDITS | Top Left:Wanda Mullinax; Top Right: niklsoncall.com; Bottom Left: Will Rafferty, pinterest.com, Bottom Right: Ashland Architects



Figure 3.3.1 Proposed Infrastructure + Utility Improvements



## 3.3 UTILITIES + INFRASTRUCTURE

Currently, there are minimal utilities within Stafford Lake Park. Water service extends to most of the picnic areas, the three restroom facilities, and the maintenance yard/trailer residence. Electrical service only exists at Group Picnic Areas 1 & 2 and the maintenance yard/trailer. There is no sewer connection to the park. Currently the restrooms and residence rely on individual holding tanks to handle waste.

To implement the aforementioned master plan improvements, the park will need extended utility connections in addition to increased transformer capacity. There are also possibilities for a sewer line connection to Novato Sanitary District in place of the existing holding tanks. The County will need to further investigate a possible sewer connection. These improvements can be linked to site specific projects or other improvements like the Roadway Extension.





# COST ESTIMATE SUMMARY



Figure 4.1.1 Preliminary Cost Opinions of Development Zones



# 4.1 DEVELOPMENT COST SUMMARY

## KEY PROJECT INFORMATION

Land area (acres)	139
Building area (square feet)	10,200
Building cost per square feet	460
Parking spaces at Event Meadow	60
Parking spaces at Back Meadow	78
Parking spaces in overflow fields	850
Event Center building area	3,510 sf
Gate House building area	235 sf
Pool Changing Facility building area	3,500 sf
Lake Pavilion building area	2,550 sf

## OVERALL COST SUMMARY

Event Meadow	\$8,533,200
Picnic Playground	\$4,124,900
Lagoon Area	\$20,586,300
General Park Improvements	\$11,933,400
Miscellaneous Amenities	\$10,764,000
<b>TOTAL DEVELOPMENT ALLOWANCE</b>	<b>\$55,941,800</b>

\* "Site improvement" contains provisions for demolition, site clearing, earth/regrading, and utilities.

\*\* "Mobilization, Administration & Contingency" contains provisions for mobilization (5%), general conditions (5.5%), general contractor and sub bonds (2%), design contingency (30%), construction contingency (10%), and one year of inflation at 5%.

\*\*\* Soft costs are excluded.

Disclaimer: This is a preliminary opinion of cost and does not include escalation, which may result from phased construction. Actual cost may vary significantly. This estimate should be used as a guide only. All numbers rounded up to the nearest 100.





**Figure 4.1.2 Event Meadow**



Maintenance Yard Relocation  
to be Completed with Event  
Meadow Construction



- ① New event structure to replace trailers and maintenance yard
- ② New parking lot
- ③ Informal stage with power outlet
- ④ Informal camping area
- ⑤ Secluded garden space crossing drainage creek
- ⑥ Buffer planting

Site Improvement*	\$1,557,000
Site Paving	\$648,100
Site Structures & Furnishings	\$2,560,800
Planting & Irrigation	\$437,300
Mobilization, Administration & Contingency**	\$3,330,000
<b>EVENT MEADOW TOTAL</b>	<b>\$8,533,200</b>

# Figure 4.1.3 Picnic Playground

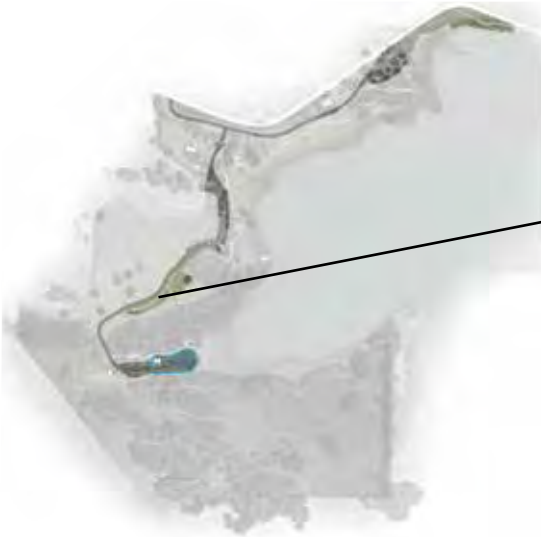


- ① Create destination playground with custom natural elements
- ② Expand playground extents
- ③ Enhance existing group picnic area adjacent to playground
- ④ Add fence around playground
- ⑤ Create new group picnic area west of existing playground
- ⑥ Relocate restrooms
- ⑦ Add new pedestrian path along southern edge

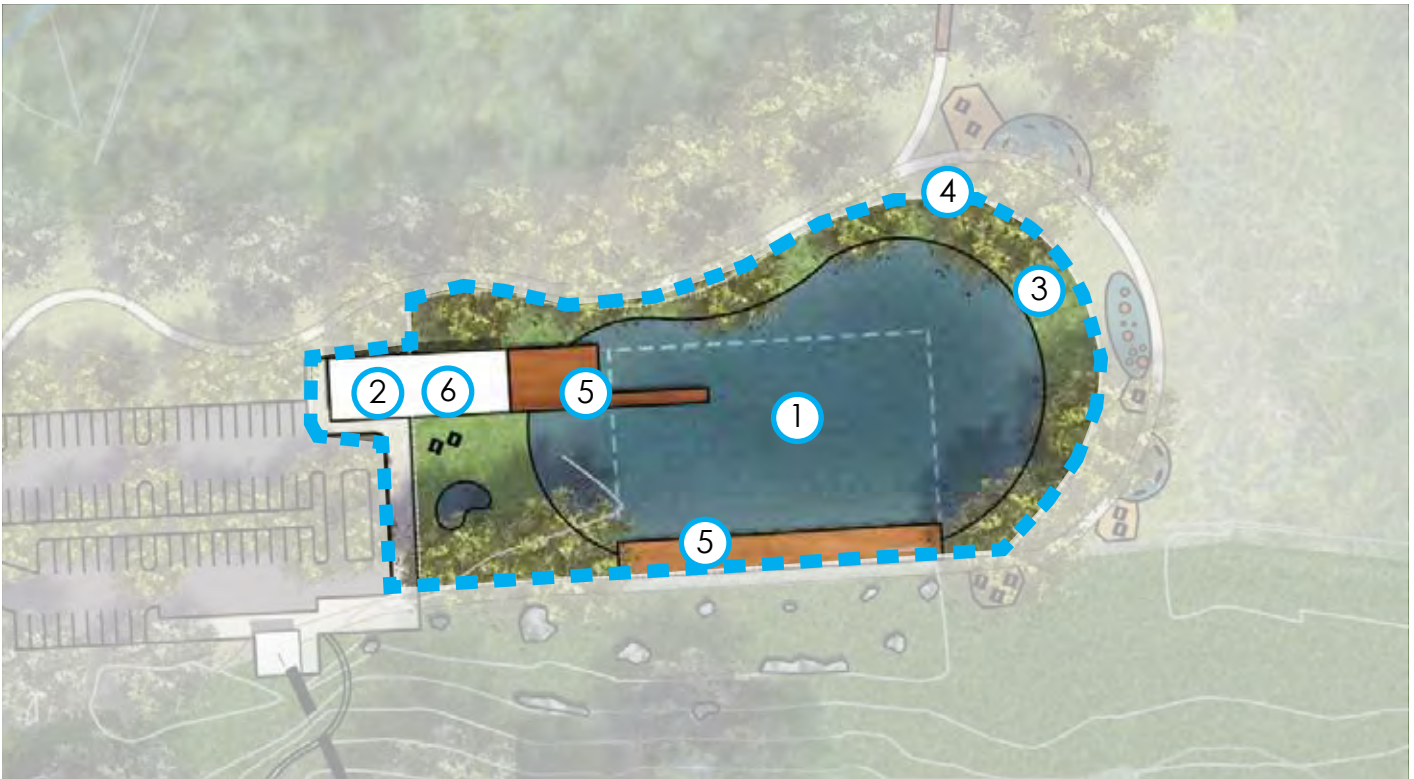
Site Improvement*	\$639,000
Site Paving	\$359,000
Site Structures & Furnishings	\$1,352,100
Planting & Irrigation	\$165,100
Mobilization, Administration & Contingency **	\$1,609,700
<b>PICNIC PLAYGROUND TOTAL</b>	<b>\$4,124,900</b>



Figure 4.1.4 Swimming Lagoon



Roadway Extension & Back Meadow Parking Lot Improvement to be Completed Prior to Lagoon Area development



- ① Excavation and grading for lagoon and kiddie pool
- ② New changing room facility with restrooms
- ③ Bioremediation plantings around lagoon edge for water filtration
- ④ Fencing around lagoon extents
- ⑤ Wood decking for swimming area
- ⑥ Power and water utilities connection

Site Improvement*	\$3,225,000
Site Paving	\$689,600
Site Structures & Furnishings	\$8,523,000
Planting & Irrigation	\$115,000
Mobilization, Administration & Contingency**	\$8,033,700
<b>SWIMMING LAGOON TOTAL</b>	<b>\$20,586,300</b>

Figure 4.1.5 General Park Improvements





①	Entry Road Realignment	\$2,787,800
②	Roadway Extension & Back Meadow Parking Lot	\$5,748,200
③	Relocated Maintenance Yard	\$2,011,400
④	Internal Bike Path	\$1,246,600
⑤	Signage	\$139,400

---

**GENERAL PARK IMPROVEMENTS TOTAL    \$11,933,400**



Figure 4.1.6 Miscellaneous Amenities





①	Bouldering Course	\$759,600
②	Lake Pavilion	\$1,109,800
③	Fishing Boardwalk	\$1,028,600
④	Creek Boardwalk	\$894,400
⑤	Alpine Slide	\$1,230,000
⑥	Zip Line	\$1,230,000
⑦	Tree Camping	\$984,000
⑧	Trail Improvements	\$31,700
⑨	South Lake Edge Improvements + Star Deck	\$1,110,700
⑩	Nature Play Pods	\$387,600
⑪	Individual Picnic Areas - Back Meadow	\$117,900
⑫	Group Picnic Areas - Back Meadows	\$492,600
⑬	Individual Picnic Areas - Rustic Meadows	\$863,100
⑭	Group Picnic Areas - Rustic Meadows Improvements	\$139,400
⑮	Group Picnic Areas 1 & 2 Improvements	\$278,800
⑯	Bird Blind	\$73,000
⑰	Bike-In Camping	\$32,800

---

**MISCELLANEOUS AMENITIES TOTAL** **\$10,764,000**





# APPENDIX





# CONTENTS

- 5.1 Potential Funding Sources
- 5.2 Online Survey Results





# 5.1 POTENTIAL FUNDING SOURCES

The passage of Measure A in 2012 has provided Marin County Parks with a strong foundation for maintaining, enhancing, and implementing various county projects. Additionally, Marin County’s Capital Improvement Plan (CIP) allows for an another source of funds for Marin County Park capital projects and programs. However, additional funding strategies are necessary to assist with the implementation of the variety of project types presented in this document. Below is a list of potential funding sources whose criteria best match the project types recommended in the Stafford Lake Park Master Plan. As particular projects become more fully developed, additional review of each funding source is recommended to determine compatibility between project and potential funding source. It should be noted that any funding source can be considered depending on how the project, program and grant is defined. This report cannot provide a comprehensive list all of the potential sources for funding – instead the list provides a starting point for further investigation.

## Grant and Funding Opportunities

### CA Dept. of Parks and Recreation, Office of Grants and Local Services

#### Land and Water Conservation Fund

The purposes of the LWCF program is to assist in preserving, developing and assuring accessibility to all citizens of the United States of America of present and future generations quality and quantity of outdoor recreation resources. Federal funds are administered by the state. Eligible projects for the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) program include acquisitions or development of outdoor recreation areas and facilities. Priority development projects include trails, campgrounds, picnic areas, natural areas and cultural areas for recreational use. It should be noted, that all projects funded by the LWCF must be retained in perpetuity for public outdoor recreational use (Public Law 88-578, 16 U.S.C. 460l-6(f)(3)).

- Applications typically due in February for annual funding cycle.
- Grant requests up to \$2 million are encouraged.
- Match of 50% of Total Project Cost is required.

**More information available at:**

*Website:* [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21360](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21360)  
*Application Guide:* [http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1008/files/lwcf\\_application\\_guide\\_final\\_draft\\_8.24.15\\_map\\_incl.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1008/files/lwcf_application_guide_final_draft_8.24.15_map_incl.pdf)

#### Habitat Conservation Fund

The Office of Grants and Local Services (OGALS) administers the state-funded Habitat Conservation Fund grant program which allocates approximately \$2 million each year to cities, counties, and districts. This program requires a 50% match from grantees. Eligible projects include nature interpretation programs to bring urban residents into park and wildlife areas, protection of various plant and animal species, and acquisition and development of wildlife corridors and trails.

- Applications typically due in October for annual funding cycle.
- No minimum or maximum request. \$2 million available annually.
- Match of 50% is required.

**More information available at:**

Website: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21361](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21361)

**Recreation Trails Program – Non-Motorized and Motorized Projects**

The Recreational Trails Program (RTP) provides funds annually for recreational trails and trails-related projects. The RTP is administered at the federal level by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). It is administered at the state level by the California Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR). Non-motorized projects are administered by the Department’s Office of Grants and Local Services and motorized projects are administered by the Department’s Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation Division. *Note: grants will not be awarded until the lead agency has completed CEQA/NEPA compliance for the project.*

- Applications typically due in September, dates may vary.
- No minimum or maximum request. Grants up to \$4 million are encouraged.
- Maximum amount of RTP funds allowed for each project is 88% of Total Project Cost. Match of at least 12% is required.

**More information available at:**

Website: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=24324](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24324)

Application Guide: [http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1008/files/rtp\\_2015\\_non\\_motorized\\_applications\\_notes\\_for\\_9.15.15\\_application\\_deadline\\_7.14.15.pdf](http://www.parks.ca.gov/pages/1008/files/rtp_2015_non_motorized_applications_notes_for_9.15.15_application_deadline_7.14.15.pdf)

**California Natural Resources Agency**

**Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program**

The EEM Program offers \$7 million each fiscal year for grants to state, local, federal and nonprofit organizations. Eligible projects must be directly or indirectly related to the environmental impact of the modification of an existing transportation facility or construction of a new transportation facility. The EEM Program encourages projects that produce multiple benefits which reduce greenhouse gas emissions, increase water use efficiency, reduce risks from climate change impacts, and demonstrate collaboration with local, state and community entities.

- Applications typically due in July for annual funding cycle.
- Request up to \$1 million are recommended.
- Matching funds are not required, but extra points given to applications with other sources of funding

**More information available at:**

Website: [http://resources.ca.gov/bonds\\_and\\_grants/eemp/](http://resources.ca.gov/bonds_and_grants/eemp/)

Application Guide: [http://resources.ca.gov/docs/bonds\\_and\\_grants/eemp/2014-15\\_EEM\\_Guidelines.pdf](http://resources.ca.gov/docs/bonds_and_grants/eemp/2014-15_EEM_Guidelines.pdf)



## CA Dept. of Water Resources

### **Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) - Proposition 84 Implementation Grants**

The IRWM Grant Program is designed to encourage integrated regional management of water resources and provide funding for projects that support integrated water management planning and implementation. Proposition 84 Chapter 2 Integrated Regional Water Management (IRWM) Grant Program, administered by DWR, provides funding for projects that help local public agencies meet the long term water needs of the state, including the delivery of safe drinking water and the protection of water quality and the environment. Grant applications are submitted on behalf of an IRWM Region.

- Applications typically due in August for annual funding cycle.
- No minimum or maximum request. Approximately \$23 million available for 2015 solicitation.
- Minimum match is 25% of Total Project Costs.

#### **More information available at:**

*Website:* [http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=21360](http://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=21360)  
*Application Guide:* [http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/docs/p84\\_implementation/P84\\_IRWM\\_PSP\\_2015\\_Draft\\_2015\\_0312\\_Public.pdf](http://www.water.ca.gov/irwm/grants/docs/p84_implementation/P84_IRWM_PSP_2015_Draft_2015_0312_Public.pdf)

## CA Dept. of Water Resources/CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife

### **Proposition 1 Restoration Grants**

Proposition 1 authorized the appropriation of \$510 million in Integrated Regional Water Management funding for Implementation and Planning efforts to each hydrologic region of the State and the Mountain County Overlay area, as identified in the California Water Plan (updated 2013). The act provides funding to implement the three broad objectives of the California Water Action Plan: more reliable water supplies, the restoration of important species and habitat, and a more resilient, sustainability managed water resources system (e.g., water supply, water quality, flood protection, environment) that can better withstand inevitable and unforeseen pressures in the coming decades. *Note: grants will not be awarded until the lead agency has completed CEQA/NEPA compliance for the project.*

- Applications typically due in September for annual funding cycle.
- No minimum or maximum request. Approximately \$24 million available for 2015 solicitation.
- Matching funds requirement not given.

#### **More information available at:**

*Website:* <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Conservation/Watersheds/Restoration-Grants>  
*Application Guide:* <https://nrm.dfg.ca.gov/FileHandler.ashx?DocumentID=105001&inline>

## CA Dept. of Transportation

### **Active Transportation Program Grant**

The Active Transportation Program (ATP) was created to encourage increased use of active modes of transportation, such as biking and walking. The ATP consolidates various transportation programs, including the federal Transportation Alternatives Program, state Bicycle Transportation Account, and federal and state Safe Routes to School programs into a single program to: increase the proportion of trips accomplished by biking and walking; increase the safety and mobility of non-motorized users; advance the active transportation efforts of regional agencies to achieve greenhouse gas reduction; enhance public health, including reduction of childhood obesity through the use of programs including, but not limited to, projects eligible for Safe Routes to School Program funding; ensure that disadvantaged communities fully share in the benefits of the program; and provide a broad spectrum of projects to benefit many types of active transportation users.

- Applications typically due in June for annual funding cycle.
- No maximum request. Minimum request of \$250,000.
- Matching funds are not required, but are encouraged.

#### **More information available at:**

*Website:* <http://www.catc.ca.gov/programs/ATP.htm>

*Application Guide:* <http://www.catc.ca.gov/programs/ATP/2015/Final%20Adopted%202015%20ATP%20Guidelines.pdf>

### **Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant - Sustainable Communities Grant**

The Sustainable Transportation Planning Grant Program was created to support the California Department of Transportation's (Caltrans) current Mission: Provide a safe, sustainable, integrated and efficient transportation system to enhance California's economy and livability. The Sustainable Communities Grants fund transportation planning projects that achieve the Caltrans Mission and Grant Program Overarching Objectives, identify and address mobility deficiencies in the multimodal transportation system, encourage stakeholder collaboration, involve active public engagement, integrate Smart Mobility 2010 concepts, and ultimately result in programmed system improvements.

- Applications typically due in December for annual funding cycle.
- Maximum request of \$500,000. Minimum request of \$50,000.
- 11.47% minimum. The entire minimum 11.47% local match may be in the form of an eligible in-kind contribution

#### **More information available at:**

*Website:* <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/grants.html>

*Application Guide:* <http://www.dot.ca.gov/hq/tpp/documents/GrantApplicationGuide.pdf>

## CA Wildlife Conservation Board

### Habitat Restoration Grant – Restoration and Public Access Grant

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) was created to administer a capital outlay program for wildlife conservation and related public recreation. This habitat restoration application is appropriate only for four of the ten Programs in the WCB: Riparian Habitat Conservation, Inland Wetlands Conservation, Ecosystem Restoration on Agricultural Lands, and Habitat Enhancement and Restoration.

- Applications are accepted on a continual basis. WCB meets four (4) times a year, typically in February, May, August and November
- No maximum or minimum request given.
- Matching funds requirement not given.

#### **More information available at:**

Website: <https://www.wcb.ca.gov/Applications>

### Other Sources for Potential Grant Opportunities Include:

- Transportation Authority of Marin
- Metropolitan Transportation Commission
- Trust for Public Land
- California Department of Fish and Wildlife
- California Integrated Waste Management Board—playground surface safety and recycling grants.
- California Office of Criminal Justice Planning—juvenile delinquency prevention grants.
- California Resources Agency—bond act grants under various Propositions.
- U.S. National Park Service—Land and Water Conservation Fund; Rivers, Trails, and Conservation Assistance (RTCA) Program; Save America’s Treasures Program; Urban Park and Recreation Recovery.
- U.S. Small Business Administration- Urban Forestry Grants.



## In addition, Foundations that Offer Grants Pertaining to Parks Include:

- Ford Foundation
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Peter E. Haas Jr Family Foundation
- David & Lucille Packard Foundation
- Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
- J. Paul Getty Trust
- William & Flora Hewlett Foundation
- McConnell Foundation
- Kaboom
- California Volunteers
- California Re-leaf
- Helen K. and James S. Copley Foundation
- Easton Sports Development Foundation II
- Hollis Foundation, Inc.
- Littler Mendelson Foundation, Inc.
- Pacific Forest & Watershed Lands Stewardship Council
- KC Family Foundation
- The PG&E Corporation Foundation
- Sierra Pacific Foundation

Many of these foundations were identified via The Foundation Center database at: <http://foundationcenter.org/>

## Fundraising, Community Outreach, and Private Donations

Greater project awareness and community support are imperative for raising funds through private donations. Stafford Lake Park has already experienced successful fundraising efforts through the Phase I implementation of Stafford Lake Bike Park. In that case, a non-profit organization, Friends of Stafford Lake Bike Park, was formed to support fundraising, construction, and long-term maintenance of the bike park. The Bike Park provides a great model for other Stafford Lake Park projects to emulate in terms of fundraising, community involvement, and the use of social media platforms to provide up-to-date information and forums for community input.

## Public-Private Partnerships

In addition to the sources mentioned above, Marin County Parks can seek private partnerships in the form of sponsorships, concessionaires, and joint development agreements. For projects that potentially generate substantial revenues like the event center, swimming lagoon, or zipline, these partnerships allow for obtaining public facilities at a lower cost.

# 5.2 ONLINE SURVEY RESULTS

6/24/2015

Stafford Lake Park Master Plan - Responses | SurveyMonkey



Pro Sign Up Sign Up FREE Sign In

## Stafford Lake Park Master Plan

Survey responses

Question Summaries Data Trends Individual Responses

Share Tweet Share Share

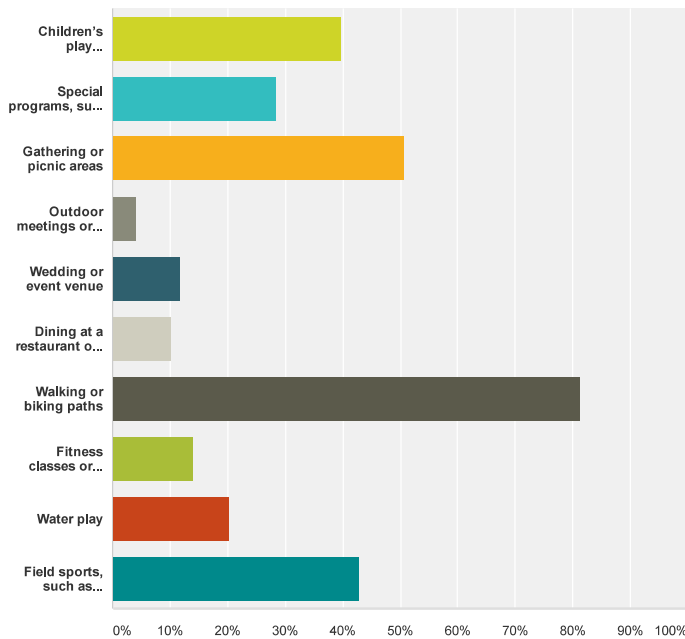
All Pages

207 responses  
197 days (December 09, 2014 - now)  
10 views

Q1

### What types of facilities and programs influence your decision to visit local parks? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 187 Skipped: 20



Answer Choices	Responses
Children's play areas/features	39.57% 74
Special programs, such as film screenings or nature walks	28.34% 53
Gathering or picnic areas	50.80% 95
Outdoor meetings or conferences	4.28% 8
Wedding or event venue	11.76% 22
Dining at a restaurant or cafe	10.16% 19
Walking or biking paths	81.28% 152
Fitness classes or events, such as yoga or triathlons	13.90% 26
Water play	20.32% 38
Field sports, such as Frisbee, soccer, football, baseball	42.78% 80

Total Respondents: 187

#### Need insights?

SurveyMonkey has dozens of expertly-designed survey templates.

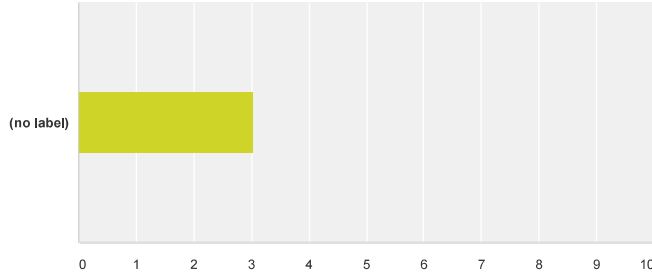
Sign up FREE or Learn more

Comments (77)

Q2

### Relaxing versus Extreme

Answered: 188 Skipped: 19

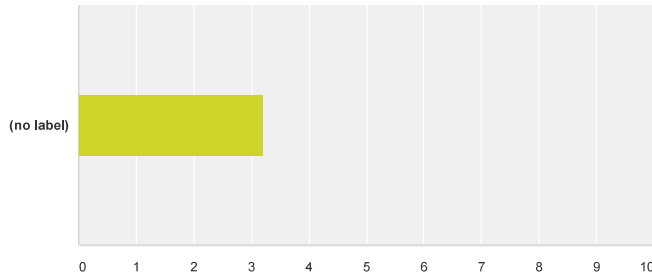


	Relaxing	(no label)	(no label)	(no label)	Extreme	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	11.70% 22	17.55% 33	39.89% 75	18.09% 34	12.77% 24	188	3.03

Q3

### Familiar versus New

Answered: 187 Skipped: 20



	Familiar	(no label)	(no label)	(no label)	New	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.28% 8	14.97% 28	48.13% 90	20.86% 39	11.76% 22	187	3.21

Q4

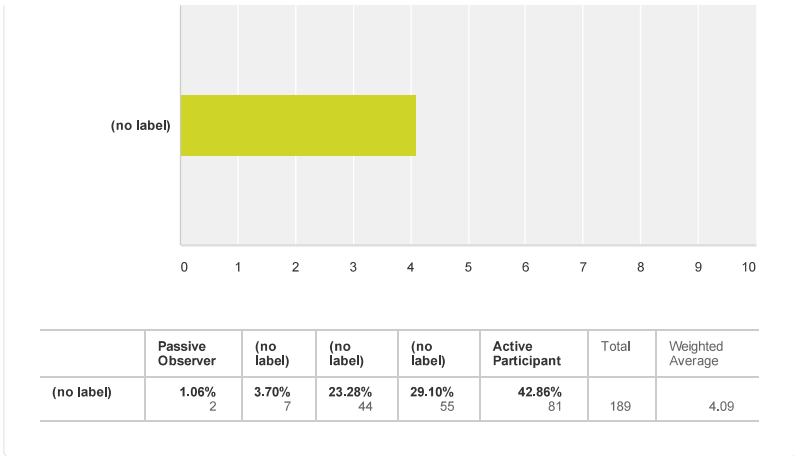
### Passive versus Active

Answered: 189 Skipped: 18



6/24/2015

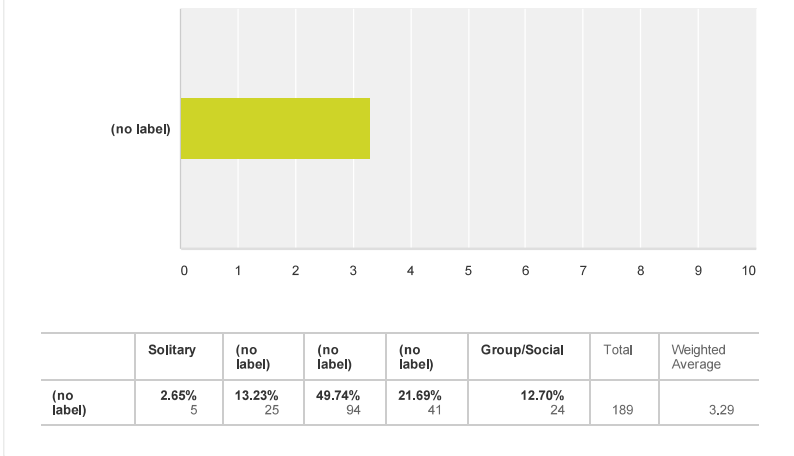
Stafford Lake Park Master Plan - Responses | SurveyMonkey



Q5

Solitary versus Group/Social

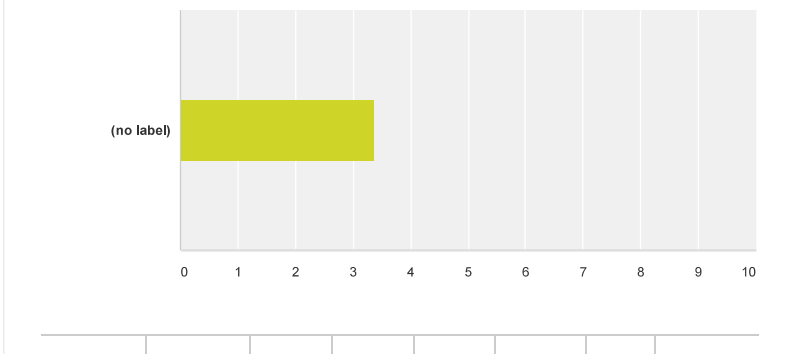
Answered: 189 Skipped: 18



Q6

Meditative versus Exciting

Answered: 188 Skipped: 19

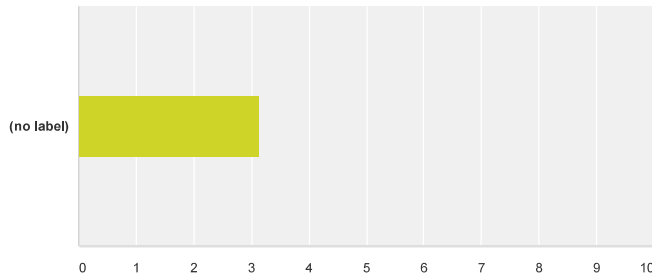


	Meditative	(no label)	(no label)	(no label)	Exciting	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.79% 9	12.23% 23	43.62% 82	19.68% 37	19.68% 37	188	3.37

Q7

### Serene versus Thrilling

Answered: 188 Skipped: 19

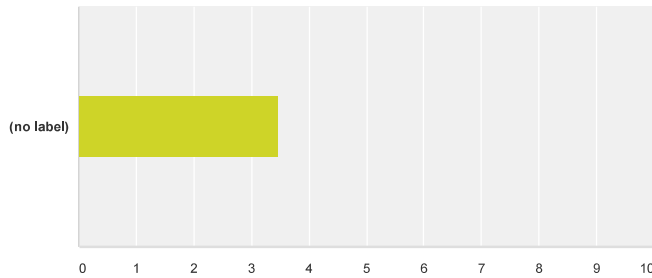


	Serene	(no label)	(no label)	(no label)	Thrilling	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	7.45% 14	18.09% 34	43.09% 81	16.49% 31	14.89% 28	188	3.13

Q8

### Traditional versus Unique

Answered: 187 Skipped: 20



	Traditional	(no label)	(no label)	(no label)	Unique/Singular	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	4.28% 8	6.42% 12	42.78% 80	31.02% 58	15.51% 29	187	3.47

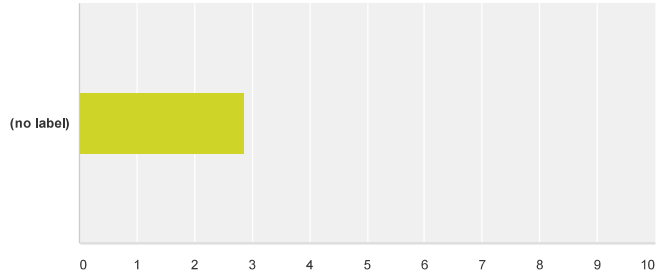
Q9

### Nature versus Recreation

Answered: 189 Skipped: 18

6/24/2015

Stafford Lake Park Master Plan - Responses | SurveyMonkey

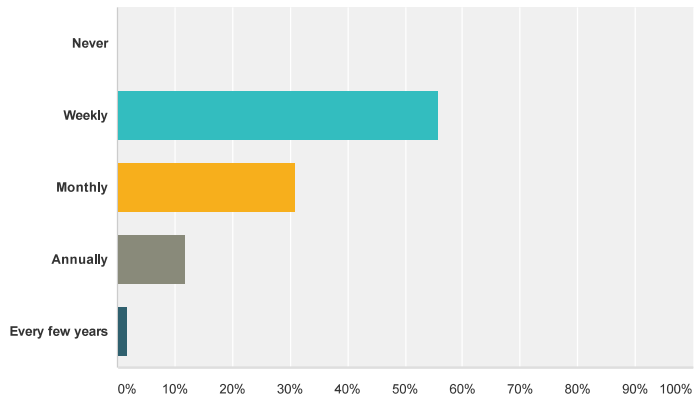


	Nature	(no label)	(no label)	(no label)	Recreational Facilities	Total	Weighted Average
(no label)	14.29% 27	15.87% 30	45.50% 86	17.46% 33	6.88% 13	189	2.87

Q10

How often do you visit parks in Marin County? (Optional)

Answered: 181 Skipped: 26



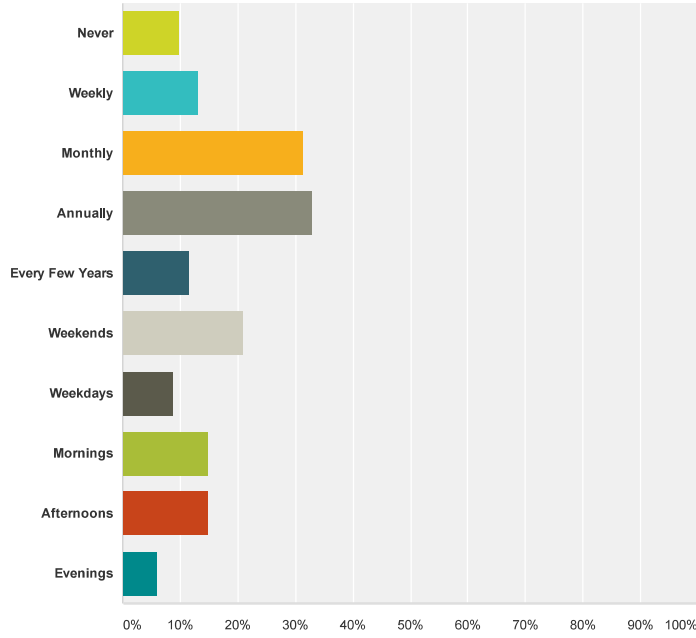
Answer Choices	Responses
Never	0.00% 0
Weekly	55.80% 101
Monthly	30.94% 56
Annually	11.60% 21
Every few years	1.66% 3
Total	181

Q11

How often do you visit Stafford Lake Park, and when? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 182 Skipped: 25





Answer Choices	Responses
Never	9.89% 18
Weekly	13.19% 24
Monthly	31.32% 57
Annually	32.97% 60
Every Few Years	11.54% 21
Weekends	20.88% 38
Weekdays	8.79% 16
Mornings	14.84% 27
Afternoons	14.84% 27
Evenings	6.04% 11
Total Respondents: 182	

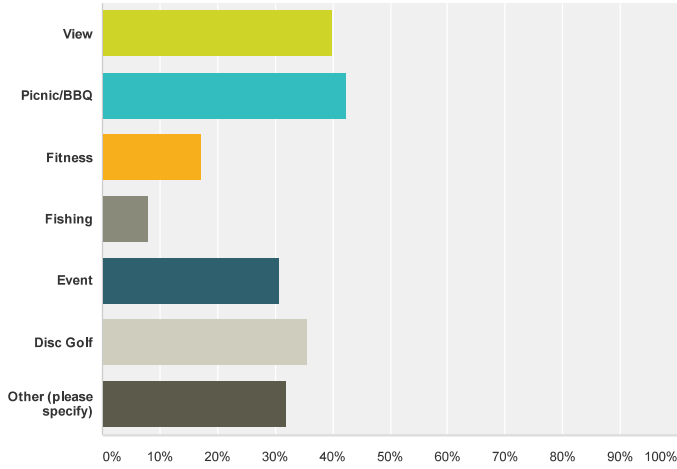
Q12

**If you have visited Stafford Lake Park, which features or activities drew you there? Pick your top three.**

Answered: 163 Skipped: 44

6/24/2015

Stafford Lake Park Master Plan - Responses | SurveyMonkey



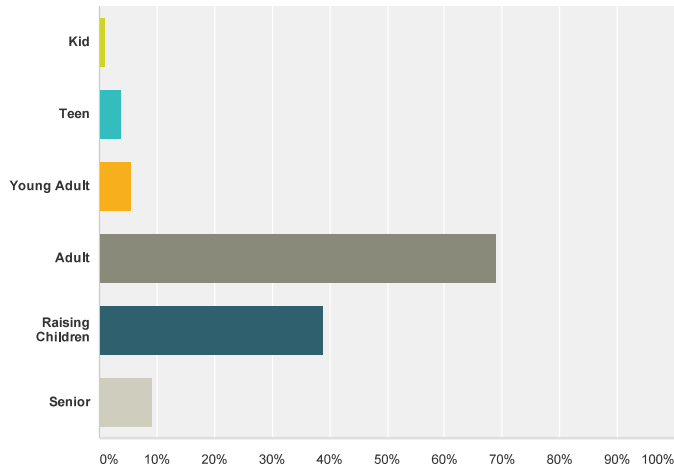
Answer Choices	Responses
View	39.88% 65
Picnic/BBQ	42.33% 69
Fitness	17.18% 28
Fishing	7.98% 13
Event	30.67% 50
Disc Golf	35.58% 58
Other (please specify)	31.90% 52

Total Respondents: 163

Q13

Which of these describe you? (Check all that apply)

Answered: 183 Skipped: 24



Answer Choices	Responses
----------------	-----------

6/24/2015

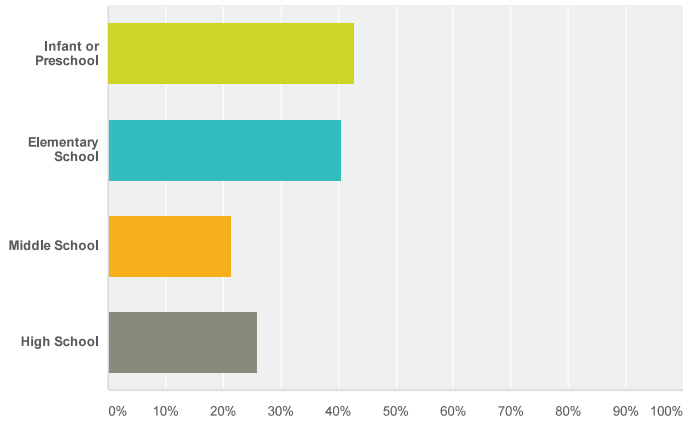
Stafford Lake Park Master Plan - Responses | SurveyMonkey

Kid	1.09%	2
Teen	3.83%	7
Young Adult	5.46%	10
Adult	68.85%	126
Raising Children	38.80%	71
Senior	9.29%	17
Total Respondents: 183		

Q14

**If any, what are the ages of children in your household? (Optional)**

Answered: 89 Skipped: 118



Answer Choices	Responses
Infant or Preschool	42.70% 38
Elementary School	40.45% 36
Middle School	21.35% 19
High School	25.84% 23
Total Respondents: 89	

Q15

**What city do you live in? (Optional)**

Answered: 143 Skipped: 64

Novato 4/4/2015 7:07 AM
Novato 3/15/2015 10:39 PM
Larkspur 3/8/2015 7:51 PM
Novato 3/7/2015 5:26 AM
Novato 3/1/2015 9:00 PM
San Francisco 2/22/2015 5:46 PM

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/results/SM-29KX2CV9/>

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