

May 2, 2022

Victor Randall, Senior Planner  
City of Benicia  
Community Development Department  
250 East L Street  
Benicia, CA 94510  
(via email)



RE: Update for the Parks Trails and Open Space Master Plan.

First, thanks for uploading the April 20, 2022 presentation for the Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan Update (Master Plan Update). The Benicia Tree Foundation participated in a [focus group meeting](#) last year, has considered the workshop information, and offers this comment letter on the Master Plan Update at this time.

It is gratifying that the statistically valid household survey identified so many households supporting more trails, publicly accessible open space with amenities, trees and landscaping and shade structures. The community definitely considers expanding the function of our open spaces as a desirable outcome. There are specific actions or projects that are supported by these survey findings that we would like considered in the Master Plan Update.

**More trees along paths in city-owned open space.** The section of the Crosstown Trail within the Braito Open Space is an example of an existing trail that would benefit from shade trees. New trails such a trail around Lake Herman could also benefit from shade trees if placed properly. To facilitate planting and maintenance of these trees, the paths should be wide enough to accommodate a service vehicle.

**More trees in city-owned open spaces adjacent to roads.** Trees planted in these open spaces can serve multiple purposes such as to capture and clean stormwater runoff, to improve habitat for wildlife, and to help clean our air and sequester carbon. Planting street trees along the road can also provide shade and reduce ambient air temperature during warm days.

**More trees in parks.** The site assessment of parks prepared for the Master Plan Update identified barren areas of dirt, the need to address neighbor adjacency, unnecessary areas of grass, and insufficient and/or improper trees. The household survey also identified a high desire for shade structures in parks. Tree planting has a role in addressing these conditions. An example of tree planting opportunities in parks that have been brought to the attention to the Benicia Tree Foundation include:

- Trees in the Disc golf course area at Community Park; and
- Trees along the path that surrounds the outfield perimeter of the ball parks at the Community Park.

In addition to these actions to plant more trees in parks and open spaces, the Master Plan Update should consider the following policy issues:

- Require timely replacement of any tree removed from a park or open space and that the replacement tree be in the vicinity of the removed tree;
- Establish a native tree planting program for open space to provide shade for users and habitat for wildlife while protecting views; and
- Work with public interest groups to plant and maintain trees in parks and open spaces.

The Benicia Tree Foundation has a history of organizing tree plantings on public property and would be open to a partnership with the City and other interested groups and individuals to plant trees in parks and open spaces.

Regards,

*Steven Goetz*

Steven Goetz, Secretary  
Board of Directors  
Benicia Tree Foundation