



## MEMORANDUM

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to **City of Napa Parks Board;  
Larry Mazucca, City of Napa Community Resources Director**

from **Ryan Mottau and Paul Rosenbloom, MIG, Inc.**

re **Focus Group Summary Memo**

date **January, 2009**

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### **Overview**

MIG conducted a series of focus group and stakeholder interviews to identify attitudes and trends and gather key information related the Napa Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Planning process. The majority of the sessions were conducted in the Fall of 2008 and completed in January 2009.

A variety of Napa residents and Napa-based organizations representing civic, environmental, educational, business and recreational interests participated in these sessions. Participants were selected based on input from Community Resources Department staff based on their respected position in the community and ability to provide project-relevant information to the team. Overall 17 people participated in focus groups and interviews and over 30 Napa High School Leadership class students participated in a youth-focused discussion. All participants were encouraged to tell fellow residents about the project website, [www.napaparksmasterplan.org](http://www.napaparksmasterplan.org) as a way to stay informed about the project.

The following memo describes key themes and issues identified during the process.

### **Key Opportunities**

Overall, participants are very enthusiastic about the Napa park system and made several suggestions on how to improve a strong existing park system.

#### **Improve existing amenity mix**

Napa has a strong array of parks, but some focus group participants acknowledged that they only use a few of the parks such as Kennedy and Fuller because they don't know about the other parks or consider them dull. Many of the existing neighborhood parks do not have an attractive amenity mix of playgrounds, social gathering areas and water features to attract users. Upgrading and improving existing amenities and adding new ones to Napa parks is one opportunity to strengthen the park system.

### **Trails and connectivity**

Napans enjoy walking throughout the city and surrounding area and are excited about increased walking and hiking opportunities. Participants identified increased perimeter walking trails in Napa parks, improved trails within existing natural areas and open spaces, and improved walking connections to parks and regional trail corridors as a key opportunity of Napa parks.

### **Coordination with ongoing planning activities**

There are several ongoing planning efforts in Napa. Coordinating these efforts with the Parks and Recreation Master Plan whenever possible will improve opportunities for a strengthened park system in the future. Some of these planning processes include projects within the Soscol Redevelopment Area, the ongoing Flood Control Project, the Housing Element Update and the Downtown Specific Planning process.

### **Strong community environmental values**

The strong environmental ethic common to many Napa residents has the potential to influence future park development and recreation programming. Participants identified increasing stewardship and restoration activities as potential activities that would be strongly supported by Napa residents and would increase the profile of the Napa park system.

### **Increased partnerships**

Participants identified several local organizations that may be suitable for a partnership with the Community Resources Department, including:

- Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District
- Queen of the Valley Hospital
- Upward Bound youth group
- Existing neighborhood groups and organizations.

### **Skate Park**

Participants expressed a strong desire to see the Napa Skate Park relocated within the downtown area, providing a location for resident youth to hang out in the heart of the city.

### **Issues and Concerns**

Participants identified a number of specific concerns that should be addressed in the Parks and Recreation Facilities Master Plan. These issues are listed below and briefly described.

#### **Inadequate parks and recreation resources in South Napa**

Participants noted that South Napa does not have adequate access to parkland and that additional park resources should be developed there.

## **Dogs**

Participants identified dog issues as highly charged and explained that there is strong sentiment on all sides related to dogs in parks.

## **Safety**

Safety issues were cited at Napa parks, including Fuller Park and the Skate Park. Participants expressed concern about drug dealing and loitering in the parks and explained that design and lighting improvements may help remedy the situation.

## **Amenity quality**

Participants expressed concern that many of the park amenities in Napa are outdated and in need of refurbishment or replacement. Children's play equipment in particular was identified as an amenity type in need of improvement throughout the park system.

## **Recreation programming space**

Facilities for recreation programming were often described over- capacity, participants expressed a strong desire for a grater selection of space for programming and or lower rental costs for recreation facilities.

## **Desired additional Park Amenities**

Residents identified the following additional park amenities as desirable:

- Bike racks
- Aquatic features like splash and spray parks
- Community gardens
- Art
- Additional picnic areas (especially reservable)
- Culturally specific picnic areas, such as pig roast area.

## **Additional Activity Ideas**

When asked to describe potential additional recreational activities, participants described the following activities:

- Paintball
- Rockclimbing
- Lawnbowling
- Roller Skating
- Ice Skating.

## **Youth-Specific Programming and Facilities**

Napa High Leadership students were asked to talk about additional programs or facilities they would like to included in the Napa park system. The teens identified many of the same opportunities described above. Ideas specifically identified by this group included:

- Developing a place for youth to “call their own”.
- Developing musical programming such as concerts or battles of the bands that can be held at parks facilities, such as Veteran’s Memorial Park.
- Integrating job training and programming, such as a student-run café, into existing parks facilities.
- Updating outreach methods to include Facebook and MySpace.

## **Latino Community Specific Facilities and Programming Needs**

Participants in a Spanish-language focus group identified the following needs:

- Additional facilities for community gatherings and activities.
- Indoor recreation programs for Winter, such as a Latino basketball league.
- Targeted outreach for the Latino community regarding parks and recreation.
- Recreation programming for Spanish-speaking seniors at the Senior Center.
- Recreation programming for Spanish-speaking teenagers targeted to reduce gang activity.
- Concurrent recreation programming for Spanish-speaking mothers and children that will allow mothers the opportunity to participate in a class while their child is in another class in the same building.