

Parks and Plazas



7.0 PARKS AND PLAZAS

7.1 AN URBAN PARK SYSTEM

The parks system is designed to complement the highly urban, transit-oriented nature of Easton Place. The centerpiece of the parks system is Easton Square, which will serve as a central gathering place surrounded by civic and commercial/retail uses. Smaller, privately managed mini parks or plazas may be located along the Main Street connecting the Hazel Avenue light rail transit station and Easton Square. A neighborhood park with sports fields and other active recreational amenities will be located in the Market District. Glenborough at Easton, the adjoining borough to the east, has an extensive trail network within the Alder Creek corridor and open space system, and Easton Place will offer access to this trail system via the urban street network and a shared use trail that will parallel Folsom Boulevard.

The parks acreage for Easton Place has been calculated in conjunction with the parks system for Glenborough at Easton. The combined parks acreage for the two communities exceeds the requirements of Title 22, “Land Development,” of the Sacramento County Code, which requires

an average dedication of 5.0 acres of improved parkland for every 1,000 new residents.

The overall required park acreage for Easton Place is 17.1 acres. Table 7.1, “Parks Summary,” depicts the parks calculation factors used to determine parks acreage in Easton Place. A total of 7.5 acres of park acreage will be provided in Easton Place, with the park acreage deficit of 9.7 acres accommodated by additional park acreage provided in Glenborough at Easton. The Cordova Park & Recreation District

is responsible for approval of specific parks programming and amenities.

Figure 7.1, “Parks Plan,” shows the location of Easton Square, the neighborhood park, the primary pedestrian streets, and access to the regional trail system. Figure 7.1 also depicts park types and sizes. This chapter should be used in conjunction with Chapter 4, “Circulation,” which describes the Main Street and the landscaped corridors along major roadways.

Table 7.1, Parks Summary

Title 22 Park Requirement Analysis				
	Dwelling Units	Description	Title 22 Factor	Req'd. Acreage
	350	Multiple Family/Medium Density	0.0122	4.3
	1,294	High Density Attached	0.0100	12.9
Total	1,644			17.2*

* 7.5 acres of parks are provided in the Easton Place Land Use Master Plan, with the remaining park requirement provided in Glenborough at Easton.





Figure 7.1, Parks Plan

7.2 PARK GOALS

Goal 7.1 Satisfy the proposed revisions to the Title 22 requirements of the Sacramento County Code, which require approximately 5 acres of improved parkland for every 1,000 new residents, to be calculated in conjunction with the park acreage for Glenborough at Easton.

7.3 PARK POLICIES

7.3.1 General Park Policies

Easton Place park policies are intended to foster the development of an active public realm focused along the Main Street and major urban streets, with active recreation opportunities available in the community's neighborhood park.

Policy 7.1 Recreational Facilities

Recreational facilities required by the Cordova Recreation and Parks District will be met on publicly managed park sites in Easton Place and Glenborough at Easton.

Policy 7.2 Parks Plan

Figure 7.1, "Parks Plan," depicts the locations of the various types of parks, landscaped streets, and trail access points. Detailed park designs will be developed at a later date.



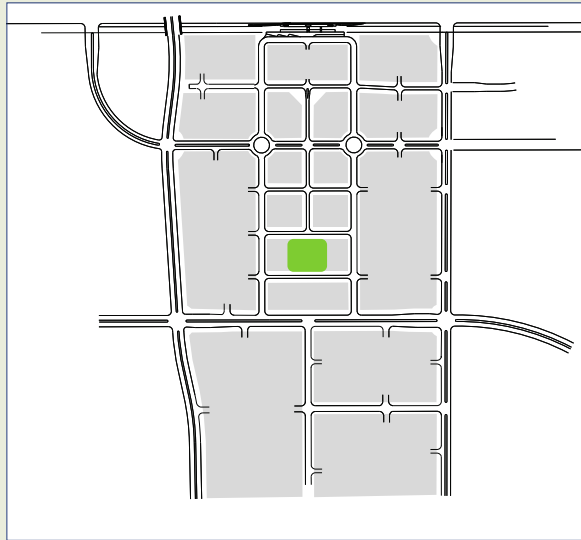


Figure 7.2, Easton Square

7.3.2 Easton Square Policies

The 2-acre Easton Square is located at the core of the Central District where it will be framed by major civic and commercial/retail uses. The Main Street connects Easton Square with the Hazel Avenue light rail transit station and serves as a primary view corridor into the community, with the square as a major destination.

Easton Square is a flexible space that will serve as a community gathering place, with organized events and activities and informal recreational uses such as lunchtime picnicking. Facilities within Easton Square could include an innovative children’s playground, a plaza area with a water feature and public art, and a small multi-purpose outdoor shelter.

The following policies should guide the design of Easton Square.

Policy 7.3 Easton Square as Visual Landmark

Easton Square should serve as a visual landmark in the center of Easton Place with visual access from streets leading to the square, particularly along the Main Street.

Policy 7.4 Formal Design

The design of Easton Square should be formal to reflect its significance in the community and to complement the surrounding uses. The key characteristics of this formal design should include a combination of hardscape and ornamental plantings, and a uniform tree pattern.



Easton Square should include shaded seating areas. Outdoor eating spaces are encouraged.

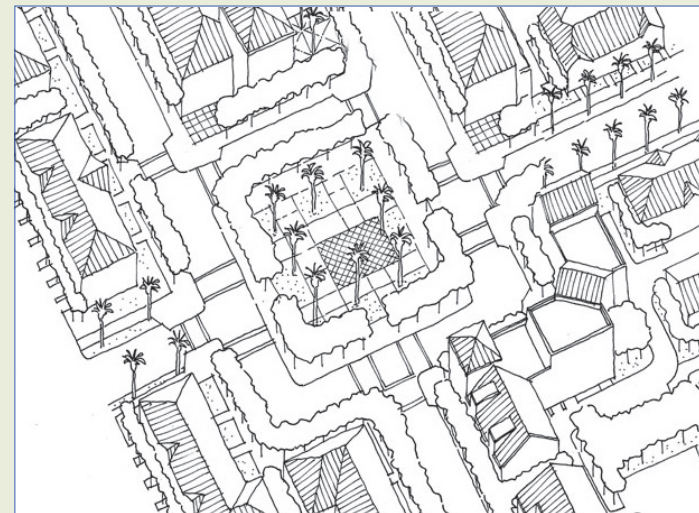


Figure 7.3, Urban Park. Easton Square should be framed by public streets and buildings.

Policy 7.5 Amenities and Features

Easton Square should include an abundance of seating choices, along with appropriately located drinking fountains, trash receptacles, lighting, and bike racks. Such elements as a permanent structure for community gatherings, a fountain or water spray area, and public art displays are also recommended. Open-air eating facilities are encouraged.

Policy 7.6 Landscaping

Large-canopy shade trees should be planted at regular intervals near seating areas. Shade trees may be supplemented by smaller ornamental tree species, particularly at the entries and near seating clusters. Entries may also be defined by ornamental plantings that could include annual species used for seasonal color.



Small food and beverage establishments can be incorporated into Easton Square.

Policy 7.7 Adjacent Buildings

Adjacent buildings should front onto Easton Square, providing both a visual and physical connection to the park. This connection can be encouraged through ground-floor activities that are connected to the square either by pedestrian access or through amenities such as sidewalk cafes and restaurants that open onto the square.

Policy 7.8 Information Center

The location and uses of Easton Square make it an ideal place for one or more information boards or kiosks providing information about transit, ridesharing, neighborhood events, and recreational opportunities in the community.

Policy 7.9 Food and Beverage Vendors

Small vendors and/or free-standing establishments are permitted within Easton Square, provided that they do not exceed 2,000 square feet per structure. The size and type of each vendor must be approved by the Easton Architectural Review Committee and the Cordova Recreation & Park District.



Adjacent buildings should front onto Easton Square and offer ground-floor activities and pedestrian connections to the park.



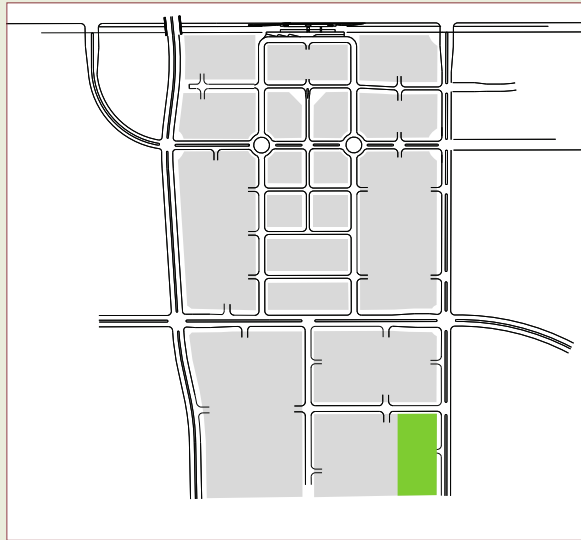


Figure 7.4, Neighborhood Park

7.3.3 Neighborhood Park Policies

A 5.5-acre neighborhood park will be located in the Market District, with the final location to be coordinated with the Cordova Recreation & Park District. The park is designed to complement the uses provided in the 12.9-acre neighborhood park located in Glenborough at Easton on the east side of Aerojet Road, and can serve both the Easton Place and Glenborough at Easton communities.

The Easton Place neighborhood park is designed for active and passive recreational uses. The park may include sports fields, a playground. Trails will connect to the wider Easton regional trail system, including the Alder Creek corridor in Glenborough at Easton.

The following policies should guide the design of the neighborhood park.

Policy 7.10 Park Design

The neighborhood park may be designed in a more naturalistic style than the other parks and plazas in Easton Place to emphasize its recreational uses.

Policy 7.11 Park Access and Visibility

Direct access to neighborhood parks should be provided from the surrounding area through formal entries, easements, and sidewalks. The park should be located adjacent to streets to provide public access and visibility.

Policy 7.12 Precedence of Active Uses

Active use facilities such as sports fields and open turf areas for informal active play shall predominate over facilities supporting passive uses.

Policy 7.13 Landscaping

Large-canopy shade trees should predominate, supplemented by smaller ornamental trees and plantings near entry areas and gathering places (such as picnic areas). Drought tolerant and native species should be used whenever possible (see Section 4.3.3, “Street Tree Overview and Policies” for a list of preferred trees).

Policy 7.14 Neighborhood Park Amenities

Amenities to be provided shall include seating, shade structures, trash receptacles, bike racks, signage, lighting, and drinking fountains.

Policy 7.15 Parking

On-street parking is allowed, where feasible, and may be supplemented by off-street parking areas. Shared parking with adjacent retail/commercial uses is encouraged.

Policy 7.16 Adjacent Structures Facing Park Spaces

Where practical, adjacent structures should front onto the park to encourage physical and visual access from surrounding uses and increase safety through visibility.



Playgrounds and other active recreational facilities will be combined with passive uses.



Pedestrian pathways will connect the neighborhood park to the regional trail system.

7.3.4 Privately Managed Parks and Plazas

Easton Place will include a number of small, local, parks and plazas that will be privately owned and maintained. These parks and plazas will be associated with individual projects, with locations to be determined at the design phase of the projects. Both parks and plazas contribute to the public realm by serving as gathering places and providing recreational opportunities, and should be visible and accessible from nearby streets.

Parks

Privately managed parks in Easton Place are generally less than 1 acre in size and located within residential neighborhoods, where they provide limited active and passive recreation opportunities for local residents. They can include tot lots, which are play areas for small children; seating and other pedestrian amenities; and landscaping. Small open areas can be used for informal play or pickup sports activities. The following policies should guide the design of these parks.

Policy 7.17 Park Design and Amenities

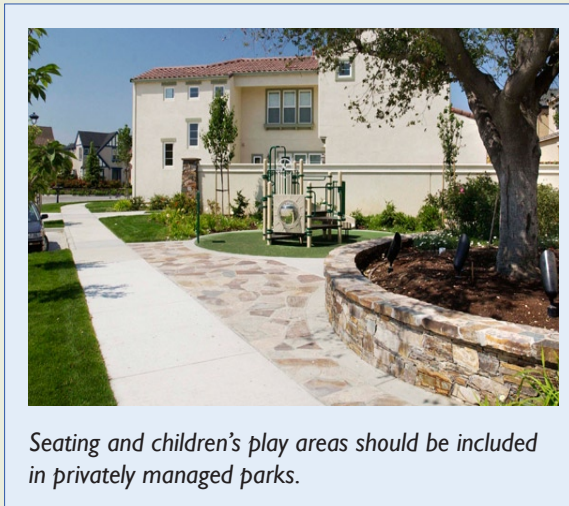
Privately managed parks should be designed to include seating areas and limited active play for young children. Amenities to be provided shall include benches, shade structures, lighting, and trash receptacles.

Policy 7.18 Access and Visibility

Privately managed parks, especially those including tot lots, shall be open to view from the street for access and security purposes. Adjacent structures should also front onto mini parks to encourage physical and visual access from surrounding uses and increase safety.

Policy 7.19 Landscaping

Depending on the size and design of each privately managed park site, landscaping should include large-canopy and/or ornamental shade trees to provide shade for seating and play areas. Small open play areas and limited ornamental plantings are also encouraged.



Plazas

As an urban, transit-oriented community, Easton Place will include several public plazas of varying sizes that serve as informal gathering and resting places. Plazas should be located along major pedestrian routes and as part of the office/commercial developments.

Plazas should be designed to support and complement, not compete with, Easton Square and the Hazel Avenue light rail transit station, which are the two primary destinations along the Main Street. Plazas are typically associated with commercial/retail or office projects and maintained by the relevant property owners/managers. They should be accessible to the public and designed to contribute to the public realm, with large-canopy shade trees, seating, public art, and other pedestrian amenities. The availability of food services, such as adjacent restaurants with café seating or small vendors operating within the plaza, contributes to active, engaging plazas.



The following policies should guide the design of plazas in Easton Place.

Policy 7.20 Amenities

Extensive and varied seating shall be installed in all plazas. Seating types could consist of seatwalls; movable seating (e.g., lightweight chairs); stationary seating (e.g., benches); and/or landscape elements. Water features serve as natural gathering places and may be incorporated as appropriate. Public art is encouraged, as it contributes to community identity and serves to enliven public areas.

Policy 7.21 Access and Visibility

Plazas should be visible from and open onto a major pedestrian street to promote safe, active use. Plazas must be open and accessible for public use during daylight and regular business hours. It is desirable to locate plazas near building entries, when feasible. Plazas that are accessible to the public during the evening should be well lit during low-light periods.

Policy 7.22 Shade Trees and Structures

Trees and shade structures should be provided in pedestrian areas. Trees should be selected for sufficient canopy size and density to offer meaningful shade to pedestrians while not impairing the visibility of adjacent tenant storefronts and signage. Likewise, shade structures should not be merely decorative, but should be designed to offer shade to pedestrians. The placement of trees and shade structures should be coordinated with the location of seating areas so that seating is comfortably shaded, as seasonally appropriate.

Policy 7.23 Paving

Large paved areas should be broken into smaller visual surfaces through the use of changes in decorative paving patterns and the inclusion of landscape elements and pedestrian amenities. Large, undifferentiated paved areas should be avoided.

Policy 7.24 Information Centers

Information boards or kiosks providing information about such topics as transit and ridesharing opportunities, neighborhood events, recreational facilities, recycling opportunities, energy efficiency, and community services shall be placed in heavily used areas, including Easton Square and near the Hazel Avenue light rail transit station. Additional information kiosks may also be located in heavily traveled pedestrian areas, such as major plazas.



Urban plazas should be well lit to promote night activities.