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## Comment

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- 1 As I testified to the parks commission, I do not think "replacing" the City Park playground reflects the community consensus or desire. The four of us who attended the commission meeting and many other Benicians would prefer the plan be reworded to "maintain and adapt" the playground to combine with any newer equipment such as replacement swings.

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- 2 Regarding pg 49 on "limited public access" to Benicia Middle School facilities as a justification for the gap in service areas around Southampton Road, there appears to be a discrepancy with the School District. I received a response from the Superintendent: "The Benicia Unified School District and the City of Benicia have a Joint Use Agreement that enables the community to access the fields and courts at Benicia Middle School. Typically, our school sites are closed to visitors during school hours and opened only to those possessing a completed Facility Use Agreement during non-school days and after hours. Only approved city user groups are allowed on the BMS campus. The District posts signage to protect the facilities from trespassers and vandals. With authorization from the city, community members can access the facility through an approved gate entrance." This reads to me that individual residents would not have access to the courts or fields, rather larger sport organizations who are holding team practices. Otherwise, how would an individual get authorization from the city to play tennis on the weekend, for example? This needs to be clarified. Thank you.

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- 3 More dirt trails in the community park / lake Herman area. I use Crockett hills park as an example of a high quality riding experience in conditions that are not conducive to it. It is an destination park because of the trails they have built. Also Briones park has opened up tons of single track to create a better relationship between bike, foot and equine trail users. I understand there has been money budgeted for some kind of bike related area in the community park. A simple pump track close to the dog park and frisbee golf area would be sick. Ive got a shovel for that project. Our town has open spaces where a simple single track with a few switchbacks which would create a really cool network of foot/bike trails. There are plenty of good examples in our area to use.

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- 4 Cut the bushes down on the medians on Southampton road to prevent collisions. Improve the street lighting especially near the new light up crosswalk on Southampton road. Remove the bar barricade across the sidewalk where the cross street of Hastings and Southampton is before someone walks into it and hurts themself. Remove the plastic utility covers embedded on the Southampton sidewalks as they break and cave in and this could break someone's ankle. install some bicycle repair stations in some of the more major Parks like the pier and or 9th Street locations such as the one that can be found at the Glen Cove Park.

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- 5 Love the small, very local "vest-pocket" parks. Don't get rid of them; increase them if possible.

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- 6 You don't have the funds necessary to support what exists today. You folks just want to continue to spend money that you don't have.

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- 7 Saw that Channing Circle Park is rated in Good shape for maintenance. Are you kidding me? The asphalt walkways are half gone both breaking apart and covered with dirt and lawn, there is little to no landscaping compared to what was there when the park was developed, and there are invasive trees everywhere that were no part of the park plan. So, where is the maintenance of the park in a Good condition? I would be more than happy to walk you through the park showing you the differences to the other parks in Southhampton which have walkways in good shape built with concrete instead of corroding asphalt, landscaping that is still mostly there, and structures in better shape than Channing Circle Park. I hear all the time from neighbors who visit the park that they miss the park when it was in Good shape. You need to fix this park!
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- 8 New plastic "wood"-style benches installed in the past year get too hot in the sun to comfortably sit on. The new benches adjacent to Arneson park are unusable much of the time.
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- 9 First I will commend staff for the careful and extensive work that has gone into the Draft Parks, Trails and Open Space Master Plan (2023 Update). I apologize that I missed out on sending thoughts during the lengthy process of soliciting public input, and that my comments and questions arrive so late in the process. Nevertheless, I have concerns that are surely shared by many Benicia residents and relatives of former residents. I understand that much work has gone into Cemetery maintenance and improvements over recent years, but that we have no Cemeteries subcommittee for the Parks, Rec & Cemeteries Commission. Shouldn't the Cemetery be a part of our overall shepherding and planning for the Parks Rec and Cemetery Commission's scope and priorities? I wonder if the absence of assessment and planning for the Cemetery is intentional? If so - if the Master Plan is ONLY intended to assess and plan for Parks, Trails and Open Space, then where, when and how does the City intend to assess and plan for our once spectacular Cemetery? Is another document or process already in place? On the other hand, if the 2023 Plan OUGHT to assess status and envision improvements of the Cemetery as one of the Commission's charges, then maybe there should have been an additional element in the Master Plan. If it is too late to add an element, will we need to wait another (2023 - 1997) 26 years for an updated plan? Or maybe wheels could be set in motion for an added element, say by 2026? Surely I'm just poorly informed, and you can enlighten me with historic, policy or procedural matters that adequately steward our Cemetery and its future.
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- 10 Looking into using common Bermuda grass might be the perfect option for benicia fields versus artificial turf fields. I believe Bermuda grass is heat and drought-resistant, and has the ability to withstand high traffic, hence the reason many sports fields use Bermuda grass, especially soccer fields. It could be worth a try to do a test section and see how it goes before deciding if it is the best choice for grass type for the Benicia recreation and sports fields. I have experienced Bermuda grass fields at sports events and is by far my top choice in grass types for recreation.
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- 11 There is a pressing need for improved soccer fields. The sport has increased in popularity and that interest has continued to hold; My kids have brought up how many of their friends/classmates play soccer and love it. At Joe Henderson, a group of kids made their case to the school to bring in soccer goals so that they could play soccer during recess. The current state of our fields is, frankly, an embarrassment. I've seen kids trip due to uneven surfaces. I have visited cities that have hosted games my children have played in and I've seen what our fields could be like. Also, with new fields our city could host soccer tournaments and bring in revenue. Please consider making improvements to soccer fields sooner than later. Thank you.
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- 12 I think putting an ampha theater at Lake Herman is a terrible idea. First of all, this is an area of natural, habitat! A theater does not fit in this location. Second, inadequate parking! Third Lake Herman Rd. is dangerous! Too high speeds, narrow, twisty and prone to a lot of auto accidents.
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- 13 Channing Circle Park: Shaded benches by the playground would be much appreciated. Walkers/bikers could then rest and cool down after they exit the trail.
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- 14 Benicia Community Park: Shaded benches by the playground would be much appreciated. There is little shaded seating for parents and children by either playground, as the picnic tables are often reserved for private parties and are located far from some of the playground equipment.
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- 15 Waters End Park: Shaded benches by the playground would be much appreciated. This park is very hot in warm months and has little shade. This park is also popular with dog walkers who could then rest and cool down.
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- 16 Southampton Park: Parents and basketball players would appreciate a fenced-off dog park, ideally with a separate entrance/exit. Also suggest moving the proposed dog park from this Park (which is close to the existing Community Park dog park) to Francesca Terrance Park.
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- 17 9th Street Park: Shaded benches by the playground would be much appreciated. Walkers/bikers could then rest and cool down as they proceed along the waterfront.
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- 18 Arneson Park: Shaded benches by the playground would be much appreciated. Walkers/bikers could then rest and cool down as they proceed along the waterfront.
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- 19 First Street Green: Shading the Seat Wall would allow walkers/bikers to rest and cool down as they proceed along the waterfront.
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- 20 Francesca Terrace Park: Shaded benches by the playground would be much appreciated. The new play structure has little shade and this park is very hot in warm months. Also suggest moving the proposed dog park from Southampton Park (which is close to the existing Community Park dog park) to this park. There are often unleashed dogs at this park which come close to the unfenced playground.
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- 21 So Sorry to hear soccer fields are not a priority. Just walk around any Saturday or Sunday to the various fields and see how many kids (both girls! and boys) are playing soccer during the season. I don't see that many girls and boys playing any other sport any other season. My kids have been playing for over 10 years in Benicia. Both have had physical therapy sessions over the years for ankles or knees. Is this due to the fields? Don't really know, but inadequate fields definitely don't help. Please reconsider field priority for soccer, the biggest growing sport in America for both girls and boys.
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- 22 Benicia falls way behind other cities in our area in terms of safe facilities to play soccer. I arrived to Benicia in 2008 and have coached soccer over the last 15 years here in town. The soccer program shares the softball fields at BCP and has limited access to various school facilities that are also used for baseball and football. We need a dedicated year round field or fields for the cities largest sport based on participation for over 15 years. Soccer is not a fall sport it is now a year round sport and has been for sometime. When the rain comes in winter a turf field would limit damage to existing grass fields and eliminate any safety concerns. I would suggest resurfacing Joe Henderson or Robert Semple with turf in co-operation with the school district or resurfacing two BCP fields as mentioned in phase 2 but bring the forward to phase 1 as we have waited patiently enough.
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- 23 Thank you for the hard work on putting together this plan. I would like to see a higher priority placed on repairing/upgrading our soccer fields. The current fields are in dreadful condition, to the point of being almost unplayable. There is a high risk of injury which could open the city to potential lawsuits and higher costs in the long run. Soccer plays a major role in bringing this community together and deserves some much needed investment. Thank you for taking the time to consider my feedback!
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- 24 What a comprehensive document. Gives me faith in our city government! Parks and trails have always been an important part of my family's life and I completed this survey when it first was made available. I feel the best way to generate the revenue needed would be to increase existing fees for reservations and permits, including fees for cleanup. I've seen the community park trashed after outside groups have used it. Also, make more volunteer opportunities available - I believe if most folks knew what help was needed, they'd volunteer.
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- 25 I think the best place to put Pickleball courts is next to the skate park at the community park with some wind brake material on a tall fence Also a row of those tall thin trees would help to reduce the wind. Because of the popularity of the sport 8 courts makes for a great play.
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- 26 I have been living in Benicia since 2016. Both my boys are in soccer. I would want to see improvement in the fields. The fields are pretty bad shape they have holes everywhere. I seen turf fields is in the talks and I hope we get that done sooner rather then later. I would hate for my kid or any kid for gbat mayter gets hurt because of the bad shape our fields are in. I belive soccer is a big part of Benicia unsure why it does not get the love that it deserved from the city when it comes down to making changes.
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- 27 Thank you for sharing this plan with the community at large. I want to express my concern at the fact that currently, 2 artificial turf fields in BCP would be part of the plan only on Phase 2 (page 66). This would mean that nothing would happen before at least 5 years (phase I is supposed to take place over the next 5 years). While it is good to see that soccer has found a place in the master plan (original discussions did not even think the soccer community needed anything at all), having those plans on Phase 2 means they will probably never materialize. The same report highlights on pages 21-22 that youth soccer is the largest athletic activity in town (these are underestimated numbers, since the club counts over 850 players on most years). On page 39, it is even highlighted that soccer fields (rectangular fields) and turf fields are #1 and 3 in the list of most important facilities. Given that the report seems to acknowledge those facts, one would hope to see a response to those needs sooner than 5 years down the line. While we are aware of the city budget constraints, we believe it is important not to push the arificial turf fields too far down the priority list, since it is a good recipe for our own children having to keep advocating for decent fields for our grandchildren. Please move the plan for artificial turf fields at BCP to phase I.
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- 28 Please NO artificial turf fields in Benicia. I was informed by the President of the Benicia Youth Soccer League that turf was planned for the city. Turf fields contain toxic chemicals that have been linked to numerous athlete deaths in particular goalies. I played on Benicia's grass fields since I was a child and now my daughter plays on these fields. They are wonderful and there is absolutely nothing wrong with these fields. It would be a waste of City money to create more toxic waste for our children to play in when there are perfectly good grass fields for them to play on. Thank you for your time. I've attached a link showing just one example of the many others who are concerned about the toxicity of these turf fields. <https://www.dolmanlaw.com/blog/artificial-turf-cancer-lawsuit>
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- 29 I can only imagine how these would be prioritized. The expense must be in the billions. How will the committee choose priorities and it seems, new hires in the committee over the next many years may not agree to original plans. Huge project. I appreciate all the enormous effort and time you have input it is greatly appreciated. I know you are doing your best.
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- 30 We need to prioritize the soccer community and build the turf fields for our children and families. With better fields, it can offer the arsenal league the ability to have a bigger year round program. We have around 850 children in Benicia that play soccer. With better facilities, families are more likely to sign up for both fall and spring. A lot of children are spending time behind screens, and this needs to be addressed. One way we can do this is to allow Benicia Arsenal to have more quality space and more attractive program to all children. Soccer improves the mental and physical health of our children, and as a community it is beneficial to invest in their health, to keep our community headed in the right direction.
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- 31 My husband and I grew up in Benicia and now we are raising our children here. I vividly remember my soccer practices at BCP. The grass was well kept, facilities clean, gear easily accessible. I am now in my second year of coaching soccer in Benicia. I cannot believe the quality of the fields we play on now. I was embarrassed and frankly scared to even have my kids practice on our assigned field, Robert Semple Elementary. There are deep holes (I sprained my ankle twice the first two weeks of practice), weeds as tall as my knees and crappy equipment at RSE Field. Not only does the soccer league need better fields, the schools do too. Please consider soccer fields as one of the top priorities in the Parks Master Plan as I imagine you wouldn't want kids or people to brake an ankle. Thank you.
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- 32 We are in support of our soccer league's request to improve field conditions for our wonderful Arsenal community. We also are in support of improving road safety measures around the parks and schools of Benicia.
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- 33 I ask that the city please consider improving soccer and sport complex fields in Phase 1 of this plan. Our community NEEDS these improved and added fields ASAP!
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- 34 Please place the additional turf fields at BCP in Phase 1. As a resident for over 30 years in Benicia and a soccer and softball coach for 13 years, I understand the importance of having quality fields for our playing children and adults. We currently lose players to other leagues due to the lack of availability of quality fields to other communities. Please consider addressing this issue in the next couple of years so we may continue to build momentum in supporting our children post pandemic.
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- 35 The preference for investing in baseball in our town rather than soccer snacks of inequity. Please move turf fields to Phase 1.
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- 36 I am a born and raised Benician and am currently raising my two boys in this wonderful town. For the last three years we have participated in the Rec soccer league, and have plans to continue in both the Rec and competitive realm for years to come. Since Benicia Arsenal currently accommodates over 850 players each season, and has poured an enormous amount of effort into building up the year-round comp program, we believe plans to build artificial turf fields should be moved into the first phase of the parks, trails and open spaces master plan. With heavy rains last year and coming again this year we have seen how negatively impacted our current fields have been, not to mention being a breeding grounds for mosquitos and gnats. We have witnessed over the years kids getting hurt due to holes dug by tiny creatures, uneven playing surfaces and grass that is cut too high. By the end of soccer season the mosquitos continue to get so bad that children are getting bit left and right. There is also the issue of dog feces that is being left on the field by folks walking their dogs before and after soccer playing hours. The current fields are being used for a number of Rec activities but unfortunately the arsenal league has hundreds of players being negatively impacted. The largest youth sport activity in the city deserves new facilities now, pushing the timeline 5 or more years is simply waiting too long. Myself and many others encourage the master plan to be revised to move soccer facilities to phase 1 before final approval. Thank you.
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- 37 No artificial turf, it will cause injury! [https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/\\_/id/36243906/nflpa-new-injury-data-shows-grass-significantly-safer-turf](https://www.espn.com/nfl/story/_/id/36243906/nflpa-new-injury-data-shows-grass-significantly-safer-turf)
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- 38 I appreciate the adjustments made in the draft master parks plan, particularly the increased priority given to soccer fields. However, I remain concerned about the potential for soccer facilities to become overshadowed within the broader "long-term" vision. To address this, I believe it's essential for us to secure a commitment of dedicated land for soccer purposes. With this commitment, the soccer community can proactively focus on fundraising efforts. One of the significant advantages of this transition towards dedicated artificial turf soccer fields is the potential cost savings for the city. Replacing traditional grass fields with artificial turf eliminates the need for ongoing maintenance of real grass, which involves expenses such as mowing, irrigation, and fertilization. Natural grass fields are susceptible to damage from heavy usage and adverse weather conditions, resulting in frequent costly rehabilitation. By embracing artificial turf, we can ensure a consistent and reliable space for soccer activities. As we strive to establish these artificial turf soccer fields to enhance opportunities for our players, it is crucial to emphasize the importance of securing dedicated space from the City of Benicia before approaching potential sponsors and launching fundraising campaigns. Having a designated space ensures that we can present sponsors with a well-structured plan, rather than relying on mere speculation. With a committed field space, we can create a comprehensive proposal outlining the specific location, dimensions, and design of the artificial turf soccer fields. This detailed information is essential when seeking sponsorships and financial support, as it underscores our club's preparedness and commitment to the project. A

concrete plan, supported by dedicated space, allows sponsors to visualize their investment and understand the tangible impact their contributions will have on the community and the development of our young athletes. Furthermore, having a dedicated space enables us to accurately estimate the project's overall costs, ensuring that our fundraising efforts are targeted and realistic. This level of transparency and accountability in financial planning will instill confidence in potential sponsors, assuring them that their support will be used efficiently and effectively for the construction and maintenance of the artificial turf fields. This heightened certainty will undoubtedly pique their interest and willingness to invest in the development of these facilities. Additionally, I believe that the fees paid by Benicia Arsenal FC to the City of Benicia and Benicia High School can potentially cover the annual maintenance of dedicated turf soccer fields. This could eliminate the upkeep cost of other non-soccer-related spaces, benefiting both the soccer community and the city. Thank you for considering these important aspects as we work together to prioritize and secure a dedicated space for soccer facilities in our master parks plan.

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- 39 Community Park: 2 fields are designated to be synthetic turf. GREAT NEWS! Major concern though that it appears the hockey rink is going to be removed for some sort of multi-use facility? It's so unique to have that rink there. We play hockey on it often and frequently see roller derby teams. There are no ice rinks within 30 minutes of here, and it is a great place to go roller blading. It does not mention anywhere what the actual plans are besides the little pink icon on the map of the rink. Could you provide details on the future of the rink, and what this multi-use facility would be?
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- 40 Jack London: Splash Pad! Amazing. Bocce as well.
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- 41 Solano Park: Much needed new play equipment. Great!
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- 42 Southampton/780 corridor: I feel like recognizing the "limited public access" to the middle school is not enough to serve these neighborhoods. It is marked as green and walkable, but that is not the case. If the middle school is going to be labeled as public access, there MUST be signs placed with hours designating when the public can enter. Even though sometimes the gate is open, there are all sorts of "NO TRESPASSING" and warning signs around. That discourages public use from the community. Please address this.
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- 43 Southampton park: Dog park is nice.
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- 44 Overall, I am heartened to see such that despite such a high priority placed on more hiking and light leisure activities, which, while important, seems to overemphasize the (growing) aging, senior population, there is a major focus on playground upgrades and field improvement. Yes, younger demographics are shrinking, but it's because Benicia has such a limitation on family amenities compared to neighboring communities in Contra Costa especially. New, innovative playgrounds are popping up everywhere while ours feel ancient. Artificial, year-round, soccer turfs are going up, with new ones opening in the Martinez-Concord area as well. Those draw in players to grow and develop leagues from out of town.
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- 45 Not sure why this is being made so complicated the existing tennis courts are not full utilized and they already have lights. This could be easily converted into a shared facility, just as other facilities are shared by simply putting together a schedule and adding stripes. A very cost conciance approach??? Pickleballers are taxpayers too just as tennis players, the city needs to stop over studying and just make the decision and get it done!!!
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- 46 Very excited for more trails and the Lake Herman Loop. Would like to see more focus on the trails aspect instead of just park improvements, as multiuse trails were valued as the highest priority in the studies.
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- 47 Access to Benicia State Recreation Area from the Northeast along Southampton Rd. is currently rough, with only a relatively poorly-maintained sidewalk and multiple forced street crossings. Can there be a pedestrian path over Military and upgrades to the sidewalk under 780 to make it safer?
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- 48 780 really divides the whole city of Benicia into two and there are relatively few paths through for walking/biking/hiking. Adding more access across 780 would also help connect more people in the more densely populated apartment and townhouse areas along Southampton Rd. to the waterfront, which would be ideal since the waterfront seems to be the focus of additional trail and pathway connections in the plan.
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- 49 It would be nice to have bocce courts at the community park.
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- 50 Why are you using synthetic turf in Benicia community Park?
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