

DEFICIENCY IN THE CITY OF HANFORD PARKS

April 18, 2023

SUMMARY

The 2022-2023 Kings County Grand Jury found that Hanford has a deficiency in the number of basketball courts in its parks system. Out of seventeen parks only four parks have basketball courts, and all are on the south side of Grangeville Boulevard. We believe that several more basketball courts are needed so that all residents have equal access to them.

While there are many basketball courts located in Hanford schools, they are unavailable for use to the public due to insurance and vandalism concerns (long before the COVID Pandemic). The Civic Center Act is codified in California Education Code 38130. The spirit of the law was to ensure that structures and facilities built with public dollars were allowed to benefit the public for other purposes beyond just schooling. Schools interpret the Civic Center Act Education Code 38130 to determine whether their school will be an open or closed campus to residents outside of regular school hours.

The lack of basketball courts would not be an issue if the City of Hanford worked with school districts to make these courts available to Hanford residents.

The Grand Jury found that many portable basketball hoops can be found in residential neighborhoods. The City of Hanford is currently issuing warnings and citations to homeowners that have the portable courts in the streets and sidewalks in front of their homes. Hanford Municipal Code 12.04 Chapter 120 deems the hoop to be a public nuisance. We believe that the number of portable hoops is due in part to the lack of available access to school courts and the lack of courts in Hanford Parks. The City of Hanford should consider making an exception to the city code so that hoops may be allowed to remain and be enjoyed by the city's youth.

BACKGROUND

Local city parks provide access to recreational opportunities. All provide different activities and amenities. City parks should offer a wide variety of recreational opportunities that reflect the community's desires. While parks encourage active lifestyles and improve health, they also improve property values, improve the environment, and in some cases, they provide a way to manage stormwater and lessen flooding.

Green spaces are seen to be the center of equitable and resilient cities. When the public is engaged in and has a say in designing city parks, it provides a sense of community and helps ensure that the park reflects the needs of the community.

Some parks in Hanford have play structures, dog areas, water activities, basketball courts, frisbee golf, work out spaces, ponds, picnic areas and jogging paths, etc. *Please see Exhibit A.* Not all residents have a desire for and a use for every amenity that is offered.

In the past, as the parks were initially being developed, Hanford schools would allow public access to their grounds for sports such as basketball and soccer. Now that the school grounds are closed to

public access, due to vandalism and insurance concerns (long before the COVID Pandemic), the loss of a once widely used amenity should be accounted for in the development of future Hanford Parks. This development also left Hanford Parks with a current need for more basketball courts.

Sociologists believe that the game of basketball provides valuable skill sets, such as communication skills and encourages a sense of community and team work as well as providing key social development for children and adults alike. Residents interact with people from different backgrounds which broadens their perspective. For this reason, the Kings County Grand Jury believes it should be a priority to invest in the development of quality parks and sports facilities in each quarter section of the City of Hanford. Basketball specifically is a sport which is not offered in most of the parks around the City of Hanford. Of the eight major parks in the city of Hanford (17 parks in total) only four parks offer basketball courts, and they are all on the south side of Grangeville Boulevard (Lacey Park being the Northern most park with a basketball court). There are no parks on the north side of Grangeville Boulevard that contain basketball courts. Hidden Valley and Freedom Park, being two of the larger parks in the city, do not offer basketball courts.

METHODOLOGY

The Hanford Parks Director was interviewed on August 4, 2022. The Hanford City Parks and Community Development Department provided statistics on the number of basketball courts in Hanford Parks, the area needed for basketball courts and the cost involved for installing the courts.

Hanford City Council Meetings were attended where the Parks and Community Development Department talked about Hanford Parks.

The Superintendent of Hanford Elementary School District provided the campus policy regarding outside use of school grounds.

Grand Jury members personally toured Hanford Parks and neighborhoods to view basketball courts and residential hoops.

The Grand Jury was given a tour of five Hanford parks on December 22, 2022. The parks visited were Freedom Park, Hidden Valley Park, Centennial Park, Coe Park and Longfield Center.

Hanford's City Manager provided the Grand Jury with information regarding the encroachment into the City's Right of Way specifically, Hanford Municipal Code Section 12.04 Chapter 120.

DISCUSSION

The Grand Jury was made aware that the City of Hanford has seventeen parks in its system. *Please see Exhibit A.* Eight of these are large enough to be considered major parks. They include Centennial, Coe, Freedom, Hidden Valley, Earl F. Johnson, Lacey, and Longfield Center. Three of the major parks have no basketball courts, one park has indoor courts, and three parks have outdoor courts. *Please see Exhibit B for amenities.*

Parks with basketball courts are as follows:

- 1) Centennial Park has 2 outdoor courts.
- 2) Coe Park has 2 outdoor courts.
- 3) Lacey Park has 4 outdoor courts (one court was just added).
- 4) Longfield Center has 2 indoor courts.

Parks without basketball courts are:

- 1) Freedom Park
- 2) Hidden Valley Park
- 3) Earl F. Johnson Park

When built, the new Hero's Park is slated to have several outdoor basketball courts.

Exhibit A: Google Maps "Hanford Parks"

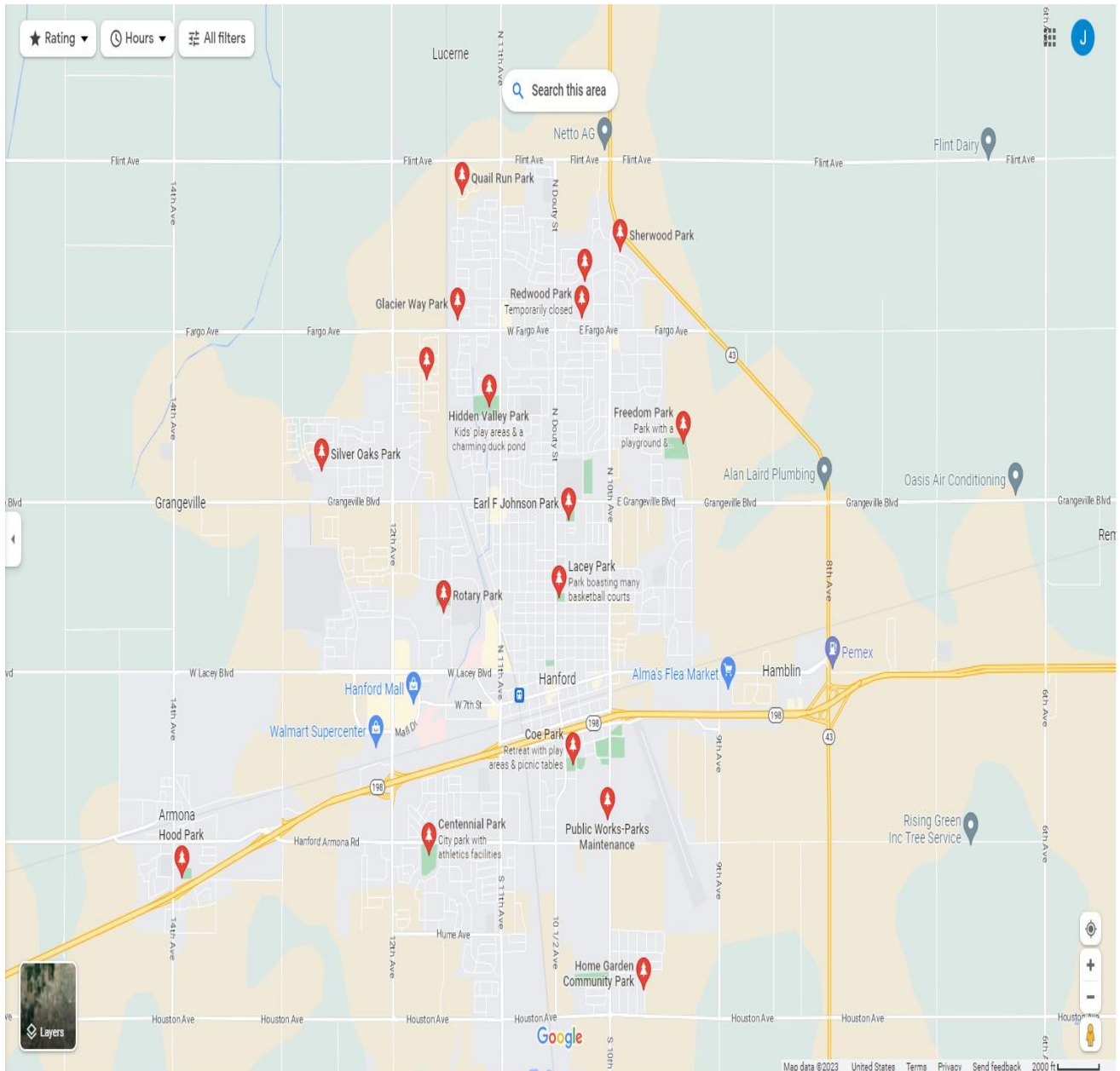


Exhibit B Hanford City Parks-Amenities													
		Basketball	Ball	Dog	Frisbee	Jogging	Covered	Play				Splash	
		Courts	Field	Park	Golf	Path	Picnic	Ground	Pond	Restroom	Soccer	Pad	Tennis
1	Centennial Park 11731 Hanford Armona Rd	x	x	x	x	x		x		x			
2	Coe Park 543 S Douty St	x					x	x		x		x	
3	Earl F. Johnson Park 1321 – 1325 N Brown St							x		N			
4	Encore Park 465 E Encore #391							x					
5	Freedom Park 2009 91/4 Ave		x		x	x	x	x		x	x	x	
6	Glacier Way Park 2406 N Glacier Way							x					
8	Hidden Valley Park 2150 N 11 th Ave					x	x	x	x	x		x	
9	Hood Park 13922 Hood Ave						x	x					
10	Home Garden Comm Park 11899 Show Place						x	x		x		x	
11	Lacey Park 112 Florinda St	x						x		x		x	
12	Longfield Center 560 S Douty	x											
12	Quail Run Park 3199 N Glacier Way												
13	Redwood Park 410 E Redwood St (temporarily closed)												
14	Rotary Park Campus Dr & North Dr		x								x		
15	Sherwood Park 700 Sherwood Dr							x					
16	Silver Oaks Park 2106 Bryman St							x		N			
17	Vineyards Peoples Park 1415 Vineyard Pl					x		x					

The following figures were provided by the City of Hanford Parks and Community Services Department.

The total area needed for a full basketball court including any regulated needs like surrounding landscaping, sidewalks, safety needs, etc. is 7,200 square feet. The court itself is 100 feet by 50 feet equaling 5,000 square feet leaving 2,200 square feet for ancillary surfacing. The area around the court should be free from trees or other obstructions.

The total cost for one full basketball court is as follows:

1. Building costs \$100,000 or more
 - i. Depending on the location, irrigation modifications can cost \$0 – \$1,500
 - ii. Cement is \$15-\$25 per square foot
 - iii. Lighting is \$2,000 – \$7,500 per pole with a minimum of two poles.
2. Ongoing maintenance \$1,750
 - i. Staff time \$1,500
 - ii. Material and supplies \$250
Annualized cost per court, not including original construction, \$2,500-\$5,000
3. Repainting of lines happens every 5-7 years, \$8,000-\$10,000
Annualized cost \$2,000

While there are many basketball courts located in Hanford schools, they are fenced off and locked up, thus making them unavailable for use by the public. Liability and vandalism have been big concerns. Schools rely on their interpretation of the Civic Center Act- Education Code Section 38130 to determine if their school will be an open or closed campus.

The Civic Center Act-Education Code Section 38130 reads as follows:

“Every public-school facility is considered a civic center where citizens, school-community councils, and clubs as well as senior, recreation, education, political, artistic, and other organizations may meet. The school district may grant the use of school facilities and grounds upon certain terms and conditions deemed proper by the governing board and subject to specified limitation, requirement, and restrictions set forth within the law.”

The City of Hanford should consider working with school districts to lessen insurance costs and make these courts available to Hanford residents. Fences may be moved around to isolate the school buildings, leaving the courts available to be used by residents.

The Grand Jury found that many portable basketball hoops can be found in residential neighborhoods. While The City of Hanford is currently issuing warnings and citations to homeowners that have the portable courts in the street and sidewalks in front of their homes, there is currently not a city ordinance that specifically prohibits basketball hoops. The prohibition applies to any items that would be deemed an encroachment into the City’s Right of Way. Those provisions are included in Title 12 of the City’s Municipal Code, Chapter 12.04.

https://library.qcode.us/lib/hanford_ca/pub/municipal_code/item/title_12

FINDINGS

F1. The Grand Jury has found a need for more basketball courts in Hanford. Three of Hanford's major parks, Freedom Park, Hidden Valley Park, and Earl F. Johnson Park do not contain basketball courts. The four major parks that do offer basketball courts are all on the south side of Grangeville Boulevard leaving the north side of Hanford in a deficit.

F2. While there are many basketball courts located in Hanford schools, they are unavailable for use to the public due to insurance and vandalism concerns. The lack of access to school basketball courts has contributed to the need for additional courts in the City of Hanford Parks.

F3. The Grand Jury found that there are many portable basketball hoops in residential neighborhoods of Hanford. The City of Hanford is currently issuing warnings and citations to homeowners that have the portable courts on the street and sidewalks in front of their homes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

R1. The Grand Jury believes that the City of Hanford should make it a priority to invest in the development of quality parks and sports facilities in each quarter section of the City of Hanford. The Grand Jury concludes that there is a need for more basketball courts in the north side of Hanford. A full court is needed in Freedom Park, and Hidden Valley Park. The Grand Jury recommends that in the future, plans be made to add a basketball court to other parks that do not currently have one, such as Earl F. Johnson Park.

R2. The Grand Jury believes that a discussion should take place between the City of Hanford and its schools. An analysis should be done by the City of Hanford to see if it might be more cost effective to cover some of the insurance costs in lieu of adding basketball courts in multiple City parks. The City of Hanford should consider working with school districts to make the basketball courts that have been fenced off available to Hanford residents.

R3. The Grand Jury recommends that the City of Hanford consider relaxing its enforcement of its encroachment code dealing with the City's Right of Way, specifically Title 12 of the City's Municipal Code, Chapter 12.04. The residents that have basketball hoops should move them on garbage days/street sweeping days but be allowed to keep them by their curb the rest of the week.

One member of the Local Government Committee recused themselves from this report due to possible conflict of interest.

REQUIRED RESPONSES

City of Hanford Parks and Recreation Department
321 N Douty Street, #B
Hanford, Ca 93230

Hanford City Council
319 N. Douty Street
Hanford, Ca 93230

Hanford City Manager
319 N Douty Street
Hanford, Ca 93230

INVITED RESPONSES

Hanford Joint Union High School District
823 W. Lacey Boulevard
Hanford, Ca 93230

Hanford Elementary School District
P. O. Box 1067
714 North White Street
Hanford, Ca 93232

Pioneer Union Elementary School District
1888 Mustang Drive
Hanford, Ca 93230

SEND FINAL REPORT RESPONSES TO:

Original to:
Shane Burns, Presiding Judge
Kings County Superior Court
1640 Kings Court Drive
Hanford, CA 93230

Copy to:
Kings County Grand Jury
P. O. Box 1562
Hanford, Ca 93232

Appendix A

The following figures were provided by the City of Hanford Parks and Community Services Department.

Classifications of Parks are as follows:

1) Mini/Pocket Parks

The Mini/Pocket Park is a small outdoor space, usually from .25 acres to three acres usually located in an urban area surrounded by houses or commercial buildings.

They usually function as a small event space, play area for children, or a space for relaxing/socializing, etc.

Pocket Parks offer minimal amenities on site and are not designed to support programmed activities. They are for users within a close walking distance.

2) Neighborhood/School Park

The Neighborhood/School Park is usually between three and ten acres but may be larger or smaller depending on the use and facilities offered.

A neighborhood park is usually within one mile of those that it is intended to serve and should have safe pedestrian access for surrounding residents. Parking is typically not provided.

Neighborhood parks serve the recreational and social need of the adjoining neighborhood.

- a. Situated on a local street near an arterial street and where possible, next to a school.
- b. Length of stay is usually one hour or less.
- c. Contains one signature amenity such as a playground, spray park, sport court, or gazebo. No restrooms are provided unless deemed necessary by the signature amenity. May include one non-programmed sports field, playgrounds for ages 2-5, one type of sports field or sports court, benches, and a small picnic shelter next to the play area.
- d. Non-revenue facilities and usage is 85 percent active, 15 percent passive.
- e. Maintenance standards: to provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding.
- f. Signage would be directional and include amenity regulations.
- g. Parking would include on-street parking area adjacent to park, usually 5-10 spaces including ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) accessible spaces.
- h. Lighting would be for security purposes only.

3) Community Park

A Community Park is intended to be accessible to multiple neighborhoods and should focus on meeting community-based recreational needs, as well as preserving unique landscapes and open spaces. Community parks are generally larger than neighborhood parks but smaller than regional parks and are designed for residents who live within a three-mile radius.

When possible, they are located next to a school.

Community parks provide recreational opportunities for the entire family and often include specific recreational purposes such as athletic fields, tennis courts, loop trails, picnic areas, reservable picnic shelters, sports courts, restrooms, drinking fountains, large turf/landscaped areas and a playground or spray ground. Passive activities include meditation and wildlife watching.

Community parks are usually 10 to 75 acres and are within the radius of one to three miles of typical users.

- a. Situated on two collector streets with the preference of being surrounded by four streets or three streets with the fourth being a school.
- b. The length of stay is usually two to three hours.
- c. Amenities include four signature amenities at a minimum. Trails, sports fields, large shelters/pavilions, community playground for ages 2-5, and 5-12, with shaded elements, recreation center, pool or family aquatic center, sports courts, water feature, public restrooms, drinking fountains, ample parking and security lighting.
- d. These contain revenue facilities such as a pool, sports complex, or pavilion.
- e. Land usage is 65 percent active and 35 percent passive.
- f. These parks are provided with the highest-level of maintenance with the funding that is available.
- g. Parking provided is sufficient to support the amenities but occupies no more than 10 percent of the park.
- h. Lighting includes sport field light standards.
- i. Signage is direction signage and facility/amenity regulation and may include kiosks.
- j. The landscape is designed to enhance the park theme/use/experience.
- k. Strong appeal to surrounding neighborhoods, loop trail connectivity, linked to regional park, trail or recreation facility.

4) Regional Park

A Regional parks function is as a destination location that serves a large area of several communities, residents within a city, county, or across multiple counties. They include recreational opportunities such as soccer, softball, golf, boating, camping, conservation-wildlife viewing and fishing. While sometimes including active facilities, they are predominantly natural resource-based parks.

Regional parks are usually 75 to 1,000 acres in size but can be 2,000 to 5,000 acres.

Facilities could include those of a community park and include specialized amenities such as an art center, amphitheater, boating facility, golf course, or natural area with trails. Regional parks should promote tourism and economic development of a region.

- a. Preferred location is one which has wetlands, streams and other geographic features or sites with significant cultural or historic features.
- b. Length of stay is assumed to be all day or multiple day experience.
- c. Amenities usually include 10 to 12 preferred amenities to create a signature facility – golf course, tennis complex, sports complex, lake, regional playground, 3 plus reservable picnic shelters, camping, outdoor recreation/extreme sports, recreation center, pool, gardens, trails, zoo, specialty facilities, restrooms, drinking fountains, concessions, restaurant, ample parking, and special event sites.
- d. Typically, this park is designed to produce revenue to offset operation costs.
- e. Land usage is typically 50 percent active/50 percent passive.
- f. These parks provide the highest-level maintenance with available funding.
- g. Parking is sufficient for all amenities.
- h. Lightning includes sports field light standards.
- i. Signage includes directional signage and facility/amenity regulations.

- j. Landscape design is appropriate to enhance the park theme/use/experience.
- k. These parks are linked to major trail systems, public transportation, concessions, food and retail sales are available, Wi-Fi/telephone/cable TV conduit and have dedicated site managers on duty.

Sports Complex

Sports complexes at community parks, regional parks, and stand-alone sports complexes are developed to provide 4 to 16 plus fields/courts in one setting. They may also support extreme sports facilities, such as BMX or skateboarding. They may be single focused or multi-focused and can include indoor or outdoor facilities to serve both youth and adults. Outdoor fields should be lighted to maximize value and productivity of the complex. They focus on meeting the needs of residents while also attracting sport tournaments for economic purposes.

Sports fields have appropriate field distances for each sport's governing body and support amenities designed to produce revenue to offset operation costs.

Signature sports complexes include enhanced amenities such as artificial turf, multipurpose field benches/bleachers, scoreboards, amplified sound, scorer's booth, etc.

- a. The service radius is determined by community demand.
- b. The site is usually located on or near arterial streets (on all four sides).
- c. The length of stay is usually two to three hours for single activities or all day for tournaments or special events.
- d. Amenities would include four to sixteen or more fields or sports courts, restrooms, ample parking, turf types appropriate for the facility and anticipated usage, and field lighting.
- e. Revenue facilities would be four or more fields, concession stand, picnic pavilion etc.
- f. The land usage would be 95 percent active and 5 percent passive.
- g. The focus is on active programming of all amenities.
- h. Parking would be sufficient to support all the amenities.
- i. Lighting would include amenity lighting sport field light standards.
- j. Signage would be direction signage and facility/amenity regulations and may include kiosks in easily identified areas of the facility.
- k. Landscape design would be appropriate design to enhance the park theme/use/experience.
- l. The site is usually 20 or more acres.

Recreation/Special use areas

Recreation/special use areas are those that do not fall within the typical park classification. A major difference is that they usually serve a single purpose not multiple recreation opportunities like a typical park does.

It is possible for a special use facility to be located inside another park.

They fall into five categories.

1) Cemeteries.

Burial-ground that is generally seen as a large public park or ground laid out expressly for the interment of the dead. May be viewed as a historic site.

- 2) **Historic/Cultural/Social Site.**
Unique local site offering historical education, and cultural opportunities. Including historic downtown areas, plaza parks, performing arts parks, arboretums, display gardens, performing arts facilities, indoor theaters, churches, and amphitheaters. Usually located in a community or regional park.
- 3) **Golf Course.**
Nine and 18-hole complexes with ancillary facilities such as club houses driving ranges, program space and learning centers. The facilities are highly maintained and support a wide age level of males and females. The programs are for daily use, tournaments, leagues, clinics, and special events. Operational costs are covered by revenue from daily play, season pass holders, concession stands, driving range fees, and sale of pro shop items.
- 4) **Indoor Recreation Facilities**
These are single purpose or specialized facilities such as community centers, senior centers and community theaters usually located in a community or regional Park.
- 5) **Outdoor Recreation Facilities**
These include baseball stadiums, aquatic parks, disc golf, skateboard, BMX or dog parks. These are usually located in a park. Amenities, revenue, land size, parking, maintenance, and programming varies.