



STRATEGIC PLAN 2021–2024

June 23, 2021

Strategic Planning Services Provided By:

The Weiss Group





INTRODUCTION

A great park is about more than land, wildlife and recreation. It's about the people who use it to refresh and re-create themselves, and the communities whose values it represents.

A great park rises and rests on a foundation of partnerships between nonprofits, governments, individuals and businesses that come together to create and maintain lasting value for their communities.

This great park relies on the American River Parkway Foundation (ARPF): committed experts, volunteers and supporters who work collaboratively to conserve, protect and enhance our heritage and our future.

The Strategic Plan that follows outlines how, through physical improvements, educational efforts and leveraging partnerships, the ARPF will guide the Parkway's development and enhancement over the next three years. This Plan is a road map for action. The commitment, vision and leadership it reflects will transform the American River Parkway from a regional treasure into one of the nation's premier urban parks.



METHODOLOGY

Initiated by American River Parkway Foundation Board of Directors and Executive Director Dianna Poggetto, and facilitated by The Weiss Group, this Strategic Plan reflects the collective work of the Foundation's board, members, staff and leadership. It builds upon ARPF's prior strategic documents, brand platform and research, incorporating these elements into an actionable Plan for propelling the Parkway and Foundation forward.

The Strategic Plan was developed through a participatory process that included the appointment of a Strategic Planning Committee, planning sessions, spirited group discussions, a board/volunteer survey, and a board retreat. All meetings and discussions were conducted in a virtual format.

The Strategic Planning Process began in December 2020 and concluded in April 2021. The process was thorough and systematic. Key milestones included:

- Establishing the project scope, timeline and Strategic Planning Framework
- Reviewing prior research and planning documents
- Conducting an organizational SWOT Analysis
- Revising ARPF's Mission, Vision and Values
- Identifying ARPF's Goals, key Strategies for achieving those Goals, and the Indicators of Achievement that will be used to demonstrate success
- Drafting the Final Strategic Plan and presenting it to the American River Parkway Foundation Board for approval



STRATEGIC PLANNING FRAMEWORK

The Strategic Plan is designed to be clear, distinct and actionable. The Plan is composed of the following elements:

- **Mission:** Why we exist
- **Vision:** Where we are going
- **Values:** Who we are and what we believe in
- **Goals:** What our priorities are
- **Indicators of Achievement:** How we know we've been successful
- **Strategies:** How we'll achieve our Goals



MISSION and VISION

MISSION

Our Mission defines why we exist and what we do as an organization. It provides focus, drives priorities and communicates our purpose. The American River Parkway Foundation's Mission is unique, inspirational and mobilizes support for our organization and the work we do.

Lead and inspire the community to conserve and nurture the American River Parkway as a unique, accessible resource for everyone to enjoy.

VISION

Our Vision establishes our destination and describes what we want to achieve as a Foundation. It provides direction and clearly communicates our aspirations.

The Foundation's Vision is for the Parkway to be one of the nation's premier urban natural parks.



VALUES

Our Values reflect the American River Parkway Foundation's core principles and shared beliefs. They demonstrate how we conduct business, the standards to which we hold ourselves, and define our organizational culture.

- **Volunteerism**— We recognize our important responsibility and commitment to nurturing and maintaining the Parkway. Our volunteers are critical to our efforts and essential to our success.
- **Conservation**— We respect nature. We are passionate about the environment and are committed stewards of the natural habitats that are home to local flora and fauna and a place of respite, recreation and rejuvenation to our community.
- **Leadership**— We strive to be the Parkway's advocate. We act boldly to enhance the user experience and protect the environment. We collaborate, convene and build partnerships that protect and promote the Parkway. We recognize and appreciate that diverse people, ideas, thinking and beliefs expand our perspectives and provide new insights for each of us.
- **Education** – We stand for learning. Environmental education helps us understand how to flourish and exist harmoniously with nature. It is essential to the legacy of the Parkway and for conserving this environment for future generations.
- **Community Access**— The Parkway is for all. We are committed to breaking down barriers that prevent people in our diverse communities from enjoying the Parkway.
- **Integrity**— We take the opportunity to learn from our mistakes and seek to improve. We are self-aware, accountable and responsible for our actions.
- **Health and Wellness**— We promote health and wellness now and in the future. The environments in which we live and work impact our well-being. Our efforts to support wellness create a healthy community.
- **Fun**— Fun is important. We work hard but we also play, socialize, laugh and share in nature.



GOALS

Our Goals are our strategic priorities. They align with our Vision and establish what we will achieve. The American River Parkway Foundation's Goals are tied to measurable outcomes and determine how we will invest our time, energy and resources.

Goal 1 | Enhance the User Experience

Create an accessible, educational and rejuvenating experience for all visitors.

Goal 2 | Conservation and Restoration of the Parkway

Increase conservation and restoration efforts across the American River Parkway.

Goal 3 | Develop a Lower Parkway Revival Plan

Develop and gain support for a Revival Plan for the lower portion of the Parkway, from Discovery Park to Cal Expo.

Goal 4 | Strengthen the Foundation

Continue to increase the visibility, diversity and organizational capacity of the American River Parkway Foundation and secure the resources to achieve our Mission.



GOAL 1: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE

Create an accessible, educational and rejuvenating experience for all visitors.

INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

- Improve user experience in the following key categories, as measured in biennial surveys and/or website input
 - The Parkway is recognized by community members as one of the region's top recreational/cultural amenities
 - Attitudes and perceptions (by Net Promoter Score)
 - Safety
 - Cleanliness
 - Usage statistics (# of visits, type of uses, etc.)
- Increase in # of Park Passes sold by 500 by 2023
- Increase the # of community events held by 5% and overall event attendance by 12% by 2023
- Increase the number of students served by educational programs by 600 (K-12) and 200 (adults) by 2023
- Secure \$100,000 in grant funding for recreation and health programs by 2022
- Decrease in number of illegal campsites by end of 2024

STRATEGIES

1. Establish benchmark metrics and evaluate performance by conducting a user survey every other year
2. Complete the following key infrastructure/physical projects and improvements:
 - Restrooms at River Bend
 - Wayfinding signage
 - Kiosks
 - Tables
 - Fishing pier
 - Par courses
3. Improve knowledge of and access to the Parkway (better signage and path marking, etc.) and build community awareness for improvements (trail map updates, include on Regional Transit map, etc.)



Goal 1: Enhance the User Experience (Continued):

4. Launch an ARP app that includes an interactive map of the Parkway, supports online reservations and payments, and provides additional user engagement functionality
5. Complete the Interpretive Plan that highlights the historical and native attributes of the Parkway
6. Enlist more retailers and outlets to sell Parkway Passes, providing the Foundation with additional resources to fund improvements and amenities that enhance the user experience
7. Increase promotion of Park Passes and their benefits/importance for supporting the Parkway, with specific efforts to promote the availability of low-income passes
8. Partner with the County to reimagine events held on the Parkway, with reservation fees dedicated to funding Parkway enhancements
9. Explore partnerships with tourism partners and promoters to hold their events on the Parkway, with ARP branding (“Summer Music Festival at the American River Parkway”)
10. Evaluate performance of current Parkway events and determine if they should be expanded, improved or eliminated in favor of other opportunities
11. Explore opportunities to hold new events that appeal to different audiences, demographics and areas of interest
12. Partner with the Sacramento County Office of Education and other organizations (Effie Yeaw Nature Center, Soil Born Farms, etc.) to collectively fund, develop, promote and offer modular, thematic programs and curricula
13. Partner with local colleges and universities to attract interns, create hands-on learning opportunities and complete research projects
14. Continue partnership with County to address illegal camping and advocate for its elimination in the Parkway
15. Convene stakeholders to discuss and implement community-driven solutions for addressing illegal camping (volunteer efforts to clean out camps, exploring safe ground shelter with the City and County, etc.)



GOAL 2: CONSERVATION AND RESTORATION OF THE PARKWAY

Increase conservation and restoration efforts across the American River Parkway.

INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

- Secure approval of the Resource Management Plan (RMP) by 2022
- Define and agree to Foundation's role in executing the Management Plan's implementation strategy by 2022
- Complete PG&E Mitigation in the Rossmoor Bar area by 2023
- Secure at least \$1 million in grant funding for restoration projects by 2023
- Continue to meet or exceed invasive plant management goals established in annual agreements with Sacramento County
- Reduce the overall volume of trash on the Parkway by 5% per year
- Increase number of volunteers by 10% and volunteer hours by 15% dedicated to conservation and trash removal activities each year
- Reduce the number of fires on the Parkway

STRATEGIES

1. Establish taskforce of internal and external experts to review draft RMP and make recommendations to ensure it aligns with sound resource management practices and ARPF overall objectives
2. Conduct outreach to Parkway stakeholders and County staff leading to support for adoption of final RMP by County supervisors
3. Work with the Program Committee to make recommendations on ARPF's role in implementing the RMP, including potential financing methods and costs to the Foundation
4. Secure necessary permit(s) for PG&E to proceed with planned mitigation work at Rossmoor Bar
5. Within the context of an approved RMP, prioritize potential projects (such as removing yellow star thistle, developing a native grasslands, collaborating with utility companies to create pollinator areas under easements, etc.), secure funding, and ensure staffing and/or contracted support for identified restoration projects



Goal 2: Conservation and Restoration of the Parkway (Continued):

6. Evaluate and improve the efficiency and efficacy of current volunteer efforts in meeting the goals of the RMP's Invasive Plant Management Program
7. Use targeted outreach and marketing (Sustainable Saturdays, etc.) to increase the number and quality of volunteers
8. Develop and implement a marketing and outreach campaign to increase awareness for and the number of trash removal projects (the ongoing Mesh Bag and Homeless Camp Trash Abatement programs, etc.)
9. Establish new and diversified volunteer positions that align with ARPF's Strategic Plan
10. Establish a Fire Safe Council to develop and implement a Fire Management Plan for the Parkway



GOAL 3: DEVELOP A LOWER PARKWAY REVIVAL PLAN

Develop and gain support for a Revival Plan for the lower portion of the Parkway, from Discovery Park to Cal Expo.

INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

- Develop a Lower Parkway Revival Plan in collaboration with an appropriate group of stakeholders and elected officials by 2023
- Gain Plan support from the City of Sacramento and Sacramento County Board of Supervisors by 2024

STRATEGIES

1. Convene a diverse group of public, private and government stakeholders to identify and define needed improvements and enhancements to the Lower Parkway
2. Explore grant funding opportunities to support the planning phase of the Lower Parkway Revival Plan
3. Partner with the City and the County to prioritize and plan Lower Parkway improvements identified by the stakeholder group
4. Conduct a feasibility study to help test the Plan and prioritize recommendations to ensure its support and viability
5. Work with Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency and other entities to explore acquiring the Uruttia property
6. Launch an education and outreach campaign to build support for the Lower Parkway Revival Plan among stakeholders, business and community leaders, and the public to generate awareness and eventual approval from the City and County



GOAL 4: STRENGTHEN THE FOUNDATION

Continue to increase the visibility, diversity and organizational capacity of the American River Parkway Foundation and secure the resources to achieve our Mission.

INDICATORS AND OUTCOMES

- Be recognized as the region's most valued advocate of the Parkway
- Increase the Foundation's annual revenue and diversify revenue streams to a level that allows it to achieve the Goals established in the Strategic Plan
- Increase Foundation membership by 10% and membership revenue by 12% each year
- Award Teichert Parkway Fund grants (amount to be determined annually based on fund availability)
- Diversify the composition of the Foundation's Board of Directors to reflect Parkway users

STRATEGIES

1. Conduct an economic impact study to demonstrate the ARP's value to the region
2. Develop and execute an integrated advocacy campaign that builds awareness and support for the ARPF, positioning it as the expert, authoritative voice for the Parkway among businesses, City and County officials, Foundation members and other stakeholders
3. Develop and implement ongoing communications & branding strategy to increase awareness of the Parkway and ARPF's myriad programs and services and how community members can support the Parkway through the Foundation
4. Prioritize Goals, Strategies and new initiatives to identify total programmatic and unrestricted support needed to accomplish Strategic Plan
5. Develop an annual development plan that outlines strategies for securing additional support from government agencies, foundations, businesses and individuals
6. Evaluate list of potential new revenue streams and develop business plans for most viable options (coffee cart, bike rentals, concessions, revenue-generating amenities, thrift store of Parkway equipment, gear swap, etc.)
7. Negotiate new MOU with County to retain 100% of Park Pass revenue for managing the Parkway, handling reservation services, funding the natural resources plan and upgrading amenities that improve the visitor experience



Goal 4: Strengthen the Foundation (Continued):

8. Explore fee-for-service model for new services offered by ARPF (ranger and educator tours, star gazing, fishing, bird watching, etc.) that includes testing viability, piloting programs, business plan development and full-scale implementation, as appropriate
9. Evaluate current membership program, identify opportunities for improvement and implement revised member benefits and recruitment program to build retention, encourage upgrades and increase new membership
10. Implement new organizational structure and complete staff hiring of new positions, including new director of development to work with board to raise additional funds
11. Develop an outreach strategy to build awareness for the Teichert Parkway Funds Grant Program, increase the number of grant applications received, and generate recognition of the awards granted
12. Execute the Teichert Parkway Funds Grant Program, monitor results and report outcomes to the community
13. Establish ARPF Board diversity goals based upon Parkway users and the communities it serves
14. Evaluate the current composition of ARPF's board compared to the diversity goals and identify gaps (industry, skill set, gender, age, income, demographic, etc.)
15. Develop and implement recruitment strategy that addresses identified board gaps by the end of 2021