STRATEGIC PLAN
2026 - 2027

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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 | Next-Level Marketing & Tourism

Increase awareness and usage through a tourism-focused marketing campaign.

Goal 2 | Create a Hub

Create a sense of place through a central hub on the American River Parkway.

Goal 3 | Enhance the User Experience

Build understanding, appreciation, and ownership of the Parkway through educational programming.

GOAL 1: NEXT-LEVEL MARKETING & TOURISM

Increase awareness and usage of the American River Parkway through a comprehensive, sustained tourism-focused marketing campaign that positions the Parkway as a regional gem – one of the nation's premier urban natural parks.

This will give the Foundation a better understanding of our visitors and how they use the Parkway, which will support Goal 2: Create a Hub.

STRATEGIES

- Data collection and analysis
- Develop Parkway brand
- Develop overall marketing campaign
- Establish "Visit the Parkway" website
- Signage
- Tourism-focused campaign with regional partners
- Public affairs strategy and outreach

GOAL 2: CREATE A HUB

Create a sense of place through a central hub that brings the community together on the American River Parkway.

HUB AMENITIES TO IMPROVE THE USER EXPERIENCE

- Recreation concessions (bike, paddleboard or kayak)
- Visitor center/kiosk (2026) (establish ARPF HQ as visitor center)
- Bike tool sheds throughout the Parkway
- Art on the Parkway
- Exercise equipment/par course
- Kids structure playpark
- Concessions (food Truck then possibly a restaurant)

HUB PROGRAMMING & ACTIVITIES

The Hub will offer programming, classes, and activities targeting adults to create a “third space.” These activities enhance the hub concept by building understanding, appreciation, and “ownership” of the Parkway.

GOAL 3: ENHANCE THE USER EXPERIENCE

Build understanding, appreciation, and ownership of the Parkway through educational programming.

ARPF will expand our educational programming to help visitors learn more about the Parkway's incredible beauty and unique nature while creating a sense of connection that can last a lifetime.

STRATEGIES

- Launch River Bend Outdoor Education Site for 2026-2027 academic year
- Introduce new programming, classes, and activities targeting adults to help establish the new hub as a third space
- Recruit new program experts to develop programs and help market offerings
- Create tours for independent individual use for walking, nature, and biking tours on the Parkway
- Continue Parkway CONNECT programming
- Restoration and fire mitigation