



# 2022 Awards of Distinction



# NOMINATIONS



Awards of Distinction

Category:

**Outstanding  
New Facility**

**CARPD Awards of Distinction**  
**Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**



**Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**

**Criteria:** Honors excellence in design and planning of newly constructed public park facilities. Demonstrates high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

**Nominee:** Auburn Bike Park

**District:** Auburn Area Recreation & Park District



## **CARPD Awards of Distinction**

### **Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**



#### **District Submission:**

I am thrilled to submit for recognition the completed Auburn Bike Park, operated by the Auburn Area Recreation and Park District (ARD), in collaboration with several community groups and members.

#### **Background**

Beginning in 2012, ARD started exploring spaces to build a new bike park after community members approached the Board of Directors. For several years, ARD and the community members explored multiple sites and considered multiple options, often meeting with resistance from neighbors or competing land uses. During this process, ARD had communications with the United States Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) about building a bike park on unused land adjacent to ARD's Canyon View Community Center. With this suggestion, ARD formed a partnership and signed an MOU with the Auburn Trails Alliance (ATA) for fundraising and maintenance of the future bike park.

After several years of environmental review, challenges from neighbors and equestrians, Reclamation finally approved the building of the Auburn Bike Park in July of 2018. During this time, ATA, led by the incomparable volunteer Diana Boyer, raised tens of thousands of dollars through events and donations, and continued to work with ARD on the final design. After final reviews and bidding, construction on Phase I of the Auburn Bike Park began in fall, 2019. Phase I included a pump track, strider course, flow trail, dual slalom trail and associated amenities. Work was just wrapping up on the Bike Park when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. After review and discussion, and seeing how busy the parks were in general, ARD decided to open up Phase I of the Auburn Bike Park on May 4, 2020. It was an immediate hit, with folks weary from shelter-in-place restrictions looking to get outside and exercise and enjoy this new local treasure.

After further fundraising, construction of Phase II began in fall of 2021. Phase II consists of a multi-level jump course, enhanced by stunning views of the American River Canyon. Phase II opened in spring of 2022.

The Auburn Bike Park is drawing throngs of visitors each day, heavily on the weekends. Users are amazed at the offerings available at the Bike Park, with features for everyone from the very beginner to the seasoned pro riders. ARD and ATA continue to benefit from their partnership, and volunteers provide regular maintenance and improvements to the facilities. ARD and ATA have also made great efforts to alleviate the concerns of the neighbors (the biggest being possible increased traffic). An email recently received from a neighbor and previous ardent opponent of the Bike Park stated the following:

*Kahl, I wanted to congratulate you and the entire Bike Park team on the completion of Phase Two of the Bike Park. It is truly a valuable recreational venue. The new jumps course is pretty cool and quite scenic to say the least. I chatted briefly with Diana Boyer today and*

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*thanked her for her work as well. I also thanked her for the efforts that are being made to urge Bike Park users to use Maidu drive to access the Bike Park. Those efforts are noticed and appreciated. I think that those efforts are having an impact. It is not perfect but it is most helpful. Once again, thank you for your work and for listening and dealing with the concerns of the Riverview neighborhood.*

To date, ARD has received \$147,464 in donations and in-kind labor towards the overall cost of \$706,287 for the Auburn Bike Park. These donations do not reflect the \$30,000+ in free dirt and delivery that ARD has received from PG&E through their spoils program. It is very evident that this is truly a community-led project that is benefitting families, kids, adults and everyone that experiences this new local gem.

**District Contact Name:** Kahl Muscott  
**District Contact Phone:** 530-885-8467  
**District Contact Email:** [kmuscott@auburnrec.com](mailto:kmuscott@auburnrec.com)

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**Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**

**Criteria:** Honors excellence in design and planning of newly constructed public park facilities. Demonstrates high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

**Nominee:** Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay

**District:** East Bay Regional Park District



Mayor of Fremont Lily Mei (on right with blue shawl) and her council members congratulated EBRPD park staff who oversee the daily operation and maintenance of the campground.

**District Submission:**

The East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD), located in the San Francisco Bay Area, completed a major historic first project – a full-service shoreline campground park – built on the site of a former quarry pit. Truly, from a gigantic gaping hole in the ground, the phoenix of an urban campground was birthed, enrichening life for the 2.8 million residents that EBRPD serves.

The Dumbarton Quarry Campground on the Bay in Fremont was opened to the public on August 28, 2021, after four decades of visioning. This 45-acre park is located on the SF Bay shoreline at the eastern end of the Dumbarton Bridge, nestled between Highway 84 and Interstate 880. The campground is equipped with 63 family campsites: 60 with full recreational vehicle (RV) hookups; ADA-accessible facilities, a camp store, outdoor

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amphitheater, playground, restrooms, showers, picnic areas, and Wi-Fi

Most importantly, this campground is a gateway linked to thousands of acres of parkland with extensive miles of trails for hiking and biking: to the north – Coyote Hills Regional Park (1,274 acres) and to the south – Don Edwards National Wildlife Refuge (30,000 acres). This trail network is an important link on the San Francisco Bay Trail, a planned 500-mile path that encircles the entire bay along its shoreline.

In the 1950s, the Dumbarton Quarry was established to provide building materials for the Bay Area's major infrastructure projects such as the SF Airport, highways and bridges. At its peak, the rock quarry was producing roughly 1.2 million tons of gravel each year. At one point, the quarry pit was 350 feet below sea level -- making it the lowest site in the Western Hemisphere!

In the 1970s, the quarry owners began talks with EBRPD, City of Fremont, and US Fish and Wildlife Service to convert the longstanding quarry into a public park. The agreement was approved by the public agencies in 1977, giving the quarry owners an extended time to continue operations until 2007. The original plan was to transform the pit into a freshwater lake for swimming, boating, and fishing. However, due to California's prolonged drought conditions, the plan was discontinued. With strong support from the community and elected officials, a new plan emerged -- fill the giant quarry pit with dirt, converting the site into an urban campground with trails for hiking, biking, bird watching. The surrounding land provides interpretive education of the rich history of the Ohlone peoples and cultures, as well as the natural resources, ecosystems, and wildlife.

It took the quarry owners 12 years to fill the pit with six million cubic yards of clean, tested dirt from Bay Area construction sites such as the BART extension project to San Jose. EBRPD construction engineers drew up plans to create a safe, accessible, and state-of-the-art campground and the quarry owners took several more years to construct the campsite, build the modern utilities, amenities, and landscaping.

The campground is a strong model of a resilient public-private partnership that spanned over many decades. EBRPD engaged in dialogs with the quarry owners in the 70s, drew up plans to rebuild the site from the rock up; and the quarry owners provided \$15 million for the earth fills and the construction. This park is the fruition of holding onto a strong vision with tenacious patience, conducting ongoing inclusive dialogs and engagement with community members, elected officials, and agency partners,

Given the ongoing pandemic and the public's strong interest in utilizing parks for physical and mental health relief, this campground provides a convenient getaway and a gateway to the history of the Ohlone peoples and thousands of acres of green space and extensive miles of trails for hiking and biking. Since its opening, the campground has been filled to capacity, heavily used by hundreds of hikers, bikers, and families touring in cars and RVs, up and down the coast of California. Coyote Hills and Don Edwards National Wildlife

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Refuge have seen over 10% increase in park visits. In fact, throughout our 73 Regional Parks, the typical annual park visitation of 25 million went up by 30% in 2020-2021 (400% in some popular parks!) with 50% increase in trail use. Truly, Parks Make Life Better! Park Save Lives!

**District Contact Name:** Mona Koh  
**District Contact Phone:** 1-888-327-2757  
**District Contact Email:** [mkoh@ebparks.org](mailto:mkoh@ebparks.org)

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**Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**

**Criteria:** Honors excellence in design and planning of newly constructed public park facilities. Demonstrates high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

**Nominee:** Streng Park

**District:** Fair Oaks Recreation & Park District



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#### District Submission:

The creation of Streng Park was a product of community involvement and cooperation. The land for the park was .8 acres of surplus property that was created by a road widening project done by Sacramento County. Sacramento County was willing to donate the land to FORPD if the property was developed into a Park. Local residents came to a FORPD Board meeting and passionately stated their need for a park in their neighborhood since the closest park required them to cross 6 lanes of traffic. After listened to the pleads of the children and families FORPD Board approved accepting the donation of land and dedicated funding for the Park using a mix of Impact Fees, Prop 68 funds, and General Obligation Bond funds from Measure J.

Public outreach for design of the Park was organized, led and facilitated by students from Meraki High School, a hands-on project based school. The High School Students that led the outreach presented their findings to FORPD's Board and the Board enthusiastically approved the design concept.

FORPD Park maintenance staff led the Team that wrote a grant to California Parks and Recreation Society's State wide Healthy Play Initiative Pathways for Play Trail Program with Playcore and playground equipment manufacturer GameTime provided a matching grant of \$83,400 toward the purchase of the playground equipment that was installed in the park.

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At the Board meeting that the name of the park was to be voted on the neighborhood residents showed up in force and wholeheartedly supported naming the park after Jim Streng. Jim Streng is a current resident of the neighborhood, a past elected Supervisor of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors and was instrumental in the funding and building of the American River Parkway Foundation's Streng Volunteer Center.

The layout of Streng Park provides numerous opportunities for play and with lots of amenities in a compact space. There are custom social seating chairs and benches in the perfect locations to view play in motion. The play structures vary in style and difficulty to provide multiple levels of play for children of all ages. Incorporating an all age linear playground with a variety of active play components this Pocket Park plays bigger than it is.

Entry to the park occurs by either a set of stairs or an accessible pathway to allow entry for all. The park is energy conscientious with solar powered bollard light fixtures at entry points and solar powered irrigation controller. A pallet of low maintenance native plants encourages native insects and birds and limits the required visits for maintenance workers.

There is a natural play area with walking path around a log and boulder play area. Existing shade trees were kept for comfort on sunny days. Additional trees were added to create a natural screen to the street and neighboring properties.

The Park was designed by Verde Designs with construction management services by Innovative Construction Services and the General Contractor was Olympic Land Construction.

**District Contact Name:** Mike Aho  
**District Contact Phone:** 916-966-1036  
**District Contact Email:** [maho@fairoakspark.org](mailto:maho@fairoakspark.org)

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**Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**

**Criteria:** Honors excellence in design and planning of newly constructed public park facilities. Demonstrates high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

**Nominee:** Mia's Dream Come True Park

**District:** Hayward Area Recreation & Park District



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**District Submission:**

The Outstanding Facility was in operation and open to the public as of November 1, 2021.

In Alameda County alone, there are over 350,000 individuals with a physical or cognitive disability. Often, families with differently abled children feel isolated or left out when they are not able to participate in activities that other children do. When Mia's father, Daniel Vasquez, brought a sketch on the back of a napkin and a dream for an all-abilities playground for his daughter to enjoy in their community, the Hayward Area Recreation and Park District (H.A.R.D.) jumped at the opportunity to collaborate with the community to

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create this special place. Mia was born with a rare type of Cerebral Palsy and is in a wheelchair. The Vasquez Family had received \$5,000 from the Make-a-Wish Foundation as seed money for this facility. Mia's story energized an entire community to rally around the project and bring it to life. In a once empty park, occupied by a handful of loitering individuals, Mia's Dream now receives 600-800 visitors each weekend. And the little girl who was told she would not survive her first year of life, was able to celebrate her 13<sup>th</sup> birthday at Mia's Dream Come True Playground with a group of her friends at the soft opening.

Mia's Dream Come True Playground is an all-inclusive playground that fosters play and learning through all five senses, it celebrates the rich history of Hayward and offers children of all abilities a chance to access every feature on the playground and play inclusively among their peers. Additionally, bringing this unique project to the severely underserved area of South Hayward was no coincidence. Tennyson Park needed renovation and had become overrun with crime due to the lack of facilities. The playground was intended to activate the space and provide positive alternatives for youth. Mia's Dream Come True Playground truly makes life better for the South Hayward community and for children of all abilities in the region who have found a playground that addresses all their needs.

Designing a playground for children with special needs required several important elements. The first goal was to ensure content experts were a part of the design process. This included parents of children with special needs, adults with disabilities, medical personnel who had knowledge of how play activates and enhances the five senses and recreation specialists. Research was done through a county-wide health assessment to determine the varying types of prominent disabilities and how best to address these needs. To help with design, HARD leveraged the Vasquez's network which included families of children with special needs to establish a working group. The group truly embraced the public process and participated in HARD's four community meetings that solicited input on how to best meet community needs and remains in place to weigh in on current programming and outreach.

HARD worked with multiple individuals and community groups to raise funds for the \$7.1 million playground. The City of Hayward-centered theme and Mia's story garnered enormous support from the community. HARD was awarded a significant amount of grant monies, including over \$1 million in CDBG grants from the City of Hayward. \$4.9 million from the measure F1 bond was utilized for the project. Major contributors included Kaiser Permanente, Fremont Bank, The HARD Foundation, NRPA/Disney, Lucille Packard Foundation, Eden Health District, Alameda County, and the Hayward Rotary. When Mia's family attended donor meetings to share their vision of how children like Mia would benefit from a special needs playground, partners became deeply invested in the project and were excited to fund specific elements of Mia's Dream with naming opportunities.

There were also countless numbers of individual donors who put forth contributions big

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and small and were recognized on painted books on the bookshelves at the playground entry or throughout the playground on plaques. Additionally, the Hayward Library and members from the community donated books for the lending library.

Mia's Dream Come True Playground is the result of creative collaborations with the community and other jurisdictions. The fact that the H.A.R.D. Foundation, H.A.R.D.'s fundraising arm, was able to garner support in the community and raise over \$1 million for the project, shows how beneficial community partnerships are in strengthening community and moving important causes forward. Lastly, the project encompasses HARD's strategic goal of addressing equity and improving accessibility in all areas of the district and delivers on the belief that recreation is a basic human right for all.

#### **Video**

[Mia's Dream Come True Playground - YouTube](#)

**District Contact Name:** James Wheeler

**District Contact Phone:** 510-881-6700

**District Contact Email:** whej@haywardrec.org

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**Outstanding New Facility - Nominee**

**Criteria:** Honors excellence in design and planning of newly constructed public park facilities. Demonstrates high standards of quality, versatility, accessibility, and community involvement.

**Nominee:** Heritage Lake Sports Park

**District:** Valley-Wide Recreation & Park District



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**District Submission:**

Heritage Lake Sports Park in Menifee opened in December 2020 as Valley-Wide Recreation and Park District's 70<sup>th</sup> park and quickly became one of the most visited.

The beautiful facility park covers 20 acres and includes six lighted soccer fields; two lighted pickleball courts; three lighted tennis courts; three lighted full basketball courts; two restroom buildings (one with concessions); tot lots, a fitness trail and gazebos.

The park, one of the five largest in the District, was constructed in partnership between Valley-Wide and Lennar Homes. It was completed and opened during the Coronavirus pandemic.

Heritage Lake Sports Park is in a growing area within the Valley-Wide District. The Heritage Lake community has thousands of homes, with many more built or being built close by. Thousands of people visit daily to use the many amenities.

**District Contact Name:** Dean Wetter  
**District Contact Phone:** 951-654-1505  
**District Contact Email:** dean@gorecreation.org