



**COUNTY OF SAN MATEO**  
Parks Department



**DATE:** November 20, 2014

**COMMISSION MEETING DATE:** December 4, 2014

**TO:** Parks and Recreation Commission  
**FROM:** Cecily Harris, Development Consultant  
**SUBJECT:** Commemorative Picnic Table Program

**RECOMMENDATION**

Receive and approve proposed Appendix G, Commemorative Picnic Table Program, to Policy 301: *Guidelines for Donations, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions*.

**BACKGROUND**

In 1998, the *Guidelines for Donation, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions* was developed by the Parks Department to provide suitable acknowledgement for donors' contributions. Policies were developed in order to protect park resources, values, and the visitor experience and the recognition and utilization of contributions to respect the dignity, needs, Master Plans, priorities, and focus of the various parks.

The Department now accepts donations for commemorative benches to recognize or memorialize individuals, groups, or significant historical individuals or events provided that such individuals or events were related to the park unit or local community. Appendix B of the Guidelines describes commemorative bench donations, types of benches, plaque wording, location of benches, term of donation, qualifying donations and re-dedication.

For several years, people have contacted Park Rangers with questions about other commemorative site amenity opportunities. Meetings were held with Park Rangers in 2011, 2013, and 2014 to discuss the existing inventory of picnic tables, about the feasibility of a commemorative picnic table program and to select standard commemorative tables to be used throughout San Mateo County Parks.

**DISCUSSION**

Currently, there are over 1,242 tables located in reservable or drop in locations and can be found singly or in clusters of three to five tables in day camps, group camps, picnic shelters, picnic areas, parking lots and at trailheads. Depending on the park location and intended use, tables are of many different sizes, shapes and manufacture. They are fabricated in concrete, wood/concrete, wood/ metal or just wood. They are round, square or rectangular.

A new proposed Appendix G, Commemorative Picnic Table Program (Attachment A) would provide guidance for Park staff to follow when contacted by potential donors of funds for commemorative tables. Commemorative picnic tables will be installed within individual park units in accordance with the park's Development Plan, Master Plan or an approved list of suitable drop-in, group picnic area, youth camp or picnic shelter locations as developed by San Mateo County Parks, or an approved list of suitable picnic tables locations as developed by the Department. Locations with existing picnic tables can be dedicated with a new accessible or non-accessible table and plaque.



Concrete Picnic Table

**FISCAL IMPACT**

The cost of purchasing commemorative picnic tables and plaques, and ten years of site and table maintenance will be fully offset by picnic table program donations. All donations for commemorative picnic tables will be deposited and expended from the 04073 Trust Fund.

**Attachment A**

**(Proposed) APPENDIX G**

**COMMEMORATIVE PICNIC TABLE DONATIONS**

1. PICNIC TABLE DONATIONS – San Mateo County Parks will accept donations for picnic tables to recognize or memorialize individuals, groups, or significant historical individuals or events provided that such individuals or events were related to the park unit or local community, and provided that all other provisions of the Guidelines for Donation, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions are met. The Director has the authority to approve or deny any picnic table donation based on the appropriateness of the donation to the park unit, the relationship between the park and the person, group or event to be honored or memorialized, and the effect of the donation on the natural features, aesthetics, historical and/or cultural nature of the requested location.

1. A. Picnic table donations commemorating commercial products, political parties, activist groups, or non-profit corporations involved in lobbying at any level of government, for profit corporations, or memorials containing endorsements of products or services, or that otherwise may be construed to be advertising or commercial promotion are prohibited.

2. TYPES OF PICNIC TABLES – Picnic tables must be of a size, design and construction which, in the opinion of the Director, are complementary to the general architectural design, natural features, historical and/or cultural traditions of the park unit, the area within the park, in which it will be installed, and the nature and subject of the commemoration.

2. A. The picnic tables should be limited to Douglas fir table boards with metal or concrete bases or concrete. The sizes and styles of tables should be standardized throughout County Parks, to reduce costs associated with obtaining and/or maintaining a large stock of diverse replacement parts or hardware. By law, 50% of County Park picnic tables need to be accessible to all users so a model that can be purchased in either configuration is desirable.

2. B. Wooden picnic tables should be constructed of Redwood or Douglas fir. All metal work should be finished with dark brown powder-coated paint.

2. C. Concrete picnic tables should be constructed in one piece.

2. D. All picnic table designs and specifications are subject to the review of the Park Superintendent and approval of the Director.

2. E. County Parks will develop a list of approved picnic table styles and manufacturers for approval by the Director. Prospective donors will be shown which picnic table configurations are available in each park unit and area. This information may be included in a donation or gift catalog developed by County Parks.

2. F. Picnic tables will have a brass-tone acrylic plaque no larger than 3” by 12” x ¼” attached to the end of a table board by epoxy and/or concealed through-bolts. Alternatively, the plaque may be mounted in another location when the picnic table is of concrete. Plaques shall be inlaid into the wood or concrete so that there are no projecting edges or corners to snag clothing or cause injuries.

2. G. Plaque wording should follow one of the following three formats:

In Memory of  
John Doe  
1998

In Memory of  
The Doe Family  
1998

Dedicated to  
John Doe  
1998

After adoption of standard plaque wording by the Park Superintendent, other wording may be approved by the Director on a case by case basis. In cases where non-standard wording is requested by the donor, the Director may decide that such changes are appropriate and provide one or more alternative compositions acceptable to San Mateo County Parks for the donor’s selection.

The Director may submit the plaque wording commemorating a historical event to the San Mateo County Historical Association for review and comment. The Director has the discretionary authority to accept, reject or edit the content of any commemorative plaque as he or she may deem necessary.

2. G. The Director may accept other types and configurations of picnic tables at his or her discretion on a case by case basis, providing that there is a compelling reason for such variance from these guidelines.

3. LOCATION OF PICNIC TABLES – Picnic tables will be installed within individual park units in accordance with the park’s Development Plan, Master Plan or an approved list of suitable drop-in, group picnic area, youth camp or picnic shelter locations as developed by San Mateo County Parks. Locations with existing picnic tables can be dedicated with a new accessible or non-accessible table and plaque.

3. A. Picnic tables should only be located in areas with appropriate grill, trash / recycling receptacles, and restroom facilities. Picnic tables should not be the focal point of an area; rather they should support a visitor’s enjoyment and appreciation of the natural, historical or other features by the area or park. Picnic tables will be situated in existing drop-in, reservable group, shelter, and youth camp locations or in new locations approved by the Director.

3. B. Picnic tables should be placed in groupings that support drop-in or reserved site usage based on the location, historical use of area or new demand based on the addition of new facilities.

3. C. Picnic tables should not be placed where they might attract activity that would damage natural resources, such as in a location to which visitors would make a new path through a pristine or sensitive area, or in a location at which litter might cause particular maintenance problems for a pristine or sensitive area. Picnic tables should also not be placed where they may create an unsafe condition, such as offering a platform for children to stand on in order to climb a tree, or too close to trails or creeks.

3. D. Reservable or drop-in picnic areas should have a suitable number of accessible tables, pathways and parking to meet Americans with Disability Act guidelines.

3. E. Any new picnic table locations should be placed upon review by the Parks Superintendent, and the approval of the Director for conformity with these guidelines, except that approved picnic table designs may be installed at sites on a list of approved picnic table locations by San Mateo County Parks without further review.

4. TERM OF DONATION -- Commemorative picnic tables shall be maintained for a period of 10 years. After 10 years the original donor may rededicate the table after contributing an additional minimum donation, for a second 10 year term. Should the original donor decline to rededicate an existing table, or fail to notify San Mateo County Parks of an intent to rededicate an existing picnic table within 60 days of the expiration of the original ten year term, the picnic table site may be offered to the public for dedication or withdrawn from the commemorative picnic table inventory if desired by the Parks Superintendent.

During the ten year term, San Mateo County Parks will provide regular maintenance of the picnic table which may include staining the table boards, repairing and replacing boards or hardware and the plaque. In addition to maintenance, San Mateo County Parks will make repairs that are necessary due to vandalism to the picnic table or plaque.

4. A. Picnic tables with expired dedication terms shall have the board bearing the plaque replaced with a plain board or a plaque inset in concrete removed until such time as another donor is found. The original plaque will be returned to the donor, or retained at the administrative office for a period of one year after expiration. If not claimed by the donor after one year, an unclaimed plaque may be recycled. Picnic tables offered for rededication shall be refurbished and have a new plaque installed if necessary.

4. B. The maximum term for any single memorial picnic table is 20 years, after which the picnic table site shall be offered to the public for dedication.

4. C. All picnic table memorials donated prior to the original adoption of these Guidelines are subject to sunset after five years has passed from the date of adoption of these Guidelines. The donor will be invited to rededicate the commemorative picnic table. All such picnic table

memorials may be renewed, or upgraded as provided for in Section 5. The Director, Parks Commission, or Board of Supervisors may waive the sunset provision of these Guidelines for any existing picnic table.

5. QUALIFYING DONATIONS -- The Director shall annually review and recommend the donation structure for dedicating commemorative picnic tables. Generally, there shall be two levels of donations and one opportunity for re-dedication:

🌲 There will be a minimum qualifying donation which provides a ten year term of dedication for a bench within a County park.

🌲 Sustaining donations will provide for a 20 year term of dedication.

🌲 To rededicate a picnic table, a reduced qualifying donation will cover an additional ten years of dedication.

The Director may annually review and adjust the required minimum donation for dedication of a picnic table, or alter or otherwise change the terms of dedication after notifying the Parks Commission. Any change will only affect picnic table donations made after such changes become effective.

## 6. RE-DEDICATION

After a period of ten years, the donor will be asked if they wish to continue their support of the commemorative picnic table. If the picnic table is abandoned by a donor, San Mateo County Parks reserves the right to maintain, rededicate, or remove the commemorative bench at its sole discretion. As a courtesy, donors would be notified of the intent to re-dedicate or remove a memorial and allowed a two-month grace period to rededicate the picnic table.

A rededication of the picnic table covers the costs of replacing table boards and provides for ten additional years of maintenance and materials. The donor is also offered an opportunity to change the wording on the plaque.