

Guidelines for Donation, Memorial and Sponsorship Contributions

APPENDIX B-Revised April 1, 2010 and February 6, 2014

COMMEMORATIVE BENCH DONATIONS

1. BENCH DONATIONS -- The Parks Department will accept donations for 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, 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 bench 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. Bench 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.

1. B. Only one bench shall be dedicated to any single person, family, group, or historical person or event within the units of the San Mateo County Parks Department, unless there is a compelling reason for additional dedications as shall be determined by the Director.

2. TYPES OF BENCHES -- Benches 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 benches should be limited to clear heart redwood. The sizes and styles of benches should be standardized throughout the Department, to reduce costs associated with obtaining and/or maintaining a large stock of diverse replacement parts or hardware.

2. B. Wooden benches should be constructed of clear heart redwood. All metal work should be finished with dark brown powder-coated paint.

2. C. All bench designs and specifications are subject to the review of the Parks Superintendent and approval of the Director.

2. D. The Department will develop a list of approved bench styles and manufacturers for approval by the Director that can be selected by prospective donors. This information may be included in a donation or gift catalog developed by the Department.

2. E. Benches will have a brass-tone acrylic plaque no larger than 3" by 12" x 1/4" attached to the backrest of the bench on the second from the top rail by epoxy and/or concealed through-bolts. Alternatively, the plaque may be mounted in the center of the bench backrest when the bench is

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of solid construction. Plaques shall be inlaid into the wood or plastic members so that there are no projecting edges or corners to snag clothing or cause injuries.

2. F. 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 Commission, 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 the Department for the donor's selection.

The Director may submit the 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 benches 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 BENCHES -- Benches will be installed within the individual park units in accordance with the park's Development Plan, Master Plan or an approved list of suitable bench locations as developed by the Department.

3. A. Benches should only be located in those areas where they will serve as an appropriate resting place, i.e., at the summit of a steep trail, at an interval along a trail, walkway or esplanade, or at a scenic overlook or other vista point, etc. Benches should not provide the focal point of an area, rather they should offer a comfortable place to enjoy the natural, historical or other features by the area or park.

3. B. Benches should be placed at an interval appropriate to the park, or the specific area within the park. For example, benches placed around a turf area in an urban park could be spaced closer than those placed along a trail through a wilderness area. Generally, benches in a natural setting should be placed at an interval where only one bench at a time can be seen.

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3. C. Benches should not be placed where they might attract traffic or 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. Benches 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 walkways or other traffic lanes.

3. D. All benches should only be placed upon review of the Parks Superintendent, and the approval of the Director for conformity with these guidelines, except that approved bench designs may be installed at sites on a list of approved bench locations by the Department without further review.

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


During the 10 year term, the Department will provide regular maintenance of the bench which may include staining the bench boards, repairing and replacing boards or hardware and the plaque. In addition to maintenance, the Department will make repairs that are necessary due to vandalism to the bench or plaque.

4. A. Benches with expired dedication terms shall have the board bearing the plaque replaced with a plain board 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. Benches offered for rededication shall be refurbished and have a new plaque installed if necessary.

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


4. C. All bench 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 bench. All such bench 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 bench.

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

 There will be a minimum qualifying donation which provides a 10 year term of dedication for a bench within a County park.

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

 To rededicate a bench, a minimum qualifying donation will provide an additional 10 years of dedication.

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

6. RE-DEDICATION

After a period of 10 years, the donor will be asked if they wish to continue their support of the commemorative bench. If the bench is abandoned by a donor, the Parks Department reserves the right to maintain, re-dedicate, or remove the commemorative bench at its sole discretion. As a courtesy, donors would be notified of the intent to rededicate or remove a memorial and allowed a two-month grace period to rededicate the bench.

A rededication of the bench covers the costs of replacing bench boards and provides for 10 additional years of maintenance and materials. The donor is also offered an opportunity to change the wording on the plaque.

Financial Process for Commemorative Bench Program Donations

I. New Commemorative Bench

After a donor and Supervisory Park Ranger have agreed upon a location from the approved available bench site list for installation of a commemorative bench and a letter has been received by the Department from the donor clarifying their understanding of the specific bench location, wording on the plaque and terms of the donation, payment can be submitted. The terms of the donation explain that the donation pays for the bench purchase, delivery freight, sales tax, plaque, and installation by Department staff as well as 10 years of maintenance of the bench. The current minimum donation level for a new commemorative bench is \$5,000. If the donor wishes to do two 10 year dedications initially, the cost would be \$8,500. This donation and any other Bench Program donations are deposited into the BENCH Program trust fund. When full payment for the bench donation has been received by check, money order or credit card, it will be deposited into the 04074 BENCH Program Trust Fund.

The Supervisory Park Ranger is then notified by Parks administrative staff that the bench can be ordered. The bench is ordered by the Supervisory Park Ranger. Once the bench has been received and the packing slip has been approved for payment, the invoice is paid and charged to the BENCH Job Org.

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Installation, labor and materials during the 10 year maintenance period for the bench will also be charged to the BENCH Program Job Org. In addition, any repairs or replacement of parts due to vandalism will be undertaken by the Department.

Annually, the Department's fiscal officer will journal funds from the 04074 Trust Fund to the BENCH Program Job Org to reimburse the Parks General Fund Budget for bench installation or maintenance activity during the year.

II. Rededicated Commemorative Bench

Unless a donor has secured the commemorative bench for two 10 year bench dedications initially, after 10 years, a donor will be asked if he/she wants to dedicate the bench for an additional period of 10 years. The rededication donation will cover the cost of ordering and replacing the redwood bench boards and an additional 10 years of maintenance and materials. At the beginning of the rededication, the donor can change the wording on the plaque.

If the donor does want to rededicate, he/she is given an opportunity to pay by check, money order or by credit card. The current minimum donation for a rededicated commemorative bench is \$5,000.

Once the new donation has been received, the Supervisory Park Ranger will be asked to order a new set of redwood boards and attachment hardware from the manufacturer. The plaque will be removed and reinstalled on the new boards or replaced if in poor condition.

If the donor does not want to rededicate, there are two choices for the Department to consider.

- 1) The Department may want to remove the plaque and offer the bench site for a new commemorative bench.
- 2) The Department may want to remove the bench from potential commemorative bench dedication if the site is no longer suitable.

If the donor does not want to rededicate, the Department will remove the brass plaque and replace any board(s) on the bench. The plaque will be offered to the donor.

III. Commemorative Bench Program Tracking

Parks administrative staff will maintain a list of all dedicated benches and sites available for dedication. This list will be updated periodically. Administrative staff will also coordinate correspondence such as thank you letters and re-dedication letters.

The Department's fiscal officer will review and approve all expenditures from the BENCH Program Trust Fund.