



City of Mill Valley Memorial and Donation Policy

1 **Purpose:** The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines, standards and procedures for the
2 installation and care of donated park improvements. These donations may include, but are not limited
3 to, park benches, *Steps, Lanes, and Paths* (emergency evacuation and community pathways), picnic
4 tables, drinking fountains, bike racks, play equipment and other types of park trails accessories. This
5 policy is also designed to provide guidelines for individuals or groups should they desire to decorate,
6 landscape or adorn a donation, such as a tree, bench, or picnic table on city owned property. This
7 policy does not apply to buildings, land or public art. Donations under these categories are covered
8 under separate policies.

9

10 *The City desires to encourage donations while at the same time manage aesthetic impacts and mitigate*
11 *ongoing maintenance cost.* The development of public facilities is expected to be the result of careful
12 planning and quality construction. In addition, public facilities are expected to be maintained to a
13 standard acceptable to the community.

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15 Guidelines established by this policy will apply to all donations made after the effective date of this
16 policy. Donations made prior to the adoption of this policy shall be subject to applicable sections of this
17 policy. Standards established by this policy will apply to purchased equipment, installation techniques,
18 donation acknowledgements, decoration and long-term care of all donations made after the adoption
19 of this policy.

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GUIDELINES FOR DONATIONS

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23 *The City and the community have an interest in ensuring the best appearance and aesthetic quality of*
24 *their public facilities.*

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26 Park accessories and their associated donation acknowledgments should reflect the character of the
27 park or facility in which they are installed. All park elements will be installed in such a manner that will
28 not substantially change the character of a facility or its intended use. Decoration, ornamentation, and
29 adornment of donated elements can interfere with routine maintenance and the appearance of the
30 donated item if not cared for on a regular basis and installed properly. Decorations which may be
31 allowed on a temporary basis for a limited time should not interfere with the use of nearby public

32 space, nor represent a hazard to motorists, bicyclist or pedestrians. The donor
33 shall remove any temporary decorations within a reasonable amount of time as they can weather, and
34 become unattractive and detract from the image of the community.

35 **Materials:** If landscaping around trees is desired, donors are encouraged to utilize natural materials
36 and drought tolerant plants. Prior approval of the landscaped area must be obtained from the
37 Operations Superintendent.

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39 **STANDARDS FOR NEW DONATIONS**

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41 *The City and the community have an interest in ensuring that park elements purchased and installed be*
42 *of high quality related to durability and ease of maintenance.*

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44 **Repair:** The community has an interest in ensuring that all park elements remain in good repair. In
45 addition, the public has an interest in ensuring that the short and long-term repair costs are
46 reasonable. Donated park elements must be of high quality to ensure a long life, be resistant to the
47 elements, wear and tear, and to acts of vandalism, in as much as is possible.

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49 **Cost:** The donation will cover the cost of purchase, installation, and basic maintenance for the life
50 cycle of the accessory. The City also has an interest in ensuring that ongoing maintenance costs do not
51 negatively impact the resources or staff time available for maintenance of other City park facilities. All
52 accessories have a life expectancy. At some point in time, the City will need to modify, relocate or
53 remove the accessory due to wear, damage or regulatory requirement. City staff will be responsible for
54 the purchase, installation, repair and maintenance of all park elements.

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56 **PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A DONATION**

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58 *The City's Department of Public Works (DPW) will manage all donations located on City park property,*
59 *with the assistance of the Operation staff.*

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61 **Application:** The donor must contact DPW to determine whether a donation may be accepted based
62 upon criteria contained in this policy. If a donation can be accepted, the donor will complete an
63 application form. Applications are available online, through the mail or in-person at City Hall.
64 Completed applications and payment will be made to DPW for review and processing.

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66 **CRITERIA FOR ACCEPTANCE**

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68 **Park Master Plans:** When a park has a Master Plan, donations must adhere to, or not conflict, with any
69 part of the plan. If a plan exists, but does not identify a particular park element proposed for donation,
70 the City may accept the donation under certain conditions. Under this circumstance the donation must
71 1) meet a true need of the facility, 2) not interfere with the intended current or future use, of the
72 facility and 3) not require the relocation of other equipment, or infrastructure, to accommodate the
73 donation. In the opinion of the City, a facility may be determined to be fully developed and the

74 opportunity for donations would not be available.

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76 **Donation Acknowledgements/Memorial Plaques:** Donation acknowledgments and memorial plaques,
77 as well as the text, must be approved by the City. They must be directly affixed to the item being
78 donated. Acknowledgements/memorial plaques will be a maximum 5 x 7 inches or 2 x 16 inches in size,
79 and be manufactured by a City-approved vendor to ensure highest quality, life and durability.
80 Exceptions for special projects are made through Park and Recreation Commission approval. Plaques
81 are to be made of bronze and managed by the City.

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- 83 • In park bench applications, donation acknowledgment can be inset into the seat back of the
84 bench or a plaque can be securely imbedded into the seat back. Park bench slats will be made
85 with recycled plastic or recycled/reused redwood, for durability, with the exception of replacing
86 an existing bench that matches other benches within a defined area.
- 87 • Since plaques can interfere with the growth or maintenance of a tree, the City will provide a
88 certificate of appreciation to the donor once the tree has been planted.
- 89 • In picnic table applications, the donation acknowledgment will be imbedded into the concrete
90 pad installed under the picnic table or into the table face if there is not a concrete pad.
- 91 • In concrete step applications, a standard oval Dipsea-style bronze plaque will be affixed to a
92 specific step riser.
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POLICIES FOR SPECIFIC ACCESSORIES

98 Park benches, picnic tables, drinking fountains, bike racks and playground components may be sited in
99 locations approved by both the City and the Parks and Recreation Commission in accordance with an
100 available site plan. Items donated must be of a product approved by the City and meeting standards
101 for safety and accessibility. These items become City property at time of purchase.

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BENCHES and PICNIC TABLES

Park Benches and picnic tables will be made from recycled resin/plastic materials or sustainably-

105 harvested natural wood. Placement of benches and tables on City property or within the City right of
106 way is controlled by and limited to areas determined by the City.

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SLPs

109 The City's *Steps, Lanes and Paths* program includes two types of improvements: 1) rustic steps and
110 trails built into steep upper hillsides to provide emergency evacuation; 2) improvement of community
111 steps in the lower elevations to promote safe walking paths to schools and other key community
112 assets. Community Steps are generally upgraded to concrete. Plaques may be inset into the concrete
113 risers and must adhere to the standards stated above.

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TREES

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117 Landscaping and plant selection for park facilities must adhere to specific climate, elevation and
118 habitat requirements. Accordingly, the size and species of tree or trees donated shall be limited to
119 those determined by the City Arborist. All tree placements must have a City-approved irrigation plan.

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121 City maintenance of street trees is limited to trimming of branches for traffic and other safety reasons.
122 The City does not maintain trees in open space areas.

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MONUMENTS

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126 Upright monuments or monuments resembling those typically found in cemeteries may not be
127 installed at any City park facility. Exceptions to this policy are the Veteran's memorials and monuments
128 installed by the City commemorating the history and/or dedication of a park facility.

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CONDITIONS

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132 **Installation:** Installation of donated park elements, including the donor acknowledgement/memorial
133 plaques, will be completed by City personnel. The installation will be scheduled, at a time and date as
134 determined by the Operations Superintendent, so as not to unnecessarily interfere with routine park
135 maintenance activities.

136

137 Once a donation and acknowledgement is implemented, the City cannot notify the donor in the future
138 if the accessory, tree or landscaping must be modified, relocated or removed. Notification of this type
139 would impose too great a burden on resources. This notification policy applies to both existing and
140 new donations.

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MAINTENANCE AND REPAIR

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143 *The long term care and maintenance of donated park elements is important to both donors*
144 *and the City.*

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146 ***Maintenance of donated landscaping*** is the responsibility of the donor. All landscaped sites will be

147 maintained weed and debris free. All dead flowers and shrubs will be removed and disposed of by the
148 donor. Donors must not apply pesticides, fertilizers, or herbicides. Requests for such applications can
149 be made to DPW.

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151 Because landscaping installed in and around picnic tables and benches can be trampled, landscaping
152 shall not be done around site furniture. If a donor determines that he or she can no longer maintain
153 the donor site, the donor is requested to contact the City in order that City staff may restore the site to
154 its original condition.

155
156 **Maintenance of donated trees** is the responsibility of the City. However, the City is not responsible for
157 replacing trees damaged by natural causes such as storms or disease. The City retains the right to trim
158 or remove any tree on public property if necessary and in the public interest, as determined by DPW.
159 The City will take reasonable steps to ensure a donated tree's good health. Trees have variable
160 lifespans and expectations are that it will at some point need to be removed if a danger to the public.

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162 **Maintenance of accessories:** The City will determine the level of maintenance required for the
163 donated property based upon available budget funding and the type of care needed to reasonably
164 maintain the donation or until such time the City determines that it must be removed and/or
165 relocated. Memorial plaques may be kept by the City even if the accessory is retired, but is not
166 guaranteed.

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168 The City will attempt to restore to good appearance any plaque that has been damaged. However,
169 some plaques may be damaged beyond repair and require removal. The City cannot use funds to
170 purchase a replacement of plaques that are damaged or stolen.

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172 The City reserves the right to exclude certain donations from this policy that are deemed not
173 appropriate or are not within the City's ability to manage risk.

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175 *Adopted and approved by the City of Mill Valley, Parks and Recreation Commission on:*
176 *(Date and signatures)*