



# LAS • CRUCES

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

ADOPTED JULY 1, 2019





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# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed by the City of Las Cruces with the technical assistance of Halff Associates, Inc. A special thanks goes out to the many residents, landowners, business owners, community leaders and others for their insight and support throughout the duration of this study. The following individuals are recognized for their significant contributions to the preparation of the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan Update 2019.

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## ABBREVIATIONS

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ATP = Active Transportation Plan	MPO = Metropolitan Planning Organization
CAPRA = Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies	MVEDA = Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance
CIAC = Capital Improvements Advisory Committee	NMDOT = New Mexico Department of Transportation
CIP = Capital Improvements Plan	NMSU = New Mexico State University
EBID = Elephant Butte Irrigation District	NRPA = National Recreation and Parks Association
FTE = Full Time Employees	NUCFAC = National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council
GO Bond = General Obligation Bond	O&M = Operations and Maintenance
LOS = Level of Service	PRAB = Parks and Recreation Advisory Board
LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund	TDR = Transfer Development Rights
NAMA = National Automatic Merchandising Association	TIDD = Tax Increment Development District
MORE = Maintenance, Operations, Revenue, and Expenses	UPARR = Urban Park and Recreation Recovery
	USBRS = United States Bicycle Route System



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



The 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been prepared to guide the delivery of municipal parks and recreation services to the residents of Las Cruces in an efficient and equitable manner. This Master Plan replaces the City's 2012 parks and recreation master plan and establishes a vision for the role that parks and recreation will serve in promoting community prosperity and personal happiness:

*The City of Las Cruces park system will be a defining community asset that fosters city-wide prosperity and increases personal happiness through the provision of park lands and facilities that are accessible and interwoven throughout our city, links us to our natural setting and environmental assets, and offers customized recreational offerings to meet the diverse needs of our residents and visitors.*

VISION STATEMENT, LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN (2019)

To advance the community's parks and recreation vision this Plan includes eight (8) goals addressing: **1)** Parkland acquisition and development; **2)** Community connectivity; **3)** Park amenities; **4)** Parkland and facility maintenance; **5)** Park design and programming; **6)** Recreational programs; **7)** Community outreach and partnerships; and, **8)** Administration and management. Master Plan goals, and supporting objectives and actions, represent the City of Las Cruces' strategic approach for ensuring that City parks and recreation services continue to serve as key elements of a prosperous, healthy, and happy community.

## PLAN STRUCTURE

The 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan contains the following five (5) chapters:

- **CHAPTER 1, PURPOSE AND PLANNING CONTEXT.** Establishes the purpose of the Plan, and presents an overview of the master planning process.
- **CHAPTER 2, LAS CRUCES PARKS SYSTEM.** Provides a comprehensive inventory of the City's system-wide parkland, facility, program, and personnel assets.
- **CHAPTER 3, NEEDS ASSESSMENT.** Evaluates the City's current parkland and recreational facility level of service and provides future targets. Also assesses park system condition, and the efficiency of recreational program delivery, administration, and operations.
- **CHAPTER 4, PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS.** Utilizes the findings of the needs assessment to recommend a series of programmatic changes across all Plan topics. Actions may take the form of financial investments, operational changes, policies, regulations, and studies.
- **CHAPTER 5, IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM.** Establishes a recommended timeframe for Plan implementation, and provides direction on Plan administration and amendment.



## HOW TO USE THIS MASTER PLAN

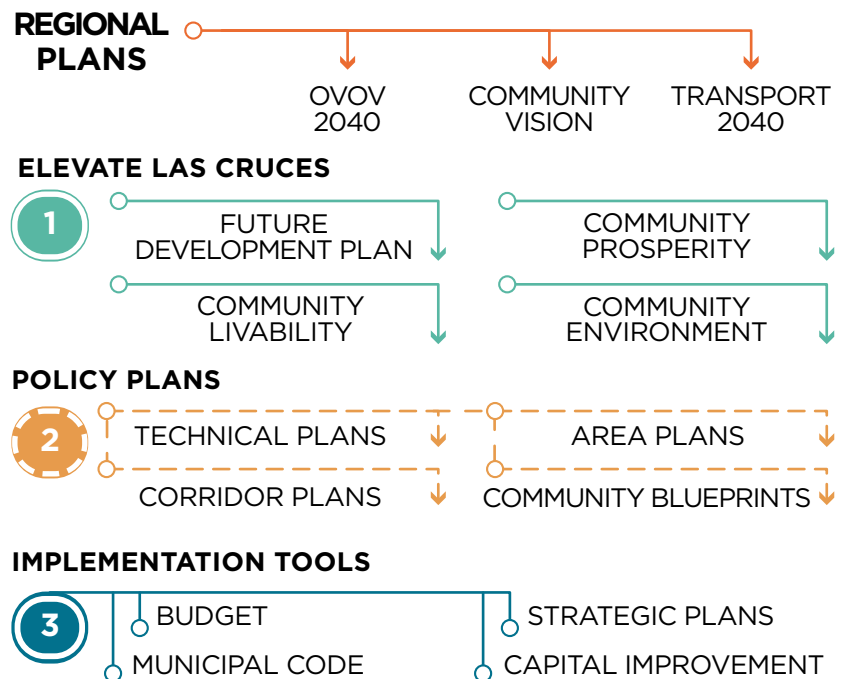
Multiple statewide, regional, and municipal planning reports that impact how Las Cruces has, or will, deliver parks, recreation, and open space services have been consulted during the master planning process. Where applicable, this Plan has been prepared to complement and advance overlapping themes, objectives, or actions presented within pre-existing planning reports. Where necessary, this Plan deviates from prior planning guidance or provides a more detailed approach for enhancing the delivery of municipal parks and recreation services.

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan may be described as a “policy plan” as outlined within the City’s municipal planning framework. More specifically, this Plan is a technical plan which offers a series of detailed and strategic actions by which Las Cruces will provide its residents with access to parkland, open space, recreational facilities, and recreational programs in an efficient and equitable manner. These actions are structured so that the City’s Parks and Recreation Department – identified as the Plan’s principal implementing agency - can measure the success of Plan implementation over the next 10+ years.

*The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an important “Level 2” policy plan that provides a strategic direction for the provision of parks and recreation services in relation to other topic-based and geographic-based plans. These plans collectively implement Las Cruces’ community vision embodied with the comprehensive plan.*

Finally, this Plan has been prepared in conjunction with the Las Cruces Impact Fee Study (2019) - which is included as an appendix to this report. The Study relies on the land use assumptions, growth projections, and parkland and recreational facility inventories compiled as part of this master planning process to calculate impact fees that should be applied to new development to maintain existing municipal levels of service for parks and recreation. This Plan is not dependent on the impact fee study to effectively advance most of the recommended actions contained herein, but any future adjustments to the City’s parks and recreation impact fees may require future amendments to the Master Plan.

Detailed instructions regarding Plan administration and amendment are contained in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.



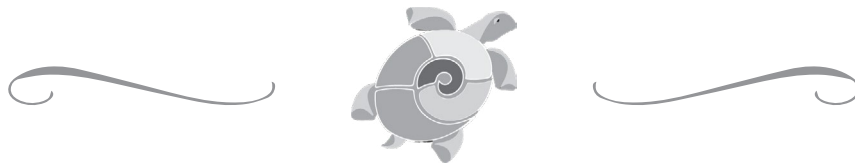
## MASTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

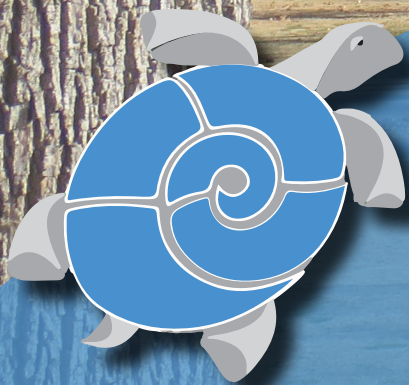
This Master Plan includes over 97 programmatic actions to improve the efficiency by which municipal parks and recreation services are provided to the public. Actions address all eight (8) Plan goals and provide strategic direction for the investment of future resources into the City's parks, recreation, and open space system. Plan actions also prioritize and address recreational themes and preferences that were identified by the residents and stakeholders who participated in the master planning process.

Although Las Cruces can leverage its municipal parks and recreation system to emphasize economic development through facility investments that promote events and athletic competition, this approach to parks and recreation system development was not a predominant theme during Plan preparation. Instead, this Plan's vision statement, goals, objectives, and actions reflect a local preference to emphasize parks and recreation investments that promote community development by providing park space, facilities and activities that address the day-to-day needs of Las Cruces. This Plan's recommendations will still support long-term economic development in Las Cruces, but will principally do so indirectly through investments that enhance Las Cruces' quality of life.

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department is the principal implementing agency for this Plan, but the Plan's implementation program (**Chapter 5**) identifies multiple municipal and non-municipal partners on whom the Parks and Recreation Department will rely to assist in Plan implementation. In addition, this Plan does not include a comprehensive list of recommended capital projects. Instead, the programmatic nature of most Plan recommendations informs the City of how future capital and non-capital projects may be proposed and structured.

Although this Plan considers municipal parks and recreation system needs for the next 25 years, its implementation program proposes actions that can be initiated within the next 10-year period. Regardless of how successful Plan implementation proves to be within that timeframe, the efficient and equitable long-term service delivery requires continual public dialogue.





# 1

## CHAPTER

# PURPOSE & PLANNING CONTEXT

LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*R.L. Young Park is a cherished public gathering space in the heart of Las Cruces.*

## SECTION 1:

---

### RELEVANCE OF PARKS AND RECREATION

Access to parks, open spaces, and recreational activities available within a community greatly influence resident quality of life. The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department oversees a multitude of public spaces for meeting and socialization, and appreciating the city's natural beauty and cultural heritage; as well as facilities and programs for exercise and active recreation which promote a shared community identity and pride.

The population of the city of Las Cruces continues to grow at a steady rate. The city's population increased by 31 percent between 2000 and 2010 - substantially exceeding the growth rates of Doña Ana County (20%) and the State of New Mexico (13%) during the same time frame. More recent estimates suggest that the city's growth rate over the last decade has remained consistent.

Las Cruces' growth is projected to continue over the course of the next several decades. The Geospatial and Population Studies Department at the University of New Mexico estimates the population of Las Cruces will add approximately 27,000 residents by 2040, increasing 26 percent. Recently adopted local plans and studies suggest similar city-wide growth.

Current and new residents have an expectation of services offered by the City. Rapid population growth in a limited time can strain city services and infrastructure. Services and infrastructure impacted include, parks, recreational programs, park facilities, roadways, water, wastewater, public safety, and more.

The 2012 *Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Parks and Recreation Master Plan & Park Impact Fee Update* presented multiple essential public benefits in having access to public parks which include the following:

- Physical activity makes people healthier.
- Physical activity increases with park access.
- Contact with the natural world improves physical and psychological health.
- Residential and commercial property values increase.
- Value is added to community and economic development sustainability.
- Benefits of tourism are enhanced.
- Trees are effective in improving air quality.
- Trees control storm water and reduce erosion.
- Crime and juvenile delinquency are reduced.
- Recreational opportunities for all ages are provided.
- Stable neighborhoods and strong neighborhoods are created.
- Children are happier, healthier, with access to frequent and varied outdoor play.

These acknowledged benefits are summarized in **Figure 1.1, Essential Benefits of Parks** (page 5).

## SECTION 2:

### MASTER PLAN PARAMETERS AND VISION

#### PURPOSE OF THE PLAN

The 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan provides updated and timely guidance on the provision of public park spaces and recreational opportunities to the residents of Las Cruces and visitors to the city. The Plan evaluates community preferences, parkland and facility distribution, community programs and events, system-wide conditions and maintenance, and municipal service delivery to ensure current and future residents of Las Cruces have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of a diverse parks and recreation system.

Key plan components include:

- Evaluation of regional and national trends in the delivery of parks and recreation services;
- Determination of the future level of service for park space by area and accessibility;
- Assessment of park condition to prioritize maintenance activities;
- Evaluation of the condition and availability of facilities and need for new facility development;
- Review of recreation programming and events, and recommend adjustments to meet public preferences;
- Evaluation of recreational partnerships; and
- Review of funding opportunities.

The findings related to the key plan components listed above are used to generate a system-level action plan for the future delivery of park space and recreation opportunities that maximize the benefits that parks can provide Las Cruces as identified in

**Figure 1.1, Essential Benefits of Parks.**

#### CAPITAL PROGRAMMING

This Plan includes recommendations on short-term and long-range capital investments and departmental budgeting. The Plan's recommended implementation program (**Chapter 5**) is structured to balance public needs and desires with the finite resources that can be applied toward the delivery of park and recreation services. Recommended investments within the Plan have been organized to correspond with projects identified in the City's capital improvements plan (CIP) and recently approved general obligation (GO) bond for park system service expansion. The Plan's implementation program *informs* the City of possible future adjustments to existing capital project lists but does not replace them. Amendment of park system capital project lists will require additional action independent of this planning process.

#### IMPACT FEE STUDY

The timing of this Master Plan update reflects the City's need to remain in compliance with the statutory requirements of the State of New Mexico regarding cyclical review and evaluation of the City's formula for assessing impact fees for parks and recreation, and related to growth caused by the new development. (More information on impact fees is located on page 144.) A separate impact fee study has been prepared in conjunction with and concurrent to this Plan. The 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study is located in **Appendix A**.

FIGURE 1.1, ESSENTIAL BENEFITS OF PARKS



**PARKS IMPROVE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING**

Parks provide opportunities for both active and passive recreation. Active recreation includes organized sports and physical activities and passive recreation activities includes hiking, wildlife viewing, etc.



**PARKS PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO BE INVOLVED**

Parks are places to socialize, engage members of the community, and meet new people. Social interactions help build safe, connected, and friendly communities.



**PARKS PROVIDE A SAFE HAVEN FOR YOUTH**

Parks and recreation programs can have a positive social impact as young people have the opportunity to socialize through organized or unstructured activities which assist in developing life skills.



**PARKS INCREASE TOURISM**

People will visit a community because of local attractions which may include park lands, open spaces, or event venues. Attracting visitors to Las Cruces via concerts, festivals, tournaments, etc. is a way to increase local revenue.



**PARKS CONTRIBUTE TO THE LOCAL ECONOMY**

Parks improve local economies by increasing residential property values through the Proximate Principle which states “people will pay more for a home when it is next to a park or green space.”



**PARKS PROMOTE CONSERVATION**

Parks and open spaces provide areas for native plantings and reclamation projects which can address issues with storm water runoff, retaining wildlife corridors, and linking built areas of the community to natural spaces.

## VISION STATEMENT

*The City of Las Cruces park system will be a defining community asset that fosters city-wide prosperity and increases personal happiness through the provision of park lands and facilities that are accessible and interwoven throughout our city, links us to our natural setting and environmental assets, and offers customized recreational offerings to meet the diverse needs of our residents and visitors.*

The City of Las Cruces' vision statement regarding parks and recreation services (above) re-affirms the City's commitment to investing in parks and recreation to serve as a cornerstone of elevating community-wide prosperity, and the health and welfare of residents.

The vision statement was prepared in consideration of the following: **A)** A review of on-line and person-to-person feedback received during the preliminary stages of the master planning process; and, **B)** A review of pre-existing mission and vision statements contained in other planning documents adopted by the City. These same considerations influenced the development of the supporting plan goals introduced on page 7.

The 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan vision statement is structured to align with the Parks and Recreation Department's current mission statement, and the vision and principles of the City's current and pending comprehensive plan documents. The following value statements are among those that influenced the new 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan vision statement and supporting goals:

### CONTRIBUTING VALUE STATEMENTS:

*"Las Cruces is a Livable Community. We invest in the services and amenities that provide our residents with feasible options to live, work, and play in Las Cruces regardless of personal means or stage in life. We will improve our residents' daily quality of life by increasing access to multiple transportation options, recreational and cultural amenities, and diverse housing types."*

*Elevate Las Cruces (Pending)*

*"The City of Las Cruces' vision is to establish a community which is supportive and pursues the furtherance of the quality of life residents and visitors envision and desire. In support of this, the City should endeavor to create a built environment which is compatible with and communicates sensitivity to the natural environment."*

*Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012)*

*"The goal of the Parks and Recreation Department is to expand park and recreation opportunities throughout the City and to provide competent, responsive and efficient maintenance services to enhance the appearance and functionality of City parks and recreation fields."*

*Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012)*

*"Within the Recreation Division, the Department aims to enhance the quality of life through the provision of leisure programming, services, and facilities to ensure customer satisfaction by meeting social, emotional and physical wellness of citizens."*

*Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2012)*

*"The mission of the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department, "The Fun Experts," is to provide dynamic customer-focused services to residents and visitors so they can experience a diverse, vibrant, prosperous, active, engaged, connected, happy, and inclusive community."*

*Parks and Recreation Department, Strategic Business Plan (2017)*



## MASTER PLAN GOALS

The sentiments contained in the 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan vision statement are common among many American communities – regardless of size, demographics, or region. We all desire quality public spaces that can alternatively serve as places for active engagement with our neighbors or personal contemplation.

The method by which each community will meet these desires may differ greatly however based on local values and means. The City of Las Cruces will implement its vision for parks and recreational services by implementing an action plan built around the eight (8) goals listed below.

**PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.** Provide an increased parkland level of service by adding new park space that is widely distributed throughout the city and by ensuring that the provision and development of new parkland occurs concurrent with new development.

**COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY.** Provide a community-wide system of multi-use trails that support residents' and visitors' fitness, recreation, and transportation needs, while linking community destinations such as parks, open space, schools, and other community activity centers.

**PARK AMENITIES.** Increase community-wide recreational choice by incorporating new indoor and outdoor facilities into the municipal park system portfolio.

**PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE.** Provide a high level of park land and facility maintenance that places equal emphasis on landscapes, hard-scapes, and structures.

**PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING.** Increase residents' and visitors' enjoyment of existing and new park spaces through the application of standard park design and programming practices.

**RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS.** Increase public accessibility to recreational opportunities by offering a diverse suite of programs that cater to varying community interests, ages, and abilities.

**COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS.** Connect residents and visitors to recreational space and programs through a robust and sustained public outreach effort, and by leveraging partnerships with other recreational, educational, and human service providers.

**ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT.** Improve the efficiency of park and recreation service delivery by aligning administrative and operational practices with Master Plan goals.

## REGIONAL CONTEXT

Las Cruces is located in south central New Mexico approximately 47 miles from El Paso, Texas and 23 miles north of the Texas state line. The City is positioned at the crossroads of Interstate 25 and Interstate 10 and is the county seat for Doña Ana County. For statistical purposes, Las Cruces is part of the El Paso / Las Cruces combined statistical area, and is also a part of the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization. See **Map 1.1, Regional Map.**

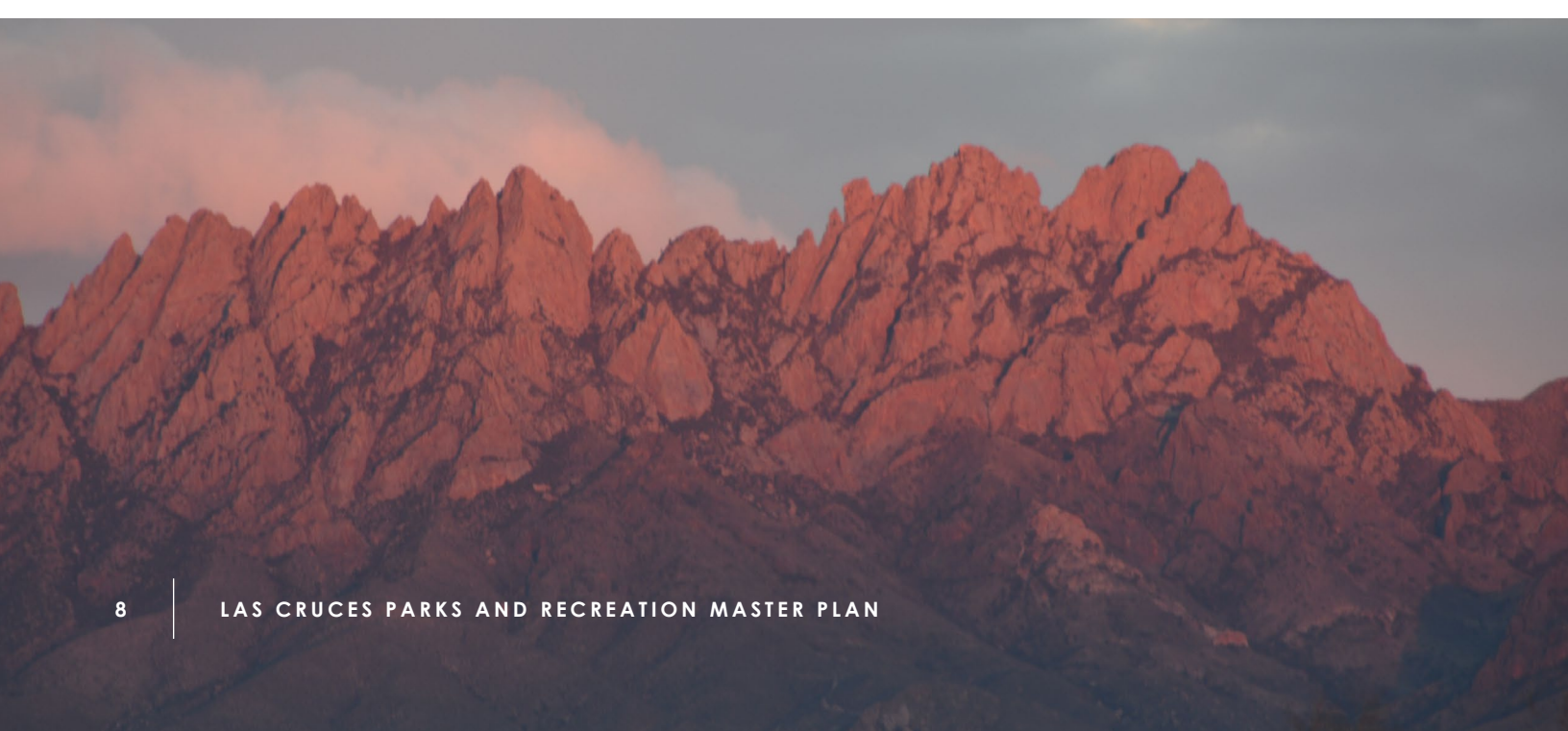
Las Cruces is surrounded by stunning natural features. The Rio Grande River bisects the city while multiple mountain ranges frame its edges - including the prominent Organ Mountains to the east of the City, the Picacho Mountains located to northwest of the City and the Robledo Mountains which provide residents with majestic views and recreational opportunities. Many of these dramatic natural elements are now incorporated into the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument significantly increasing the area's potential as an outdoor recreation destination.

*The Organ Mountains lie largely within land administered by the United States Bureau of Land Management. These iconic community features are outside of the geographic and administrative scope of this Plan, but their impact on the local outdoor recreation economy has been considered.*

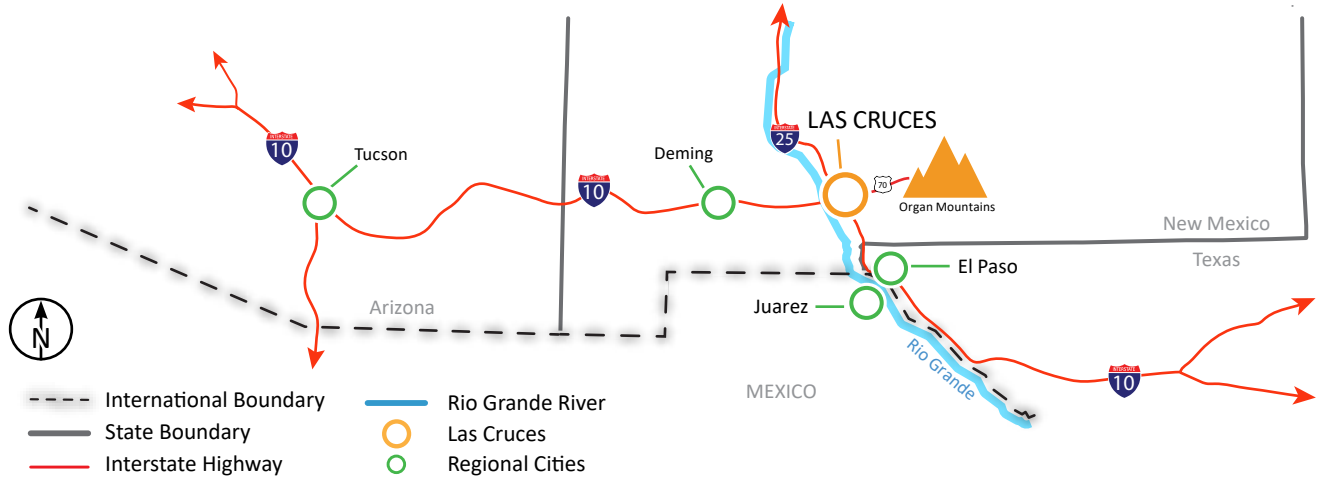
## JURISDICTION & SCOPE

The City of Las Cruces provides the majority of recreational facilities for the residents of the City and adjacent unincorporated areas. Doña Ana County provides an additional 16 parks and recreational facilities near the City limits. There are additional recreational facilities operated by multiple entities within 15 miles of the City. These include facilities operated by New Mexico State University (NMSU), and property managed by the Bureau of Land Management - including the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.

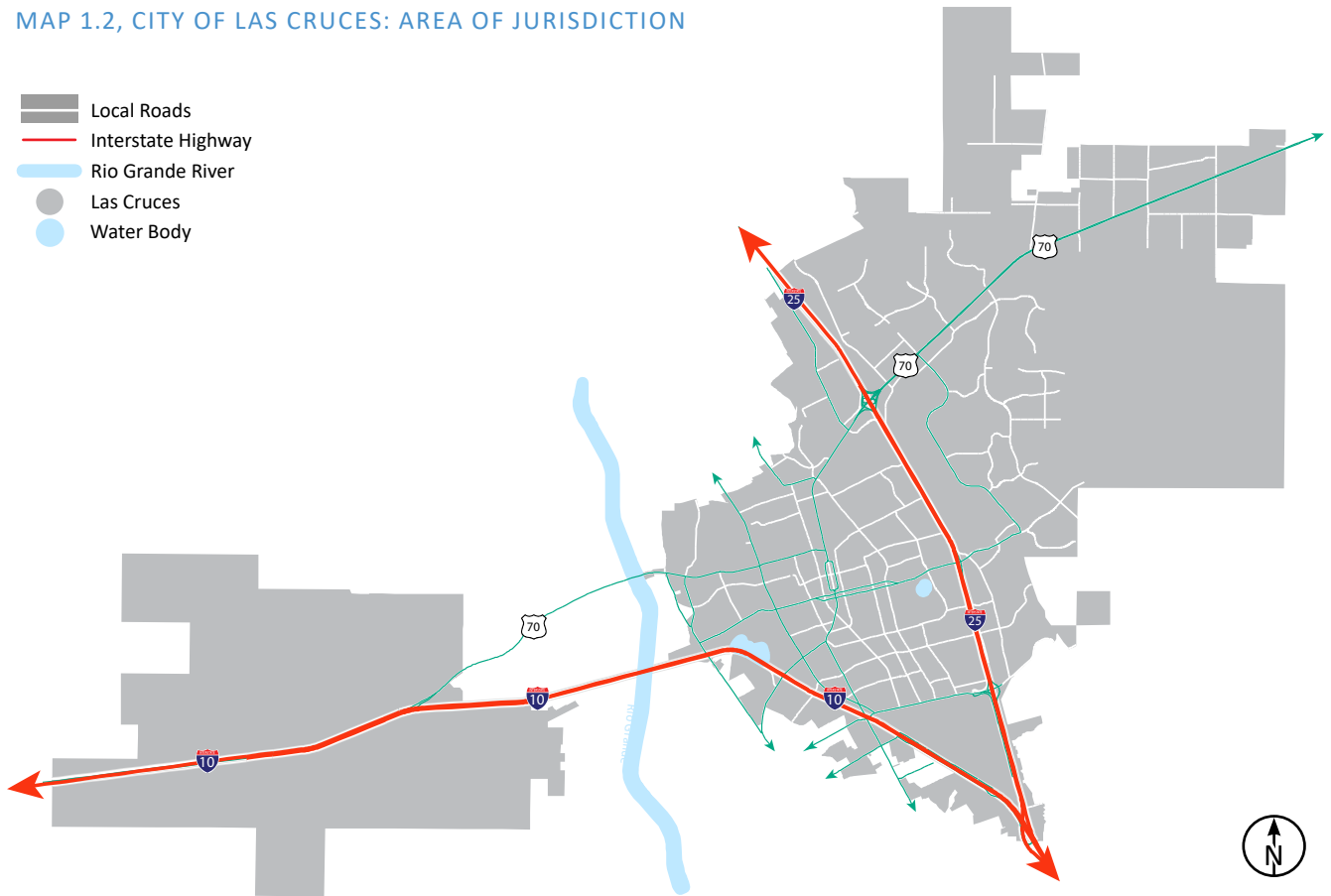
The City of Las Cruces is the principal organization responsible for the implementation of this report as this Plan focuses on the parks and recreation facilities operated by the City. As depicted by **Map 1.2, City of Las Cruces: Area of Jurisdiction** park land and facility evaluation has been contained almost entirely within the municipal limits except for two facilities operated by the City Parks and Recreation Department that are located outside of municipal limits.



MAP 1.1, REGIONAL MAP

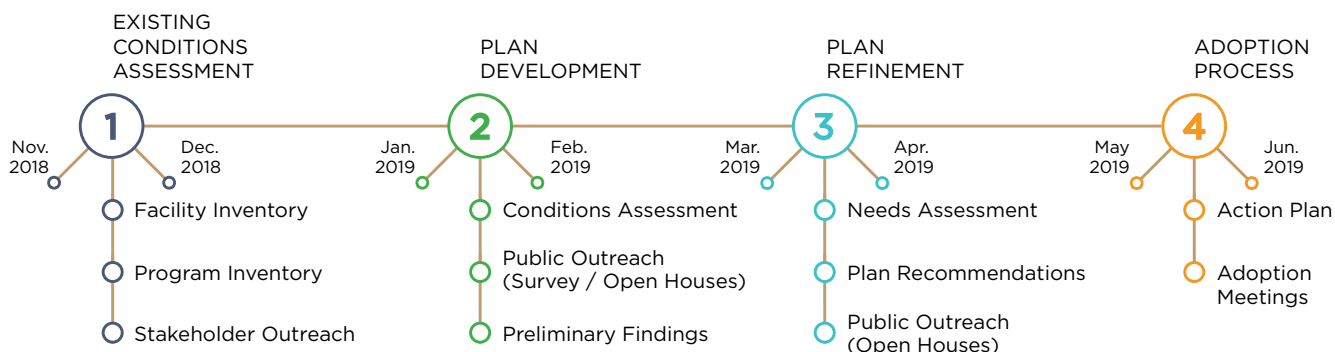


MAP 1.2, CITY OF LAS CRUCES: AREA OF JURISDICTION



## SECTION 3: PLANNING PROCESS AND TIMELINE

FIGURE 1.2, TIMELINE FOR THE LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



### TIMELINE SUMMARY

The update of the 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was initiated in November 2018 and completed in June 2019. An update to the 2012 impact fee study was prepared separately and completed within a similar time frame (see **Appendix A**). A summary of master planning process and time frame is depicted by **Figure 1.2, Timeline for the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan**.

The Plan was prepared by a consultant team selected by the City of Las Cruces with support from the Parks and Recreation Department. Parks and Recreation Department staff provided data and document review assistance, and assistance with public engagement. Additional project support was provided by staff from the City Manager's Office and Community Development.

As depicted in **Figure 1.2** (above), this Plan has been prepared in four (4) phases:

- **Phase 1, Existing Conditions Assessment.** Includes an inventory of park lands, facilities, and programs. Stakeholder meetings were conducted to obtain important insight about the community.
- **Phase 2, Plan Development.** Includes a conditions assessment, document review, additional public outreach, and preliminary findings.
- **Phase 3, Plan Refinement.** Preliminary assumptions are refined, detailed plan recommendations prepared, and additional public feedback is solicited on system-wide recommendations.
- **Phase 4, Adoption Process.** Final action plan development and meetings of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and City Council.

The timeline presented in **Figure 1.2** represents a general chronology - with many of the steps in the planning process occurring concurrently.



# PUBLIC SURVEY OPEN

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan Survey (in English and Español) will remain open until the end of February. Please take the survey and add your voice to the future of Parks and Recreation in Las Cruces

Go to the **“ONLINE INPUT”** Page to Participate

Advertising materials for public outreach activities included on-line announcements (above), event fliers (below), and other creative measures such as bus wraps and a promotional video.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH

The 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan process included a series of opportunities for the public to give their input, ideas, and concerns about parks and recreational facilities within the City. The following are the means by which residents could obtain information about the Plan and provide their feedback.

- **Project Website.** An on-line website presence for the 2019 Parks and Recreation Master Plan was created. The website provided interested parties with news and information about plan progress and access to associated documents.
- **On-line Community Survey.** An on-line community survey was advertised on the project website, postcards, movie theater advertisement, bus wrap, newspapers, fliers, social media, City events, and emails. The survey was open from November 2018 to February 2019.
- **Stakeholder Meetings.** At the start of the project, stakeholder meetings were conducted for three days. Attendees included key City staff; City Council members; Parks Youth Board; indoor and outdoor sports users; Cultural Historic Neighborhood members; passive park users; Senior Program members; and City Art Board members.

HOW CAN OUR PARKS RISE TO OUR EXPECTATIONS?  
PARTICIPATE IN THE LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN.

**LAS CRUCES  
PARKS AND  
RECREATION  
MASTER  
PLAN**

**TUESDAY 01.22**  
6PM - 8PM  
Dona Ana Community College  
Student Resources,  
2800 Sonoma Ranch Blvd

**WEDNESDAY 01.23**  
8AM - 1PM  
Las Cruces Farmers Market,  
Downtown Main Street  
6PM - 8PM  
Benavidez Community Center,  
1045 McClure Road

**THURSDAY 01.24**  
6PM - 8PM  
Frank O'Brien Papan Community Center  
Auditorium,  
2304 West Bell Avenue

**PUBLIC OPEN HOUSES  
JANUARY 22,23,24**

No formal presentation. Drop-in  
anytime during advertised hours.  
Spanish speaking staff will be on  
hand to answer questions.

**LAS CRUCES  
PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN**

**CAN'T MAKE IT TO THE OPEN HOUSES?**  
Please take the survey at the Las Cruces Master Plan Website

Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan Website  
[lascrucesparksplan.half.com](http://lascrucesparksplan.half.com)

For more information, contact the  
City of Las Cruces Parks & Recreation Department (575) 541-2550.

- **Public Open Houses.** Four open houses were held at the beginning of the project. Three additional open houses were held in April 2019 to allow residents to evaluate preliminary plan recommendations and prioritize plan actions.

## PUBLIC OUTREACH THEMES

### PUBLIC PREFERENCES (NOVEMBER 2018 - FEBRUARY 2019)

During initial public outreach activities, several themes were identified via the on-line and in-person outreach activities identified on page 11. A few prominent themes included:

- More lighting is needed in key locations;
- Additional security is needed in some parks;
- Signage needs to be added for identification;
- Facility conditions must be improved;
- There is a lack of indoor facilities;
- Restrooms need to be added to some parks;
- There must be more shade in our parks; and,
- Running, walking, and biking trails need to be added to the existing trails system.

Many of the results compiled from the on-line public survey conducted between November 2018 and February 2019 can be found in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**. A full summary of the survey and other initial public outreach activities (stakeholder meetings, open houses) is located in **Appendix B**.

## PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS (APRIL 2019)

In April 2019, three additional open houses took place to allow participants the opportunity to view and evaluate preliminary plan recommendations and prioritize plan actions. A summary of public outreach activities relating to plan recommendations is located in **Appendix B**.



*An initial public open house was held at the Benavidez Community Center where citizens were provided an opportunity to give their input about the Park Master Plan.*

What do you like most about your park system?

*There is a diversity of what we have available, and it (the park system) is programmed to serve a diverse number of people.*

*Stakeholder Meeting Participant (January 22, 2019)*

## SECTION 4:

### CHARACTERISTICS OF LAS CRUCES

#### CHANGING ROLE OF PARKS

The history of a city or town can provide community members with a distinct sense of identity and can create important local traditions that are passed down from each generation. Reverence for one's local heritage is often retained in historic structures, relevant landscapes or geographic features, and memorials for past events or influential individuals. As is the case in Las Cruces, these tangible features are often embedded within a community's park system and other public spaces.

Las Cruces was founded in 1849, with initial development occurring around today's Mesquite Historic District. Today's Klein Park and its companion Pioneer Womens' Park are vestiges to the growing city's first public squares at a time when public park space was dedicated not just to provide active recreation, but also to host significant public events and other 'utilitarian' public functions.

As the Mesilla Valley's agricultural economy has grown through the decades and diversified with the development of New Mexico State University, and the nearby White Sands Proving Ground and NASA Research Facility, so too has community wealth and the desire for larger spaces for active recreation and structured play. To meet these needs, the Las Cruces Park system has gradually grown to over 93 parks containing a wide range of facilities to meet diverse recreational needs.

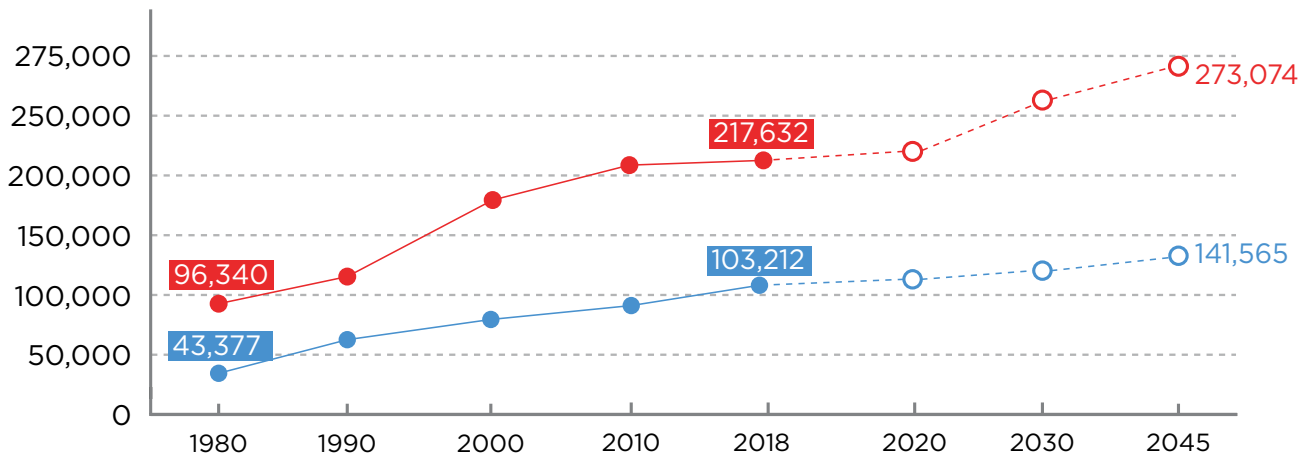


*Klein Park (top) is Las Cruces' original public square. Today's programming within the park reflects evolving community needs. The trail at La Llorona Park serves to meet Las Cruces' increasing desire to connect to the outdoors.*

Today, Las Cruces is a community that prides itself on its location among the Organ Mountains and other surrounding peaks – and while this interest in the area's open space and natural settings has increased, so too have changes in park preferences. In addition to the formal gathering spaces of the past (and present, in the form of Plaza de Las Cruces), and the active recreation spaces of today, attention is now turning to how Las Cruces' parks can provide access for its residents to the iconic natural features that make the city unique.

## DEMOGRAPHIC SNAPSHOT

FIGURE 1.3, POPULATION PROJECTION FOR LAS CRUCES & DOÑA ANA COUNTY



Source: ESRI; Mesilla Valley MPO; Economic & Planning Systems

Understanding a population’s changing demographics is an essential step in evaluating the basic needs of residents and property owners in any community. As part of this Plan, an initial review of Las Cruces’ core demographic indicators including: population characteristics, household wealth, education, employment, and public health provided initial clues in how subsequent participants in the master planning process may view the City’s roles and performance in providing parks and recreational services to Las Cruces.

### POPULATION

**Figure 1.3, Population Projection for Las Cruces and Doña Ana County**, illustrates both the historic population growth and projected population growth for Las Cruces and Doña County between 1980 and the year 2045. Between 1980 and 1990, the City of Las Cruces experienced a growth rate of 33.4 percent which was 7.3 percent less than Doña Ana County, but 17.2 percent greater than the State of New Mexico.

The City of Las Cruces had its highest rate of growth between the year 2000 and 2010 as its residential population grew by 31.4 percent in comparison to 19.8 percent for Doña Ana County and 13.2 percent for the State of New Mexico.

Growth continues for Las Cruces as the population reached 103,212 in 2018 and is projected to continue to grow. Based on estimates prepared in Winter 2018 as part of the Elevate Las Cruces comprehensive planning process, Las Cruces is projected to gain an additional 38,353 new residents by 2045. This growth rate will surpass both Doña Ana County and the State of New Mexico.



## POPULATION BY AGE

**Figure 1.4, Las Cruces Population by Age**, illustrates Las Cruces' population by age group in 2017. The group comprising the largest percentage of the city's population are residents aged 65 years old and above - roughly 14.3 percent of the total population. The city's second largest age group is residents aged 25-34.

These figures do not provide verification of a common perception articulated in Las Cruces - that the City is unable to retain young adults who have completed their high school or college educations. The division of municipal population by age group does however, loosely conform with on-line participation rates in the master planning process.

## HOUSEHOLD INCOME

The median household incomes of the residents of Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, and the State of New Mexico are illustrated in **Figure 1.5, 2017 Median Household Income**. An analysis of household income indicated that 17.8 percent of residential households have a median income between \$50,000 and \$74,999 while those with a median household income of less than \$25,000 represent 32.7 percent of the population.

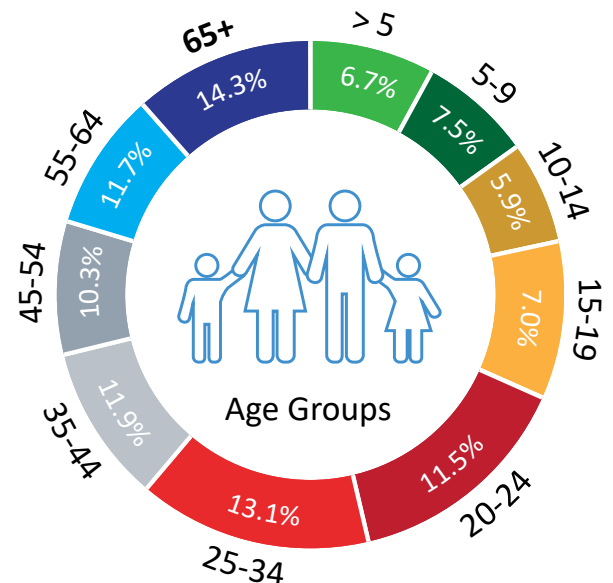
Consistent with household income figures, **Figure 1.6, 2017 Poverty Rates**, illustrates the poverty rate for Las Cruces, Doña Ana County, and New Mexico is significantly higher than national averages.

FIGURE 1.6, 2017 POVERTY RATES

2017 POVERTY RATES	
LAS CRUCES	21.3
DOÑA ANA COUNTY	26.3
NEW MEXICO	20.4

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table S1701

FIGURE 1.4, LAS CRUCES POPULATION BY AGE



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table S0101

FIGURE 1.5, 2017 MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME

LAS CRUCES	
2010	\$38,391
2017	\$40,924
DOÑA ANA COUNTY	
2010	\$36,657
2017	\$39,114
NEW MEXICO	
2010	\$43,820
2017	\$46,718

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table S1901

### MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION TO WORK

In 2017, approximately 80 percent of Las Cruces used a car, truck, or van to drive alone to work. Approximately 12 percent of surveyed residents use the same means, however, they carpool to their place of employment. These rates are nearly identical to 2010 rates in the City. In 2017, approximately 3 percent of individuals walked to destinations and 2.5 percent used other means to travel to work (see **Figure 1.7, 2017 Means of Travel to Work**) - not an insignificant figure when compared to nationwide statistics on bicycling and walking.

### RACE AND ETHNICITY

**Figure 1.8, Race and Ethnicity**, illustrates the racial and ethnic composition of Las Cruces in 2017. Approximately 83 percent of residents identify themselves as white, while 59 percent of residents identified themselves as ethnically Hispanic.

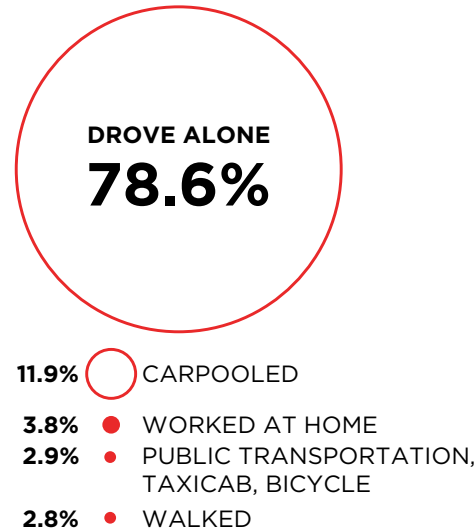
The second largest racial group - at 7.3 percent, are identified as "some other race" which is not uncommon when residents confuse the category of race versus ethnicity.

### PERSONS WITH DISABILITIES

Residents in Las Cruces with a disability represent approximately 13.6 percent of the population. A total of 5.93 percent of residents over the age of 65 have some form of disability.

The number of individuals with disabilities are similar to levels in both Doña Ana County and New Mexico. However, the population of Las Cruces 65 and older with disabilities is higher than the United States as a whole, perhaps reflecting a slow trend in the growth of older age groups in the city.

FIGURE 1.7, 2017 MEANS OF TRAVEL TO WORK



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table B08101

FIGURE 1.8, RACE AND ETHNICITY

RACE	LAS CRUCES	DOÑA ANA COUNTY	NEW MEXICO
WHITE	83.4%	81.0%	75.8%
BLACK OR AFRICAN AMERICAN	3.3%	4.6%	2.1%
AMERICAN INDIAN & ALASKA NATIVE	1.2%	1.9%	9.6%
ASIAN	1.4%	2.0%	1.4%
NATIVE HAWAIIAN & OTHER PACIFIC ISLANDER	7.3%	17.6%	7.7%
OTHER	0.0%	0.1%	0.1%
TWO OR MORE RACES	3.3%	4.7%	3.3%
ETHNICITY			
HISPANIC OR LATINO DESCENT	58.6%	67.7%	48.2%

Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table QP-P3

## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

**Figure 1.9, 2017 Educational Attainment,** illustrates the educational levels of Las Cruces residents who are 25 years old and older. Around 87 percent of all residents have a high school diploma or its equivalent.

Nearly 30 percent of Las Cruces residents in 2017 have a bachelor's or graduate degree. This level of post-secondary education exceeds that of Doña Ana County and New Mexico as a whole.

## EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY

**Figure 1.10, 2017 Employment by Industry,** identifies the employment sectors of residents over the age of 16 that are employed within industries located in the City. Employment by industry sector in Las Cruces is similar to both Doña Ana County and New Mexico.

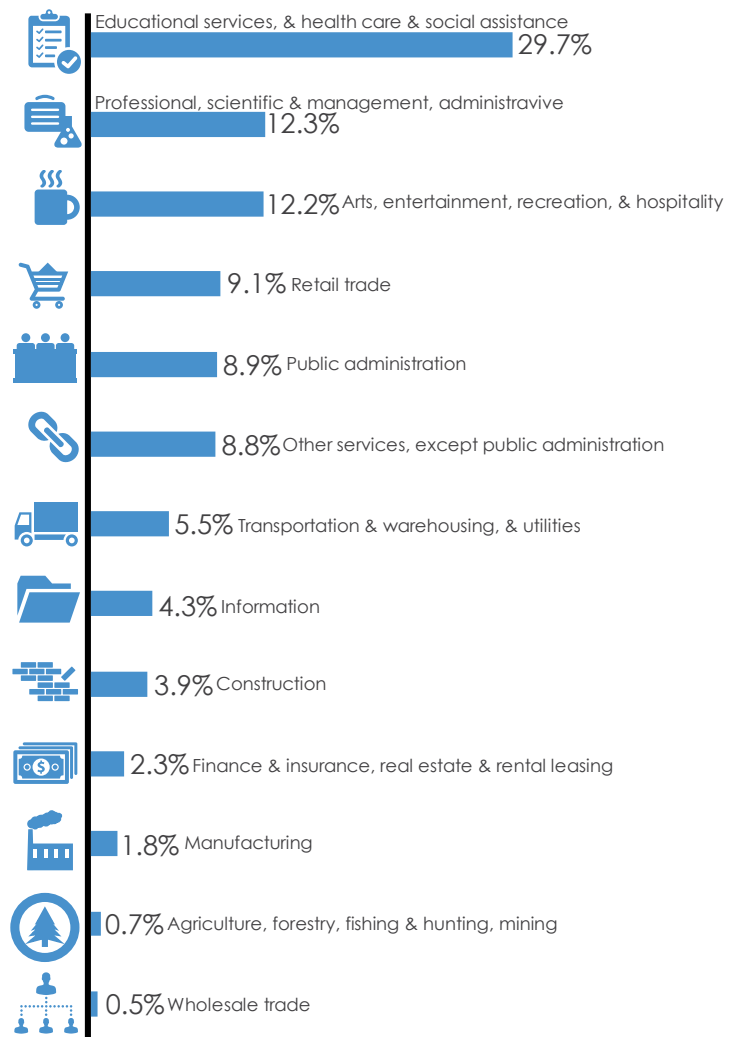
The field of "educational services, healthcare, and social assistance" is the largest employment sector within Las Cruces - amounting to nearly 30 percent of the workforce. Employment in the field of "professional, scientific, management; administrative and waste management services" and "arts, entertainment, and recreation; accommodation and food services" represents 24.5 percent of the workforce.

FIGURE 1.9, 2017 EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT	LAS CRUCES	DOÑA ANA COUNTY	NEW MEXICO
HIGH SCHOOL OR HIGHER	87.5%	78.9%	86.0%
BACHELORS DEGREE OR HIGHER	28.6%	24.9%	27.0%

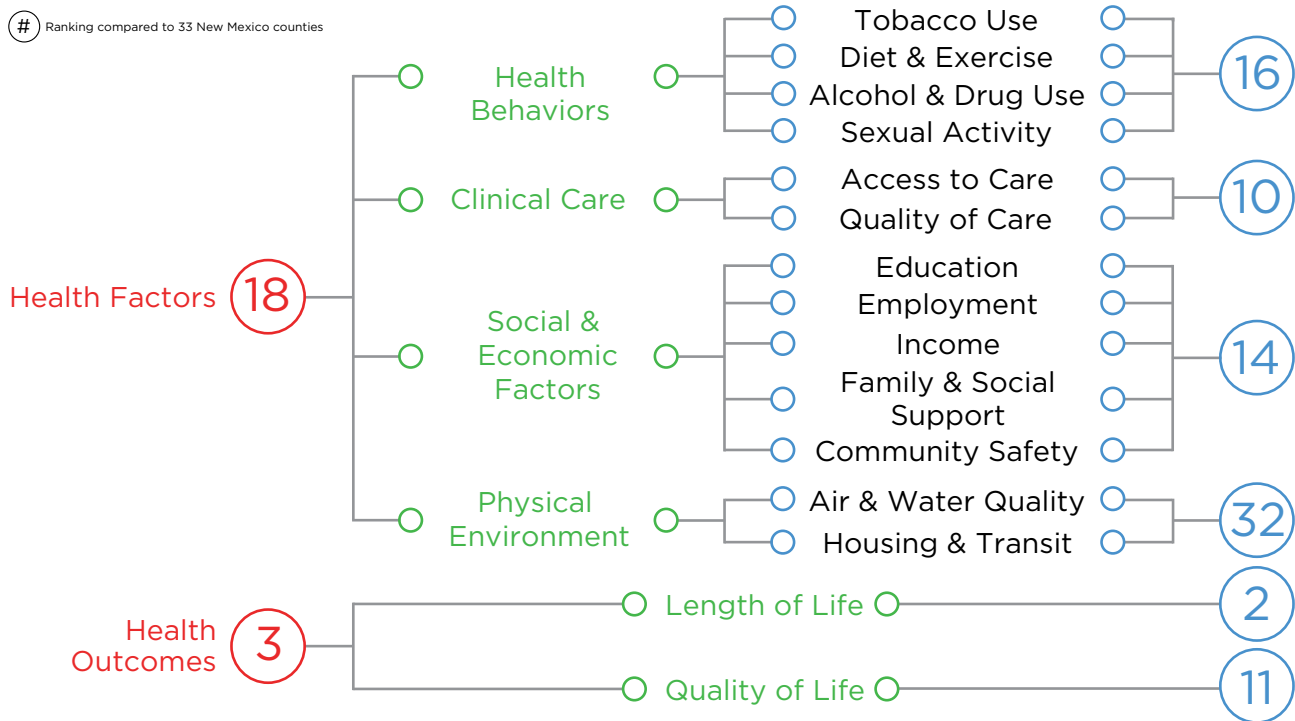
Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table S1501

FIGURE 1.10, 2017 EMPLOYMENT BY INDUSTRY



Source: U.S. Census Bureau, 2017 American Community Survey 1-Year Estimate, Table DP03

FIGURE 1.11, 2017 HEALTH MEASURES



Source: County Health Rankings & Roadmaps for Webb County, TX, Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and University of Wisconsin Population Health Institute, Accessed 6 February 2019

### HEALTH MEASURES

The Community Health Rankings issued by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation are a tool used to understand the levels of overall health of a community. These annual rankings are an examination of community-wide health care outcomes which include length and quality of life and health factors which include; health behaviors, clinical care, social and economic factors, and physical environment.

The overall health rankings for Doña Ana County - in comparison to the state's 33 counties - are found in **Figure 1.11, 2017 Health Measures**. In comparison to New Mexico's 33 counties, Doña Ana County ranks very well in the length of life measurement and in all measures with the exception of physical environment where it ranks second to last. Physical environment features may be collectively addressed through open space recommendations contained in this Plan and land use and transportation policies contained in the City's comprehensive plan and the MPO's metropolitan transportation plan.



Many Las Cruces rely on public transportation to get around the City. The above photo shows an example of a bus stop near R.L. Young Park.

### SUMMARY OF OBSERVATIONS

The figures presented between pages 14 and 18 were initially compiled prior to this planning effort's public outreach activities. Absent the context provided by subsequent public feedback, few of the Plan's demographic measures provide surprising information by which conclusive assumptions can be made of public parks and recreation preferences. Given the benefit of hindsight however, some information in this section offers clues about probable community expectations regarding public parks and recreation services:

- Lower household incomes and higher poverty rates in Las Cruces and surrounding Doña Ana County allow less disposable income for recreation.

- Populations living in areas with less community-wide wealth tend to expect a greater amount of recreational space and programming to be offered by local government.
- The combined rate of Las Cruces that rely on car-pooling, public transportation, bicycling, and walking as their means of travel to work suggests the need to place greater emphasis on accessibility (or 'proximity') to parkland and recreational facilities.

These initial demographic observations are expanded upon as part of the parkland, recreational facility, and recreational programming evaluation presented in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**.

## SECTION 5:

### PARK PLANNING IN LAS CRUCES

Multiple statewide, regional, and local planning initiatives have been conducted which have impacted how Las Cruces provides parks and recreational services to its residents, or how the City has otherwise prioritized and invested in parkland and facilities. Many of the documents produced by these initiatives still influence park and recreation planning in Las Cruces today.

#### PARK PLANNING IN NEW MEXICO

##### VIVA NEW MEXICO: A STATEWIDE PLAN FOR OUTDOOR ADVENTURE 2016-2020 (2016)

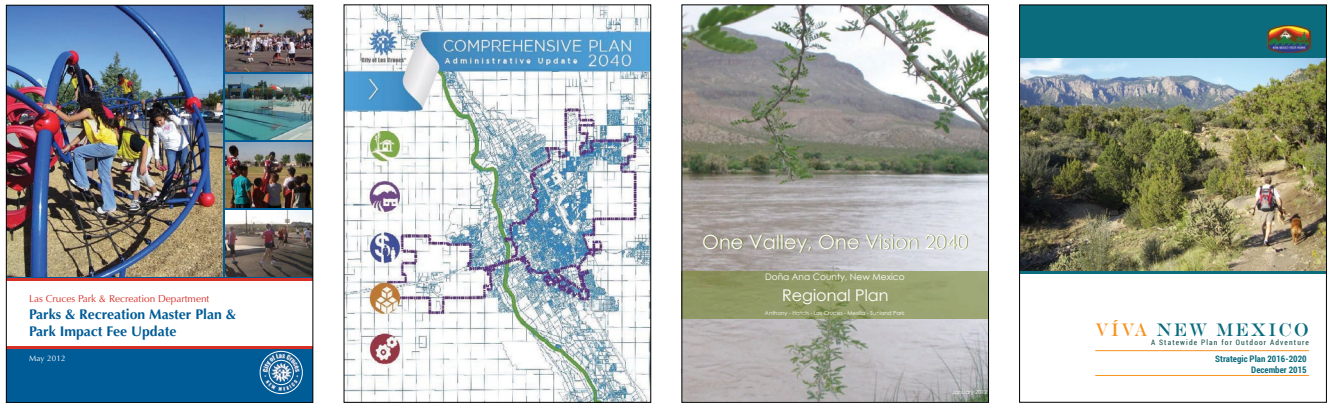
The State of New Mexico's State Parks Division recently completed a five-year update of Viva New Mexico: A Statewide Plan for Outdoor Adventure 2016-2020. This strategic plan includes outdoor recreation data, analysis, and conclusions to assist federal, state, and local organizations in the development of jurisdictional park plans that address statewide recreation needs. The Viva New Mexico Strategic Plan is not policy document, but rather a guide to identify New Mexico's most pressing outdoor recreation trends and to encourage public and private recreation providers to position themselves for funding of park and recreation amenities by emphasizing investments that can support broad statewide goals.



*The Rio Grande River at La Llorona Park. State plans identify opportunities for local investments to serve broader statewide outdoor recreation needs and goals.*

#### RIO GRANDE TRAIL MASTER PLAN

The Rio Grande Trail Master Plan establishes the framework to develop a 500-mile cross-state recreational trail for hiking, biking, and horseback riding along the Rio Grande River. Administered by the State of New Mexico's Rio Grande Trail Commission, the Rio Grande Trail route would bisect Las Cruces utilizing existing multi-use trail segments along the Rio Grande River which currently connect the Outfall Channel Trail with La Llorona Park.



State, regional, and local plans were reviewed as part of the master planning process (above). The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Park Impact Fee Update, the Comprehensive Plan Administrative Update 2040, the One Valley, One Vision 2040 Regional Plan, and the Viva New Mexico: A Statewide Plan for Outdoor Adventure 2016-2020, are a few of the documents within which parks and recreation are discussed to varying degrees.

## REVIEW OF RELEVANT LOCAL PLANS

Many current regional and municipal plans were reviewed to understand how the policies, goals, and actions within each might influence the Plan recommendations herein. Relevant regional and municipal plans are listed in accordance with the City’s ‘planning framework’ identified in Comprehensive Plan 2040 (Administrative Update): Regional Plans; Level 1: Comprehensive Plan; Level 2: Policy Plans; and, Level 3: Implementation Tools.

## REGIONAL PLANS

### ONE VALLEY, ONE VISION 2040 REGIONAL PLAN (2010)

The One Valley, One Vision 2040 (Regional) Plan presents a region-wide perspective on challenges and opportunities posed by changing economic, environmental, and social conditions in the Mesilla Valley. This regional planning document was prepared through the collaboration of private interests and public entities throughout Doña Ana County including the communities of Anthony, Hatch, Las Cruces, Mesilla, and Sunland Park. One Valley, One Vision was endorsed by the Las Cruces City Council as the City’s official regional comprehensive plan. It includes goals that address the provision of outdoor recreation and community facilities.

### TRANSPORT 2040, METROPOLITAN TRANSPORTATION PLAN UPDATE (2015)

Transport 2040 is the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization’s (MPO) long-range transportation plan guiding the planning, construction, operation and maintenance of the metropolitan area’s integrated, multi-modal transportation network. The plan establishes the regional transportation vision for Las Cruces and adjacent urbanized areas and identifies and prioritizes actions and projects to improve region-wide mobility.

Transport 2040’s Trail System Priorities Plan identifies the future trail segments that – once constructed – will provide over 100 miles of interconnected multi-use trail to serve the community’s recreational and active transportation needs. Complimentary bicycle and pedestrian system priorities plans identify additional active transportation routes that will provide improved access to the City’s growing multi-use trail system.

### CITY OF LAS CRUCES ARROYO MANAGEMENT PLAN (2015)

The Las Cruces Arroyo Management Plan includes a series of recommendations regarding the conservation of arroyo corridors as new development encroaches further into the City’s surrounding natural areas and desert habitat. In addition to multiple recommendations regarding ecological preservation and storm water management, the Management Plan promotes the benefits of utilizing arroyo corridors as linear parks and multi-use trail corridors. The possibility of developing these recreational assets is acknowledged in the Mesilla Valley MPO’s Trail System Priorities Plan (a component of Transport 2040, Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update).



*Transport 2040, Metropolitan Transportation Plan Update (2015)*



*Arroyos represent natural pathways for storm water drainage, but may also be improved to accommodate increased runoff and seasonal recreational activities.*




## LEVEL 1: COMPREHENSIVE PLANS

### COMPREHENSIVE PLAN 2040, ADMINISTRATIVE UPDATE (2013)

Comprehensive Plan 2040, Administrative Update is the City’s primary policy document which provides City elected and appointed officials and staff a collective vision for how Las Cruces should grow and develop. This policy tool provides guidance for the management of capital improvement projects, community changes, and land use and includes a corresponding action plan to implement the community’s growth and development vision and goals.

Comprehensive Plan 2040 includes no fewer than 71 actions that directly or indirectly relate to the provision of parkland, recreational facilities, and recreational programming. The status of all 71 actions was provided by the City of Las Cruces as part of this planning initiative.

The City initiated an update of Comprehensive Plan 2040 in 2016. Called Plan 4 Las Cruces, this initiative focused on updating the ‘Healthy Community’ theme of the existing plan. Plan4LasCruces was not adopted, but has been reviewed as part of this planning effort because it provides a more recent assessment of public opinions regarding healthy community lifestyles – an essential benefit of well-maintained and managed municipal park system (see **Figure 1.1**, page 5).



The Las Cruces PRMP was prepared concurrent with the City’s most recent comprehensive plan update efforts (Elevate Las Cruces). Issues related to parks and recreation are largely addressed in the ‘Community Livability’ section of the plan. Elevate Las Cruces will include goals, policies, and recommended actions for city parks and recreation that correspond with the recommendations of this Plan.

## LEVEL 2: POLICY PLANS

### LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN AND PARK IMPACT FEE UPDATE (2012)

The current Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Park Impact Fee Update has guided how Las Cruces provides public parks and recreational services to its residents since May 2012. The Master Plan includes level of service assessments for parkland, park facilities, and recreational programs, and compares these assessments to stated public preferences and needs. The 2012 Master Plan includes 10 goals and 90 recommended actions to improve the delivery of parks and recreation services to the community. Many of the 2012 Master Plan goals have been re-affirmed by participants in this planning process and incorporated into this report.

### LAS CRUCES ACTIVE TRANSPORTATION PLAN (2018)

The Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan (ATP) proposes a prioritized list of on-street and off-street bicycle and pedestrian improvements to provide access to community-wide destinations through bicycling and walking. The multi-use trail network proposed in the ATP aligns with the recommendations of the Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan. Although serving a dual recreation-transportation role, it is assumed that new multi-use trail mileage will be added to the current inventory of trail facilities maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

### APODACA BLUEPRINT (2018)

The City of Las Cruces' Community Blueprint Planning Initiative was initiated by action of City Council in 2011 to address unique land use, economic development, aesthetic, urban design, resource protection, transportation, and neighborhood conservation issues related to specific districts, corridors, or neighborhoods in Las Cruces. Six (6) Community Blueprints have been completed in Las Cruces to date.

The Apodaca Blueprint proposes a conceptual redevelopment plan for the former Las Cruces Country Club property and Apodaca Park. The plan includes proposed parkland additions that would link Apodaca Park to the Outfall Channel Trail corridor to the north. The conceptual site plan also proposes a multi-use trail that forms a loop on the outer boundary of the property and suggests the addition of a series of additional civic spaces. Programming of additional parkland is proposed on a separate parcel (the Villa Mora property) at the intersection of E. Madrid Avenue and Triviz Avenue.



### LEVEL 3: IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

#### LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION STRATEGIC BUSINESS PLAN (2018)

Part of the City's PEAK Performance strategic planning initiative, the City of Las Cruces Park and Recreation Strategic Plan establishes the Park and Recreation Department's mission statement:

"The mission of the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department, "The Fun Experts," is to provide dynamic customer-focused services to residents and visitors so they can experience a diverse, vibrant, prosperous, active, engaged, connected, happy, and inclusive community."

The Plan provides a series of five (5) department-wide issue statements and identifies measurable strategic outcomes ('results'). Additional service-based objectives are established throughout the strategic business plan. The implementation program contained within this Plan has been calibrated to ensure consistency between the demand and service-based recommendations contained herein and the Park and Recreation Department's Strategic Business Plan.

## RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As part of the master planning process, the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department completed an inventory of accomplishments based on actions, initiatives, and projects referenced in prior planning documents. A summary of significant actions includes many parks and recreation-related activities that were recommended in the 2012 Parks Master Plan, Comprehensive Plan 2040 and the 2018 Capital Improvement Plan.

### 2012 PARKS MASTER PLAN

- Identified and developed an area for archery, remote control cars/ trucks, remote control airplanes and rocketeering at the City Complex;
- Standardized park furniture to reduce inventory cost and improve the appearance of, and maintenance consistency within parks;
- Increased resident awareness of Park and Recreation activities as Facebook followers have increased to over 3,000 individuals;
- Expanded youth and senior leagues, expanded open pickleball sessions;
- Established a system-wide identification system named Etrak; and
- Solar panels placed in the parking lot of the aquatics center.

### 2040 COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

- Increased facilities in existing parks including way-finding signs for trails, Woman's Veterans Monument, Provencio-Van Dame Soccer Field Lighting, etc.;
- Encouraged parks and multi-use activity/ recreational fields in conveniently located areas including Highland Park - East Mesa;
- Solicited public input regarding facility, program and activity requests so that the City may meet the needs and desires of the community. Meetings were held at seven different community centers;
- Applied water conservation measures in Metro Verde Desert Park, Paseo de Oñate Neighborhood Park, etc.;
- Included amenities for companion animals such as watering stations, waste stations, and watering bowls for dogs in new fountains; and
- Constructed NM 292 Trail in the Elephant Butte Irrigation Right of Way.

### 2018 CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS PROJECTS

- Apodaca Park was granted \$275,000 for a new shade canopy; grandstands were repaired; and, a new sound system conduit was provided;
- Harty Field was provided \$175,000 for parking;
- North Las Cruces Park was provided \$75,000 for a drinking fountains, picnic shelter, lighting, a security camera, and a future basketball court;
- Young Park was provided \$325,000 for the installation of new bathrooms;
- Desert Trails received \$630,000 for parking and trail renovations; and
- Paseo de Oñate Park was constructed with funds totaling \$238,000.

## SECTION 6: ASSESSMENT COMMUNITIES

The abbreviated ‘record of accomplishments’ presented on page 25, illustrates that substantial new investment in the municipal parks system has resulted from Las Cruces’ past and ongoing long-range planning initiatives. To assist in measuring ongoing success however, the City has determined to compare its park system and administration to a series of similar communities across the region.

Two groups of ‘assessment communities’ have been selected by the City of Las Cruces to compare the level of service at which each provide parks and recreation services to its residents.

Assessment communities include the following:

- **Comparison Communities.** Six (6) cities that exhibit characteristics similar with Las Cruces including: population, education, and/or income. These peer communities assist in determining whether current parkland and facility standards in Las Cruces represent a competitive quality of life measures.
- **Benchmark Communities.** Six (6) cities with population, education, and income demographics that exceed those in Las Cruces. These communities may exhibit exemplary parkland and facility standards that offer aspirational targets for Las Cruces.

FIGURE 1.12, ASSESSMENT COMMUNITIES



All assessment communities assist in establishing this Plan’s targeted service standards for parkland and facilities to Las Cruces’ growing population.

The comparison and benchmark communities selected by the City for assessment as part of this Plan are depicted on **Figure 1.12, Assessment Communities**. **Figure 1.13, Comparison Communities, Characteristics**, and **Figure 1.14, Benchmark Communities, Characteristics** (page 27) provide an overview of each assessment communities’ basic demographics in comparison with Las Cruces. Further comparison of each community’s parks and recreation system, and operational structures, is provided in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**.

FIGURE 1.13, COMPARISON COMMUNITIES, CHARACTERISTICS

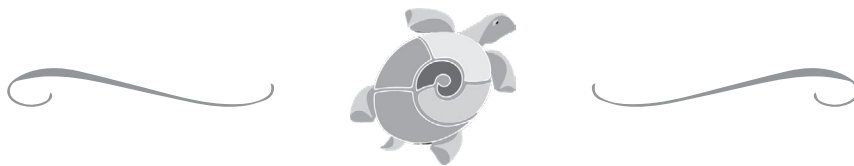
MEASURE	COMMUNITY						
	COLLEGE STATION, TX	LUBBOCK, TX	PROVO, UT	PUEBLO, CO	RIO RANCHO, NM	YUMA, AZ	LAS CRUCES, NM
POPULATION	107,445	247,323	116,199	109,122	93,317	93,851	101,014
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION	94%	86%	92%	86%	93%	78%	87%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	56%	30%	43%	19%	30%	18%	33%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$39,430	\$47,326	\$44,312	\$36,280	\$63,180	\$46,151	\$40,924
POVERTY RATE	31.8%	19.8%	25.4%	24.4%	12.3%	16.9%	24.4%
POPULATION PER SQUARE MILE	2,268	2,063	2,631	2,056	929	789	1,330

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau (2017): DP05, S1501, S1701, S1901

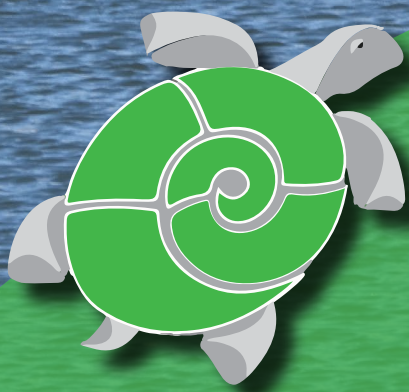
FIGURE 1.14, BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES, CHARACTERISTICS

MEASURE	COMMUNITY						
	BROKEN ARROW, OK	FLAGSTAFF, AZ	FORT COLLINS, CO	PLANO, TX	ROUND ROCK, TX	TUCSON, AZ	LAS CRUCES, NM
POPULATION	106,264	69,903	167,500	281,390	116,369	530,905	101,014
HIGH SCHOOL EDUCATION	94%	93%	96%	94%	92%	85%	87%
BACHELOR'S DEGREE	34%	45%	54%	55%	40%	27%	33%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME	\$70,788	\$51,758	\$60,110	\$83,793	\$76,295	\$39,617	\$40,924
POVERTY RATE	7.6%	21.7%	17.0%	7.0%	8.2%	24.1%	24.4%
POPULATION PER SQUARE MILE	2,328	1,119	2,888	3,908	3,330	2,341	1,330

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau (2017): DP05, S1501, S1701, S1901



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# 2

## CHAPTER

# LAS CRUCES PARKS SYSTEM

LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*Baseball fields in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.*



## SECTION 1:

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### DEFINING PARK SPACE

The City of Las Cruces' municipal parks and recreation system is comprised of over 94 parks, open spaces, and facilities of varying scale that serve the residents of Las Cruces and the greater Mesilla Valley region. As with most communities, Las Cruces' varying park types are principally classified according to their size and geographic service area.

The standard framework defining parks by a "classification" of size and service area originated as a series of guidelines established within the National Recreation and Parks Association's (NRPA) Parks, Recreation, Open Space & Greenway Guidelines (formerly the "Recreation, Park and Open Space Standards and Guidelines"). Over the years, these industry-accepted guidelines served a useful purpose of setting a baseline national standard for parks and recreation areas, particularly as it relates to establishing a ratio of population to acres within specific park systems.

Today, it is more widely recognized that every jurisdiction is unique and adherence to an "across-the-board" national standard may not result in a park system that is appropriately tailored to respond to the specific needs of each unique community.

National guidelines were also created during a time of greater emphasis on active recreation pursuits revolving around organized athletics and structured play areas. Today, there is greater recognition that active recreation facilities cater only to limited community-wide needs. Public recreation providers are now diversifying their park space and facility portfolios to include a greater selection of parks, trails, and open spaces that cater to the passive enjoyment of one's environment and to resource conservation. In many cases, designated public space catering both to active and passive interests is now being programmed on the same property. In this regard, it is important to start evaluating how individual parks are programmed to serve a series of different recreational and non-recreational activities.

This Plan establishes a dual framework for understanding the existing and future composition of the Las Cruces parks and recreation system. For purposes of establishing the City's parkland level of service metrics, each park property must be categorized according to a standardized **park classification** hierarchy (e.g., regional park, civic space, etc.). In addition, the Plan describes how identified community needs can influence **park programming** decisions that result in a mix of recreational, social, and natural spaces that can serve a greater cross-section of Las Cruces' population.

## PARKS CLASSIFICATIONS

Municipal park systems include multiple park types to serve different geographic service areas, purposes, and intended users. Understanding the distinct characteristics of different park types assists a community in identifying system gaps and overlaps in the municipal park system, and determining whether the distribution of existing facilities meets the current park, recreation, and open space needs of the City.

Building from standard industry practices, this Plan classifies Las Cruces' parkland within four broad park classifications - each containing several types of park:

- **Regional Parks.** *Includes recreation areas that are typically located within a one to two hour driving radius to the areas that they serve. Parks in this category can serve many communities and may include the following: metropolitan, county, and state parks; and, accessible national monuments, parks, and recreation areas.*
- **Local Parks.** *Includes parks that are usually integrated as a component of the neighborhoods, subdivisions, or developments which they are intended to serve. This category includes: pocket parks, neighborhood parks, and community parks.*
- **Civic Parks.** *Includes formal areas principally reserved for public gathering, civic events, and community reflection. Often less than three acres in size, this category includes: greens, squares, plazas, and parkways.*
- **Special Use Parks.** *May be either local or regional in scale and can be defined in some unique way due to their physical features or the types of facilities offered. This category may include: special interest parks, linear parks, natural areas/open space, and athletic complexes.*

*Art installations such as those found within Albert Johnson Memorial Park reflect the civic nature of the space.*

Many of the park types referenced within the classifications listed in this section are described in greater detail on pages 33 through 41. **This Plan describes only those park types that are currently found within the Las Cruces municipal parks and recreation system.** Descriptions are intended as a general guide only.



## REGIONAL PARKS

With the intention of serving the entire city and beyond, a regional park often becomes the premier park in an area due to its broad range of facilities and activities. These parks often include regionally significant natural resources, or alternatively incorporate event space or other competitive venues such as sports complexes or aquatic centers. Over time the term "regional park" has come to be viewed as synonymous with a "metropolitan park."

**General Characteristics.** *These parks are frequently planned to accommodate large numbers of visitors for events such as fairs, festivals, and exhibitions. Regional parks should be located near highways or major arterial roadways to provide easy access from different parts of the city.*

**Service Area.** *Up to a 50-mile radius, depending on site features.*

**Size.** *Depending on the purpose and character of the site, regional parks can vary in size from less than 10 acres to several thousand acres.*



## LOCAL PARKS

### COMMUNITY PARKS

Community parks provide facilities for structured recreational activities which may include facilities such as athletic fields and sport courts, swimming pools, hike and bike trails, or exercise stations. These parks serve a group of neighborhoods or a portion of a city, and may therefore be accessed by nearby residents through walking or biking, but are also structured to accommodate motor vehicle traffic.

Community parks may serve as a venue for community festivals or competitions and often include open space for unstructured recreation and natural areas.

**General Characteristics.** *These parks should be located near a major thoroughfare to provide easy access from different parts of the city. Vegetative buffering may be required to minimize the impact of light and sound pollution on adjacent residential areas.*

**Service Area.** *Primarily serves a one to two-mile radius, but some facilities may be intended for persons throughout a community.*

**Size.** *May vary between 10 to 50 acres. Should be large enough to accommodate a variety of facilities while leaving sufficient space for unstructured recreation, natural areas, and possible expansion.*

*Athletic fields for organized competitions may be appropriate in regional and community parks, but the scale of facilities should vary in consideration of traffic, noise, and lighting impacts on surrounding neighborhoods.*

## REGIONAL / COMMUNITY PARK DESIGN BASICS

The large scale and service area of regional and community parks can present challenges with the efficient planning and programming of park space, and with the mitigation of potential impacts to those residing in close proximity. This section presents a few basic programming and design principles for regional and community parks intended for active recreation use. This section is not comprehensive, and the manner in which these principles may be applied to parkland in Las Cruces will vary on a case-by-case basis.

**Facilities.** Common recreational and accessory facilities in a regional and community park include:

- Play equipment with adequate safety surfacing;
- Open and manicured play areas;
- Jogging, bicycle, or nature trails;
- Athletic fields or sport courts, suitable for organized and competitive events;
- Indoor recreation facilities (if appropriate);
- Picnic areas and pavilion(s);
- Restrooms;
- Sufficient off-street parking based on facilities provided and size of park;
- Lighting for evening use; and,
- Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of unique site characteristics.

Many of the items listed above may be augmented or replaced by other facilities that cater to special interests, or that otherwise enable the City to address community-wide recreational, social, or environmental programming needs.

**Space Programming.** Within regional and community parks, it is desirable to delineate the manner in which park space is programmed identifying between specific activity zones and areas which are intended to be retained in a largely natural state (see "Park Programming," page 42).

Well defined zones of activity provide visual transitions between spaces intended for active and passive (low-impact) use. Paved trails should connect these various areas, while also providing walking, jogging, and bicycling loops for recreational use.

**Location.** The interaction between a regional or community park and surrounding areas is crucial to the quality of the park experience. It is important that a community park is bordered by roadways, drainage ways, or other natural areas where possible (although adjacency of community parks to residential areas on some sides is also encouraged).

When development does border the park, edge treatments will differ based on land use and intensity. If development is residential, fencing between homes and the park should be transparent. If the development is industrial in nature or otherwise aesthetically unpleasing, significant buffering should be installed to soften edges including a mix of fencing, trees, and shrubs.

**Good Neighbor.** Active recreational parks of a regional or community scale can sometimes be the source of nuisances if near residential neighborhoods. Bright lighting at night, excessive noise from cheering spectators, or the overflow of parking onto neighborhood streets can all become major issues. Some basic design and operating principles are encouraged:

- **Vehicular Access.** Parking areas, including access points, should be designed so that they are not in close proximity to adjacent housing. Vehicular access should be provided only from major thoroughfares.
- **Noise.** Operating hours should be limited. Large event venues and multi-day tournaments that attract non-residents should be programmed only in those parks that are located away from established neighborhoods.
- **Lighting.** Potential light intrusion from evening events may be mitigated with buffering and through the use of the latest technology (see **Chapter 4**, page 185).

## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

Neighborhood parks are the "backbone" of most municipal park systems, providing active and passive recreational opportunities within walking distance of neighborhoods. Proximity to residential areas creates accessible and family-friendly destinations. Common amenities may include, but are not limited to: playground equipment, picnic areas, park benches, walking trails, open play areas, and occasionally, sport courts or athletic fields.

- **General Characteristics.** *Neighborhood parks should be evenly distributed throughout residential areas of the city, and be centrally located within neighborhoods to provide safe and easy access for bicyclists and pedestrians.*
- **Service Area.** *Adjacent residential areas within a 1/4 to 1/2 mile "walkshed", determined by the availability of a defined walking route free of obstructions. Service areas extend across major thoroughfares only where defined crosswalks can provide access at intersections or at other roadway crossings via traffic control devices.*
- **Size.** *Typically three to 10 acres, although sizes may vary beyond this range depending on physical conditions and the availability of land.*

*Neighborhood and pocket park facilities such as playscapes and sitting areas are simple investments that can meet the most basic recreational needs of families with small children. These essential park system "building blocks" must be augmented by well-spaced community parks that provide recreational opportunities for additional user groups.*

## POCKET PARKS

Pocket parks provide active and passive recreation opportunities for concentrated populations within immediate walking distance. These parks serve a similar purpose as neighborhood parks, but their smaller size limits the type of facilities that may be incorporated into the space. Small landscaped areas and lawns may be accompanied by sitting areas, gazebos, playscapes, or facilities of similar scale.

- **General Characteristics.** *Pocket parks should be located in close proximity to residences. This park type should be provided in addition to, not in lieu of, a neighborhood scale park.*
- **Service Area.** *Directly adjacent residential areas no further than a 1/4 mile "walkshed", determined by the availability of a defined walking path that is free of obstructions. Service areas do not typically include residential areas separated from the park by a major thoroughfare.*
- **Size.** *Typically 1/4 to one acre in size. Smaller public pocket parks are highly discouraged.*



## NEIGHBORHOOD / POCKET PARK DESIGN BASICS

Within most communities it is the neighborhood park or pocket park that provides much of the population with its first experiences and memories of public recreation and open space. Both park types are often embedded within neighborhoods, providing safe and immediate access for nearby families. The small scale of both park types and their central location in a community's residential areas requires careful design and programming consideration to ensure that they retain long-term value.

This section presents a few basic programming and design principles for regional and community parks intended for active recreation use. This section is not comprehensive and the manner in which these principles may be applied to parkland in Las Cruces will vary on a case-by-case basis.

**Facilities.** *Common recreational and accessory facilities in a neighborhood and pocket park include:*

- *Play equipment with adequate safety surfacing;*
- *Open and manicured play areas;*
- *Jogging, bicycle, or nature trails;*
- *Multi-purpose sport field (neighborhood park only) or sport court, suitable for random activity;*
- *Picnic areas, shaded pavilions, and gazebos;*
- *Security lighting; and,*
- *Other facilities as needed which can take advantage of unique site characteristics.*

*Many of the items listed above may be augmented or replaced by other facilities of a limited scale that cater to special interests.*

**Space Programming.** *Neighborhood parks should be programmed with recreational space (e.g., playgrounds, pavilions, basketball courts, etc.) clustered into an “active zone” within the park. These areas should be located along accessible park edges, and accessorized with seating and shade to be hospitable year round.*

*Pocket parks may not be of sufficient size to incorporate recreational facilities. Programming emphasis should focus on quality social spaces for sitting or gathering, with small manicured areas for informal play. Pocket parks may also be programmed with a special feature catering to a specific interest group.*

**Location.** *The manner in which neighborhood and pocket parks integrate with surrounding land uses (e.g., residences, a school, an arroyo or other open space, etc.) is crucial to the quality of experience within the park. When a street borders the park, houses across the street should face the park space. When houses must back up to a park, fencing should be transparent to allow a softer transition between both spaces (with the added benefit of providing informal surveillance). When a park is constructed adjacent to a school, ensure that the two sites interact. Work with school districts to accommodate paved walkway connections between the school and the park.*

*The value of pocket parks may be increased significantly if located in areas of frequent bicycling and walking activity. Pocket parks that serve as trailheads enjoy particularly frequent visitation.*

**Good Neighbor.** *Neighborhood and pocket parks are intended for the enjoyment of surrounding residents. Except for recreation facilities catering to niche interests, facilities that regularly attract visitors outside of the intended service area are discouraged. Restrooms and off-street parking should be omitted from most neighborhood and pocket park design. Likewise, night-time use should be discouraged and lighting should be used only for security purposes.*

## CIVIC PARKS

Principally located within historic city centers, or dense urban environments, civic parks can serve as a community's "front porch," providing critical space for public gathering, civic or other events, or community reflection. Civic parks are defined primarily by social space and are not typically programmed for active recreation. Civic parks also define highly urban environments, providing important focal points within areas of dense development.

The size and service area of civic parks will vary according to their specific functions.

## GREENS

Greens are large lawns characterized by landscaping and trees planted in strong geometric fashion. Greens provide small amounts of space for unprogrammed recreation and may contain architectural structures such as gazebos, arbors, or pavilions, and pedestrian elements such as benches and seat walls.

## SQUARES

Found at significant junctions and nodes, squares may provide programmed space for organized and unstructured recreation. Additionally, these spaces are often utilized for activities such as open air markets, concerts, or even civil assemblies. Unlike greens, squares are typically fronted by roadways. Surrounding buildings may be used for civic purposes, but may also consist of other mixed land uses. Similar to greens, squares may contain lawns, trees, landscaping, architectural, and pedestrian elements.

*Although identified on the town's original plats in the colonial Spanish tradition as a "plaza," Klein Park assumes the design characteristics of a town square.*

## PLAZAS

Plazas may be found in civic, commercial, or even residential settings as dominant, celebrated intersections or peaceful neighborhood gathering spaces. Plazas are noticeably associated with building frontages and primarily consist of hard surface materials such as pavers. Landscaping and trees are optional, but when present provide shade or aesthetic function.

## PARKWAYS

Parkways are aesthetically landscaped areas adjacent to or integrated within the street system. Parkway enhancements on prominent streets are used to bolster community image. These areas may be developed to incorporate seating elements, walking paths, and gathering areas. Parkway treatments are typically located in excess street right-of-way or parallel greenways.





*Civic parks include downtown's Plaza de Las Cruces (top left) and recently revitalized paseos (bottom left). Veterans Memorial Park provides space for quiet reflection (above), but also includes design features for larger events and activities. Although classified as a "community park" Veterans Memorial Park is also programmed in a manner that is similar to a civic park. See page 42 regarding park space programming.*

#### PUBLIC RIGHTS-OF-WAY

*The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance of cemeteries, public street rights-of-way, alleys, and other miscellaneous "landscaped areas." These areas are not included in the Plan's inventory of public park space.*







*The Las Cruces archery range is a special interest facility co-located on the City landfill (referred to in this Plan as "City Complex").*

## SPECIAL USE PARKS

Special use parks accommodate unique recreational activities or specialized interests. Because the facility needs for each activity are distinct, a special use park usually provides only one or a few activities. Examples of some of the recreational needs that may be exclusively served by a special use park include (but are not limited to): athletic complexes, swimming pool/aquatic centers, skate parks, shooting ranges, dog parks, golf courses, natural areas/open space, linear parks/greenways, and multi-use trails.

The size and service area of special use parks will vary according to their specific functions. Although any of the facilities listed above may be provided within a stand-alone purpose-built park space, municipalities will commonly co-locate such facilities within larger community, metropolitan, or regional parks. Some types of special use parks are described in more detail on pages 39 through 41.

## SPECIAL INTEREST' PARKS

Parks designed and built to serve a unique or niche use such as a skate park, dog park, or other special recreational need. Prominent special use parks in Las Cruces include the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range, and the archery range and RC airplane park at City Complex.



*The Lush and Lean Demonstration Garden on Spruce Avenue is a special use park that serves a public education purpose.*

## ATHLETIC COMPLEXES

Athletic complexes provide groupings of sport fields or sport courts for organized play in an area that can accommodate the traffic and noise that a large number of users can generate. Athletic complexes typically include sufficient fields so that leagues can congregate at one facility for competitive play and not be dispersed among different locations across the community. Evening activities at athletic complexes necessitate high-intensive lighting that can be a nuisance when the complex is located too close to residential areas.

Athletic complexes may also incorporate indoor facilities including gymnasiums, recreation centers and aquatic centers.

## NATURAL AREA/OPEN SPACE

Land left largely in a natural state to provide wildlife habitat, flood control, and places for passive recreation. These parks can vary greatly in size depending on the resources available, but are meant to have a city-wide service radius.

Programmed in a manner to limit disturbance of the landscape, natural areas and open spaces are largely self-maintaining. Maintenance is generally not a significant factor - other than to check for hazards or invasive plant species. Besides recreational and aesthetic opportunities afforded by natural areas, such areas have huge economic value to society in terms of ecological services provided - functions such as water and air purification, carbon sequestration, flood control, pollination, air cooling, which can positively effect human health and well being.



*Athletic complexes typically support court sports (top) and field sports, but can also include indoor recreation venues. Athletic complexes vary in size, but larger or "premiere" facilities intended to serve not just local league play but also year-round select tournaments should be located in areas that minimize direct traffic, noise, and lighting impacts on nearby residential areas.*

## LINEAR PARKS

Linear parks generally follow natural or man-made corridors such as creeks, abandoned railroad right-of-ways, drainage corridors, or utility easements. Properly developed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel, linear parks may link other parks, as well as schools, neighborhoods, civic buildings, and other major destinations. Linear parks (or 'greenway' corridors) often serve concurrently as a natural area or open space.



## MULTI-USE TRAILS

Multi-use trail networks provide active and passive recreation as well as connections between recreational areas, and parks, schools, and other community destinations. Commonly referred to in the active transportation field as 'shared use paths,' a well-designed multi-use trail system should serve both recreation and transportation needs.

Multi-use trail facilities and corridors may be located within linear parks, public rights-of-way, or easements. Because of its intended dual recreation and transportation function, the multi-use trail network is distinct from casual walking paths, hiking trails, or single-track biking trails that are intended for the enjoyment of users within a fixed location.



*The City's multi-use trail network increases park accessibility and connectivity between community destinations. The multi-use trail network is maintained by the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department and includes trail segments within linear parks, easements, and public rights-of-way (left). The walking paths contained within a fixed location (above) and not intended to serve dual recreation and transportation functions are not considered part of the City's multi-use trail system.*

## PARK PROGRAMMING

While park classification provides appropriate context regarding property distribution and level of service, it provides less guidance on how a property should be programmed to serve different functions and users. In this regard, understanding how different parks are (or may be) programmed provides a clearer connection between public needs and expectations and, accordingly, how the municipal parks and recreation system should grow and change over time.

The absence of clarity in how a community intends to program park space to meet various community functions and recreational needs over time can suggest indecisiveness. Likewise, it decreases residents' confidence in the type of recreational amenities that the City intends to provide in the future, and what the long-term character of undeveloped and developed park space will be. (For example, a sports park with tall lighting systems has a different impact on surrounding neighborhoods than a nature preserve.)

Municipalities are taking an increasingly pro-active approach in identifying how park space is, or will be, programmed. Some properties may serve a single function while others may serve multiple uses. **Figure 2.1, Park Programming Categories** (facing page) identifies the three general park programming categories: **recreational, social, and natural** space.

In addition to the three park programming categories, some park space may remain unprogrammed for an indefinite period of time. During this period, it is essential for park providers to be transparent about how it intends to program the space. Absent such acknowledgment, residents can develop a false expectation that the space is being reserved long-term for open space and/or resource conservation purposes.

**Figure 2.2, Park Space Programming by Park Classification** (facing page) compares the general suitability of the three park programming categories within municipal parkland by park classification.

*The pavilion in La Buena Vida Park is surrounded by over 8 acres of 'natural space.' Does this represent an unprogrammed condition, or a long-term commitment to the retention of most park acreage as natural space? Municipalities should clarify their intentions as close to parkland acquisition as possible.*

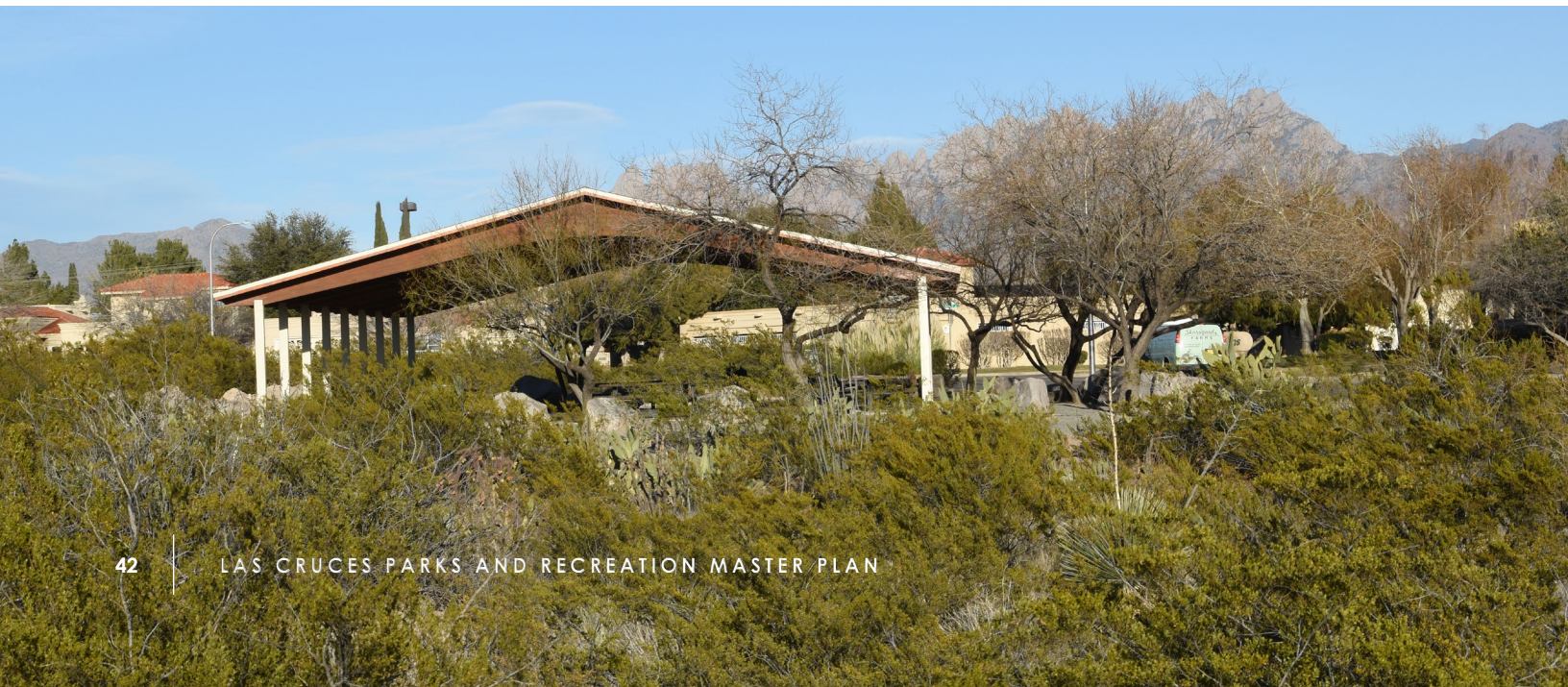


FIGURE 2.1, PARK PROGRAMMING CATEGORIES

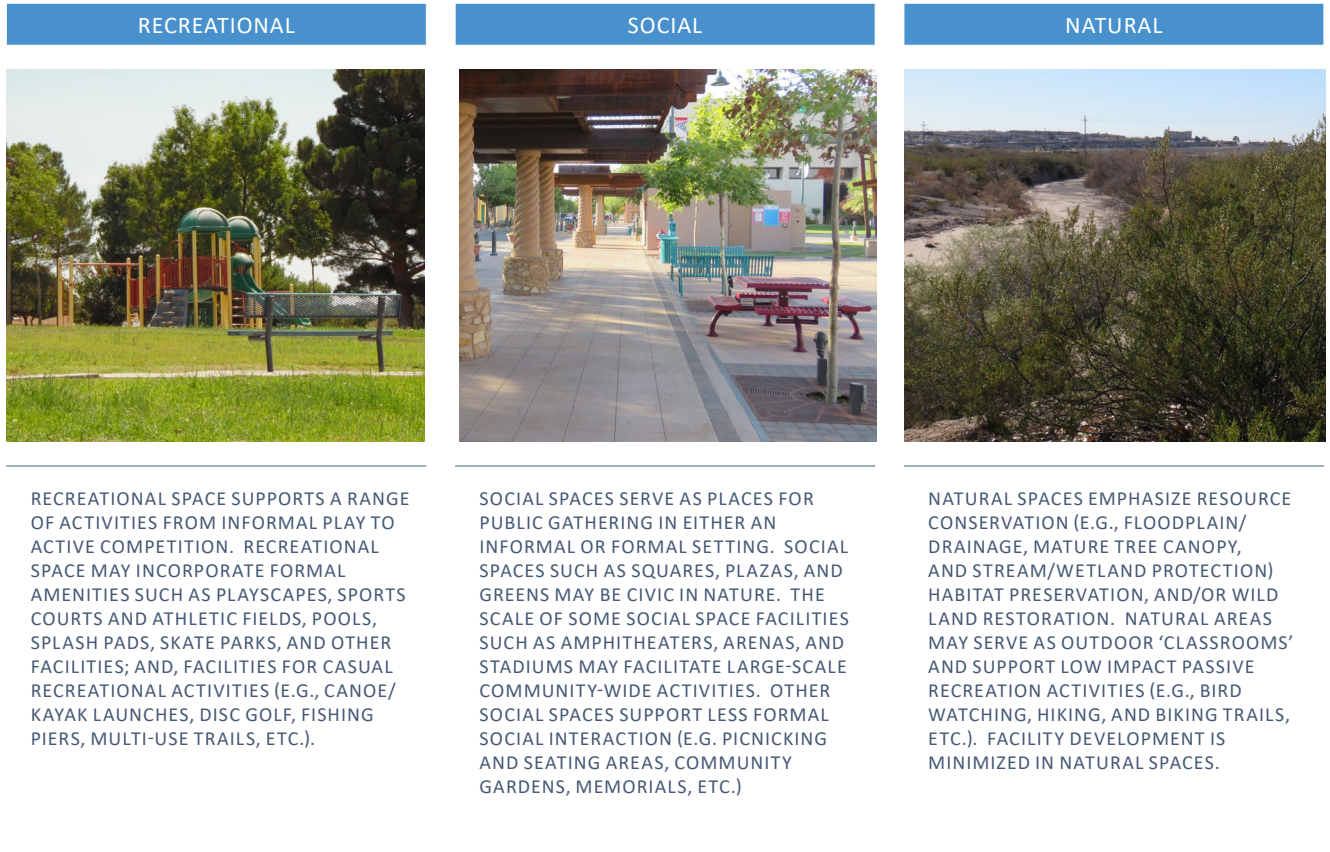
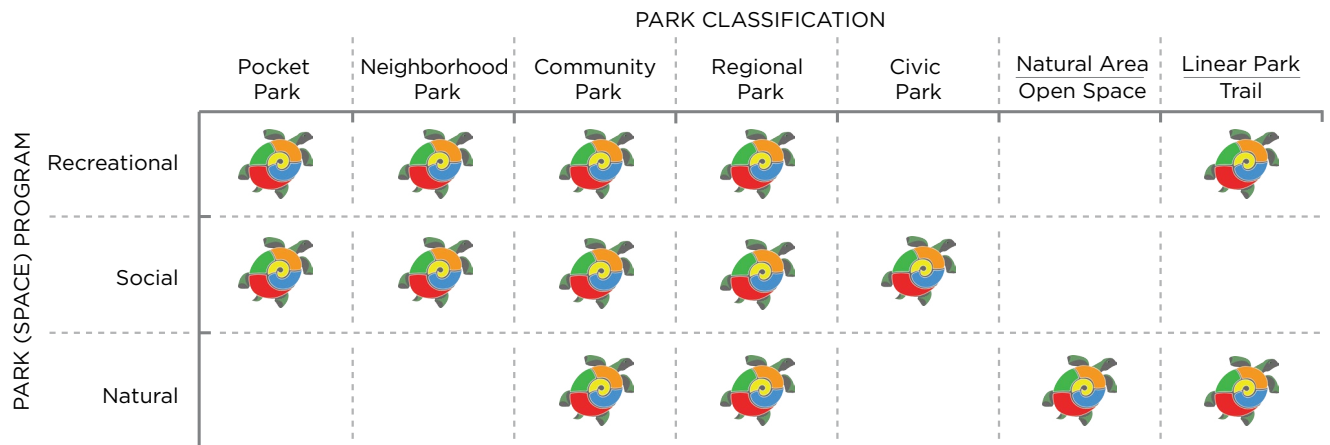


FIGURE 2.2, PARK SPACE PROGRAMMING BY PARK CLASSIFICATION



## SECTION 2: LAS CRUCES PARKS SYSTEM

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### PARK ADMINISTRATION

#### Our Mission:

*The mission of the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department, "The Fun Experts," is to provide dynamic customer-focused services to residents and visitors so they can experience a diverse, vibrant, prosperous, active, engaged, connected, happy, and inclusive community.*

*Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Mission Statement (2019)*

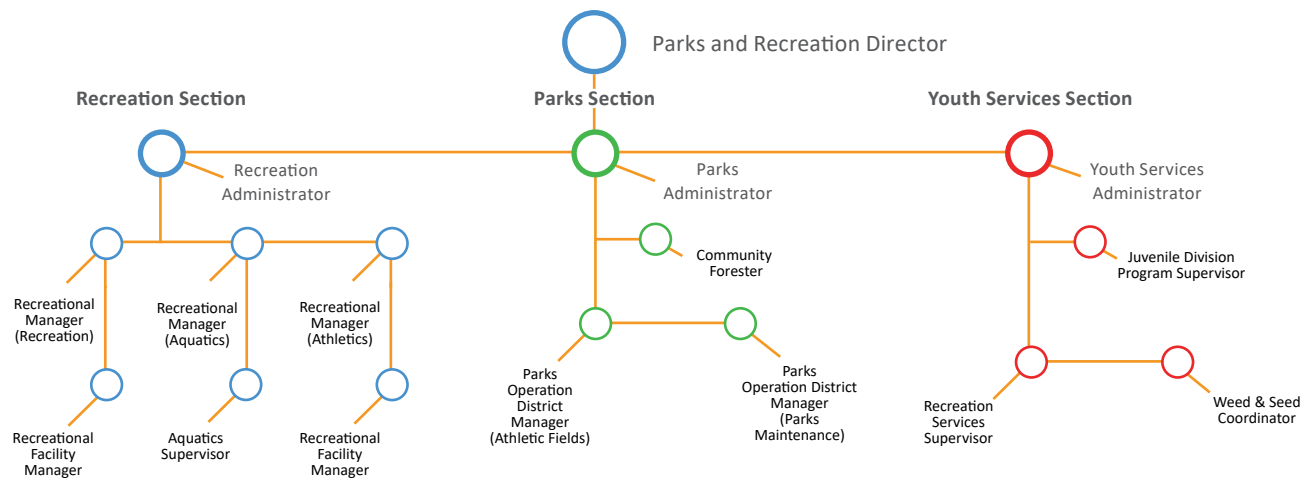
The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department is the municipal department responsible for providing recreational facilities, services, and programs to the residents of Las Cruces and visitors to the city. Although the department's designation as "The Fun Experts" clearly articulates its principal role as a recreational services provider, it must balance these activities with a secondary role of city-wide landscape maintenance including responsibility for medians, rights-of-way, alleys, municipal grounds, miscellaneous 'landscaped areas,' and several playing fields for the Las Cruces School District.

The City parks department was formed more than fifty years ago as a division of the Public Services Department (Recreation Services was a function of the Facilities Department). Under a 2009 City reorganization, the Parks and Recreation Department was merged into a single and independent department.

**Figure 2.3, Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department Organizational Chart** (facing page) illustrates an abbreviated version of the department's organizational structure. The chart illustrates an organizational structure comprised of three sections: a Parks Section, Recreation Section, and Youth Services Section.

The following section describes the general structure and duties of each of the Department's divisions, including a description of management positions (see **Figure 2.4, Parks and Recreation Department Management Team**, page 46).

FIGURE 2.3, LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATIONAL CHART (ABBREVIATED)<sup>1</sup>



## DEPARTMENTAL STRUCTURE

An abbreviated Parks and Recreation organizational chart is presented in **Figure 2.3** above. The figure reflects the Department's FY 2017-2018 structure.<sup>1</sup>

### ADMINISTRATION

The Parks and Recreation Department is managed by a Director who oversees the operations of the Department's three sections, and retains direct oversight responsibility of nine administrative staff members. The Recreation Administrator, Parks Administrator, and Youth Services Administrator report directly to the Parks and Recreation Director.

### YOUTH SERVICES SECTION

The Youth Services section provides activities for at-risk youth. Forty nine section full-time, part time, and seasonal staff direct after school, youth citation, mentoring programs, and other similar services.

### PARKS SECTION

The Parks section is responsible for the grounds maintenance of 1,537.5 acres of parks and trails. The section also performs basic facility maintenance but major projects are handled by the Facilities Management section of the City's Public Works Department. The Parks section is also responsible for the maintenance of 147.68 acres of landscaped areas, medians, and rights-of-way throughout the city. In 2019, the Parks section employed a staff of 62.

### RECREATION SECTION

The Recreation section oversees all recreational programming provided by the City including athletics, aquatics, and general programs. The Recreation section's 99 full-time, part time, and seasonal staff manage program development, scheduling, fees, staffing, advertisement, and associated vendor services.

<sup>1</sup> Changes to the Parks and Recreation organizational structure for FY 2018-19 were anticipated during Plan preparation. These pending organizational changes were considered as part of the operational analysis in Chapter 3, Needs Assessment.

FIGURE 2.4, PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT MANAGEMENT TEAM

POSITION	DESCRIPTION	PROGRAMS ADMINISTERED
<b>ADMINISTRATION</b>		
DIRECTOR	Individual responsible for the direction and operation of the entire Parks and Recreation Department; Collaborates with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board to improve departmental service.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plans, organizes, and coordinates all programs, roles and activities</li> </ul>
<b>RECREATION SECTION</b>		
RECREATION ADMINISTRATOR	Manages, implements, coordinate, and directs programming, operations, and staff of the Recreation and/or Youth Services Sections to assure programs are delivered in a safe effective manner and align with the City's strategic objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After-school Program</li> <li>Juvenile Citation Program</li> <li>Safe Haven Weed &amp; Seed</li> <li>Summer Recreation</li> <li>Youth Employment</li> </ul>
RECREATION PROGRAM MANAGER	Manages staff and coordinates the activities of recreational facilities, related programs, and activities to meet strategic objectives and comply with applicable standards, laws, policies, and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aquatics</li> <li>Adult Programs</li> <li>Youth Programs</li> <li>Adaptive Sports</li> <li>Fitness</li> <li>Teen Programs</li> </ul>
RECREATION FACILITIES MANAGER	Manages staff and coordinates the activities of a recreation facility, associated programs, and activities to assure safety of participants and compliance with applicable standards, laws, policies, and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Regional Aquatic Center</li> <li>Meerscheidt Center</li> <li>Recreation Centers</li> <li>Fitness Facilities</li> </ul>
AQUATICS SUPERVISOR	Supervises aquatics staff and coordinates the activities of the City swimming pools recreation and aquatics programs and facilities, and assures aquatics programs are delivered in a safe manner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fitness/Exercise Swim Sessions</li> <li>Supervised Lap Swim</li> <li>Pool Child Watch</li> <li>Swim Lessons</li> </ul>
<b>PARKS SECTION</b>		
PARKS ADMINISTRATOR	Plans implement and direct the maintenance and repair of parks, recreation, facilities, medians, landscaped right of way and public grounds, minor construction projects and maintenance operations in order to provide safe, playable, and aesthetically pleasing parks, open space, and recreation areas within the City.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park Facilities</li> <li>Trail Facilities</li> <li>Athletic Fields</li> <li>Community Wellness</li> </ul>
COMMUNITY FORESTER	Plans, develops, implements, and oversees City-wide forestry and horticultural programs, activities, and operations to achieve strategic objectives and ensure compliance with applicable standards, laws, policies, and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teen Connection</li> <li>After-school Program</li> <li>Summer Program</li> </ul>
PARKS OPERATION DISTRICT MANAGER	Plans, organizes and supervises the activities and staff involved in the maintenance and operations of City parks, at Right-of-way landscaping, and construction projects.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Park Facilities</li> <li>Park Maintenance</li> </ul>
<b>YOUTH SERVICES SECTION</b>		
YOUTH SERVICES ADMINISTRATOR	Manages, implements, coordinate, and directs programming, operations, and staff of the Recreation and/or Youth Services Sections to assure programs are delivered in a safe effective manner and align with the City's strategic objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After-school Program</li> <li>Juvenile Citation Program</li> <li>Safe Haven Weed &amp; Seed</li> <li>Summer Recreation</li> <li>Youth Employment</li> </ul>
JUVENILE DIVISION PROGRAM SUPERVISOR	Develops and administers Juvenile Diversion Programs to divert at-risk youth and youth offenders throughout the City from the criminal justice system and provide alternative intervention initiatives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Juvenile Citation Program</li> <li>Community Service</li> <li>Mentoring</li> <li>Parent/Youth Session</li> </ul>
RECREATIONAL SERVICES SUPERVISOR	Plans, manages, schedules, and coordinates a variety of recreation, sports, and wellness programs and activities for participants of all ages and skill levels to meet established objectives and comply with applicable standards, laws, policies, and regulations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Athletic Leagues</li> <li>Exercise Classes</li> <li>Home-school PE</li> <li>After-school programs</li> </ul>
WEED & SEED COORDINATOR	Develops and administers the Weed & Seed Program for the Las Cruces Police Department to provide youth recreation & education, neighborhood revitalization, and crime reduction activities in at-risk neighborhoods.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Weed and Seed Program</li> <li>Youth Programs</li> </ul>



**FIGURE 2.5, COMPARISON COMMUNITIES, RESOURCES (2018)**

COMMUNITY	PARK ACRES/ 1000 RESIDENTS	BUDGET PER CAPITA <sup>1</sup>
COLLEGE STATION, TX	1.32	\$56.69
LUBBOCK, TX	3.00	\$44.79
PROVO, UT	2.20	\$47.88
PUEBLO, CO	0.61	\$50.79
RIO RANCHO, NM	1.03	\$71.21
YUMA, AZ	1.09	\$182.05
LAS CRUCES, NM	1.54	\$127.85

Source: NRPA Park Metrics and municipal plans.  
1. Cumulative budget (2018)

### DEPARTMENT RESOURCES

Upon completion of the 2012 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Impact Fee Study, the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department's overall budget was approximately \$9.3 million dollars. The 2012 budget included funds for 217 full-time, part-time, and seasonal positions - roughly equal to 2.14 staff for every 1000 residents. The 2017-2018 adopted parks and recreation budget contained an approximate \$13 million and funds 219 staff equivalent positions and equates to 1.5 staff to every 1000 residents, a noticeable reduction in staff.

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department was the caretaker of 680 acres of parkland and recreational facilities according the 2012 Parks and Recreation Master Plan and Impact Fee Study (page 18). Based on staffing, as discussed above, there was a ratio of one staff member to 3.13 acres of parkland in 2012. The addition of 857.5 acres of parkland and reduction of staff since 2012 has increased the staff to parkland acreage to 10.18 acres per staff member.

**FIGURE 2.6, BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES, RESOURCES (2018)**

COMMUNITY	PARK ACRES/ 1000 RESIDENTS	BUDGET PER CAPITA <sup>1</sup>
BROKEN ARROW, OK	0.76	\$20.14
FLAGSTAFF, AZ	0.68	\$106.67
FORT COLLINS, CO	0.95	\$107.37
PLANO, TX	3.88	\$107.43
ROUND ROCK, TX	2.27	\$94.63
TUSCON, AZ	2.66	\$71.82
LAS CRUCES, NM	1.54	\$127.85

Source: NRPA Park Metrics and municipal plans.  
1. Cumulative budget (2018)

**Figure 2.5, Comparison Communities, Resources (2018)** and **Figure 2.6, Benchmark Communities, Resources (2018)** compare the parkland acreage responsibilities and overall budgets of PRMP assessment communities to Las Cruces. **Figure 2.5** suggests that Las Cruces provides 1.54 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents. This is second only to Lubbock, Texas which provides three acres per 1,000 residents. Pueblo, Colorado provides the lowest parkland acreage per resident and has a budget per capita. In relation to benchmark communities, **Figure 2.6** suggests that Las Cruces provides the highest budget per capita in comparison to the listed cities but ranks fourth in the amount of park acreage provided per 1000 residents.

Detailed staffing information was readily available for four assessment communities. On average, the four communities provide 1.02 parks and recreation employees (FTE) per 1,000 residents and 0.06 operations and maintenance (O&M) employees per parkland acres. The comparable ratio of O&M employees to acres is higher than Las Cruces, but figures do not consider whether comparable departments are also responsible for other public properties such as alleys, parkways, and medians.)



## CITY PARTNERS

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department works in conjunction with several other city departments to ensure that recreational facilities and services offered by the City are provided in an efficient manner. Key department partnerships include:

- **Police Department.** *The Las Cruces Police Department provides security services for Parks and Recreation Department special events. This includes traffic control and security services related to the event. The City does not operate a separate security division for parks and other municipal properties.*
- **Public Works (Facilities Management).** *The Facilities Management section assists the Parks and Recreation Department with facility maintenance throughout the park system. Facilities Management is responsible for all major construction and renovation projects involving park buildings and structures.*
- **Public Works (Streets and Traffic Operations).** *The Streets and Traffic Operations section collaborates with the Parks and Recreation Department to operate the Weed It program for the City of Las Cruces.*

*The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department is responsible for the maintenance of public street rights-of-way, alleys, and other miscellaneous "landscaped areas" accounting for a significant portion of the Parks Division Budget. As City beautification efforts continue on major roadways such as Roadrunner Parkway (above), demands on the department's non-recreational services will increase.*

*The pavilion at R.L. Young Park (below). Responsibility for major parks construction and renovation projects is the responsibility of the Facilities Management section of the Public Works Department.*



## PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

Determining the degree to which the City's park system meets the needs and preferences of residents requires a detailed understanding of the quantity and distribution of park property, recreation facilities, and recreational programs owned and maintained by the City. Maintaining and evaluating a current inventory of park system assets helps to define the effort and cost needed for system-wide operations and maintenance and is a key component of the park planning process.

### SYSTEM-WIDE PARKLAND INVENTORY

**Figure 2.7, Existing City Parks (2019)**, shows that as of 2019 the City owns and operates 94 parks exceeding 1,537 acres. The City's total park land acreage equals roughly 0.02 acres of parkland per person and suggests a significant increase in municipal park property since the completion of the last park plan in 2012. A detailed inventory of municipal parks by classification/type and other major recreational amenities is provided on pages 50 through 72. Cemeteries are also maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department, but are not included in the City's parkland inventory.

FIGURE 2.7, EXISTING CITY PARKS (2019)

PARK CLASSIFICATION/TYPE	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARKS	TOTAL ACRES <sup>1</sup>
REGIONAL PARKS	1	84.8
COMMUNITY PARKS	11	147.4
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS	37	108.9
POCKET PARKS	23	13.2
SPECIAL USE PARKS/FACILITIES	5	533.5
CIVIC PARKS	1	0.7
NATURAL AREAS/OPEN SPACE	1	644.1
LINEAR PARKS/(MULTI-USE) TRAILS <sup>2</sup>	15	4.8
	TOTAL NUMBER OF PARKS: 94	TOTAL ACRES: 1,537.5

1. Does not include rights-of-way or other non-recreational property maintained by the Parks and Recreation Department.

2. Linear Park/(Multi-use) Trail classification acreage includes only fee simple property ownership and excludes easements and rights-of-way.

### INTERPRETING THE PARK FACILITY INVENTORY

The following should be considered when reviewing the park facility inventory maps and tables presented in this Plan:

- Many parks have been reclassified and may differ from 2012 designations;
- New park classifications have been added; and,
- Some park properties previously listed in the 2012 park master plan have been consolidated.

**It is particularly important to note that the park facility inventories listed in the 2019 Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Impact Fee Study will differ from those contained in this Plan.** Although inventories in the Impact Fee Study are derived directly from this Plan, the Study considers only the 'active use areas' of those properties and facilities for purposes of impact fee calculations. For instance, although the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range encompasses over 480 acres, only 88 acres is actively used and maintained on a daily basis.

REGIONAL PARKS

LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

84.8  
ACRES

FIGURE 2.8, REGIONAL PARKS, EXISTING (2019) <sup>1</sup>

NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	PARK	ADDRESS	ACRES
	NAME		
1	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX <sup>2</sup>	1600 E HADLEY AVE	84.8
			TOTAL ACRES: 84.8

1. Also see Map 2.1, Regional and Community Parks, page 52

2. Hadley Avenue Recreation 'Complex' is comprised of multiple special use facilities including: Jim Harty Field, Las Cruces BMX Track, Las Cruces Dog Park, Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center, Las Cruces Skate Park, MAAG Park, Matt Youngblood Horseshoe Courts, Meerscheidt Recreation Center, Meerscheidt Volleyball Courts, Provencio-Van Dame Soccer Center Complex, Raymond M. Paz Complex, RC Track, Ronald D. Galla T-Ball Complex, Sammy Burke Youth Boxing Center, Soldados Multipurpose Complex, and Unidad Park.

The combined facilities of the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex represent the only regional park in Las Cruces. A 'park complex' is an unofficial term used in this Plan to describe a park that contains one or more special use or athletic facilities, while the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex represents an unofficial moniker describing the combined recreational facilities located adjacent to or in the vicinity of a Hadley Avenue.

The Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex is over 84 acres and makes up over five percent of the City's parkland. It is located near the center of the City and consists of 16 separate facilities including:

- Jim Harty Field;
- Las Cruces BMX Track;
- Las Cruces Dog Park;
- Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center;
- Las Cruces Skate Park;
- MAAG Park;
- Matt Youngblood Horseshoe Courts;



Unidad Park is a beloved community asset located in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.

- Meerscheidt Recreation Center;
- Meerscheidt Volleyball Courts;
- Provencio-Van Dame Soccer Center Complex;
- Raymond M. Paz Complex;
- RC Track;
- Ronald D. Galla T-Ball Complex;
- Sammy Burke Youth Boxing Center;
- Soldados Multipurpose Complex; and
- Unidad Park.

FIGURE 2.9, COMMUNITY PARKS, EXISTING (2019) <sup>1</sup>

NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	PARK		ADDRESS	ACRES
	NAME			
1	APODACA PARK		801 E. MADRID AVE.	24.5
2	BURN LAKE		1855 AMADO AVE.	12.8
3	DESERT TRAILS		3492 SONORA SPRINGS BLVD.	34.0
4	EAST MESA		4851 PORTER DR.	5.4
5	LA LLORONA PARK		3499 W. PICACHO AVE.	5.0
6	LAS CRUCES LIONS PARK		701 W. PICACHO AVE.	7.7
7	LEGENDS WEST PARK		1120 N. MOTEL BLVD.	11.3
8	MESILLA PARK		304 BELL AVE.	4.4
9	METRO VERDE SPLASH PAD PARK		7125 METRO PARK ST.	2.9
10	R.L. YOUNG PARK		860 S. WALNUT ST.	21.5
11	VALLEY VIEW PARK		750 S. ESPINA ST.	9.0
12	VETERAN'S MEMORIAL PARK		2651-B ROADRUNNER PKWY.	9.0
				TOTAL ACRES: 147.4

1. Also see Map 2.1, Regional and Community Parks, page 52

There are currently 12 community parks in Las Cruces totaling over 147 acres. Community parks comprise over nine percent of the City's total parkland.

Although most of the City's community parks are predominantly programmed for recreational use, some parks such as Desert Trails retain large areas of natural space, while others such as Veterans Memorial Park are reserved for significant areas of social space related to the many monuments contained on the property. Some of the City's community parks are smaller than community park size recommendations. Many of these variations from standard guidelines reflect special facilities such as recreation centers or athletic complexes that are located on the properties.



R.L. Young Park features two amphitheaters, three pavilions, picnic areas, playgrounds, and two tennis courts.

## MAP 2.1, REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARKS

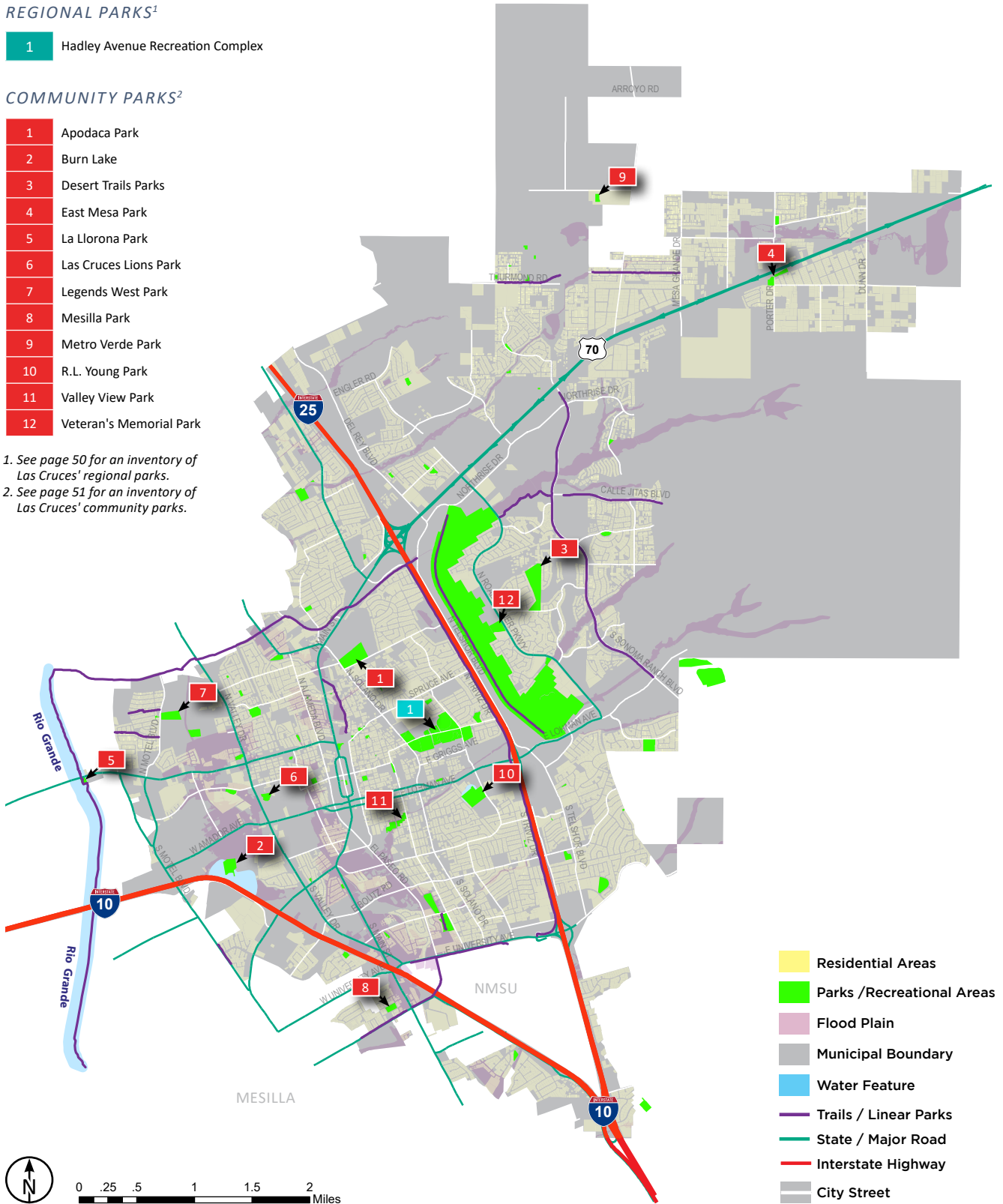
### REGIONAL PARKS<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex

### COMMUNITY PARKS<sup>2</sup>

- 1 Apodaca Park
- 2 Burn Lake
- 3 Desert Trails Parks
- 4 East Mesa Park
- 5 La Llorona Park
- 6 Las Cruces Lions Park
- 7 Legends West Park
- 8 Mesilla Park
- 9 Metro Verde Park
- 10 R.L. Young Park
- 11 Valley View Park
- 12 Veteran's Memorial Park

1. See page 50 for an inventory of Las Cruces' regional parks.  
 2. See page 51 for an inventory of Las Cruces' community parks.



## NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

### LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

**108.9**  
ACRES

FIGURE 2.10, NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, EXISTING (2019) <sup>1</sup>

NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	PARK		ADDRESS	ACRES
		NAME		
1		ALBERT JOHNSON MEMORIAL PARK	800 N MAIN ST	1.9
2		BRANIGAN PARK	1255 HAYNER AVE	4.3
3		CAMELOT GARDENS PARK	1801 WINSOR PLACE	1.2
4		CAMUNEZ PARK	915 N VALLEY DR	2.4
5		CANDLELIGHT KNOLLS PARK	1505 CANDLELIGHT DR	0.3
6		COLLEGE MANOR PARK	401 YALE DR	2.1
7		COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES PARK	2800 SPITZ ST	2.1
8		EL CARDON PARK	1050 N MESQUITE ST	0.8
9		EL ENCANTO PARQUITE	410 AVENIDA DE MESILLA	0.5
10		FOUR HILLS PARK	2395 SUNRIDGE DR	1.9
11		FRENGER PARK	800 PARKVIEW DR	9.9
12		GUS VLACHAKIS PARK	2800 E MISSOURI AVE	3.3
13		HERMOSA HEIGHTS PARK	1600 E AMADOR AVE	1.1
14		KLEIN PARK	438 E ORGAN AVE	1.7
15		LA BUENA VIDA PARK	3300 BUENA VIDA CIR	8.7
16		LAS COLINAS ARROYO PARK	3401 LAS COLINAS DR	1.3
17		METRO VERDE SCULPTURE PARK	3675 THURMOND RD	1.7
18		NORTH LAS CRUCES PARK	1001 VALLEY VIEW AVE	8.2
19		NORTHPOINTE PARK	3559 NORTHPOINTE DR	1.0
20		NORTHRIDGE PARK	3245 WESTRIDGE RD	1.0
21		PARKHILL ESTATES PARK	4623 MOUNTAIN TOP DR	2.2
22		PASEO DE OÑATE PARK	4571 PASEO DE OÑATE	10.0
23		PIONEER WOMAN'S PARK	500 W LAS CRUCES AVE	2.1
24		PONDEROSA PARK	1505 BRANDING IRON CIR	0.7
25		SAGECREST PARK	489 N ROADRUNNER PKWY	2.1
26		SALOPEK / STULL PARK	464 SALOPEK BLVD	2.2
27		SAM GRAFT PARK	4230 SEDONA HILLS PKWY	2.5
28		SAN JOSE PARK	101 N ESPINA ST	1.8
29		SPRUCE ROW PAVILION	1050 N TORNILLO ST	0.1
30		SUNRISE TERRACE PARK	1800 SUMMER AVE	4.3
31		SUNSET HILLS PARK	3333 LUNARIDGE ST	1.4
32		TELLBROOK PARK	4290 WINCHESTER RD	5.7
33		TONY GOMEZ PARK	881 E FARNEY LN	11.7
34		VALLE VERDE PARK	1721 W HADLEY AVE	2.8
35		VILLA ENCANTADA PARK	1236 BIRCH DR	1.7
36		VISTA DE LA MONTANA PARK	5700 PORTER DR	2.1
				TOTAL ACRES: 108.9

1. Also see Map 2.2, Neighborhood Parks, page 55

There are currently 36 neighborhood parks in the City of Las Cruces, totaling 108.9 acres and consisting of over seven percent of municipal park land.

Most neighborhood parks are clearly designed to serve the immediate recreational needs of surrounding residents. Other neighborhood parks, such as Klein Park, contain facilities that encourage social interaction through structured events and activities. Some park properties, such as Sagecrest Park, also serve as trailheads to the City's expanding multi-use trail network.



*Tony Gomez Park contains a community garden, multi-purpose field, pavilions, and trails.*



*Parkhill Estates Park features three pavilions. The presence of shade structures increases the utility of the neighborhood by providing a comfortable location from which parents can watch their children play.*



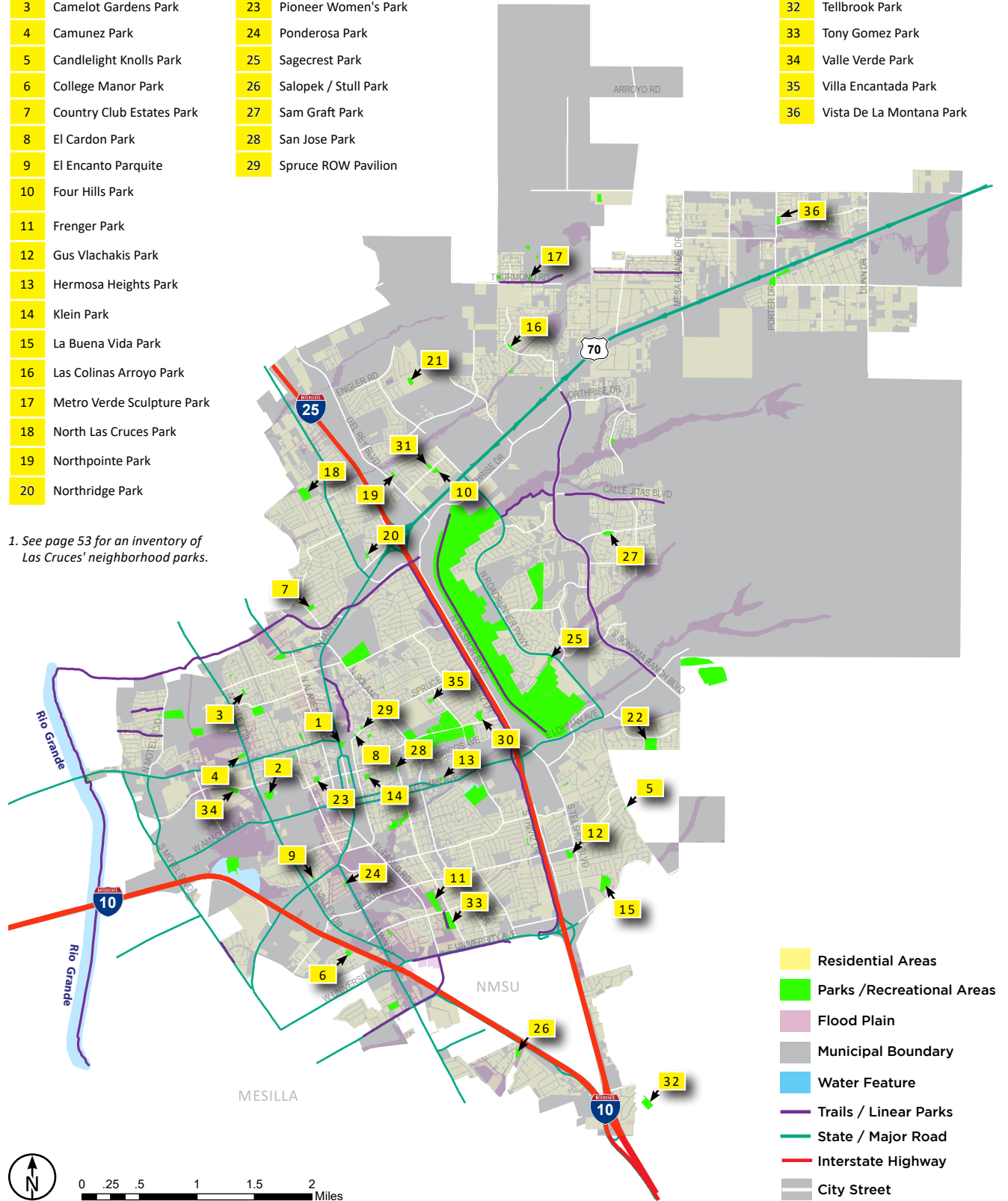
*El Encanto Parquite is located in southwestern Las Cruces and contains a basketball court and playground.*



## MAP 2.2, NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS<sup>1</sup>

- |                                |                          |                             |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 1 Albert Johnson Memorial Park | 21 Parkhill Estates Park | 30 Sunrise Terrace Park     |
| 2 Branigan Park                | 22 Paseo De Onate Park   | 31 Sunset Hills Park        |
| 3 Camelot Gardens Park         | 23 Pioneer Women's Park  | 32 Tellbrook Park           |
| 4 Camunez Park                 | 24 Ponderosa Park        | 33 Tony Gomez Park          |
| 5 Candlelight Knolls Park      | 25 Sagecrest Park        | 34 Valle Verde Park         |
| 6 College Manor Park           | 26 Salopek / Stull Park  | 35 Villa Encantada Park     |
| 7 Country Club Estates Park    | 27 Sam Graft Park        | 36 Vista De La Montana Park |
| 8 El Cardon Park               | 28 San Jose Park         |                             |
| 9 El Encanto Parquite          | 29 Spruce ROW Pavilion   |                             |
| 10 Four Hills Park             |                          |                             |
| 11 Frenger Park                |                          |                             |
| 12 Gus Vlachakis Park          |                          |                             |
| 13 Hermosa Heights Park        |                          |                             |
| 14 Klein Park                  |                          |                             |
| 15 La Buena Vida Park          |                          |                             |
| 16 Las Colinas Arroyo Park     |                          |                             |
| 17 Metro Verde Sculpture Park  |                          |                             |
| 18 North Las Cruces Park       |                          |                             |
| 19 Northpointe Park            |                          |                             |
| 20 Northridge Park             |                          |                             |

1. See page 53 for an inventory of Las Cruces' neighborhood parks.



POCKET PARKS

LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

**13.2**  
ACRES

FIGURE 2.11, POCKET PARKS, EXISTING (2019)<sup>1</sup>

NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	PARK		ADDRESS	ACRES
	NAME			
1	A. FIELDER MEMORIAL SAFE HAVEN (WEED & SEED)		906 N TORNILLO ST	0.7
2	CALLE ABUELO PARK		4380 CALLE ABUELO	1.1
3	CAMELOT GARDENS MINI-PARK		2044 CAMELOT DR	0.4
4	EAST CAMBRIDGE MINI-PARK		120 E CAMBRIDGE DR	0.1
5	ENTRADA DEL SOL PARK		711 E HADLEY AVE	0.1
6	HESS TERRACE MINI-PARK		500 W PICACHO AVE	0.9
7	HIGHLAND PARK		4201 EMERALD ST	0.2
8	HILLRISE MINI-PARK		2619 HILLRISE DR	0.1
9	JARDIN DE ESPERANZA		341 E PICACHO AVE	0.1
10	JARDIN DE MESQUITE		1039 N TORNILLO ST	0.1
11	JASON JIRON PARK		355 THREE CROSSES AVE	3.5
12	LA FONDA MINI-PARK		1502 LA FONDA DR	0.6
13	LAS COLINAS MINI-PARK		3731 JADE AVE	0.7
14	LEGENDS WEST TODDLER PARK		1402 TINGLEY DR	0.4
15	MAJESTIC TERRACE MINI-PARK		2946 MAJESTIC TERRACE DR	0.4
16	MESA HEIGHTS PARK		1022 ASH AVE	0.3
17	METRO VERDE #1 PARK		6013 ATLAS ST	0.7
18	METRO VERDE #2 PARK		6054 VOYAGER ST	0.3
19	METRO VERDE DESERT PARK		3800 SANTA MINERVA AVE	0.6
20	MISSION MINI-PARK		1603 S MAIN ST	0.2
21	RIO BRAVO MINI-PARK		950 RIO BRAVO WAY	0.3
22	ROSE VILLAGE PARK		245 BEX CT	1.1
23	WEST GALLAGHER MINI-PARK		137 W GALLAGHER AVE	0.1
				TOTAL ACRES: 13.2

1. Also see Map 2.3, Pocket Park, page 58

There are currently 23 pocket parks in the City of Las Cruces, totaling 13.2 acres and consisting of less than one percent of all municipal park land.

Highland Park, shown below, is a pocket park that is located directly north of Highland Elementary School. From the school, there is a path that leads directly to this park. The accessibility of this park from the school provides a place for parents and caretakers to wait for their children after school. The park contains a pavilion and picnic tables. Other pocket parks in the City's inventory provide little apparent recreational benefit, but nonetheless represent important community landmarks.

*The utility of Highland Park is significantly increased due to its proximity to the recreation facilities at Highland Elementary School (background).*



*The Entrada del Sol Park serves as a prominent gateway feature to the Mesquite Historic District, but otherwise provides little incentive for active use or visitation.*

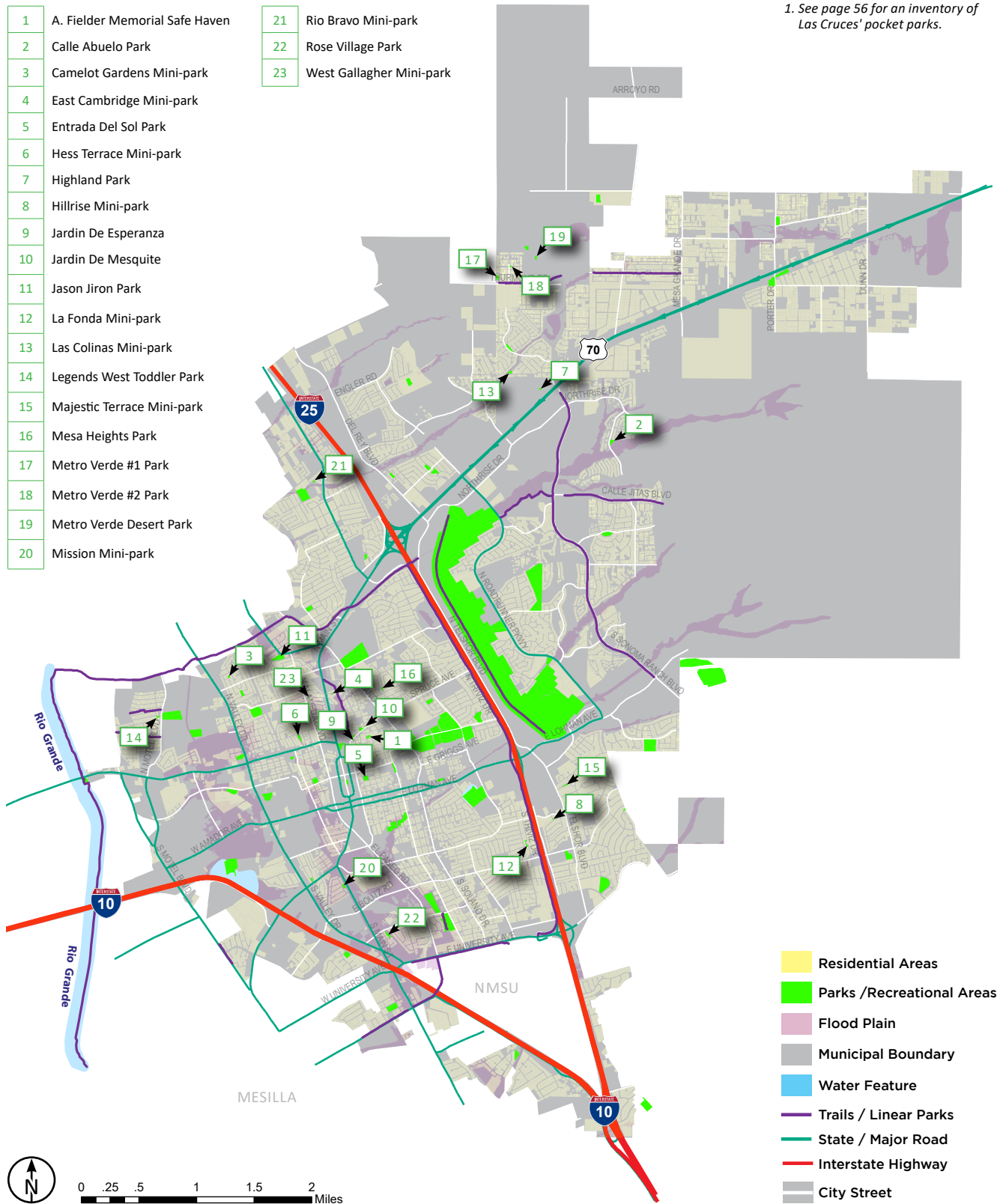


### MAP 2.3, POCKET PARKS<sup>1</sup>

- 1 A. Fielder Memorial Safe Haven
- 2 Calle Abuelo Park
- 3 Camelot Gardens Mini-park
- 4 East Cambridge Mini-park
- 5 Entrada Del Sol Park
- 6 Hess Terrace Mini-park
- 7 Highland Park
- 8 Hillrise Mini-park
- 9 Jardin De Esperanza
- 10 Jardin De Mesquite
- 11 Jason Jiron Park
- 12 La Fonda Mini-park
- 13 Las Colinas Mini-park
- 14 Legends West Toddler Park
- 15 Majestic Terrace Mini-park
- 16 Mesa Heights Park
- 17 Metro Verde #1 Park
- 18 Metro Verde #2 Park
- 19 Metro Verde Desert Park
- 20 Mission Mini-park

- 21 Rio Bravo Mini-park
- 22 Rose Village Park
- 23 West Gallagher Mini-park

1. See page 56 for an inventory of Las Cruces' pocket parks.



SPECIAL USE PARK/FACILITIES

LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

533.5  
ACRES

FIGURE 2.12, SPECIAL USE PARK/FACILITIES, EXISTING (2019)<sup>1</sup>

PARK		LOCATION	
NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	NAME	ADDRESS	PARK COMPLEX
1	APODACA GIRL SCOUT PARK	1101 E MADRID AVE	APODACA PARK
2	ARCHERY RANGE <sup>2</sup>	535 S SONOMA RANCH BLVD	CITY COMPLEX
3	BUTTERFIELD TRAIL SHOOTING RANGE <sup>2</sup>	13500 FRONTAGE RD	N/A
4	EAST MESA BATAAN MEMORIAL POOL	6151 REYNOLDS DR	EAST MESA
5	EMMA B. HESKE GARDEN	975 S MESQUITE ST	VALLEY VIEW PARK
6	HIGH NOON SOCCER COMPLEX - FIELDS <sup>23</sup>	15 BRUINS LN	N/A
7	LAS CRUCES BMX TRACK	145 N WALNUT ST	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
8	LAS CRUCES DOG PARK	430 N HEMOSA ST	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
9	LAS CRUCES REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTER	1401 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
10	LAS CRUCES SKATE PARK	151 N WALNUT ST	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
11	LUSH & LEAN DEMONSTRATION GARDEN <sup>2</sup>	401 SPRUCE AVE	N/A
12	MATT YOUNGBLOOD HORSESHOE COURTS	1801 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
13	MEERSCHIEDT VOLLEYBALL COURTS	1600 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
14	METRO VERDE SOCCER PARK <sup>2</sup>	3770 SIENNA AVE	N/A
15	MUNSON COMMUNITY GARDEN	975 S MESQUITE ST	VALLEY VIEW PARK
16	RC AIRPLANE PARK	545 S SONOMA RANCH BLVD	CITY COMPLEX
17	RC TRACK	1600 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
18	SAGE CAFÉ COMMUNITY GARDEN	5110 PORTER DR	EAST MESA
19	SAGE CAFÉ - LANDSCAPE	N/A	DOWNTOWN
20	SAMMY BURKE YOUTH BOXING CENTER	700 N SOLANO DR	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX

1. Also see Map 2.4, Special Use park/facilities, civic space, and Natural Area/Open Space, page 63.

2. Special use park/facility acreage limited to identified properties. Most park complex acreage included in regional and community park totals.

3. Owned by Las Cruces ISD, but maintained by the City of Las Cruces.



*The Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center (top) offers several types of pools, exercise equipment, and classes. The Las Cruces Skate Park (bottom left) is almost 36,000 square feet and is located in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex. Emma B. Heske Garden (bottom right) is located in Valley View Park and features sustainable landscape design practices.*

Unlike other types of parks, special use parks/facilities are designed for specific recreational activities. Although special use facilities may be located on 'stand-alone' park properties most such facilities in Las Cruces have been incorporated into a large park (referred to in this Plan as a park 'complex').

**Figure 2.12** (page 59) lists 20 special use facilities in the Las Cruces parks system and identifies the park complexes within which they are located (if applicable).

Special use parks are an important part in the recreational environment of Las Cruces and offer many opportunities for outdoor enjoyment. Some of the prominent special use parks in Las Cruces include the Archery Range, Butterfield Trail Shooting Range, East Mesa Bataan Memorial Pool, and RC Airplane Park. The 'active use areas' intended for the general public on many of these properties is often much smaller than the overall property acreage.

## CIVIC PARKS

### LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

0.7  
ACRES

FIGURE 2.13, CIVIC PARKS, EXISTING (2019)<sup>1</sup>

NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	PARK		ADDRESS	ACRES
	NAME			
1	DOWNTOWN		100 N MAIN	0.7
				TOTAL ACRES: 0.7

1. Also see Map 2.4, Special Use park/facilities, civic space, and Natural Area/Open Space, page 63.

The Plaza de Las Cruces is located on the northeast corner of North Main Street and East Griggs Avenue and is the City's newest event space - designed to activate downtown. The plaza contains a large stage for performances and events, multiple seating areas, and a splash pad. Downtown is further activated by recent improvements to downtown paseos, including La Placita.

The City's historic squares - including Klein Park and Pioneer Womens Park - meet the definition of 'civic park' but are categorized elsewhere in this Plan. Other parks such as the Albert Johnson Memorial Park and Veterans Memorial Park are programmed to include substantial amounts of social space for civic purposes but are likewise inventoried in other parkland categories.



Plaza de Las Cruces (left) features a stage as well as a public gathering space. La Placita (top) provides a connection for pedestrians between North Water and Main Street.

NATURAL AREA/OPEN SPACE

LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

644.1  
ACRES

FIGURE 2.14, NATURAL AREA/OPEN SPACE, EXISTING (2019)<sup>1</sup>

NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	PARK		ADDRESS	ACRES
	NAME			
3	LAS CRUCES DAM		3011 E LOHMAN AVE	644.1
				TOTAL ACRES: 644.1

1. See Map 2.4, Special Use park/facilities, civic space, and Natural Area/Open Space, page 63.



The Las Cruces Dam is comprised of open space and wetlands. Although containing a substantial trail system, only a small portion of the property is considered an 'active use area' for purposes of maintenance.

Natural area/open space is a new parkland classification being incorporated into the Las Cruces parks and recreation system. There is currently one municipal park property in Las Cruces that is categorized as a natural area. The Las Cruces Dam property totals 644.1 acres, or almost 42 percent of the City's parkland. The property accounts for most of the City's parkland acreage that was added to the municipal park system between 2012 and 2019, and only a small portion of it has been improved for recreational activity.

Desert Trails Park, La Buena Vida Park, and Paseo de Oñate Park contain significant areas of parkland programmed as natural space, but programming may change in the future for portions of these park properties.



## MAP 2.4, SPECIAL USE PARK/FACILITIES, CIVIC SPACE, AND NATURAL AREA/OPEN SPACE

### SPECIAL USE PARK/FACILITIES<sup>1</sup>

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1 | Butterfield Shooting Range              |
| 2 | City Complex                            |
| 3 | High Noon Soccer Complex - Fields 11-12 |
| 4 | Lush & Lean Demonstration Garden        |
| 5 | Metro Verde Soccer Park                 |

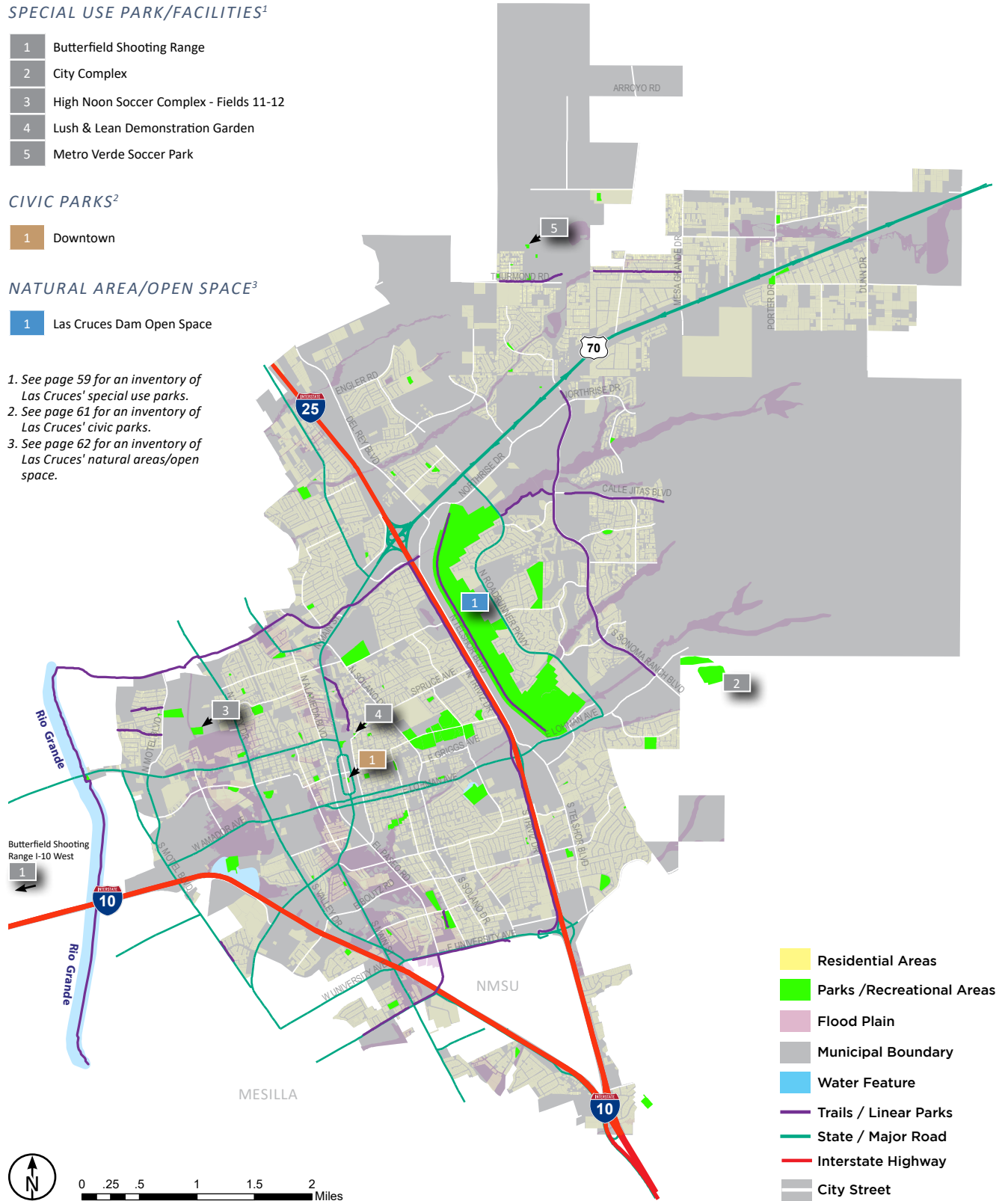
### CIVIC PARKS<sup>2</sup>

- |   |          |
|---|----------|
| 1 | Downtown |
|---|----------|

### NATURAL AREA/OPEN SPACE<sup>3</sup>

- |   |                           |
|---|---------------------------|
| 1 | Las Cruces Dam Open Space |
|---|---------------------------|

1. See page 59 for an inventory of Las Cruces' special use parks.
2. See page 61 for an inventory of Las Cruces' civic parks.
3. See page 62 for an inventory of Las Cruces' natural areas/open space.



LINEAR PARK/(MULTI-USE) TRAILS

LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

27.6  
MILES

FIGURE 2.15, LINEAR PARK/(MULTI-USE) TRAIL, EXISTING (2019)<sup>1</sup>

PARK / (MULTI-USE) TRAIL		ADDRESS	TRAIL LENGTH (MILES)
NUMBER <sup>1</sup>	NAME		
1	ALAMEDA ARROYO TRAIL	ROADRUNNER PKWY TO SONOMA RANCH BLVD	0.7
2	CALLE JITAS TRAIL	DONA ANA COMMUNITY COLLEGE TO PRADO DEL SOL AVE	1.1
3	LA LLORONA PARK RIVER WALK-NORTH	ALONG THE RIO GRANDE TO LA LLORONA PARK	1.4
4	LA LLORONA PARK RIVER WALK-SOUTH	FROM LA LLORONA PARK ALONG THE RIO GRANDE	3.2
5	LAS CRUCES DAM TRAILS	3011 E LOHMAN AVE	2.6
6	LEGENDS WEST TRAILS <sup>2</sup>	MAGALENA DR TO MOTEL BLVD AND ROADRUNNER LN TO MOTEL BLVD	1.2
7	METRO VERDE/ENGLER MULTI USE PATH	ATLAS TO SONOMA RANCH BLVD	0.7
8	OUTFALL CHANNEL MULTI-USE PATH	RIO GRANDE TO N TELSHOR BLVD	4.4
9	SONOMA RANCH MULTI-USE TRAIL	BATAAN MEMORIAL TO E LOHMAN AVE	3.6
10	TIERRA VERDE TRAIL	MESILLA LATERAL TO LAGUNA DR	0.3
11	TRIVIZ MULTI-PURPOSE PATH	OUTLET CHANNEL TRAIL TO E UNIVERSITY AVE	4.5
12	TWIN PARKS (TRAIL)	5045 ENGLER RD	0.9
13	UNION MULTI-USE PATH	APPLE CROSS PL TO LAS CRUCES CONVENTION CENTER	1.3
14	UNIVERSITY MULTI USE PATH	E COLLEGE AVE TO JORDAN RD	1.1
15	WILLOUGHBY TRAIL	N MAIN ST TO LAS CRUCES POLICE DEPARTMENT	0.7
			TOTAL ACRES: 27.6

1. Also see Map 2.5, Linear Park/Trail, page 66.

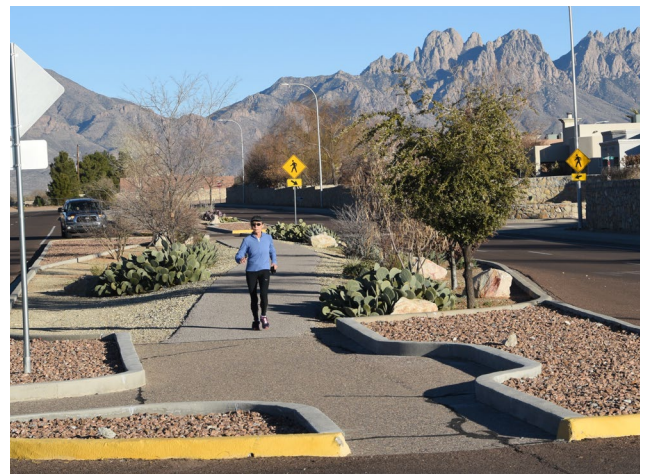
2. By definition, Legends Trail West is the only true 'linear park' in the Las Cruces parks system - accounting for 4.8 acres of land.



*The Legends West Trail system (above) includes the only linear park in the City's current municipal park inventory. In contrast, the Twin Parks Trail (below) is located completely within the Engler Road right-of-way, which may be more accurately described as a parkway.*

Multi-use trails are an integral component of the City's active transportation network, and a growing component of the municipal park system - in terms of both linear mileage and popularity. Most of the City's multi-use trails (or 'shared use paths') are located in a large park property, a public street right-of-way, or easement. The City's recently adopted active transportation plan advocates for a significant expansion of the municipal and regional multi-use trail network.

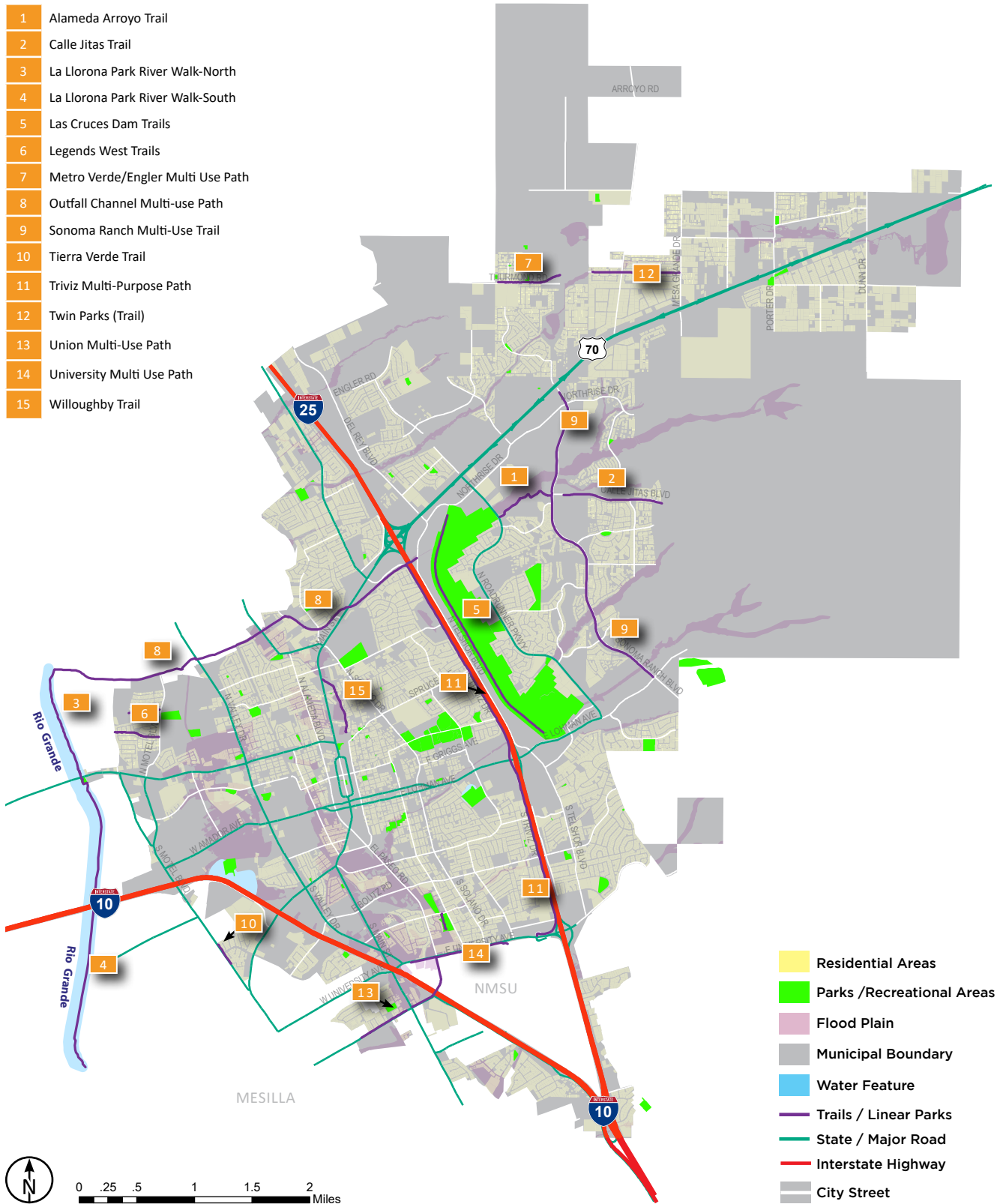
The only municipal park currently meeting the definition of a linear park is a City-owned property associated with the Legends West Trails. The City of Las Cruces retains fee-simple ownership of this elongated property exclusive of any adjacent municipally-owned public street rights-of-way.



Although this plan groups linear parks and multi-use trails into a single park classification, it is important to note that these park system elements are not synonymous. There are two fundamental distinctions: **A)** A multi-use trail is actually a facility and not a park type; and, **B)** A linear park or greenway may or may not incorporate multi-use trails.

MAP 2.5, LINEAR PARKS/(MULTI-USE) TRAILS<sup>1</sup>

- 1 Alameda Arroyo Trail
- 2 Calle Jitas Trail
- 3 La Llorona Park River Walk-North
- 4 La Llorona Park River Walk-South
- 5 Las Cruces Dam Trails
- 6 Legends West Trails
- 7 Metro Verde/Engler Multi Use Path
- 8 Outfall Channel Multi-use Path
- 9 Sonoma Ranch Multi-Use Trail
- 10 Tierra Verde Trail
- 11 Triviz Multi-Purpose Path
- 12 Twin Parks (Trail)
- 13 Union Multi-Use Path
- 14 University Multi Use Path
- 15 Willoughby Trail



## ATHLETIC FIELDS

### LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

FIGURE 2.16, ATHLETIC FIELDS, EXISTING (2019)

FACILITY	LOCATION	CITY PARK	LIGHTED BASEBALL FIELDS	UNLIGHTED BASEBALL FIELDS	UNLIGHTED MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS	LIGHTED SOCCER FIELDS	UNLIGHTED SOCCER FIELDS	LIGHTED T-BALL FIELDS
APODACA BALL FIELDS	1101 E MADRID AVE	APODACA PARK	2					
(ATHLETIC FIELD) BRANIGAN PARK <sup>1</sup>	1255 HAYNER AVE	BRANIGAN PARK	1					
BURN LAKE - SOCCER FIELDS	1855 AMADO AVE	BURN LAKE				3		
(ATHLETIC FIELD) COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES PARK <sup>1</sup>	2800 SPITZ ST	COUNTRY CLUB ESTATES PARK					1	
(ATHLETIC FIELD) HENRY BENAVIDEZ COMMUNITY CENTER <sup>1</sup>	1045 MCCLURE RD	HENRY BENAVIDEZ COMM. CENTER		1	2			
HIGH NOON SOCCER COMPLEX - FIELDS	15 BRUINS LN	N/A			2			
(ATHLETIC FIELD) JASON JIRON PARK <sup>1</sup>	355 THREE CROSSES AVE	JASON JIRON PARK			1			
JIM HARTY FIELD	1840 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY PARK	3					
(ATHLETIC FIELD) LEGENDS WEST PARK <sup>1</sup>	1120 N MOTEL BLVD	LEGENDS WEST PARK			1			
MAAG PARK	1700 E HADLEY ST	HADLEY PARK	4					
(ATHLETIC FIELD) METRO VERDE SOCCER PARK <sup>1</sup>	3770 SIENNA AVE	METRO VERDE SOCCER PARK			1			
PROVENCIO-VAN DAME SOCCER CENTER COMPLEX	1700 E HADLEY ST	HADLEY PARK			1			
RAYMOND M. PAZ COMPLEX	1875 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY PARK	4					
RONALD D. GALLA T-BALL COMPLEX	1601 E HADLEY AVE	HADLEY PARK						4
SOLDADOS MULTIPURPOSE COMPLEX	190 N WALNUT ST	HADLEY PARK			1			
(ATHLETIC FIELD) TONY GOMEZ PARK <sup>1</sup>	881 E FARNEY LN	TONY GOMEZ PARK			1			
(ATHLETIC FIELD) VALLEY VIEW PARK <sup>1</sup>	750 S ESPINA ST	VALLEY VIEW PARK			1			
			14	1	11	3	1	4

1. Open and manicured park space that may be utilized for some organized athletic activities subject to Parks and Recreation Department policy.



*The Jim Harty Fields (top) are located in Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex and features three lighted baseball fields for organized league play. Tony Gomez Park (bottom) is located on the south side of Las Cruces and includes one unlighted multi-purpose field cross-purposed with a storm water detention area. The facilities in each image accommodate a different level of structured or unstructured play that is appropriate for the type of parks in which they are located.*

The City of Las Cruces municipal park system includes 34 total athletic fields, including 21 fields for night time use. Seventeen of the City's total athletic fields are located within the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex, the City's only regional park. Lighted and unlighted field distribution in Las Cruces is depicted on page 129 (**Chapter 3**) as part of this Plan's needs assessment.

The City's consolidation of most lighted athletic fields which are purpose-built for competitive play into a few locations is consistent with recommended industry standards. Likewise, the corresponding distribution of unlighted multi-purpose fields for informal play at various community park and neighborhood park locations provides for localized recreational needs.

## RECREATION CENTERS

### LAS CRUCES PARK SYSTEM INVENTORY (2019)

FIGURE 2.17, RECREATION CENTERS, EXISTING (2019)

FACILITY	ADDRESS
EAST MESA COMMUNITY CENTER	5589 PORTER DR
FRANK O'BRIEN PAPAN COMMUNITY CENTER	304 BELL AVE
HENRY BENAVIDEZ COMMUNITY CENTER	1045 MCCLURE RD
MEERSCHIEDT RECREATION CENTER	1600 E HADLEY AVE
MUNSON SENIOR RECREATION CENTER	975 S MESQUITE ST



*Munson Senior Recreation Center (below) offers programs and activities geared toward seniors. Frank O'Brien Papan Community Center (above) offers fitness activities for adults of all age groups.*



Recreation centers offer an assortment of indoor activities for adults and children of all ages. Depending on the arrangement of space and the availability of gymnasiums, municipal recreation centers may offer both athletic and non-athletic programming.

Las Cruces operates five recreation and community centers. An overview of recreational programming offered at each location is provided on page 74 (Figure 2.20).

## AQUATIC FACILITIES

Las Cruces continues to expand its offering of aquatic facilities and programs in response to the local climate, community expectations, and to remain competitive with other communities in terms of quality of life metrics. These facilities however are expensive to maintain. **Figure 2.18, Aquatic Facilities**, lists the name and location of the four pools that are offered in the City.

The Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center is an indoor facility open year-round. Swimming and aquatic fitness classes are offered in the facility, but the second story also contains cardio machines, strength training equipment, indoor cycling, and a large fitness classroom. Aquatic amenities within the center include:

- *Two lap lanes;*
- *Baby activity pool;*
- *Lagoon pool-water slide area;*
- *Warm water pool (with handicap entry);*
- *Upstairs fitness facility;*
- *Locker rentals;*
- *Showers and towel rentals; and,*
- *Family cabana lockers.*

A 50-meter competition pool is also planned for the Aquatic Center, and will be located under a shade structure on the grounds of the facility.

In addition to the regional aquatic center, the East Mesa Bataan Memorial Pool is located in northeast Las Cruces. In addition, Frenger Park contains one indoor pool that offers lap swimming. Frenger Park serves the south side of the City.

FIGURE 2.18, AQUATIC FACILITIES

NAME	LOCATION
LAS CRUCES REGIONAL AQUATIC CENTER	HADLEY AVENUE RECREATION COMPLEX
EAST MESA BATAAN MEMORIAL POOL	EAST MESA
LIONS' PARK POOL	LAS CRUCES LIONS' PARK
FRENGER POOL	FRENGER PARK



*The Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center is located in Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex and features a variety of swimming amenities.*

Although not included in **Figure 2.18**, the City continues to expand access to aquatic amenities through the addition of adding splash pads to some of its existing parkland inventory. The City's current aquatic offerings are also augmented by the availability of the NMSU Aquatic Center for students, staff, and faculty.



## ADDITIONAL RECREATION FACILITIES



*Metro Verde Splash Pad Park is a community park that contains playgrounds for children of all ages.*

The City offers a diverse selection of recreation facilities distributed throughout the municipal park system. Beyond those facilities highlighted on preceding pages (athletic fields, aquatic facilities), the most common and recognizable recreation facilities include playgrounds and sport courts. This section broadly discusses both facility types, and highlights some other unique facilities offered within the Las Cruces parks and recreation system. A detailed table of all recreation facilities in the municipal park system is located in **Appendix C**.

**FIGURE 3.19, PARK FACILITIES**

TYPE OF FACILITY	NUMBER OF FACILITIES
PLAYGROUNDS	95
SPORTS COURTS	60
SPECIAL FACILITIES (AMPHITHEATER/STAGE, ARCHERY, BMX, COMMUNITY GARDEN, DISC GOLF, DOG PARK, SHOOTING SPORTS, SPLASH PARK, SKATE PARK)	35

## PLAYGROUNDS

Playgrounds are an important part of a child's development. Although playscapes provide obvious opportunities for physical activity, playgrounds also promote the development of social skill by offering a structured and shared gathering space.

In Las Cruces, there are over 95 playgrounds in City-owned parks. R.L. Young Park contains eight playgrounds, the largest concentration in the City. Each playground is designed to accommodate a different age group, featuring multiple amenities such as swings, slides, and climbing areas. One of the playgrounds at this park is an 'inclusive playground' which is designed for children of all abilities.

Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex offers seven playgrounds - five of which are located in Unidad Park. The playground at Unidad Park is comprised of a large wood play structure. The park also contains an adobe house play area and a tire swing.

## SPORTS COURTS

Sports courts in Las Cruces include courts for basketball, tennis, volleyball, pickleball, and racquetball. In total, there are 60 sports courts in Las Cruces. The greatest concentration of courts in the City is at Las Cruces Lions Park where there are 16 total courts. This includes 12 tennis courts and four racquetball courts. In addition, Apodaca Park contains 10 sports courts including eight pickleball courts, one tennis court, and one volleyball court. Lastly, Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex contains eight sports courts including two basketball courts and six volleyball courts.

## SPECIAL INTEREST FACILITIES

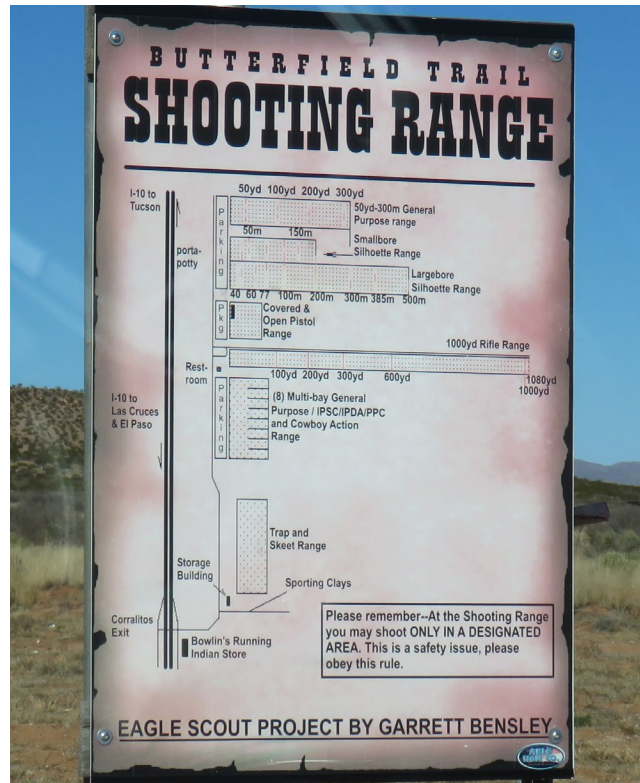
Special interest facilities can set a municipal parks and recreation system apart from other communities by offering unique amenities that are not common in the surrounding region. Some of the special interest facilities that are offered by the City of Las Cruces, but are not common features of most municipal park systems include:

- Archery range;
- BMX track;
- RC airplane field;
- RC Track; and,
- Shooting range.

The Butterfield Trail Shooting Range is a particularly expansive facility not offered by most municipal parks and recreation departments. The shooting range contains multi-purpose bays, a pistol range with covered shooting stations, and rifle range extending out to 1,000 yards.



Las Cruces Lions Park contains 12 tennis courts. Some tennis courts in other locations have been converted to accommodate pickleball.



The Butterfield Trail Shooting Range is a substantial tract of land west of Las Cruces that offers facilities for various shooting sports.

## RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

The Parks and Recreation Department's Recreation section encourages community members to be active by providing a substantial offering of athletic and non-athletic programs and activities. Municipal programming may be categorized according to the following program types and user groups:

- Youth;
- Adult;
- Fitness classes/series;
- Miscellaneous training/lessons;
- Camps/lessons;
- Senior programs;
- Keep Las Cruces Beautiful program;
- Juvenile Citation Program; and,
- After School Program (Kindergarten through 5th grade).

Recreational program offerings have changed significantly since 2013. **Figure 2.20, Recreational Program Offerings (2013-2017)** (page 74), provides a sample of some of the different recreational programs that are offered by the City. **Appendix D**, contains a more detailed list of recreational program offerings.

**Figure 2.20** indicates that participation in some programs has increased significantly over the five-year period measured. For instance, Youth 4th Grade Basketball enrollment has increased by 165 percent over the past five years (from 72 students in 2013 to 191 students in 2017). Coach Pitch for 3rd and 4th graders and Youth Basketball for 3rd graders programs have also seen substantial growth in enrollment, growing about 52 and 53 percent respectively.

Although enrollment in many programs has increased, attendance in some classes has declined. For instance, enrollment in Lil Hoopsters for 1st and 2nd graders has decreased by 69 percent since 2013. In addition, Women's Basketball Open for 18 years old and older, has decreased by 50 percent in the last five years.

## NON-RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Non-Recreational programs are offered by cities to allow residents social opportunities to learn a new hobby or take part in an enjoyable activity. Non-Recreational programs that are offered by the City of Las Cruces include the following:

- Make It and Take It class;
- Messy Masterpieces;
- Hands On Discoveries class;
- Mommy and Me classes;
- Mentoring classes;
- After school programs; and,
- Parents Night Out.

## SENIOR PROGRAMS

Seniors are typically extremely involved in recreation programs. Senior Programs oversees senior events and services and is located in the Quality of Life Department. One example of a senior program that is offered by the City is Zumba Gold. This fitness class is offered at Munson Senior Recreation Center.

A detailed table of all recreational programs offered by the City of Las Cruces, including attendance rates and fees, is located in **Appendix D**.

FIGURE 2.20, RECREATIONAL PROGRAM OFFERINGS (2013-2017)<sup>1</sup>

PROGRAM TYPE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% CHANGE (2013-2017)
COACH PITCH 3RD/4TH GRADE	48	96	96	40	73	52%
LIL HOOPSTERS 1ST/2ND	312	168	120	121	96	-69%
LIL HOOPSTERS PREK	72	72	72	74	72	0%
YOUTH BASKETBALL 3RD GRADE	96	120	120	72	147	53%
YOUTH BASKETBALL 4TH GRADE	72	72	144	233	191	165%
YOUTH BASKETBALL 5TH GRADE	120	120	96	215	206	72%
YOUTH BASKETBALL MIDDLE SCHOOL GIRLS	120	72	80	74	109	-9%
YOUTH BASKETBALL MIDDLE SCHOOL BOYS	72	96	40	40	81	13%
BRONZE CO-ED SAND VOLLEYBALL	106	100	100	120	160	51%
MEN'S BASKETBALL 29+ (TEAMS)	100	110	60	80	70	-30%
MEN'S BASKETBALL 39+ (TEAMS)	50	50	40	30	30	-40%
MEN'S BASKETBALL OPEN 18+ (TEAMS)	100	80	80	70	80	-20%
SILVER CO-ED SAND VOLLEYBALL	106	120	140	120	120	13%
WOMEN'S BASKETBALL OPEN 18+ (TEAMS)	60	60	60	60	30	-50%
LIBBY THE GREEN DOG PRESENTATIONS	1100	1100	1100	1100	1100	0%
JUVENILE CITATION PROGRAM - CHOICES SESSIONS	545	564	498	381	460	-16%
JUVENILE CITATION PROGRAM - PARENT/YOUTH SESSION	445	480	400	300	405	-9%
JUVENILE CITATION PROGRAM - COMMUNITY SERVICE	505	495	410	295	400	-21%
JUVENILE CITATION PROGRAM - INTAKE SESSIONS	551	575	505	400	480	-13%
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM KINDERGARDEN - 5TH GRADE	10860	10860	10860	10860	10860	0%

Source: City of Las Cruces, Parks and Recreation

1. Abbreviated table illustrating most programs with five-year attendance records. Detailed table of all programs located in Appendix D.

For youth offenders who commit a crime, minor offense, or status crime, the Juvenile Citation Program provides suitable public service outlets to rehabilitate juvenile offenders. Source: <http://www.las-cruces.org/departments/parks-and-recreation/youth-services/juvenile-citation-program>



## EVENTS

The City’s Parks and Recreation Department administers multiple special events in parks and within other locations on an annual basis. These events are widely attended both by city residents and visitors. Special event programs contribute to the quality of life in Las Cruces and are a component of the City’s overall economic development efforts.

Similar to recreation programs, participation in City-sponsored or administered special events has been subject to substantial increases since 2013. Since 2016, participation in the City's Annual Christmas Tree Lighting has increased by 33 percent (see **Figure 2.21, City-Sponsored Special Event Estimated Attendance: 2013 - 2017**).

The special event that has seen the single largest increase in attendance within the past five years is the Fourth of July Electric Light Parade, which grew 112 percent between 2013 and 2017. The Great Pumpkin Candy Drop grew moderately since 2013 (38%) while participation in the Forth of July celebration, Music in the Park, and Kids Expo has remained roughly consistent in the last five years.



*The Fourth of July Electric Light Parade features floats decorated with electric lights.*

*Source: [http://www.google.comsearchsafe=strict&biw=1920&bih=963&tbs=isz%3AI&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=OoCbXNmXJ5CJwTHRjilDg&q=4th+of+july+electric+light+parade+las+cruces&oq=4th+of+july+electric+light+parade+las+cruces&gs\\_l=im](http://www.google.comsearchsafe=strict&biw=1920&bih=963&tbs=isz%3AI&tbm=isch&sa=1&ei=OoCbXNmXJ5CJwTHRjilDg&q=4th+of+july+electric+light+parade+las+cruces&oq=4th+of+july+electric+light+parade+las+cruces&gs_l=im)*

**FIGURE 2.21, CITY-SPONSORED SPECIAL EVENT ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE: 2013 - 2017**

EVENT / ESTIMATED # OF PEOPLE IN ATTENDANCE	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	% CHANGE (2013-2017)
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,000	33%
FOURTH OF JULY	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	0%
MUSIC IN THE PARK	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	12,000	0%
GREAT PUMPKIN CANDY DROP	4,000	4,800	5,200	5,500	5,500	38%
4TH OF JULY ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300	7,000	112%
MOVIES IN THE PARK	3,600	3,840	4,080	4,560	4,800	33%
MAYOR’S JAZZ FEST	1,100	1,200	1,300	1,300	1,300	18%
KIDS EXPO	120	120	120	120	120	0%
ESTIMATED TOTAL ATTENDANCE	30,620	31,760	32,500	33,280	37,720	23%

*Source: City of Las Cruces, Parks and Recreation*

## SECTION 3:

### RECREATIONAL PARTNERS, PROGRAMS, AND PROPERTIES

Although the City of Las Cruces is the principal provider of public parks and recreation facilities within the Mesilla Valley, it is not the sole provider, nor the only vendor of recreational programs. Other public and private entities provide recreational opportunities for the residents of Las Cruces and greater Mesilla Valley - often in partnership with the City of Las Cruces.

#### RECREATION PARTNERS

##### LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS

There are 34 public elementary, junior, and senior high schools currently located in Las Cruces - a few of which are near City parks. School-park adjacency presents opportunities for school system and municipal park linkages. In particular, accessibility to recreation facilities on school grounds by the general public may be permitted when school is not in session, subject to suitable maintenance, security, and liability agreements.

The City of Las Cruces and Las Cruces Public Schools are already expanding their recreational and social partnerships through the Community School program. The Community Schools partnership is discussed in more detail on page 79.

##### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

The United State Department of the Interior's Bureau of Land Management oversees the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument which provides outdoor recreation opportunities within four areas of significant prehistoric, historic, geologic, and biologic interest surrounding Las Cruces. Included within the National Monument is the region's most iconic natural feature - the Needles of the Organ Mountain Range.

#### HEALTHY COMMUNITY

*The Las Cruces parks and recreation system is a critical component of the City's contributions toward the creation of a "healthy community" as presented in Comprehensive Plan 2040. The relationship of public parks and the promotion of community health and well-being is acknowledged in this Plan as one (1) of the six (6) essential benefits of a vibrant parks and recreation system (see page 5). The City of Las Cruces has several policies in place that link the use and enjoyment of municipal park space to healthy lifestyle choices. The following information was provided by the Parks and Recreation Department in response to health policy questions measured by the NRPA:*

- **Does the City have a policy that bans the use of tobacco products in City parks and at City facilities and grounds?** No smoking is permitted within 50 feet of City facilities.
- **Does the City have a policy that allows the consumption of alcohol by legal-aged adults on municipal premises?** No alcohol is allowed on City premises, unless permitted with an event.
- **Does the City sell alcoholic beverages to legal-aged adults on municipal premises?** Case-by-case basis. If permitted, and allowed at certain events, alcohol will only be sold to legal-aged adults.
- **Does the City provide healthy food options at concession stands?** Healthy options are requested as part of vendor contracts.
- **Does the City provide healthy food options at vending machines?** All vending machines at City facilities include healthy options.



FIGURE 2.22, LAS CRUCES RECREATION PARTNERS

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM TYPE	TARGET AGE	LOCATION	TIME OF YEAR
DREAM LEAGUE BASEBALL	BASEBALL	12 & UNDER	MEERSCHEIDT RECREATION CENTER	FALL
DREAM LEAGUE SOCCER	SOCCER	12 & UNDER	MEERSCHEIDT RECREATION CENTER	FALL
LAS CRUCES YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE	SOCCER	12 & UNDER	MEERSCHEIDT RECREATION CENTER	WINTER
LAS CRUCES YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE	SOCCER	12 & UNDER	MEERSCHEIDT RECREATION CENTER	WINTER
LAS CRUCES YOUTH SOCCER LEAGUE	SOCCER	12 & UNDER AND AGE 13 - 18	MEERSCHEIDT RECREATION CENTER	SUMMER
MESILLA VALLEY SOCCER LEAGUE	SOCCER	ADULT	HIGH NOON SOCCER COMPLEX	SUMMER & FALL
LAS CRUCES YOUTH SOFTBALL ASSOCIATION	SOFTBALL	YOUTH	MEERSCHEIDT RECREATION CENTER	SUMMER
ROOKIE YOUTH RUGBY	RUGBY	YOUTH AND SENIOR	OFF-SITE	YEAR ROUND
LAS CRUCES RUNNING CLUB	RUNNING	YOUTH	OFF-SITE	YEAR ROUND
BANTAM WEIGHT SPORTS ASSOC.	WEIGHT LIFTING	YOUTH	OFF-SITE	YEAR ROUND
CROSSROADS CITY ROLLER DERBY	ROLLER DERBY	ADULT	OFF-SITE	YEAR ROUND
LAS CRUCES TENNIS PLAYERS ASSOCIATION	TENNIS	YOUTH, ADULT, SENIOR	LION'S PARK	YEAR ROUND

Source: City of Las Cruces, Parks and Recreation

Although the National Monument is located outside of the City municipal limits, its extensive system of pedestrian, equestrian, and mountain bike trails; and rock climbing routes, has increased Las Cruces' profile as an outdoor destination. The proximity of the Monument's units to the municipal limits has also raised interest in creating trail linkages from the city.

### NEW MEXICO STATE UNIVERSITY

Residents in the City utilize recreation facilities at New Mexico State University (NMSU) or attend sporting, performing arts, and visual arts events offered in University venues. Students, staff, faculty, and alumni are also eligible to participate in the AggieFit program which provides access to NMSU's Activity Center, Aquatic Center, Corbett Fitness Center, South Campus Fitness Center, golf course, and driving range.

### COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS

City park properties and facilities host a significant number of community organizations that provide recreational programming. Many of these key providers - and their associated recreational services - are identified in **Figure 2.22, Las Cruces Recreation Partners**.



*The effort to establish the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument has raised public awareness of the value of incorporating natural areas and open space into the community's park inventory.*

### RECREATIONAL AND ENVIRONMENTAL ADVOCATES

In addition to the recreational program providers listed in **Figure 2.22**, other recreation service providers and advocacy organizations operate in Las Cruces to promote specific recreational interests that align with the mission of the City's Parks and Recreation Department. Prominent examples include:

- *Tree Stewards;*
- *Keep Las Cruces Beautiful;*
- *Adopt A Spot;*
- *Friends of the Organ Mountain-Desert Peaks;*
- *Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance;*
- *Boy Scouts of America;*
- *Paso del Norte Health Foundation;*
- *Veterans Advisory Board; and*
- *The Bridge of Southern New Mexico.*

## ADDITIONAL FACILITIES

### OPEN SPACES

One of the most important and iconic open spaces in the region surrounding Las Cruces is the Organ Mountains - Desert Peaks National Monument. This open space preserves the viewshed of the Organ Mountains, which can be seen from many locations throughout the City of Las Cruces. In many of the existing parks in the system, the mountains are also within view. As development gradually advances from the city up the lower slopes of the Organ Mountain Range, residents have begun expressing concern about preserving viewsheds to this defining community feature.

Much of the land between Las Cruces and the Monument (in all directions) remains under the stewardship of the Bureau of Land Management. Given the recent efforts that were made to ensure establishment of the Monument residents have become increasingly aware that there is a direct linkage between open space preservation and public park systems - whether national or municipal.



## PRIVATE FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

Municipal land development codes often augment the provision of public park space with requirements for private common areas in high-density residential developments such as apartment or townhouse complexes. These requirements typically include minimum facility and amenity provisions, often with requirements for items such as:

- Pools;
- Playgrounds;
- Open space;
- Trails;
- Pavilions; and,
- Golf courses.

A more recent trend has also seen land development codes require public gathering spaces and amenities in association with shopping centers and office parks that exceed certain size thresholds. The provision of social space within these types of developments has grown in part due to the recognition by public agencies and private developers of the role these developments now play in the everyday lives of auto-dependent residents (a role traditionally filled by the downtown or "Main Street.")



*A private amenities center serving tenants of an office park. This center offers patio seating, picnic facilities, shade structures, fans, gas grills, bocce ball, and a basketball court. The space may be reserved for events and use of the grills, but is otherwise accessible to all tenants.*

## COMMUNITY SCHOOLS

The City of Las Cruces and Las Cruces Public Schools have recently partnered to establish the area's first Community School. A Community School is a school that hosts local community services. The first Community School in Las Cruces was established in January 2017 at Lynn Middle School through efforts by the surrounding community, local agencies, and other prospective partners.

Through the Community School partnership, the Lynn Middle School teachers' lounge was converted into a health center, becoming the first middle school in the City with a school-based health center.

The Ben Archer Health Center sponsored and constructed the center. The room also features computers for the students and their families to explore and apply for employment. This program increases graduation rates because students become more interested in attending school.



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# 3

## CHAPTER NEEDS ASSESSMENT

LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*The splash pad at Plaza de Las Cruces.*

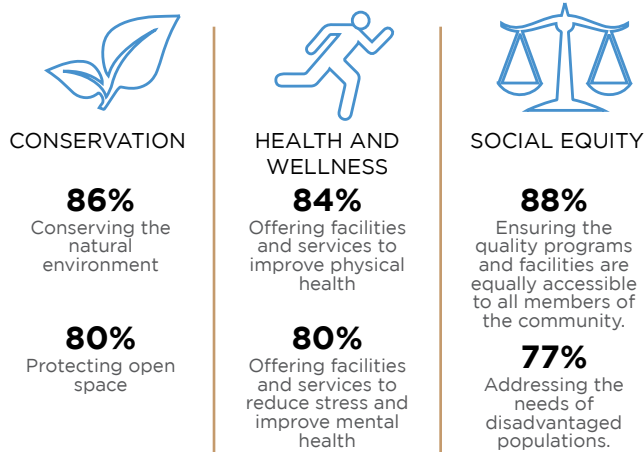
# SECTION 1:

## ASSESSING PARK AND RECREATION NEEDS

A recent report by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA) provides some of the latest metrics affirming that local parks, recreation, and open space systems are key elements of personal and community-wide health and well-being. Among the findings of the NRPA’s *Americans’ Broad-based Support for Local Recreation and Park Services: Results from a Nationwide Study* (2016) report are results emphasizing the role of municipal parks and recreation systems in advancing the NRPA’s Three Pillars: conservation, health and wellness, and social equity.

**Figure 3.1, Three Pillars of Parks and Recreation**, suggests that a high percentage of Americans believe that municipal parks and recreation are a key resource in promoting conservation, health and wellness, and social equity – measures of well-being that are consistent with many of the six essential benefits of parks previously identified in this Plan (see page 5). But how might these broadly-supported priorities apply to Las Cruces? How might the Las Cruces parks and recreation system be designed and funded to address the community’s long-range conservation, health and wellness, and social equity needs while meeting the immediate recreation needs of Las Cruces today?

FIGURE 3.1, THREE PILLARS OF PARKS AND RECREATION<sup>1</sup>



1. Importance of priority by survey respondents, *Americans’ Broad-based Support for Local Recreation and Park Services: Results from a Nationwide Study*, NRPA (2016)

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s “needs assessment” evaluates local interests and preferences regarding parks and recreation services. It considers the quantity, distribution, and condition of Las Cruces’ parks and recreational facilities, and evaluates the City’s ability to provide recreational services in an efficient manner. The Plan’s needs assessment also identifies today’s system-wide assets and deficiencies and serves as the foundation for recommended parks and recreation system enhancements.

**83% of Americans personally benefit from local parks.**

**92% of Americans say their communities benefit from local parks.**

*Americans’ Broad-based Support for Local Recreation and Park Services: Results from a Nationwide Study, NRPA (2016)*

## LEVEL OF SERVICE SNAPSHOT

A common method to measure how a municipal parks and recreation system can meet the needs of its residents is to establish targeted “levels of service” for parkland acreage and core recreational facilities (i.e., athletic fields, sport courts, aquatics, and trails). Level of service targets are typically measured by: *acreage/quantity x population, or proximity to park properties and facilities*. These targets are aspirational – often not being met in full – yet provide clear benchmarks that tell a community where funding and resources for new recreational services should be directed.

## CURRENT PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE TARGETS

Level of service targets are not the only way to measure the health of a municipal parks and recreation system, or to prioritize future enhancements. These measures however can provide a quick snapshot of a jurisdiction’s progression toward providing sufficient and suitable park space and recreation facilities for its residents and visitors. **Figure 3.2, Parkland Level of Service (2019)** (facing page), presents the current amount of parkland being provided by the City of Las Cruces in comparison to the level of service targets established in the 2012 PRMP.

The 2012 PRMP established acreage targets for three park classifications: community parks, neighborhood parks, and pocket parks. **Figure 3.2** suggests that the City has met 86 percent of its 2019 acreage goal for these three combined classifications (In addition, the City’s 2012 deficit in neighborhood and pocket park acreage has been reversed as of 2019).

While **Figure 3.2** illustrates positive park system growth – particularly in terms of neighborhood and pocket park acreage – the City continues to face a substantial deficit in community parkland. Although the City’s 2012 community parkland deficit of 78.1 acres has decreased by 22 percent to 60.9 acres, the decrease is due only to a change in the City’s service standard from 3 acres / 1,000 residents to 2 acres / 1,000 residents.

Other parkland variables that affect accessibility to the Las Cruces parks system are not depicted in **Figure 3.2** – including overall system acreage (incorporating different park types, actual use area, and proximity guidelines). These and other variables are discussed in the parks system level of service assessment beginning on page 87.



*With a system of over 23 pocket parks such as Las Colinas Park (above), Las Cruces' combined neighborhood and pocket park acreage exceeds 2012 target levels of service.*

FIGURE 3.2, PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019) <sup>1</sup>

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE		CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)		
	RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD (2012)	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2019)	EXISTING ACREAGE	EXISTING SERVICE STANDARD	EXISTING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)
COMMUNITY	2.0 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	208.3 ACRES	147.4 ACRES	1.3 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	-(60.9 ACRES)
NEIGHBORHOOD MINI (POCKET)	1.0 ACRE / 1,000 RESIDENTS	104.1 ACRES	122.1 ACRES	1.2 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	18.0 ACRES
COMBINED	3.0 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	312.4 ACRES	269.5 ACRES	2.6 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	-(42.9 ACRES)

1. 104,161 residents (est. 2019): Based on 101,706 residents per US Census, American Community Survey population estimates (2017) plus 1.2 percent annual population growth.

FIGURE 3.3, COMPARISON COMMUNITIES, PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE<sup>1</sup>

COMMUNITY	PARK SYSTEM ACREAGE <sup>1</sup>	
	PARK ACRES MAINTAINED	PARK ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS
COLLEGE STATION, TX	1,316	12.25
LUBBOCK, TX	3,000	12.13
PROVO, UT	2,197	18.91
PUEBLO, CO	606	5.55
RIO RANCHO, NM	1,029	11.03
YUMA, AZ	1,085	11.56
LAS CRUCES, NM	1,537	15.12

Sources: NRPA Park Metrics & municipal parks & recreation plans.  
1. Most recent year measured varies by source.

FIGURE 3.4, BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES, PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE<sup>1</sup>

COMMUNITY	PARK SYSTEM ACREAGE <sup>1</sup>	
	PARK ACRES MAINTAINED	PARK ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS
BROKEN ARROW, OK	763	7.19
FLAGSTAFF, AZ	680	9.73
FORT COLLINS, CO	946	5.65
PLANO, TX	3,880	13.79
ROUND ROCK, TX	2,270	19.51
TUSCON, AZ	4,298	8.10
LAS CRUCES, NM	1,537	15.12

Sources: NRPA Park Metrics & municipal parks & recreation plans.  
1. Most recent year measured varies by source.

### ASSESSMENT COMMUNITIES, LEVEL OF SERVICE

Figure 3.3, Comparison Communities, Parkland Level of Service, and Figure 3.4, Benchmark Communities, Parkland Level of Service, present the cumulative parkland acreage of each assessment community in relation to the communities' most recent level of service targets. The figures suggest that per 1,000 residents, Las Cruces' park system is larger than that of all but two assessment communities.

As with Figure 3.2, the favorable findings presented in Figures 3.3 and 3.4 must be considered in context. For instance, of the City's 1,537 total parkland acres, only 446.8 acres (29% of total) are considered "active uses areas," with the remaining 1,090 acres remaining largely inaccessible to the public.



*The City of Las Cruces provides 0.26 miles of multi-use trail per 1,000 residents, a standard that exceeds the 2012 target ratio of 0.25 miles of "recreational trails and bikeways" per 1,000 residents. New level of service targets should align with the City's recently adopted active transportation plan, and consider proximity of trail mileage to residential areas.*

### SNAPSHOT SUMMARY

The metrics presented in **Figures 3.2, 3.3, and 3.4** provide only a snapshot of the scale of Las Cruces' park system in comparison to select assessment communities. This general information is presented to prompt critical questions about the type and amount of park space that Las Cruces wants to incorporate into the municipal parks system in the future.

The remaining sections of this chapter evaluate the manner that the City of Las Cruces delivers parks and recreation services to its residents. The needs and service delivery assessment considers parkland, recreational facilities, recreational programs and events, operations, and methods for future system-wide development. New parkland and facility level of service targets are established within **Chapter 3**, but needs assessment findings also serve as the source of the financial, operational, policy, and regulatory actions introduced in **Chapter 4, Plan Recommendations**.



## SECTION 2: PARKS SYSTEM LEVEL OF SERVICE

The quantity, distribution, and quality of Las Cruces' municipal parkland and recreational facilities represent the most apparent measures of system-wide health. This Plan utilizes four methodologies to evaluate the City of Las Cruces' current and future parkland and recreational facility needs:

- **Demand-based Assessment.** *The demand-based assessment uses resident and stakeholder input to determine actual and anticipated parks system usage, and to recommend suitable park types, recreational facilities, and programs to meet existing and latent demand.*
- **Standards-based Assessment.** *The standards-based assessment uses level of service ratios and proximity measures to determine the accessibility of parkland and recreational facilities in relation to current and future residents. This assessment method identifies aspirational parkland and facility targets to maintain or improve long-term accessibility to the municipal parks system.*
- **Resource-based Assessment.** *The resource-based assessment considers unique or prominent physical features and natural resources, and pre-existing local or regional initiatives, that may be leveraged to provide enhanced recreational opportunities.*
- **Conditions-based Assessment.** *The conditions-based assessment measures the maintenance conditions of park grounds and facilities. This assessment uses a uniform scoring system to identify where the most critical maintenance and service enhancement investments may be necessary.*

All four standard assessment methodologies are important to determine future parkland and facility needs in Las Cruces. No one metric however presents a complete picture of current system-wide deficiencies or projected investment priorities. This Plan considers the cumulative findings of all four assessment methods to present a series of parkland and recreational facility level of service targets and accompanying recommendations.

**Section 2, Parks System Level of Service**, principally applies the four standard methodologies to parkland (although the conditions-based assessment also considers recreational facilities as well). Additional demand-based and standards-based assessments are applied to recreational facilities in **Section 3** of this chapter.



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 LAS CRUCES  
PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

 City of Las Cruces  
HERITAGE OF OPPORTUNITY

*The Plan's demand-based assessment depends on feedback provided by the public through surveys, open houses, and meetings with stakeholder groups. An overview of outreach methods is provided in Chapter 1.*

## DEMAND-BASED ASSESSMENT

Parks system investments should support the preferences of the individuals who will be utilizing the amenities. Public feedback is essential in forming a general consensus and support for initiatives and funding that allow future parks and recreation projects to become reality. Gathering individual thoughts from the public would be ideal, but is not practical as any community-wide planning effort is restricted by both the time and funds required to poll all system users.

As introduced in **Chapter 1**, three principal methods were used to gather public input during the master planning process: stakeholder meetings, an on-line public survey, and public open houses. (A project website also served as a key outreach tool, but was not used to collect public comment). These public input methods cumulatively provide an understanding of local opinions on system use, programming, and facility needs for the parks system. A full summary of public outreach activities is located in **Appendix B**.

### STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Stakeholder meetings were held in December 2018 and January 2019 with City officials and other entities that provide recreational services in partnership with the City. The introductory meetings provided an opportunity for user groups that have a high level of interaction with the City to identify important themes regarding municipal parks and recreation service delivery.

Repetitive issues and themes identified by stakeholder groups include:

- **Lighting.** *There are concerns regarding inadequate lighting across all parks, and a desire for extended hours for athletic field and sport court lighting.*
- **Security.** *There is a lack of security cameras in parks.*
- **Trails.** *There should be more connectivity between parks and the multi-use trail network.*
- **Signage.** *There is a lack of signage along the multi-use trail system.*
- **Shade.** *Additional shade is needed throughout the parks system.*

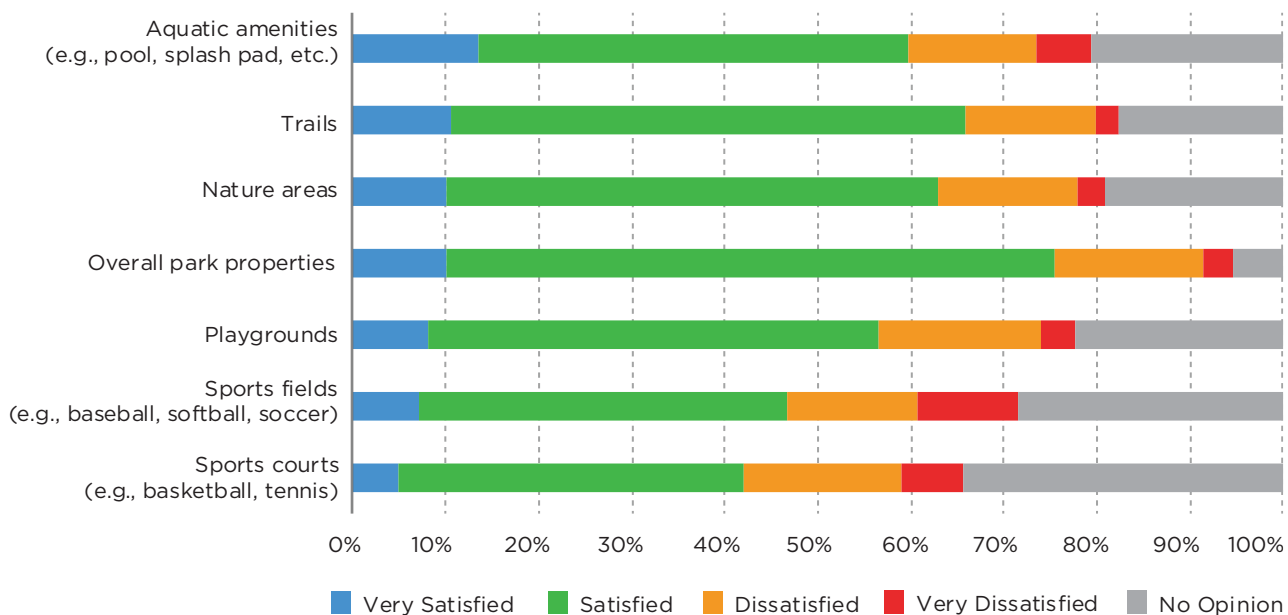
Most stakeholders did not identify a precise idea, issue, facility, or recreational program as a “game changer” to system enhancement. Rather, stakeholders expressed a desire for general enhancements to existing park properties and facilities before major parks system additions would be considered.

### ONLINE PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

A community survey was disseminated between November 2018 and February 2019 to better understand residents’ perceptions of the City of Las Cruces’ parks and recreation system. The survey was promoted by fliers, word of mouth, and a City-led social media outreach.

There were a total of 1,217 survey respondents. Results from many of the survey questions that have helped to inform the demand based assessment are presented on pages 89 through 98.

FIGURE 3.5, SATISFACTION WITH SPECIFIC PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENTS



The La Llorona Park River Walk-North is a popular trail segment that forms part of a planned loop system around Las Cruces. This trail segment is also likely to serve as portion of the statewide Rio Grande Trail.

**SATISFACTION WITH THE QUALITY, APPEARANCE, AND MAINTENANCE OF SPECIFIC PARKS AND RECREATION ELEMENTS**

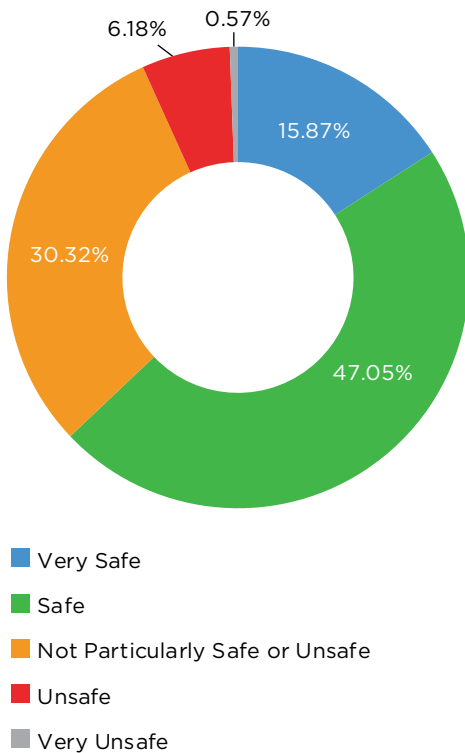
Survey respondents were asked if they were pleased with the quality, appearance, and maintenance of parks and recreation elements within the City. As **Figure 3.5, Satisfaction With Specific Parks and Recreation Elements** shows, survey respondents are the most satisfied with the aquatic amenities (e.g., pool, splash pad, etc.), trails, and nature areas provided by the City. In contrast, respondents were most dissatisfied with the condition of sports fields (e.g., baseball, softball, soccer).

**HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WHILE IN THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES PARKS?**

In large measure, survey respondents indicated that safety concerns are not a significant problem within the Las Cruces parks system. **Figure 3.6, How Safe Do You Feel While in the City of Las Cruces Parks?** indicates that almost 63 percent of respondents feel that municipal parks are either safe or very safe.

A smaller percentage of respondents – almost seven percent – indicated that parks are unsafe or very unsafe.

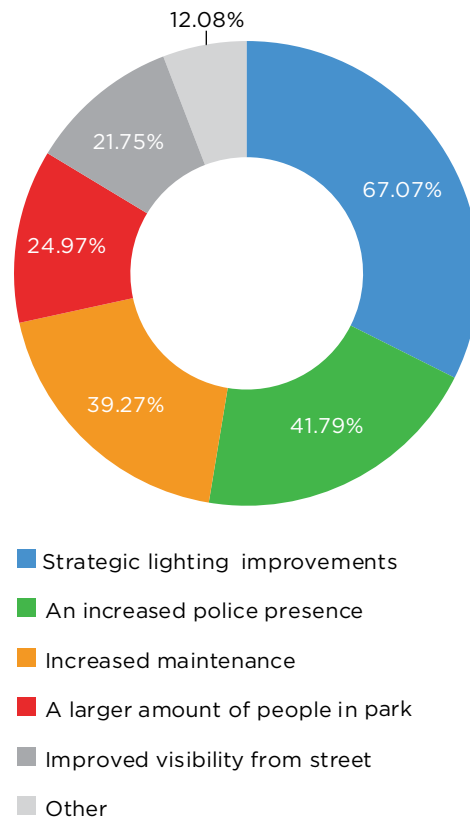
**FIGURE 3.6, HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL WHILE IN THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES PARKS?**



**WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL SAFER IN THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES PARKS?**

Although the Las Cruces parks system is perceived as mostly safe, many respondents expressed that there is additional room to improve perceptions of security in City parks. **Figure 3.7, What Would Make You Feel Safer in the City of Las Cruces Parks?** indicates that many survey respondents believe that strategic lighting improvements would help make parks feel safer. An increased police presence was determined as the second most significant element in improving security on municipal park property – particularly in relation to vandalism and loitering.

**FIGURE 3.7, WHAT WOULD MAKE YOU FEEL SAFER IN THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES PARKS?**



### WHAT DO YOU LIKE MOST ABOUT LAS CRUCES PARK PROPERTIES AND/OR PARK FACILITIES?<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 3.8, What Do You Like Most?** (page 92), is a "word cloud" that illustrates key words used by survey respondents to describe what they most like about the municipal parks system. (The larger the word, the more frequent it was used by survey respondents.) The popular key words highlighted in **Figure 3.8** abbreviate the sentiments of survey respondents who indicated that they like the way in which park properties and facilities are maintained, the variety of park facilities, and areas of shade, where applicable.

### WHAT IS THE MOST CRITICAL FEATURE OR CHARACTERISTIC THAT SHOULD BE IMPROVED WITHIN THE CITY OF LAS CRUCES PARKS SYSTEM?<sup>1</sup>

The word cloud depicted by **Figure 3.9, What is the Most Critical Feature or Characteristic that Should be Improved?** (page 92) suggests that survey respondents believe that the addition of more athletic fields and multi-use trails is a high priority. Regarding the term "facilities," expanded survey responses indicate that many people feel as though accessory facilities (i.e., bathrooms, trash cans, bleachers, etc.) are most in need of repair.

### WHICH MUNICIPAL PARK PROPERTY OR FACILITY DO YOU VISIT MOST OFTEN?<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 3.10, Which Municipal Park Property or Facility Do You Visit Most Often?** (page 93) indicates that R.L. Young Park is the most visited park in the municipal parks system. This is followed by Apodaca Park and Meerscheidt Recreation Center. Popular parks with high visitation are typically larger in size and categorized as community or regional parks.

### IS THERE A PARTICULAR RECREATION FACILITY THAT YOU WOULD LIKE TO SEE ADDED TO THE LAS CRUCES PARKS SYSTEM?<sup>1</sup>

Key word responses in **Figure 3.11, Is There a Particular Recreation Facility That You Would Like to See Added?** (page 93) suggest that survey respondents would most like to see pickleball courts, other sports courts, and trails added to the municipal parks system. The potential addition of swimming pools and soccer fields is also a prominent response.

### HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH ATHLETIC OR OTHER RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE FOLLOWING AGE GROUPS?<sup>1</sup>

Survey results indicate that there is general satisfaction with the City's delivery of recreational programming targeting all age groups. Consistent with most communities, **Figure 3.12, How Satisfied Are You With Athletic or Other Recreational Programs for the Following Age Groups?** (page 94) suggests that the age group that is perceived to be the most underserved is teens aged 13-19. In contrast, there is a high level of satisfaction with recreational program service delivery for seniors over the age of 55 and children ages 5 to 8.

### WHICH AGE GROUP NEEDS BETTER ATHLETIC OR RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS?<sup>1</sup>

**Figure 3.13, Which Age Group Needs Better Athletic or Recreational Programs?** (page 94) indicates that survey respondents feel that teens aged 13-19 have the greatest need for enhanced recreational programming choices.

<sup>1</sup> Figures 3.8 through 3.13 are located on pages 92 through 94.





FIGURE 3.12, HOW SATISFIED ARE YOU WITH ATHLETIC OR OTHER RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS FOR THE FOLLOWING AGE GROUPS?

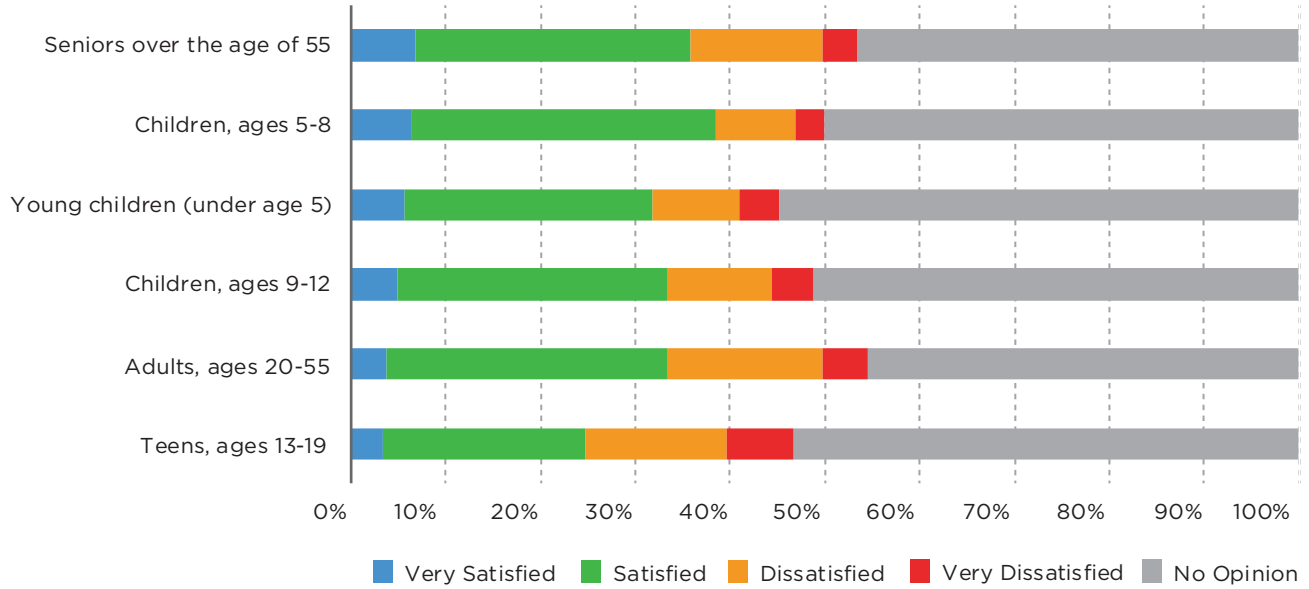
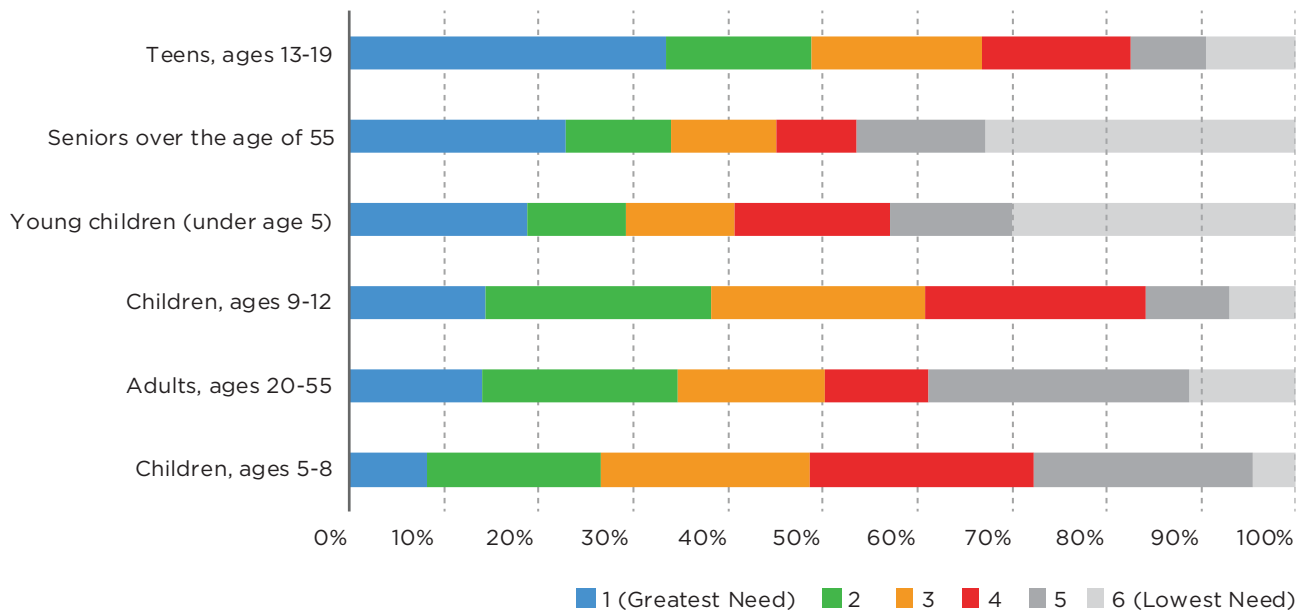


FIGURE 3.13, WHICH AGE GROUP NEEDS BETTER ATHLETIC OR RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS?







Highland Park is directly adjacent to Highland Elementary School. Las Cruces recognizes that expansion of the City's and Las Cruces Public Schools' cooperative service agreements could help meet latent community-wide recreation and public service needs.

1. Figures 3.14 through 3.16 are located on pages 96 and 97.

**HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR LAS CRUCES TO SPONSOR OR SUPPORT DIFFERENT TYPES OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS?<sup>1</sup>**

**Figure 3.14, How Important is it for Las Cruces to Sponsor or Support Recreational Programs?** (page 96) illustrates strong local support for Las Cruces to continue its initiatives to sponsor or support different types of recreational programs - particularly in well-served categories such as youth and senior programs, and fitness classes.

**WHAT IS KEEPING YOU FROM USING THE PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN LAS CRUCES MORE?<sup>1</sup>**

**Figure 3.15, What is Keeping You From Parks and Recreation Facilities in Las Cruces?** (page 96) illustrates that only 11.2 percent of survey respondents do not visit City parks often. The most common reasons identified by survey respondents for not visiting municipal parks is that the parks and recreation facilities do not meet their needs or that there are no parks located near them.

**INDICATE HOW IMPORTANT EACH ACTIVITY IS TO YOU.<sup>1</sup>**

**Figure 3.16, Indicate How Important Each Activity is to You** (page 97) illustrates the type of park and recreation investments that survey respondents feel is most important subject to funding constraints. Popular expenditures or initiatives include: partner with the school district to provide mutually-beneficial facilities and programs; renovate existing neighborhoods parks, playgrounds, shelters, parking, etc.; and renovate existing athletic facilities (e.g., soccer, baseball/softball, basketball, etc.).

FIGURE 3.14, HOW IMPORTANT IS IT FOR LAS CRUCES TO SPONSOR OR SUPPORT DIFFERENT TYPES OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

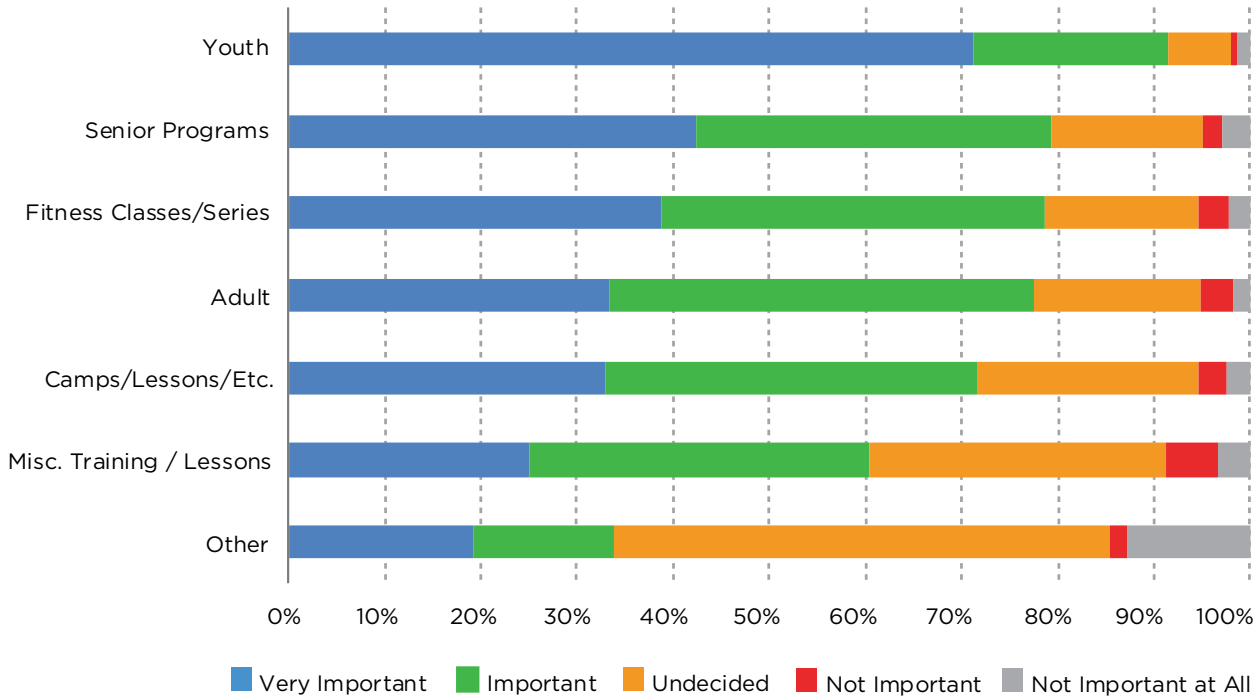


FIGURE 3.15, WHAT IS KEEPING YOU FROM USING PARKS AND RECREATION FACILITIES IN LAS CRUCES MORE?

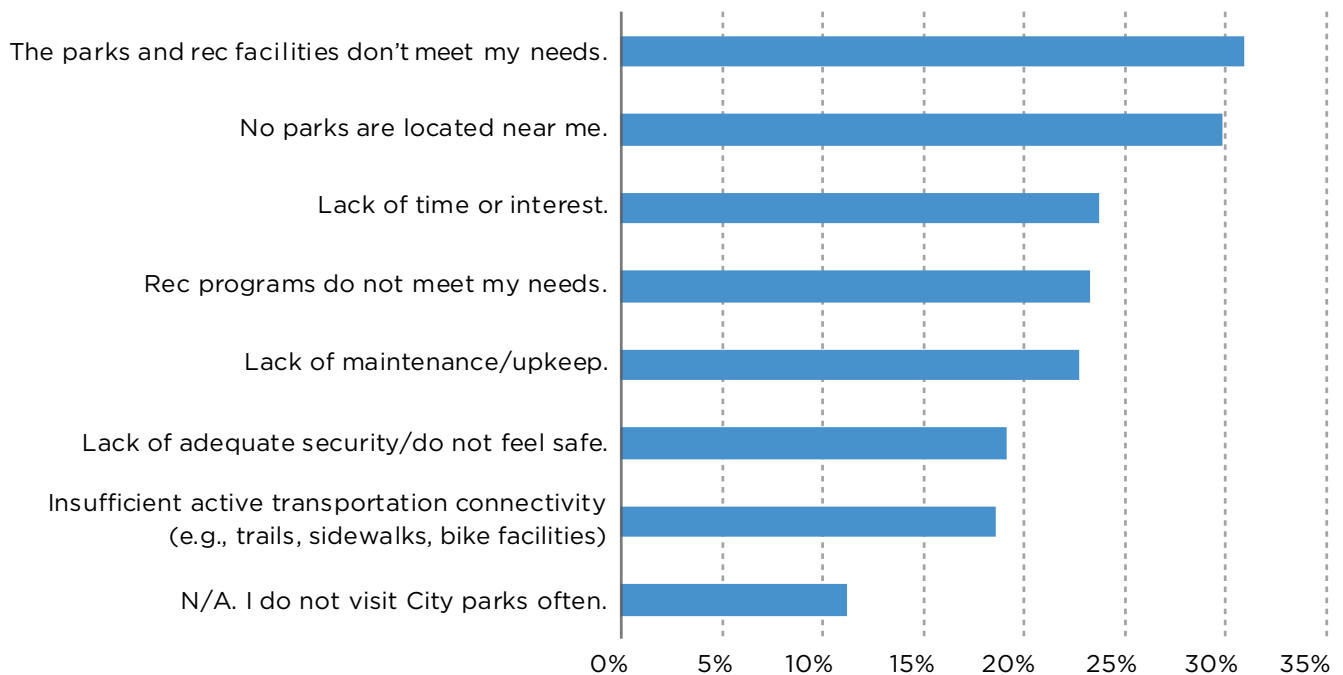


FIGURE 3.16, INDICATE HOW IMPORTANT EACH ACTIVITY IS TO YOU

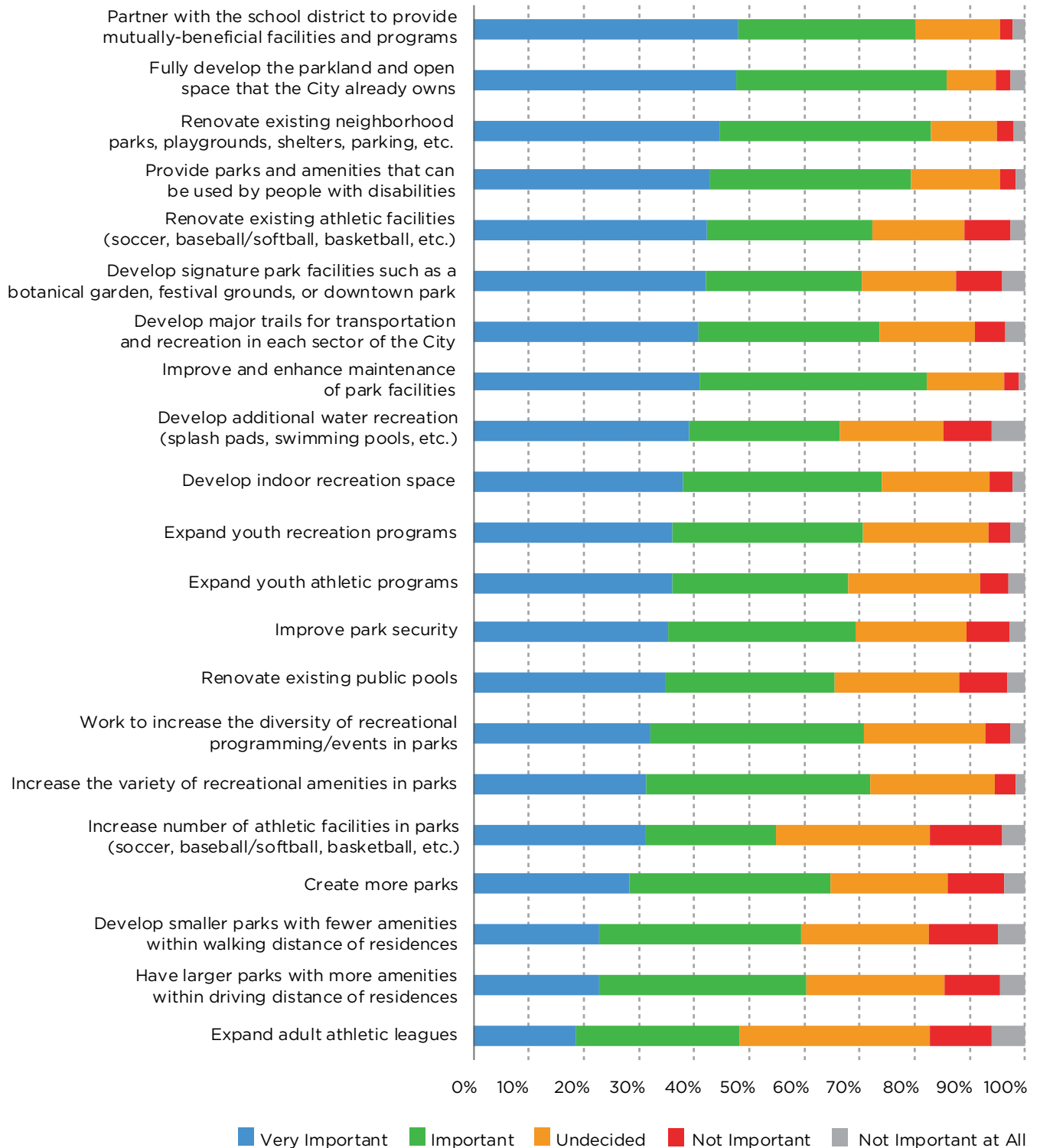
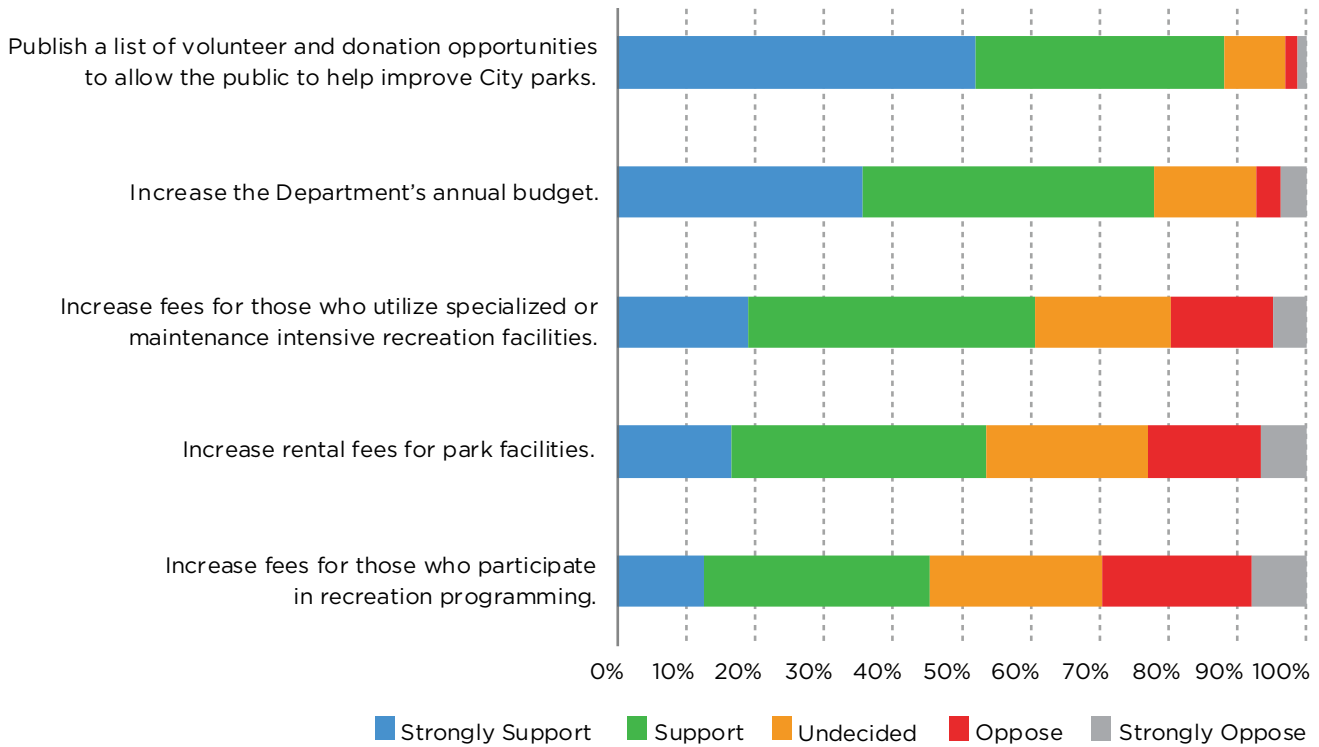


FIGURE 3.17, HOW STRONGLY WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE FOLLOWING FINANCING STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE REVENUE FOR PARK MAINTENANCE?



HOW STRONGLY WOULD YOU SUPPORT OR OPPOSE THE FOLLOWING FINANCING STRATEGIES TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL REVENUE FOR PARK MAINTENANCE?

**Figure 3.17, How Strongly Would You Support or Oppose the Following Financing Strategies to Provide Revenue for Park Maintenance?** suggests that there is high support for increased funding to improve park maintenance. Almost 90 percent of survey respondents support the idea of publishing a list of volunteer and donation opportunities to allow the public to help improve City parks. Similarly, support to increase fees for individuals who use active recreation facilities and rent facilities such as community rooms and pavilions surpasses 50 percent.

In contrast, less than 50 percent of respondents either "strongly support" or "support" fee increases in recreational programs to support improved system maintenance. Lower levels of support in this category may be attributed to the perception that there is an indirect relationship between many recreational programs and facility wear and tear.

It is important to note that the category of "Increase the department's annual budget" is left purposely vague in **Figure 3.17** so that the City retains the ability to think creatively regarding how best to adjust the municipal budget to meet parks maintenance needs without detracting from other municipal services.



One of the initial open houses was held in January 2019 at the Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center. Citizens were provided an opportunity to provide their feedback during the beginning of the planning process.

## OPEN HOUSES (PUBLIC PREFERENCES)

A series of public open houses were held in January 2019 as part of the City's attempts to solicit public participation in the master planning process. The open houses were used to display public information boards, voting "preference" boards, comment cards, and stations to complete the on-line public survey. Common themes from the public open houses include the following:

- *Add pickleball courts.*
- *A community park is needed in Las Cruces.*
- *Green plazas are a preferred type of civic space.*
- *For walking and biking facilities, attendees preferred shared-use paths and crushed granite trails.*
- *Preserve existing trees.*
- *Additional dog parks are needed in the parks system.*
- *Increase adult sports programming.*
- *Add exercise classes.*
- *Incorporate a splash pad into the parks system.*

In many cases, feedback at public open houses provided context for many of the preliminary online public survey results. Additionally, participant feedback at the open houses affirmed stakeholder meeting and survey results in many instances.

## SUMMARY

The three-layered demand-based assessment approach provided interested participants with different methods for participating in the master planning process. Across all outreach initiatives, trails were identified as the most desired amenity in the municipal parks and recreation system. The addition of shade, adult sports, and increased maintenance of park facilities are additional items that were repeatedly mentioned by master planning participants. There was also a sustained interest expressed for the addition of pickleball courts within the City's sports court inventory – as well as a general desire to increase access to other types of sport courts.

There is also a public desire for additional parkland throughout the community. This desire was expressed less as a need for greater acreage, than as a need for improved park access from existing residential areas. Still, public feedback suggested a desire for additional field space in configurations that are similar to the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex and which would generally require larger community or regional park types.

## STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT

The standards-based assessment – sometimes referred to as the "access-based" assessment – analyzes the amount and distribution of parkland and recreational facilities offered by a jurisdiction in relation to the community's existing and anticipated population. Two common types of analysis are used to evaluate a parks system's standards-based level of service:

- **Level of Service - Park Acreage.** *The acreage-based level of service analysis defines the quantity of parkland acreage in a community, expressed as a ratio of acreage to population. This analysis method considers whether there is sufficient acreage to serve the community's population today and in the future.*
- **Level of Service - Access to Parkland.** *The access-based parkland analysis examines the location and distribution of parkland throughout a community to determine its accessibility to residents. This method is often measured using a "proximity guideline," expressed as a maximum walking radius from a park property.*

Both standards-based level of service analysis methods may also be applied to recreational facilities. Where applicable, both methods have been applied to selected recreational facilities within the Las Cruces parks and recreational system (see Section 3, Recreational Facilities, page 123).

*The level of service targets recommended in this Plan are aspirational and advisory only.*

The City of Las Cruces' current parkland service standards – adopted as a component of the City's 2012 PRMP – are identified in **Figure 3.2** (page 85). As previously stated, the 2012 PRMP's acreage targets are limited to three park classifications: community parks, neighborhood parks, and pocket parks. The previous PRMP also recommended proximity guidelines for all three park classifications, and a service standard for "recreational trails and bikeways." The 2012 PRMP level of service standards superseded prior standards contained in Comprehensive Plan 2040.

### APPLYING LEVEL OF SERVICE STANDARDS

This Plan recommends level of service targets for some park and recreational facility types. **The level of service targets recommended in this Plan are aspirational and advisory only.** They are meant to assist the City of Las Cruces in budgeting sufficient funds to not only maintain current levels of service for key parkland and recreational facilities, but to prioritize funding for new community services. These measures should be consulted in conjunction with sustained community input.

Target levels of service are useful metrics for the City to measure selected parks and recreation service delivery on an annual basis. Ultimately however, level of service targets are imperfect metrics by which to anticipate and measure all local recreational needs and trends, and are not applied in this Plan to all possible parkland or recreational facility categories.

## REGIONAL PARKS

The Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex is the City's sole regional park. The complex is comprised of 16 individual parkland parcels and facilities which comprise almost 85 acres. (The parcels and facilities that form the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex are listed on page 50.) These parcels and facilities were previously listed in the 2012 PRMP as a collection of independent parks of varying scale. Nonetheless, the complex's combined baseball fields, t-ball fields, soccer fields, BMX track, skate park, roller rink, aquatics center, recreation center, and RC track collectively service the entire community and attract visitors from outside of the City for tournaments and other events, fulfilling a regional need. The complex's regional importance is evident through not only from the collection of recreational facilities that it contains, but from the fact that the property is referred to by many as the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex even though the name has never been formalized.



## FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

This Plan does not recommend a specific level of service standard for regional parks. Future regional park needs will be determined on a case-by-case basis and may occur through the reclassification of one or more of the City's current or future community parks. (Community park expansion may occur through the addition of parkland or facilities to meet a future need.) The City could consider a specific acreage-based target level of service for regional parks in the future should the City wish to assertively market itself a destination for regional or national athletic tournaments, but the master planning process did not reveal a broad community-wide desire to utilize the municipal parks system as a recruitment tool for recreation-based tourism.

Depending on location, accessibility, and available facilities, regional parks are often utilized by the residents of surrounding neighborhoods to meet their immediate recreational needs. As a result, regional parks may be counted on a case-by-case basis as fulfilling the proximity guideline recommendation of a ¼ mile walkshed typically applied to neighborhood parks (see, Service Area Gap Analysis, page 101). The Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex has the characteristics to meet the immediate recreational needs of surrounding residents and therefore fulfills a ¼ mile walkshed standard for surrounding residential areas. The Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex's ¼ mile walkshed is depicted on **Map 3.1, Regional and Community Park Accessibility** (page 103).

*The Unidad Park playscape at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex is both a community destination and a source of community-wide pride, and doubles as a neighborhood park serving the daily recreational needs of many surrounding residents.*

## COMMUNITY PARKS

Las Cruces’ 12 community parks encompass roughly 147 acres. The current level of service standard for community parks is shown in **Figure 3.18, Community Parkland Level of Service (2019)**. These standards were adopted as part of the 2012 PRMP. Based on the City’s estimated 2019 population, there is a deficit of 60.9 acres of community parkland. In 2045, the estimated need for community parkland acreage will increase to 283.1 acres.

The recommended walkshed for a community park is one-quarter of a mile. This represents the distance that it takes an average pedestrian to walk within five minutes. Depending on location and accessibility, community parks may also be utilized by the residents of surrounding neighborhoods to meet their immediate recreational needs. As a result, community parks may be counted on a case-by-case basis as fulfilling proximity guideline recommendations of a ¼ mile walkshed typically applied to neighborhood parks. **Map 3.1, Regional and Community Park Accessibility**, shows that approximately 7.3 percent of all residential areas in Las Cruces (594 acres) are within a ¼ mile walkshed of a regional or community park.

Public input received during the master planning process suggests a high level of interest for new athletic fields and sport courts. These facility types – when grouped in a way to allow for organized and concurrent play – typically require greater land area than can be afforded by many neighborhood parks. Furthermore, the accommodation of this Plan’s recommended recreational facility targets may necessitate the acquisition of larger parkland tracts than the neighborhood parks currently being provided through the land development process.

## FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

This Plan recommends retaining a service standard of 2.0 acres of community parkland per 1,000 residents. At a minimum, this means adding no less than 135.7 acres of community parkland to the municipal parks system between now and 2045 (almost doubling current acreage). This Plan also recommends a targeted proximity guideline of a ¼ mile walkshed between any residential area and any combination of the following three park types: regional, community, and neighborhood. Current proximity-based service area gaps are illustrated on **Map 3.3, Parkland Service Area Gaps** while all recommended target level of service standards for community parks are located in **Figure 4.1, Parkland, Target Level of Service (2019-2045)** on page 159.

FIGURE 3.18, COMMUNITY PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)<sup>1</sup>

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (2012)			CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)		
	RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD (2012)	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2019)	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2045) <sup>2</sup>	EXISTING ACREAGE	EXISTING SERVICE STANDARD	EXISTING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)
COMMUNITY	2.0 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	208.3 ACRES	283.1 ACRES	147.4 ACRES	1.3 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	- (60.9 ACRES)

1. 104,161 residents (est. 2019): Based on 101,706 residents per US Census, American Community Survey population estimates (2017) plus 1.2 percent annual population growth.

2. 141,565 residents (est. 2045): ESRI; Mesilla Valley MPO; Economic & Planning Systems.



### MAP 3.1, REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARK ACCESSIBILITY

#### WALKSHEDS<sup>1</sup>

- Regional Parks
- Community Parks
- 1/16th Mile Walkshed
- 1/8th Mile Walkshed
- 1/4th Mile Walkshed

1. Based on accessible "path" (i.e., roadway, multi-use trail). Clipped at major barriers such as drainage channels, limited access roadways, and major thoroughfares.

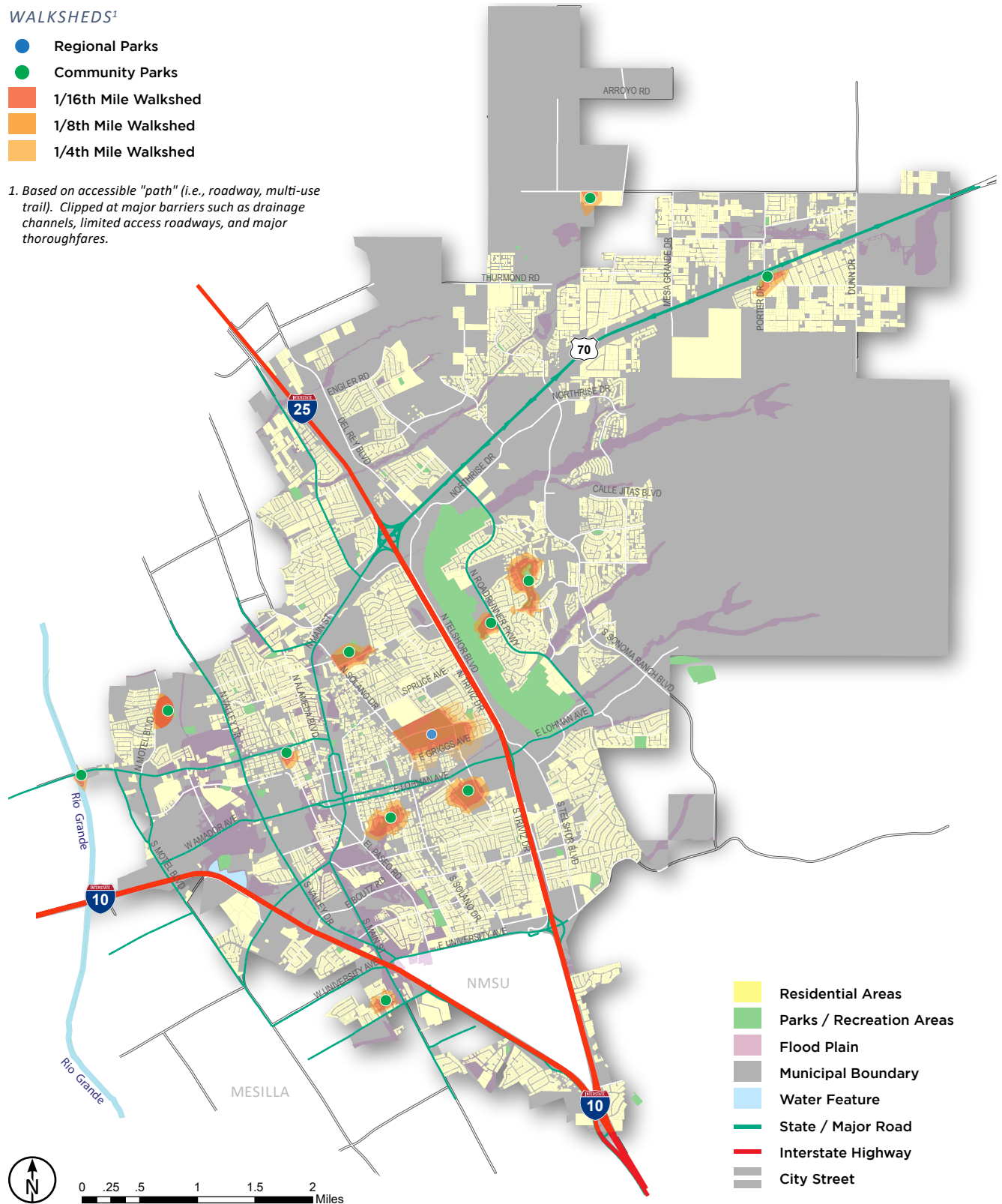


FIGURE 3.19, NEIGHBORHOOD AND POCKET PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)<sup>1</sup>

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (2012)			CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)		
	RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD (2012)	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2019)	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2045) <sup>2</sup>	EXISTING ACREAGE	EXISTING SERVICE STANDARD	EXISTING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)
NEIGHBORHOOD	1.0 ACRE / 1,000 RESIDENTS	104.1 ACRES	141.6 ACRES	122.1 ACRES	1.2 ACRE / 1,000 RESIDENTS	18.0 ACRES
MINI (POCKET)						

1. 104,161 residents (est. 2019): Based on 101,706 residents per US Census, American Community Survey population estimates (2017) plus 1.2 percent annual population growth.

2. 141,565 residents (est. 2045): ESRI; Mesilla Valley MPO; Economic & Planning Systems.

### NEIGHBORHOOD AND POCKET PARKS

The City currently maintains 36 neighborhood parks totaling almost 109 acres, and 23 pocket parks totaling 13.2 acres. For purposes of parkland service standards, both park types have been combined. **Figure 3.19, Neighborhood and Pocket Parkland Level of Service (2019)**, illustrates the combined acreage-based level of service standard for neighborhood parks and pocket parks as established by the 2012 PRMP.

The recommended walkshed for a neighborhood park is one-quarter of a mile. This represents the distance that it takes an average person to walk within five minutes. This proximity guideline for neighborhood parks has been applied to pocket parks even though the level of recreational facilities that can be provided in a pocket park vary. The results of this Plan’s conditions-based assessment (see **Figure 3.22**, page 120) suggests that pocket parks are among the lowest scoring parks in the municipal system – a common occurrence due to a lack of facilities that decreases visitation and public demands for pocket park investment. Regardless, **Map 3.2, Neighborhood and Pocket Park Accessibility**, shows that approximately 19.4 percent of all residential areas in the City (1,572 acres) are within a ¼ mile walkshed of a neighborhood or pocket park.

### FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

This Plan recommends target level of service standards only for neighborhood parks. An acreage-based service standard of 1.0 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents is recommended. This acreage-based standard alone would result in only a nominal increase in current neighborhood parkland acreage (even when subtracting 13.2 acres of pocket parkland from consideration). This Plan also recommends a targeted proximity guideline of a ¼ mile walkshed between any residential area and any combination of the following three park types: regional, community, and neighborhood. Current proximity-based service area gaps in the municipal parks system are significant and are illustrated on **Map 3.3, Parkland Service Area Gaps**. All combined target level of service standards for neighborhood parks are also located in **Figure 4.1, Parkland, Target Level of Service (2019-2045)** on page 159.

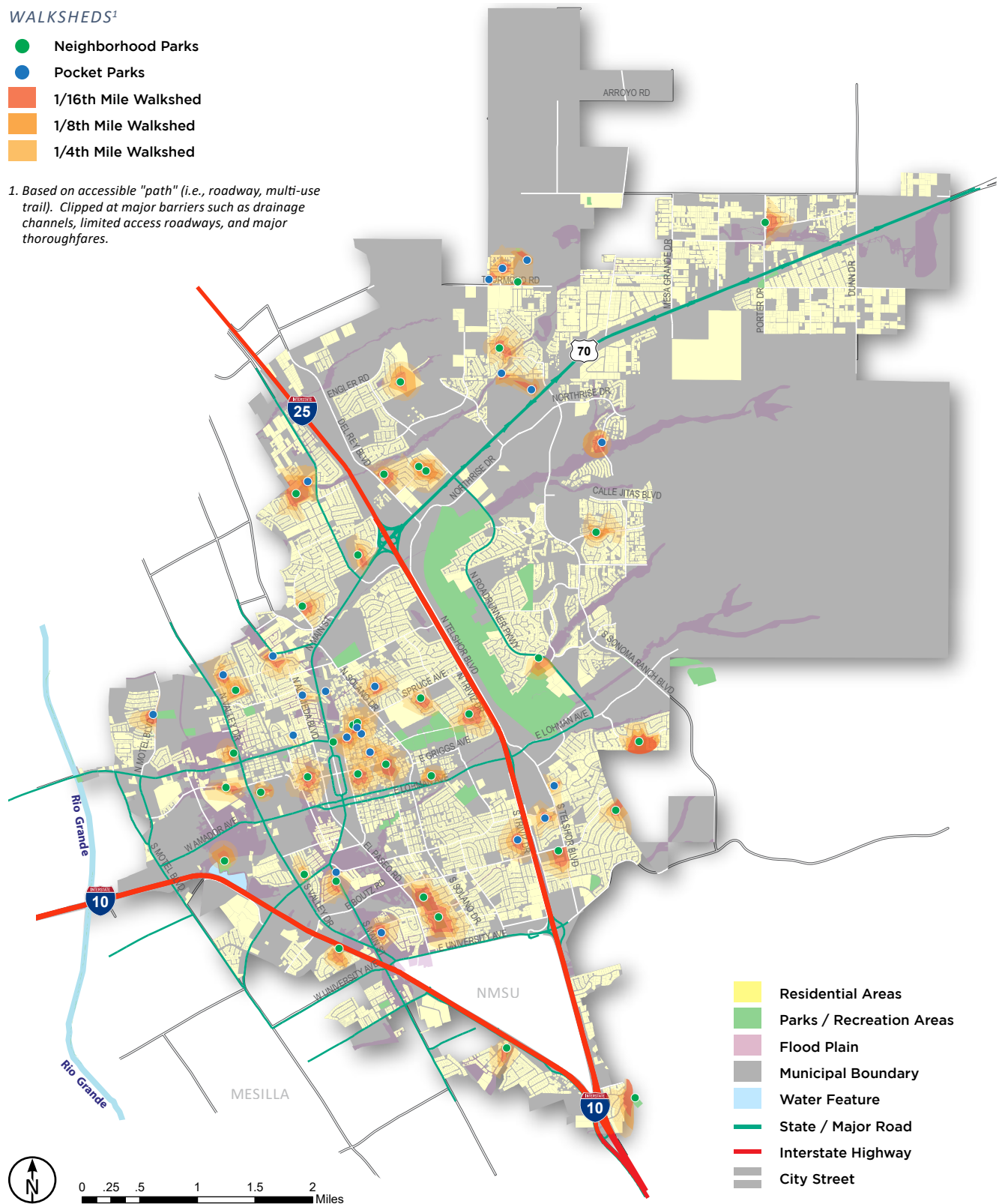
No future level of service standard is recommended for pocket parks due to their limited scale and inability to provide significant recreational benefits to a broad set of age or interest groups. This does not mean that such parks offer no community value. **Chapter 4** recommends specific standards by which future pocket parks may be added to the municipal parks system.

### MAP 3.2, NEIGHBORHOOD AND POCKET PARK ACCESSIBILITY

#### WALKSHEDS<sup>1</sup>

- Neighborhood Parks
- Pocket Parks
- 1/16th Mile Walkshed
- 1/8th Mile Walkshed
- 1/4th Mile Walkshed

1. Based on accessible "path" (i.e., roadway, multi-use trail). Clipped at major barriers such as drainage channels, limited access roadways, and major thoroughfares.



## SERVICE AREA GAP ANALYSIS

A public parks system’s regional, community, neighborhood, and pocket parks combine to serve the majority of a community’s “everyday” recreational needs. Regardless of scale and concentration of recreational facilities provided, parks in all four categories are often viewed by surrounding and proximate residents as their park. In contrast, other special use parks and facilities are far more likely to cater to a more constrained user group.

**Map 3.3, Parkland Service Area Gaps**, combines the walksheds surrounding regional, community, neighborhood, and pocket parks depicted on previous maps to reveal areas of apparent parkland service gaps. Service area gaps identified on **Map 3.3** presume that a residential area lies outside of a ¼ mile (5 minute) walkshed from a park and is therefore underserved. **Map 3.3** suggests that roughly 75 percent of the City’s residential areas are located outside of a ¼ mile parkland walkshed. The map identifies 19 areas where the City may prioritize the future placement of additional parkland to meet the needs of currently underserved residents.

*Neighborhood parks, pocket parks, and pathways within new development provide for the basic recreational needs of immediate residents, but do not always guarantee accessibility to park spaces and facilities of substantial size serving a broader range of community interests. Parkland of substantial size and distribution is particularly lacking in City Council Districts #5 and #6.*

The public was polled during the second round of public open houses regarding their preferences on which service area gaps should be filled (as depicted by **Map 3.3**). The response rate was not sufficient to draw conclusions about public preferences. The City should therefore prioritize the acquisition of new parkland in the service area gaps identified by **Map 3.3** based on land availability and price in each service area gap. Ultimately, it is not realistic to expect that all service area gaps will be filled, but that over time, the City is able to improve the proximity of public parkland to neighborhoods.

**Map 3.3** does not depict areas where new residential area is entitled (e.g., has received plan or plat approval by the City) or is otherwise projected in the future. These future residential areas should not be subject to the same level of parkland service area gaps as existing neighborhoods (or require the retroactive acquisition of significant amounts of parkland by City) so long as the City promotes parkland dedication policies and regulations consistent with the recommendations of this Plan (see **Chapter 4**).







*The City's archery range is co-located on the City's landfill along with the RC airplane facility. Most of Las Cruces' special use facilities are incorporated into larger municipal parks or other City-owned property.*

## SPECIAL USE PARK/FACILITIES

**Chapter 2** identifies 20 special use park/facilities in Las Cruces (see page 59). Five of these facilities are independent of any other park type, while the remaining 15 are incorporated into a larger park “complex” that contains multiple parcels.

### FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

This Plan does not recommend a level of service standard for special use parks since they typically contain unique recreational facilities that are intended to serve the entire community. Furthermore, the facilities that this type of park is intended to provide are often incorporated into a much larger multi-purpose park. This Plan instead provides recommendations on specific special use facilities that have been identified through the master planning process as important potential additions to the municipal parks and recreation system. Recommendations on “special” recreational facilities are incorporated into Section 3, Recreational Facilities (page 123) of this chapter.

## CIVIC PARKS

Plaza de Las Cruces is the only purpose-built civic park included within the Las Cruces municipal parks system. The plaza is considered “purpose-built” because it has been designed and programmed almost exclusively as social space to host concerts, events, and other formal or organized public gatherings. There are other park spaces within the municipal system that are also programmed for social activity, but these areas are contained within parks that also include co-located recreational or natural spaces. The City’s Downtown Development Code identifies “civic space” as an element of mixed-use urban development but does not provide a specific mechanism to incorporate such spaces into new development.

### FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

The City has no current level of service standard for civic parks. This Plan does not propose a future level of service metric for civic parks. Rather, the City should consider the incorporation of formal social space within future (or redesigned) public parks on a case-by-case basis as part of conceptual site planning that incorporates public input. In addition, civic parks and similar privately-owned public gathering spaces should be a required component of the conceptual site planning process for all future mixed-use development projects (subject to thresholds of scale as determined by the City). Finally, formal public gathering space may be considered as part of new retail, office, and other employment centers that exceed certain size thresholds.

## NATURAL AREAS/OPEN SPACE

**Figure 2.14** (page 62) identifies the Las Cruces Dam property as the City’s only designated natural area or open space. Portions of other City parks are programmed as natural space, but the size of these areas is limited. It is also possible that some existing natural areas may be reprogrammed in the future for active recreation or other uses.

## FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

Public input received as part of the master planning process (and the concurrent comprehensive planning process) suggests strong community support for proactive open space preservation in the greater Las Cruces area. Consistent with this sentiment, **Chapter 4** of this Plan recommends that the City establish an open space lands program that is an extension of the City’s existing parks and recreation system.



The City of Las Cruces currently manages 644.1 acres of dedicated public open space – roughly equivalent to 6.18 acres per 1,000 residents. As with other public lands, it is not uncommon for communities to establish open space target levels of service (although an open space acreage TLOS has been adopted by very few of the “assessment communities” referenced in this Plan). Target levels of service for open space acreage are often omitted from municipal parks and recreation planning efforts – even by many communities that actively engage in open space acquisition – because these targets are often viewed as self-limiting and they ignore ongoing environmental considerations that extend beyond a mere acreage benchmark. Public open space acquisition programs should be based instead on the prioritization of targeted property based on physical features, environmental benefits, viewsheds, accessibility, and the ability to consolidate holdings. The focus of such programs should also be based on land features and overall conservation objectives, and not be limited to properties within the municipal boundaries.

Should Las Cruces wish to establish an open space acreage TLOS as part of a formal open space lands program a minimum of 20 acres per 1,000 residents is recommended as a starting point – roughly 2,083 acres based on the City’s estimated 2019 population. This or any alternative TLOS should be established only as an initial and minimum target and should not be viewed as a factor limiting additional open space acquisition. TLOS should also be modified to match estimated program revenues and real estate prices.

*A municipal open space lands program should promote connectivity between the City and the units of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument to preserve viewshed along the lower slopes of surrounding mountain ranges.*



*Arroyos could become a significant component of a future open space lands program, and could also serve as valuable multi-use trail corridors. Nonetheless, the relationship between a preserved arroyo corridor and the definition of a linear park is incidental.*

## LINEAR PARKS

As previously noted in **Chapter 2**, the City's parkland inventory only includes one park property that meets the definition of a linear park. A segment of the Legends West Trails system is defined as a linear park simply because of the property's shape, alignment, and ownership characteristics (see page 65 for additional explanation). The collection of these attributes in the case of Legends Trails West is incidental and is not a required condition for meeting the municipal parkland or facility needs recommended in this Plan, nor for ensuring the long-term connectivity of the City's multi-use trails network.

Although the future acquisition of trail corridors and preservation of arroyo corridors represent desirable future additions to the municipal park system the way that they are acquired or preserved (fee-simple versus easement) will determine whether they may also be defined as a linear park. This ownership condition is ultimately irrelevant for purposes of meeting service needs and therefore this Plan does not recommend a targeted service standard for linear parks.

Within **Chapter 2** linear parks and multi-use trails are listed for inventory purposes. However, these parks system assets are distinct. The standards-based assessment for multi-use trails is located on page 134.



## RESOURCE-BASED ASSESSMENT

The resource-based assessment identifies key features within the City of Las Cruces and surrounding areas that may be leveraged to support the parkland and recreation recommendations contained in this Plan. These assets may include developed property and associated man-made features such as school district property, drainage channels, utility rights-of-way, and natural features such as arroyos, streams, viewsheds, and protected areas. There are a series of significant assets in Las Cruces and the greater Mesilla Valley that may be adapted for recreational use or open space preservation.



*The Outfall Channel Trail stretches for 4.4 miles between the Rio Grande River and Interstate 25 along an Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) drainage channel. Trail segments fit easily within the dimensions of berms and embankments along most EBID channels.*

## DEVELOPMENT ASSETS










**Drainage Channels.** *Maintenance berms along Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) drainage channels offer extensive public access opportunities in the form of multi-use trail corridors. Key multi-use trail segments proposed along EBID drainage channels are identified in the Mesilla Valley MPO's Trail System Priorities Plan (2015). The dimension and condition of many of these berms are sufficient to support EBID maintenance vehicles and often only need minimal upgrades to safely support multi-use trail activity.*

**Las Cruces Public Schools.** *Map 3.4, Las Cruces Public Schools (page 112) illustrates the location of Las Cruces public schools in relation to community, neighborhood, and pocket park walksheds. Building off of the City and School District's current Community Schools model, school properties both within and outside of public park walksheds may be leveraged to increase access to recreational facilities (subject to suitable joint-use agreements).*

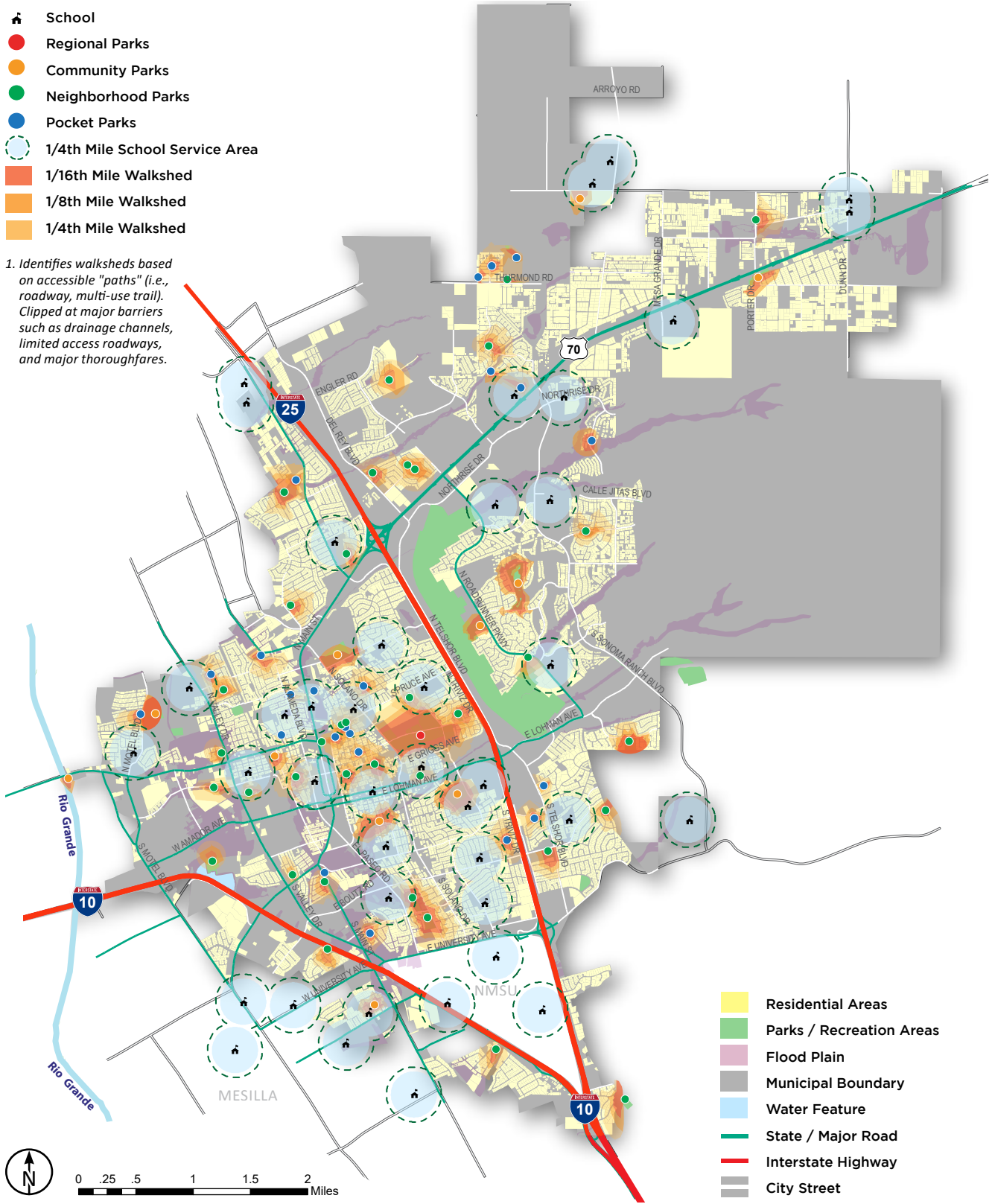
**New Mexico State University.** *The presence of New Mexico State University property, facilities, and personnel resources provides the City of Las Cruces with multiple opportunities to leverage institutional partnerships that enhance the City's offerings of recreational programs and events.*









**Mesilla Valley Farmlands.** *Agricultural properties in the Rio Grande River Valley provide a pleasant contrast to the area's surrounding and sweeping desert mountain views. Working and preserved agricultural lands offer an enduring linkage to the Mesilla Valley's agricultural heritage and can serve as a pleasant backdrop to the planned cross-state Rio Grande River Trail. Selected agricultural properties may also be suitable candidates for acquisition as part of a municipal open space program.*

### MAP 3.4, LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS<sup>1</sup>

-  School
-  Regional Parks
-  Community Parks
-  Neighborhood Parks
-  Pocket Parks
-  1/4th Mile School Service Area
-  1/16th Mile Walkshed
-  1/8th Mile Walkshed
-  1/4th Mile Walkshed

1. Identifies walksheds based on accessible "paths" (i.e., roadway, multi-use trail). Clipped at major barriers such as drainage channels, limited access roadways, and major thoroughfares.



-  Residential Areas
-  Parks / Recreation Areas
-  Flood Plain
-  Municipal Boundary
-  Water Feature
-  State / Major Road
-  Interstate Highway
-  City Street

## NATURAL ASSETS

**Managed Lands.** *Expansive areas of land surrounding Las Cruces are either managed by public entities for a variety of public purposes or reserved specifically for open space preservation. Protected lands surrounding Las Cruces are anchored by the United States Bureau of Land Management’s Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument. Associated “managed” lands are held by the Bureau of Land Management, New Mexico State Land Office, and New Mexico State University. While many of these properties are not currently reserved as permanent open space lands, their general location and features may make them attractive candidates for acquisition as part of a municipal open space program.*

**Arroyos.** *The Las Cruces Arroyo Management Plan (2015) identifies the City’s many arroyo corridors as features of significant importance for ecological preservation and storm water management. These corridors are also identified in the Management Plan, the City’s Active Transportation Plan (2018), and the Mesilla Valley MPO’s Trail System Priorities Plan (2015) as potential linear parks and multi-use trail corridors. Many of the area’s most prominent arroyos are in the East Mesa area and have a general east-west orientation providing linkages between Las Cruces and the Organ Mountains.*

**Rio Grande River.** *The seasonal flows of New Mexico’s primary river corridor provide access to intermittent water-based recreation opportunities and riverine landscapes. The river also serves as the principal route of the 500-mile cross-state Rio Grande River Trail. Full trail development along the corridor, both in Las Cruces and surrounding communities, will result in a statewide asset that is attractive to the rapidly-growing active tourism market.*

*Bureau of Land Management property between Paseo de Oñate Park and Tortugas Mountain (below) contains multiple trails and is largely undisturbed, but is not designated as protected open space.*



## CONDITIONS-BASED ASSESSMENT

Demand, standards, and resource-based assessments consider whether a recreational resource is available and accessible in a community. These three methodologies however do not measure the state of parkland grounds and facility repair. The conditions-based assessment measures whether a park space and the facilities located on the site are maintained in a condition suitable to be used safely, or to otherwise entice continued visitation and usage by surrounding residents and other potential users.

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan’s conditions-based assessment measures and ranks the condition of parkland grounds and facilities according to 12 categories described in **Figure 3.20, Conditions Assessment Categories**. A visual assessment was conducted of all 94 municipal park properties, including all 27.6 linear miles of multi-use trail identified in the City’s linear park and multi-use trail inventory (see **Figure 2.15**, page 64.) The assessment methodology allows the City to rank and review results by park property, and system-wide by assessment category.

FIGURE 3.20, CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT CATEGORIES<sup>1</sup>

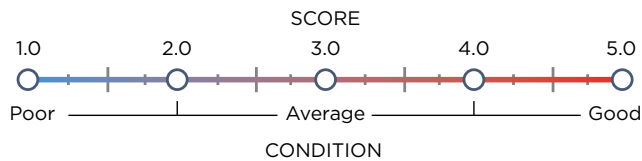
ASSESSMENT CATEGORY	PRINCIPAL REVIEW ITEMS
SPORT COURTS	PLAYING SURFACE, FENCING, NETTING, STRIPING, WALLS, AND OTHER NON-REMOVABLE FACILITIES ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITY AND DEFINE THE AREA OF PLAY.
SPORT (ATHLETIC) FIELDS	PLAYING SURFACE, FENCING, NETTING, AND OTHER NON-REMOVABLE FACILITIES ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITY AND DEFINE THE FIELD OF PLAY (STRIPING NOT CONSIDERED DUE TO DIFFERING CONDITIONS DEPENDING ON SEASON).
PARK PATHWAYS / TRAILS	SURFACE CONDITION, PATHWAY/TRAIL WIDTHS, VERTICAL AND HORIZONTAL CLEARANCE, CROSSING POINTS, AND ADA ACCESSIBILITY. CONSIDERS VARIATIONS IN PATHWAY/TRAIL TYPE DEPENDING ON THE TYPE OF FITNESS, RECREATIONAL, OR TRANSPORTATION ACTIVITIES THE TRAIL IS DESIGNED TO SUPPORT.
PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES	AREAS DEFINED FOR PUBLIC GATHERING INCLUDING SEATING AND SHADE STRUCTURES.
ADDITIONAL SITE FACILITIES <sup>1</sup>	GENERAL RECREATIONAL AND ACCESSORY STRUCTURES (ENCLOSED AND OPEN AIR) INCLUDING PAVILIONS, RESTROOMS, CONCESSION STANDS, BLEACHERS, AND SPECIAL USE FACILITIES TO SUPPORT MISCELLANEOUS ACTIVITIES (I.E., SHOOTING SPORTS, SKATING, ARCHERY, ETC.).
ADDITIONAL SITE AMENITIES	ACCESSORY AMENITIES SERVING GENERAL VISITATION INCLUDING TRASH RECEPTACLES, PET WASTE STATIONS, WATER FOUNTAINS, BENCHES, ETC.
STRUCTURED PLAY	PLAYSCAPES, SURROUNDING SURFACE AREAS, ACCESSORY STRUCTURES TO IMPROVE THE COMFORT OF USERS AND ATTENDANTS.
OPEN PLAY AREAS	SURFACE CONDITION, LANDSCAPING, AND ACCESS TO SHADE FOR OPEN LAWN AREAS INTENDED FOR RANDOM PLAY.
ACCESS / CONNECTIVITY / PARKING	BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND ADA ACCESS TO, FROM, AND WITHIN THE PARK SPACE. OFF-STREET PARKING AREAS AND PROXIMATE ON-STREET PARKING AREAS.
SITE LIGHTING / SIGNAGE	IDENTIFICATION, INFORMATIONAL, AND WAY-FINDING SIGNAGE. LIGHTING STANDARDS, FIXTURES, AND COVERAGE AREA.
PLANTINGS AND TREES	HEALTH, MAINTAINED CONDITION, AND COVERAGE OF TREES AND OTHER LANDSCAPING INCLUDING OVERGROWTH. STRATEGIC PLACEMENT OF VEGETATION TO DEFINE PARK SPACES.
TURF	MANICURED LAWN AREAS. CUMULATIVE - MAY INCLUDE SURFACING FOR PREVIOUSLY LISTED CATEGORIES INCLUDING ATHLETIC FIELDS AND OPEN PLAY AREAS.


1. The conditions assessment does not include structural, mechanical, electrical, HVAC or plumbing inspections of park department administrative buildings, community centers, recreation centers, aquatics facilities, or similar structures.

## CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT SCORING<sup>1</sup>

All Las Cruces park properties have received a score of one to five in each of the 12 assessment categories – with “1” representing a negative score and “5” representing a positive score. Each park is assigned an average score based on the cumulative results of all categories by which it was assessed. (Where an assessment feature is non-existent or not applicable, then a score of “0” is assigned, and the category is excluded from the average score of the applicable park property.) As depicted by **Figure 3.21, Park Conditions Scale**, a score of 1.0 to 1.99 is considered “poor;” 2.0 to 3.99 is considered “average;” and, a score of 4.0 or greater is considered “good.”

**FIGURE 3.21, PARK CONDITIONS SCALE**



 Las Cruces' system-wide rankings by category are depicted by Ziggy.

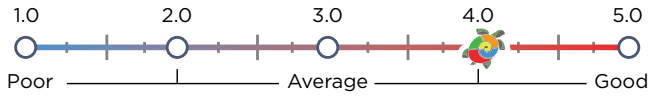
The system-wide results of each of the 12 conditions assessment categories is presented on pages 116 through 119, sorted in a descending manner with the most positive scores listed first and the least positive scores listed last. A corresponding overview of high-scoring and low-scoring park properties is presented on pages 120 and 121.

*The grounds at Sagecrest Park. The Las Cruces parks and recreation system scores well in assessment categories related to grounds keeping and landscaping, but the condition of structures and facilities varies widely.*

1. Full conditions assessment results are maintained by the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department.



**PARK PATHWAYS | TRAILS (SCORE: 4.10)**

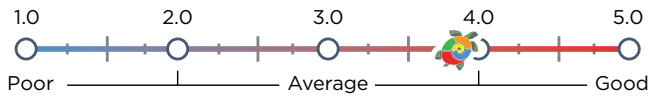


Las Cruces received a system-wide score of 4.10 for Park Pathways and Trails across all parks and multi-use trails – the City’s highest ranked assessment category. The quality of pavement on most multi-use trails and internal park pathways and sidewalks is high with minimal cracking or heaving. Except for limited instances, there is little washout present on most paths and trails that are comprised of decomposed granite or other similar pervious surface. Most trails are of sufficient width and uninhibited by encroaching vegetation.



The pavement surface on the Triviz Multi-use Trail is in good condition.

**OPEN PLAY AREAS (SCORE: 3.82)**

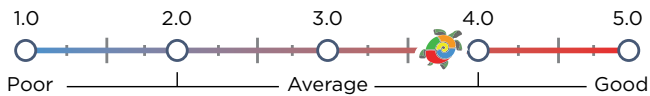


The quality of Open Play Areas in Las Cruces parks is above average, receiving a system-wide score of 3.82. This score is reflective of most spaces being located a safe distance within each park space from any hazards such as roads. Most open play areas also exhibit a fairly uniform surface, with only minor instances of disturbance. Even during dormancy, there are few bare spots of significant size present that have the potential to become an erosion hazard.



The open play areas in Four Hills Park exhibit a uniform surface.

**STRUCTURED PLAY (SCORE: 3.76)**

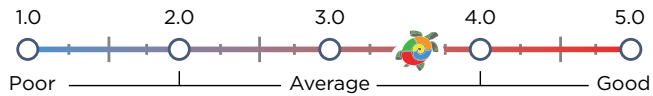


The condition of Structured Play areas and facilities received a system-wide score of 3.76. Play structures are of a high quality and provide diversity in play experiences. Most structures lack shade however, which results in fading and weathering that accelerates the need for significant maintenance. There are localized instances where immediate play scape area maintenance is needed including the replacement of play structures and improvements to play area fencing.



The Country Club Estates Park play scape is a quality, contemporary structure.

### PLANTINGS | TREES (SCORE: 3.67)

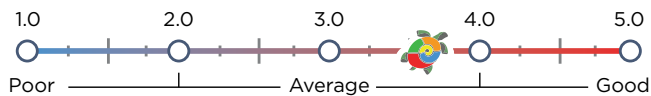


The category of Plantings and Trees received a system-wide score of 3.67 based solely on the health of vegetation. Scoring may have been higher except for instances where decomposed granite within planting beds is being washed away and left bare in many areas. Overall, trees and shrubs that are maintained in good condition, with few needing obvious pruning or removal. Trees provide a significant amount of shade in Las Cruces parks but are not always positioned to best benefit park system users.



Lush & Lean Demonstration Garden plantings and drainage.

### SPORTS COURTS (SCORE: 3.65)

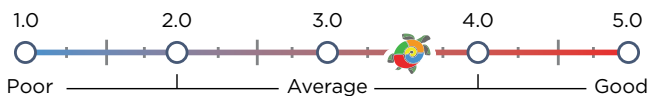


The system-wide conditions assessment for sports courts in Las Cruces is 3.65. Most sports courts are in an above average condition with only limited cracks evident and minor incidents of resurfacing necessary. Nets and hoops are mostly intact with few evident instances of immediate maintenance needs.



Lions Park West tennis court complex. Sport court surface quality is fairly high.

### TURF (SCORE: 3.56)

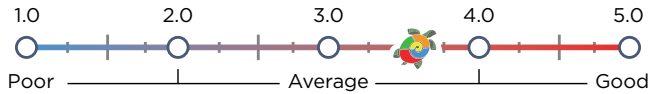


System-wide turf quality scored 3.56 across all Las Cruces park properties. There exist intermittent examples of obvious and substantial bare spots, but only in confined instances. Where bare spots are not present, remaining turf quality ranks very high with minimal weeds, and thick coverage.



The Sunrise Terrace Park turf coverage is thick with minimal weeds.

### PARKING, CONNECTIVITY, ACCESS (SCORE: 3.54)

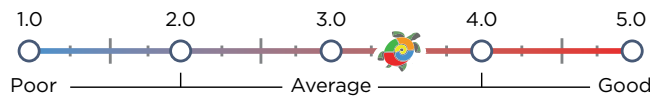


The system-wide score for Parking, Connectivity, and Access is 3.54. This score reflects more than just the quality of parking lots, but also addresses pedestrian access, parking availability in relation to park type, and public transit opportunities. Most parking lots are in suitable condition, with a few updates and striping needed. Bicycle and pedestrian accessibility to many parks and trails is inhibited by major thoroughfares or drainage ditches, or a lack of apparent transit options.



Hadley Complex parking areas are sufficient but exhibiting deferred care.

### PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES (SCORE: 3.44)

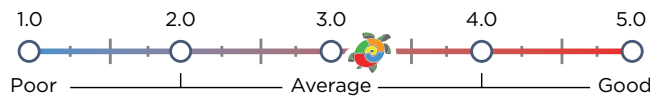


The average system-wide score for public gathering spaces within Las Cruces parks is 3.44. The quality of facilities in most formal gathering spaces and casual sitting areas is good but positioning may be improved to account for sun exposure. The positioning of seating and gathering spaces in relation to shade structures and complimentary vegetation can be modified to account for hard early and later hour sun angles.



Sun shining on a Frenger Park covered picnic table in late afternoon.

### SPORTS (ATHLETIC) FIELDS (SCORE: 3.22)



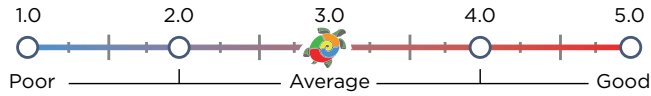
The average condition of Sports (Athletic) Fields is 3.22 throughout the Las Cruces parks system. Factors inhibiting the average score include substantial amounts of ground disturbance or uneven surfaces; and, lack of nets, or nets needing maintenance. Conditions were lower for informal and individual multi-purpose fields in smaller parks than for purpose-built fields in athletic complexes. As with other categories relating to surfacing, the turf on most sports fields is thick and relatively free of weeds.



Multi-use athletic field space in Valle Verde Park.



### ADDITIONAL SITE FACILITIES (SCORE: 3.00)

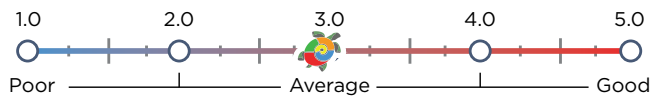


The system-wide score for Additional Site Facilities in Las Cruces parks is 3.00. The facilities and structures in most park spaces require minor aesthetic updates and repairs. Minor structures that do not require electrical or plumbing fixtures are made of durable high quality material, but many permanent pavilion structures and bathroom buildings exhibit signs of advanced age and deficiency.



R.L Young Park pavilion and event rental space is currently inaccessible.

### ADDITIONAL SITE AMENITIES (SCORE: 2.94)

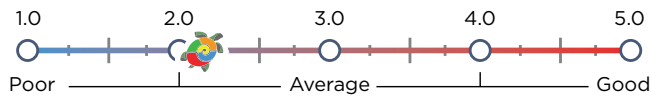


The system-wide score for Additional Site Amenities is slightly below average at 2.94. Many trash receptacles, water fountains, and benches are in a slightly deteriorated condition. There are many opportunities to provide immediate cosmetic updates, such as treatment for rust, that can be made to prevent larger long-term issues. There are many instances where a more permanent amenity solution should be provided such as in the provision of trash receptacles.



Basic amenities in Veterans Memorial Park.

### SITE LIGHTING | SIGNAGE (SCORE: 2.11)

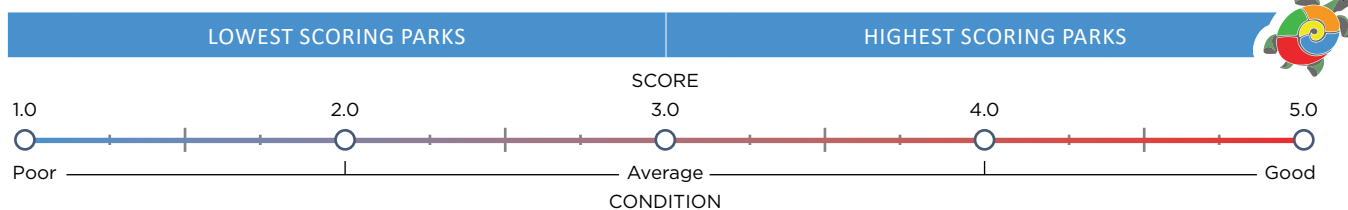


Site Lighting and Signage is the lowest ranked system-wide assessment category with a score of 2.11. The low score reflects a lack of strategically positioned security lighting in parks as well as an overall lack of consistent identification, information, and way-finding signage. Many signs are weathered, with print that is sometimes illegible. There is also a lack of branding and consistent identity amongst signage to serve as a unifying system-wide feature.



Alameda Arroyo Trail informational signs lack branding.

FIGURE 3.22, CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT BY PARK, LOW AND HIGH SCORES (2019)



PARK NAME/RANK <sup>1</sup>		AVERAGE SCORE	PARK NAME/RANK		AVERAGE SCORE
#84	LA FONDA MINI-PARK	2.57	#1	DOWNTOWN COMPLEX	5.00
#85	EAST CAMBRIDGE MINI-PARK	2.57	#2	DESERT TRAILS PARK	4.40
#86	CITY COMPLEX	2.50	#3	METRO VERDE DESERT PARK	4.29
#87	HENRY BENAVIDEZ COMMUNITY CENTER - LANDSCAPE AREA	2.42	#4	METRO VERDE POCKET PARKS/TWIN PARKS MULTI-USE PATH	4.25
#88	NORTHPOINTE PARK	2.40	#5	VETERANS MEMORIAL PARK	4.20
#89	EL ENCANTO PARQUITE	2.33	#6	METRO VERDE SCULPTURE PARK	4.13
#90	RIO BRAVO MINI-PARK	2.00	#7	PARKHILL ESTATES PARK	4.11
#91	MISSION MINI-PARK	2.00	#8	SAM GRAFT PARK	4.10
#92	CALLE ABUELO PARK	2.00	#9	SAGECREST PARK	4.10
#93	WILLOUGHBY TRAIL	2.00	#10	R. L. YOUNG PARK	4.09

1. The numerical designation of the lowest park ranked differs from the total number of parks in the Las Cruces parks and recreation system due to property combinations/divisions for inventory purposes.

### CONDITION ASSESSMENT BY PARK<sup>1</sup>

The average conditions score for the lowest and highest ranking properties in the Las Cruces parks and recreation system is displayed in **Figure 3.22, Conditions Assessment by Park, Low and High Scores (2019)**. Unsurprisingly, many of the parks with the lowest rankings are located in older areas of the City while high scoring parks tend to cluster in areas of newer development.

### HIGH SCORING PARKS

Park properties that received high conditions scores share one or both of the following characteristics:

- A)** They are newer and contain more recent investments with limited deterioration; and/or,
- B)** The park is larger and more popular, and is an element of shared community-wide pride.

One of the most common elements of high scoring parks is the quality in the condition of pathways and trails - both hard and natural surface – within each property. High scoring parks also exhibit quality turf, plantings, and trees. Even among the top scoring parks however, the condition of signage and lighting is a limiting factor.

1. Full conditions assessment results are maintained by the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department.



*The grounds surrounding the Henry Benavidez Community Center (above left) received low overall conditions scores due to poor surfacing and the condition of on-site amenities. In contrast, the Metro Verde Sculpture Park (above right) received high scores due to well-maintained turf and the presence of new amenities that remain in good condition. The images for both parks illustrate a consistent city-wide need for shade in municipal parks.*

### LOW SCORING PARKS

Six of the 10 lowest scoring municipal parks in Las Cruces are classified as pocket parks. This is a common condition among municipal park systems for two reasons: **A)** The lack of facilities in most pocket parks decreases visitation and public demands for investment or upkeep; and, **B)** Newer pocket parks are older because they are not being added to municipal inventories due to long-term maintenance concerns. In some cases, the desire within local governments to divest its municipal parks system of small park spaces and landscaped areas creates a “self-fulfilling prophecy” of slowly deteriorating and devalued pocket park spaces.

Lower scoring parks in the Las Cruces parks system still rank average or above average in turf quality, which was consistent across all parks (except in areas where bare spots were present). The quality of “additional amenities” such as fountains, trash receptacles, and seating areas – in conjunction with low system-wide scores for lighting and signage – contributes to poor individual park scores.

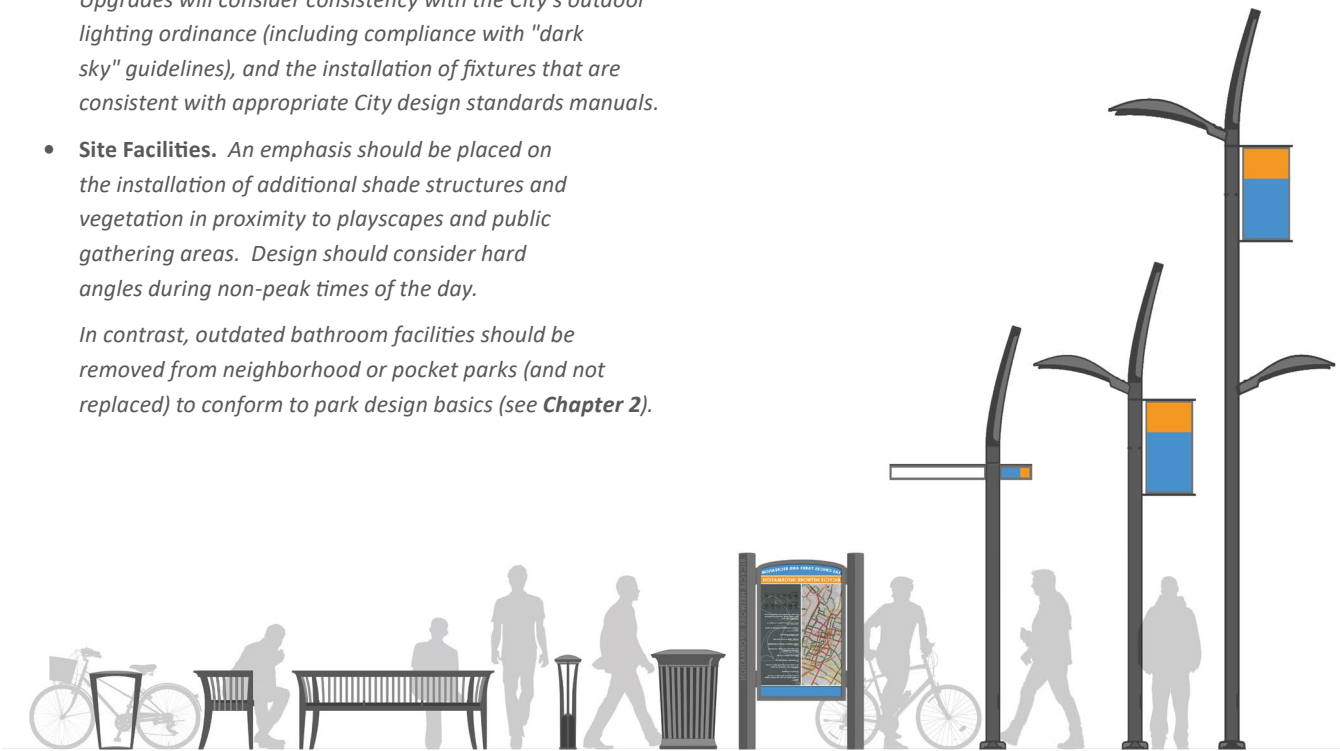
## CONDITIONS SUMMARY

A review of the park-by-park condition assessment inventory forms will reveal property-specific priorities for inclusion in the City's master maintenance list. The system-wide condition of the Las Cruces parks and recreation system can be rapidly improved with a focus on the following property and facility elements:

- **Signage and Branding.** *A system-wide branding plan and design manual may be commissioned. Consistent standards may be developed for identification, informational, regulatory, and way-finding signage, and banners. Upon completion, the branding plan may be used as a guide to program systematic updates to signage, banners, and monumentation in City parks.*
- **Lighting.** *A safety assessment may be performed with the Las Cruces Police Department to identify locations where security lighting upgrades are most necessary. Upgrades will consider consistency with the City's outdoor lighting ordinance (including compliance with "dark sky" guidelines), and the installation of fixtures that are consistent with appropriate City design standards manuals.*
- **Site Facilities.** *An emphasis should be placed on the installation of additional shade structures and vegetation in proximity to playscapes and public gathering areas. Design should consider hard angles during non-peak times of the day.*

*In contrast, outdated bathroom facilities should be removed from neighborhood or pocket parks (and not replaced) to conform to park design basics (see **Chapter 2**).*

- **Site Amenities.** *A parks system design standards manual may identify preferred amenities and structures. Existing fixtures may be replaced according to the recommendations of the standards manual beginning with non-permanent fixtures.*
- **Site Access.** *Improved bikeway and pedestrian access to parks should be prioritized. Particular priority should be given to improved access across major thoroughfares that separate parks from residential areas.*



*A parks and recreation system design standards manual would create a uniform brand for Las Cruces parks and provide instruction to ensure the purchase of amenities and facilities that retain long-term value.*

# SECTION 3:

## RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

Recreational facilities are subject to the same assessment methodologies that apply to parkland: demand-based, standards-based, resource-based, and conditions-based. The latter two categories have already addressed in a manner that applies equally to parkland and facilities (see pages 111 and 114, respectively). Some demand-based assessment results were also previously introduced in this chapter regarding recreational facilities (see **Figures 3.5 through 3.16**, beginning on page 89).

Additional demand-based and standards-based analysis is presented in this section which applies to the type and quantity of recreational facilities that will be necessary to support the interests of Las Cruces' growing and changing population.

### DEMAND-BASED ASSESSMENT

The three public input methods that were introduced in **Chapter 1** to community-wide parkland preferences were applied to recreational facilities: stakeholder meetings, an on-line public survey, and public open houses. A full summary of public outreach activities is located in **Appendix B**, but key findings related to recreational facility preferences are presented in this section of the Plan.

### ON-LINE PUBLIC SURVEY RESULTS

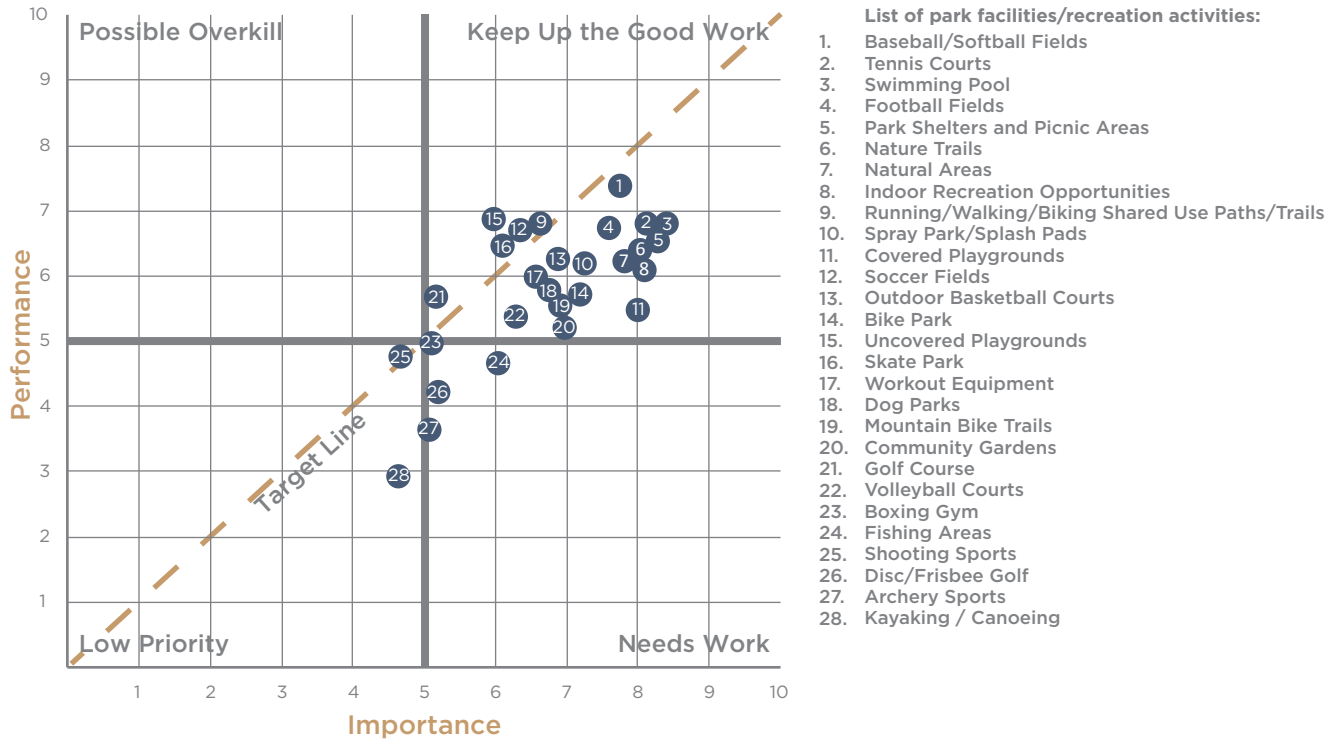
In addition to the public survey results previously presented in this chapter, two essential and interrelated survey questions were presented to the public regarding the importance of common public recreational activities versus the perceived ability of the City to provide facilities that support the activity. **Figure 3.23, Recreational Facility Importance Versus Performance Assessment** (page 124), combines the results of both questions to illustrate survey participants' opinions on how well the City is performing in providing preferred recreational facilities to the public.

**Figure 3.23** is divided into four quadrants:

- Keep Up the Good Work.** *Identifies park facilities/recreation activities where the City's ability to provide the park facility and support the recreation activities closely matches a strong community desire.*
- Needs Work.** *Displays where the City is underperforming in providing a park facility or supporting recreation activities compared to community demand.*
- Possible Overkill.** *Consists of park facilities/recreation activities provided/supported by the City that greatly surpass the community's desire for them.*
- Low Priority.** *Consists of park facilities/activities where City provision is low, but so is community demand.*

All survey responses are plotted in relation to a diagonal target line that serves as a gauge for consistency between public demand for a recreational facility or activity and public satisfaction with provision of the facility or activity. Survey results that are closer to the target line suggest a more satisfactory level of service in relation to facility demand.

FIGURE 3.23, RECREATIONAL FACILITY IMPORTANCE VERSUS PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT



Most results in **Figure 3.23** fall within the quadrant of “Keep Up the Good Work” and are close to the target line – suggesting a general level of satisfaction with the amount and quality of recreational amenities that are being provided by the City. The relationship of facility importance to the target line does suggest a strong desire for additional swimming pools, covered shelters and playground areas, and indoor recreation facilities. These priorities are consistent with other survey feedback, and well as comments received during stakeholder meetings and public open houses.

The recreational facilities listed in **Figure 3.23** are not comprehensive. In addition to the responses received about the 28 facility types listed in **Figure 3.23**, survey participants repeatedly mentioned the following facility needs in written comments:

- Aquatic facilities
- Ball fields
- Basketball courts
- Bike park/ MTN bike area
- Disc golf
- Dog park
- Pickleball
- Playgrounds
- Skate park
- Soccer fields
- Splash pads
- Sports courts
- Swimming pools
- Tennis courts
- Trails
- Volleyball courts



*Additional dog park space continues to be a consistent public priority expressed across all public outreach activities. The general obligation bond approved by Las Cruces voters in 2018 will provide funds for two new dog parks to supplement the dog park at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex (above).*

## STAKEHOLDER MEETINGS

Initial parkland and facility issues identified at stakeholder meetings are described on page 88 and include reoccurring themes such as the quantity and quality of lighting, signage, shade structures, and other accessory facilities, and improvements to security for purposes of protecting public investments. Consistent with survey responses, trail connectivity was also a critical need expressed by stakeholders. Other recreational facilities for which certain stakeholder representatives expressed an interest include:

- *Community garden*
- *Indoor fitness*
- *Disc golf*
- *Playgrounds*
- *Fishing facilities*
- *Trails*

A full summary of stakeholder meeting comments is found in **Appendix B**.

## OPEN HOUSES (PUBLIC PREFERENCES)

Attendees of initial public open houses conducted in January 2019 were asked to provide feedback about the City's parks and recreation system via public information boards, voting "preference" boards, and comment cards. Overall themes that were identified by the public during initial public open houses were introduced on page 99. Additional popular park facilities identified by open house attendees included:

- *All abilities playgrounds*
- *Dog parks*
- *Game zones (e.g., chess/checkers, ping pong, foosball, etc.)*
- *Pickleball*
- *Sports courts*
- *Trails*

Although skate park interests were not well represented at master plan open houses or stakeholder meetings, a large contingent of skaters separately approached City Council (but during Plan preparation) to express interest in skate facility rehabilitation and additions.

## STANDARDS-BASED ASSESSMENT

As with parkland, the availability of recreational facilities in relation to public need can be measured quantitatively. Communities often measure recreational facility needs by quantity – as either a ratio of number of facilities per 1,000 residents, or square footage per 1,000 residents. A proximity-based guideline can also be used to measure accessibility to recreational facilities but is not as frequently applied due to the presumed community-wide or regional nature of many facility types such as recreation centers, swimming pools, and athletic fields.

The 2012 PRMP did not apply a standards-based assessment to recreational facilities. This Plan considers and applies a standards-based assessment to a series of core recreational facilities that are essential components of most municipal parks and recreation systems, and a handful of other facilities that have been determined to be locally popular based on public feedback.



*The need for special uses such as the Las Cruces Archery Range should be considered on a case-by-case basis.*

## FACILITY LOS COMPARISONS

**Figure 3.24, Recreational Facility Level of Service Comparison**, compares the level of service at which Las Cruces provides key recreational facilities to other parks and recreation service providers across the country. All data provided in **Figure 3.24**, is derived from agencies/communities that participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program. **Figure 3.24** compares Las Cruces to three categories of service providers: **A)** All agencies participating in Park Metrics nationwide; **B)** All participating agencies with a comparable population density to Las Cruces; and, **C)** All of this Plan's assessment communities (see **Chapter 1**) that have recorded measurable data within Park Metrics.

Park Metrics does not provide a comparable measure for a handful of facility categories in **Figure 3.24**, but these items are nonetheless listed due to their importance to Las Cruces. In addition, Park Metrics figures for recreation centers are not comparable to Las Cruces because it has been determined by the City that square footage is a more suitable measure for recreation centers than number of facilities due to the potential for meeting indoor recreation space needs through facility expansion or distribution. The same consideration applies to skate parks. In fact, an alternative metric for measuring skate parks – the Skatepark Adoption Model – establishes skate park level of service standards based on square footage.

Results within **Figure 3.24** vary widely and should not be viewed as conclusive comparisons. It is difficult to compare Las Cruces to average figures from communities that are distinctly different to Las Cruces in size, population, geography, economics, and climate. As such, **Figure 3.24** should be viewed as a guide - but not a mandate – when considering potential service standards for recreational facilities in Las Cruces.



FIGURE 3.24, RECREATIONAL FACILITY LEVEL OF SERVICE COMPARISON

FACILITY	LAS CRUCES CURRENT LOS (PER RESIDENTS)	AVERAGE LEVEL OF SERVICE, NRPA PARK METRICS (2019)		
		AVERAGE LOS, ALL AGENCIES <sup>1</sup>	AVERAGE LOS, COMPARABLE DENSITY <sup>2</sup>	AVERAGE LOS, ASSESSMENT COMMUNITIES <sup>3</sup>
<b>ATHLETIC FIELDS</b>				
BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FIELDS	1 PER 6,944	VARIES BY 5 CATEGORIES	VARIES BY 5 CATEGORIES	VARIES BY 5 CATEGORIES
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS	1 PER 9,469	1 PER 7,878	1 PER 7,398	1 PER 8,222
SOCCER FIELDS	1 PER 26,040	1 PER 6,883/13,031	1 PER 5,262/9,930	1 PER 27,783/59,704
<b>SPORTS COURTS</b>				
BASKETBALL COURTS	1 PER 4,960	1 PER 7,353	1 PER 7,260	1 PER 17,577
PICKLEBALL COURTS	1 PER 13,020	N/A	N/A	N/A
TENNIS COURTS	1 PER 5,786	1 PER 4,803	1 PER 5,217	1 PER 5,464
VOLLEYBALL COURTS	1 PER 20,832	1 PER 17,667 <sup>4</sup>	1 PER 17,536 <sup>4</sup>	1 PER 24,902 <sup>4</sup>
<b>AQUATICS</b>				
POOL <sup>5</sup>	1 PER 26,040	1 PER 36,266	1 PER 26,474	1 PER 73,927
SPLASH PAD	1 PER 52,080	N/A	N/A	N/A
<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES</b>				
DISC GOLF COURSES	1 PER 104,161	N/A	N/A	N/A
PLAYGROUNDS	1 PER 1,096	1 PER 3,706	1 PER 3,397	1 PER 4,359
RECREATIONAL CENTERS	710 SF PER 1,000	1 PER 30,470	1 PER 27,776	1 PER 71,857
SKATE PARKS	346 SF PER 1,000	1 PER 49,250	1 PER 41,148	1 PER 175,526
<b>MISCELLANEOUS SOCIAL FACILITIES</b>				
DOG PARKS	1 PER 104,161	1 PER 40,000	1 PER 40,000	1 PER 122,987
PAVILIONS	1 PER 1,795	N/A	N/A	N/A
PICNIC FACILITIES (TABLES, BBQ PITS)	2.26 PER 1,000	N/A	N/A	N/A

1. All agencies with measurable data participating in the NRPA's Park Metrics program.

2. Communities with a density of 500 - 1,500 residents per square mile.

3. Six PRMP assessment communities introduced in Chapter 1 that participate in the NRPA Park Metrics program.

4. Multi-use courts (basketball/volleyball).

5. Outdoor only. There are up to five additional competitive swimming pool categories.

## RECREATIONAL FACILITY ACCESSIBILITY

Athletic fields, sport courts, and aquatic facilities are the most common active recreation facilities provided within municipal parks and recreation systems. Future additions to all three facility categories will be necessary as Las Cruces' population grows – serving as visible testaments to the sufficiency of a municipal park system.

Many of Las Cruces' athletic fields, sport courts, and aquatic facilities are consolidated into centralized park "complexes." There are logical reasons to consolidate these types of facilities within centralized locations including: land availability, tournament and event management, and general operational efficiency. Nonetheless, the City must consider how future facility additions can be equitably distributed throughout Las Cruces to gradually improve community accessibility.

**Map 3.5, Athletic Fields, Lighted, and Unlighted** (page 129); **Map 3.6, Sports Courts** (page 130), and **Map 3.7, Aquatic Facilities** (page 131), illustrate the approximate location of the City's existing athletic fields, sport courts, and aquatic facilities. All three maps display generalized radial buffers around each facility simply to provide greater context regarding facility spacing. Unlike the walkshed-based maps depicted in this Plan for certain park types, it is presumed that the facilities shown on **Maps 3.5** through **3.7** will attract a high amount of utilization by persons willing to drive or take transit. Nonetheless, **Maps 3.5** through **3.7** are still useful aids in determining the potential location of future recreational facilities.

## LIGHTED AND UNLIGHTED ATHLETIC FIELDS

**Map 3.5, Athletic Fields, Lighted and Unlighted** (facing page), displays a one-half mile proximity radius for lighted athletic fields (blue circles) and unlighted athletic field (green circles). Since the majority of visitors to athletic fields access them by car, the proximity areas extend beyond major thoroughfares. Thirteen of the City's athletic fields are currently unlighted. In addition, there is a need for more athletic fields in the northeastern portion of the City. Currently, the majority of Las Cruces' publicly accessible athletic fields are located in the southwest area of the City.

## SPORTS COURTS

**Map 3.6, Sports Courts** (page 130), depicts the location of the 60 sports courts owned and maintained by the City. Like athletic fields, the majority of municipal sports courts are located on the southwest side of Las Cruces. Based on the feedback received from the community, more sports courts of varying type are needed - including basketball courts, tennis courts, and pickleball courts. Additionally, more courts are needed on the northeast side of the City.

## AQUATIC FACILITIES

**Map 3.7, Aquatic Facilities**, indicates the locations and proximity areas of the six aquatic facilities in Las Cruces. There is a documented community-wide desire for additional aquatic facilities, but **Map 3.7** suggests that there is a particular geographic need on the north side of the City.

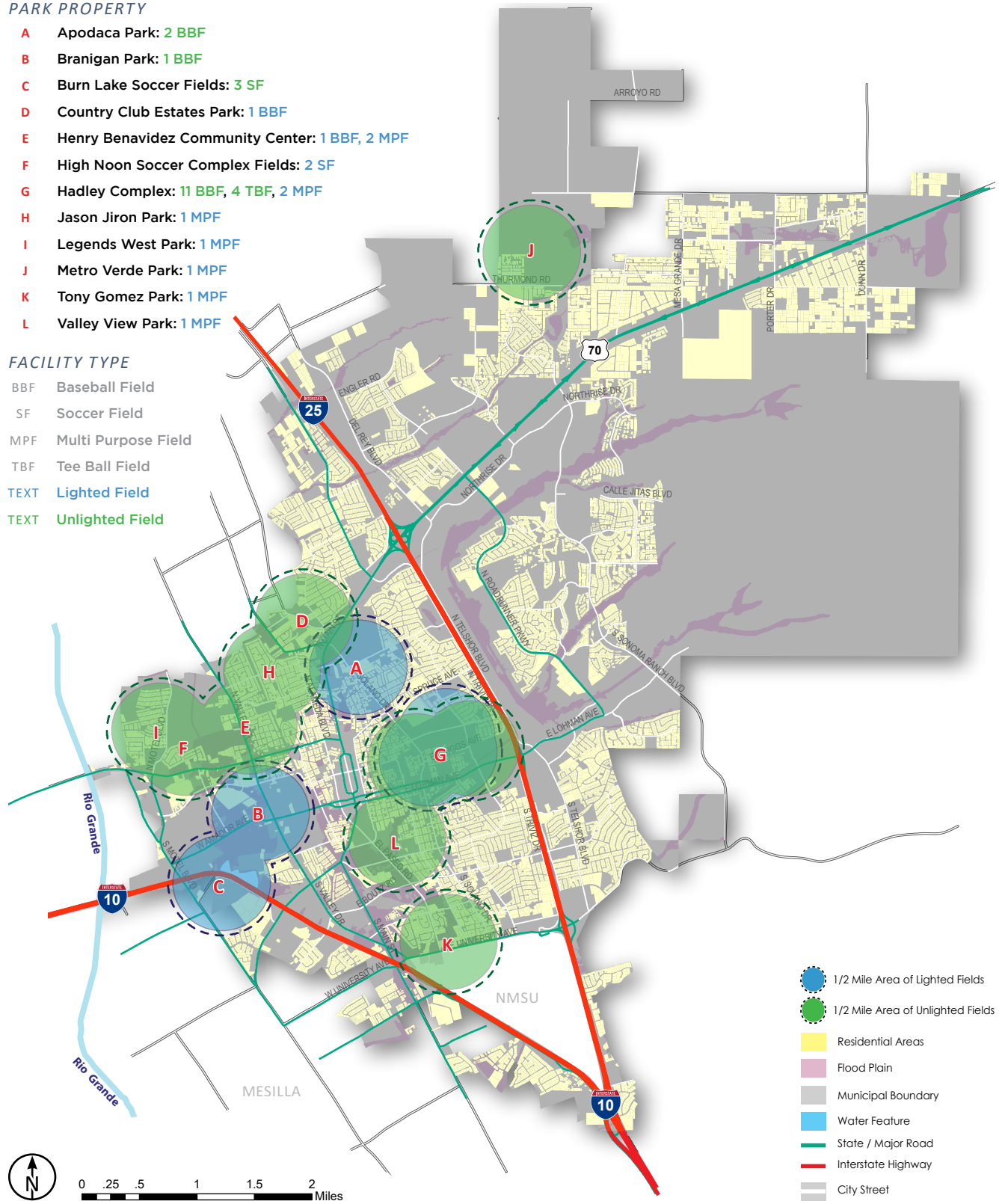
### MAP 3.5, ATHLETIC FIELDS, LIGHTED, AND UNLIGHTED

#### PARK PROPERTY

- A** Apodaca Park: 2 BBF
- B** Branigan Park: 1 BBF
- C** Burn Lake Soccer Fields: 3 SF
- D** Country Club Estates Park: 1 BBF
- E** Henry Benavidez Community Center: 1 BBF, 2 MPF
- F** High Noon Soccer Complex Fields: 2 SF
- G** Hadley Complex: 11 BBF, 4 TBF, 2 MPF
- H** Jason Jiron Park: 1 MPF
- I** Legends West Park: 1 MPF
- J** Metro Verde Park: 1 MPF
- K** Tony Gomez Park: 1 MPF
- L** Valley View Park: 1 MPF

#### FACILITY TYPE

- BBF Baseball Field
- SF Soccer Field
- MPF Multi Purpose Field
- TBF Tee Ball Field
- TEXT **Lighted Field**
- TEXT **Unlighted Field**



- 1/2 Mile Area of Lighted Fields
- 1/2 Mile Area of Unlighted Fields
- Residential Areas
- Flood Plain
- Municipal Boundary
- Water Feature
- State / Major Road
- Interstate Highway
- City Street

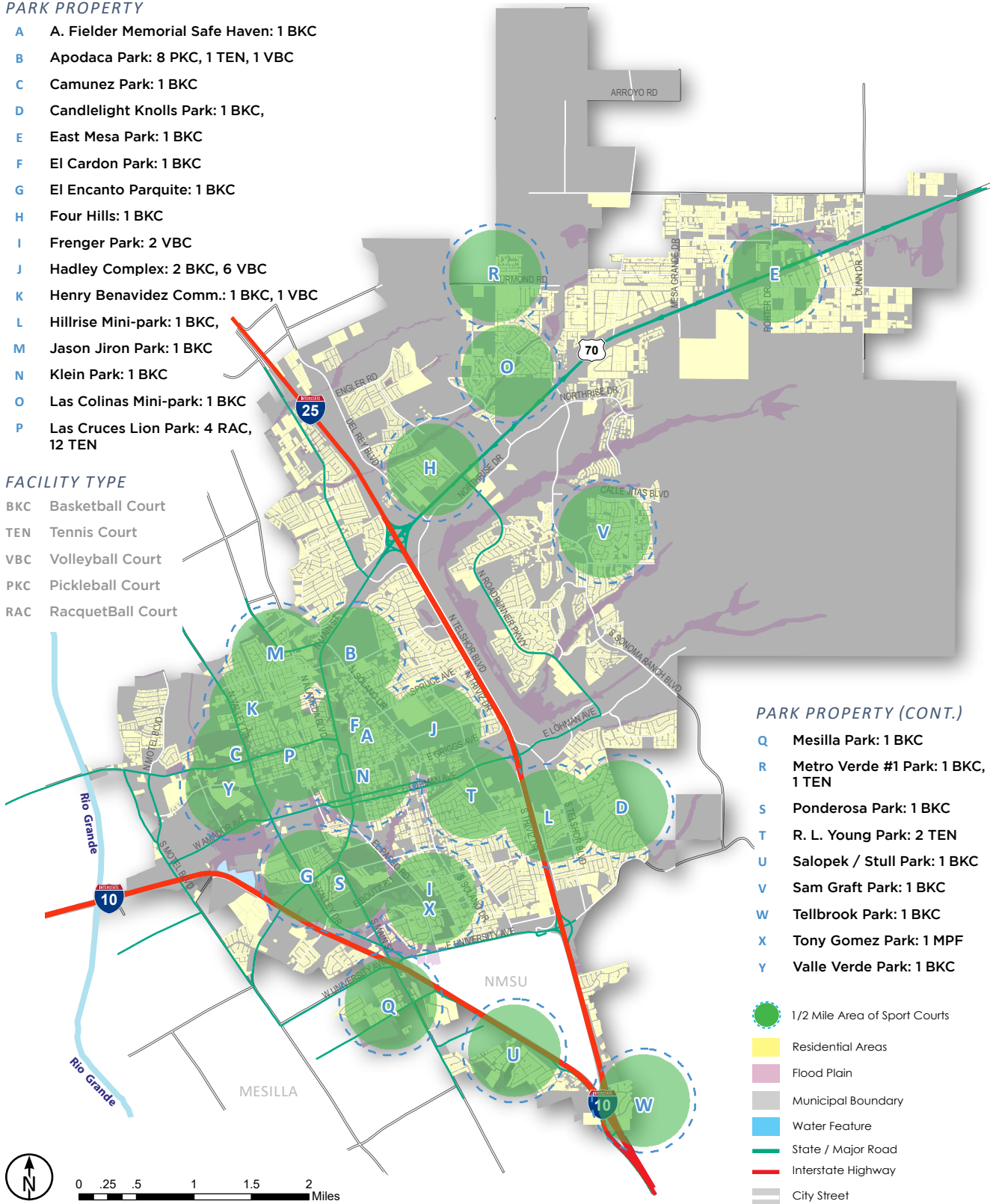
### MAP 3.6, SPORT COURTS

#### PARK PROPERTY

- A** A. Fielder Memorial Safe Haven: 1 BKC
- B** Apodaca Park: 8 PKC, 1 TEN, 1 VBC
- C** Camunez Park: 1 BKC
- D** Candlelight Knolls Park: 1 BKC,
- E** East Mesa Park: 1 BKC
- F** El Cardon Park: 1 BKC
- G** El Encanto Parquite: 1 BKC
- H** Four Hills: 1 BKC
- I** Frenger Park: 2 VBC
- J** Hadley Complex: 2 BKC, 6 VBC
- K** Henry Benavidez Comm.: 1 BKC, 1 VBC
- L** Hillrise Mini-park: 1 BKC,
- M** Jason Jiron Park: 1 BKC
- N** Klein Park: 1 BKC
- O** Las Colinas Mini-park: 1 BKC
- P** Las Cruces Lion Park: 4 RAC, 12 TEN

#### FACILITY TYPE

- BKC** Basketball Court
- TEN** Tennis Court
- VBC** Volleyball Court
- PKC** Pickleball Court
- RAC** RacquetBall Court



#### PARK PROPERTY (CONT.)

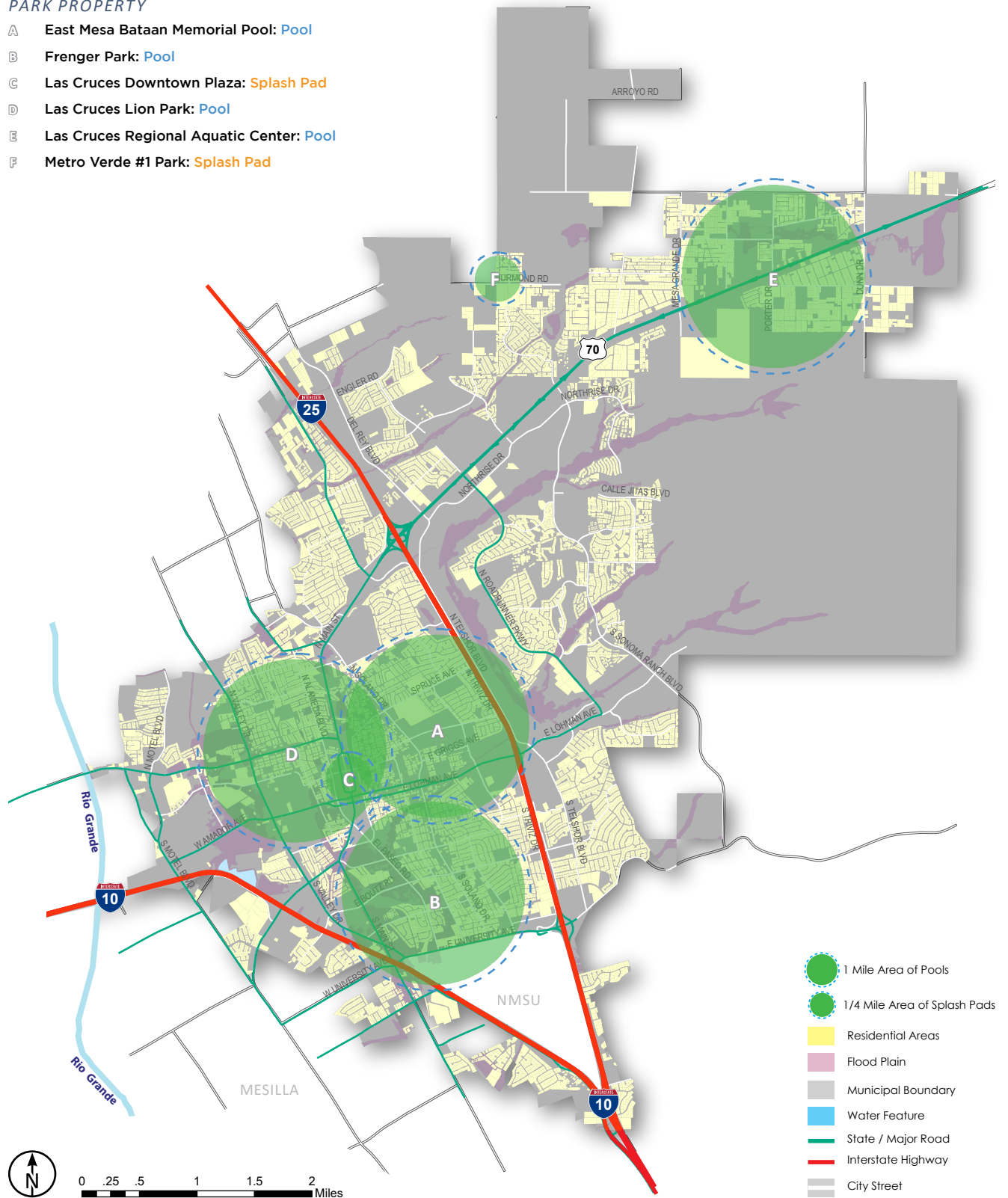
- Q** Mesilla Park: 1 BKC
- R** Metro Verde #1 Park: 1 BKC, 1 TEN
- S** Ponderosa Park: 1 BKC
- T** R. L. Young Park: 2 TEN
- U** Salopek / Stull Park: 1 BKC
- V** Sam Graft Park: 1 BKC
- W** Tellbrook Park: 1 BKC
- X** Tony Gomez Park: 1 MPF
- Y** Valle Verde Park: 1 BKC

- 1/2 Mile Area of Sport Courts
- Residential Areas
- Flood Plain
- Municipal Boundary
- Water Feature
- State / Major Road
- Interstate Highway
- City Street

## MAP 3.7, AQUATIC FACILITIES

### PARK PROPERTY

- A East Mesa Bataan Memorial Pool: Pool
- B Frenger Park: Pool
- C Las Cruces Downtown Plaza: Splash Pad
- D Las Cruces Lion Park: Pool
- E Las Cruces Regional Aquatic Center: Pool
- F Metro Verde #1 Park: Splash Pad





*The public's desire for additional indoor recreation space may be addressed through the provision new stand-alone facilities, or additions to existing facilities, including City-owned and maintained community centers.*

### FUTURE SERVICE NEED

This Plan recommends that the City of Las Cruces establish targeted level of service standards for a series of core recreational facilities that are essential components of most municipal parks and recreation systems, and a handful of other facilities that are locally popular based on public feedback. These facilities were previously identified in **Figure 3.24**.

**Figure 3.25, Recreational Facilities, Target Level of Service**, proposes targeted LOS standards for 17 recreational facility types in Las Cruces. Most recommendations are based on a ratio of facility per 1,000 residents, except for trails, recreation centers, and skate parks. Recreation center and skate park recommendations are based on square feet per 1,000 residents because the future need for these facilities may be accommodated by additions to existing facilities or a (to be determined) distribution among various locations.

The “Level of Need” presented in **Figure 3.25** is derived from the gap between facility importance and City performance as presented in **Figure 3.23** (page 124). Recommended facility target levels of service do not include proximity guidelines. The City should exercise discretion in distributing new facilities in a way that reduces proximity gaps as represented by **Maps 3.5, 3.6, and 3.7**. Regardless, as previously mentioned recommended level of service targets are aspirational and advisory only. Other facility recommendations may be added to **Figure 3.25** by the City at a future date, while the absence of a particular facility from the figure does not imply that it should not be added to the municipal parks and recreation system. Additional facility recommendations are presented in **Chapter 4, Plan Recommendations**.

FIGURE 3.25, RECOMMENDED FACILITY LOS, LAS CRUCES

FACILITY	CURRENT AVAIL.	CURRENT LOS (PER RESIDENTS)	TARGET LOS (PER RESIDENTS)	LEVEL OF NEED (2019)	2019 SURPLUS OR DEFICIT (BASED ON TARGET)	2045 NEED BASED ON 141,565 POP.
<b>ATHLETIC FIELDS</b>						
BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FIELDS	15	1 PER 6,944	1 PER 7,000	MODERATE	0	20
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS	11	1 PER 9,469	1 PER 10,000	MODERATE	1	14
SOCCER FIELDS <sup>1</sup>	4	1 PER 26,040	1 PER 20,000	MODERATE	-1	7
<b>SPORTS COURTS</b>						
BASKETBALL COURTS	21	1 PER 4,960	1 PER 5,000	MODERATE	+1	28
PICKLEBALL COURTS <sup>2</sup>	8	1 PER 13,020	1 PER 8,000	HIGH	-5	18
TENNIS COURTS	18	1 PER 5,786	1 PER 6,000	MODERATE	+1	24
VOLLEYBALL COURTS	5	1 PER 20,832	1 PER 18,000	MODERATE	-1	8
<b>AQUATICS</b>						
POOL <sup>3</sup>	4	1 PER 26,040	1 PER 20,000	HIGH	-1	7
SPLASH PAD	2	1 PER 52,080	1 PER 25,000	MODERATE	-2	6
<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES</b>						
DISC GOLF COURSES	1	1 PER 104,161	1 PER 50,000	MODERATE	-1	3
PLAYGROUNDS	95	1 PER 1,096	1 PER 1,250	MODERATE	+12	113
RECREATIONAL CENTERS <sup>4</sup>	74,024 SF <sup>4</sup>	710 SF	900 SF PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	HIGH	-19,700 SF <sup>4</sup>	127,400 SF <sup>4</sup>
SKATE PARKS <sup>5</sup>	36,000 SF	346 SF	350 SF PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	MODERATE	-465 SF	49,500 SF
<b>MISCELLANEOUS SOCIAL FACILITIES</b>						
DOG PARKS	1	1 PER 104,161	1 PER 40,000	MODERATE	-2	4
PAVILIONS	58	1 PER 1,795	1 PER 1,500	HIGH	-11	94
PICNIC FACILITIES (TABLES, BBQ PITS)	235	2.26 PER 1,000	2 PER 1,000	HIGH	27	283

1. City-owned fields only.

2. Number of "current available" includes all exclusive and shared court space at Apodaca Park. Estimated need in 2045 reflects courts used exclusively for pickleball.

3. Outdoor only. There are up to five additional competitive swimming pool categories.

4. Square footages include City-owned community centers and recreation centers.

5. Category includes skate parks and skate spots.

## MULTI-USE TRAILS

The City of Las Cruces’ existing multi-use trail network includes 15 trail segments that collectively extend for roughly 27.6 linear miles. At 0.26 miles per 1,000 residents, current multi-use trail mileage in Las Cruces exceeds the 2012 PRMP’s recommended TLOS of 0.25 miles of multi-use trail per 1,000 residents. Currently, the longest trail in the City’s multi-use trail system is Triviz Multi-Purpose Path which runs from the Outlet Channel Trail to East University Avenue. **Figure 3.26, Multi-Use Trails, Level of Service**, compares the City’s current level of service to projected level of services (in terms of linear mileage) in 2045.

The City’s recently adopted Active Transportation Plan (2019) and the Mesilla Valley MPO’s Trails Priorities Plan (2016) propose an ambitious expansion of the City’s and metropolitan area’s multi-use trail network, including over 100 linear miles of multi-use trail within the Las Cruces municipal limits. Over 19 linear miles of the City’s future multi-use trails network has been funded following voter approval of a 2018 general obligation bond.

## FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

There is no recommended proximity guideline in the 2012 PRMP for multi-use trails. Regardless, the popularity of multi-use trails in Las Cruces means that their accessibility should be just as important as other park types. **Map 3.8, Multi-Use Trails, Accessibility**, illustrates a ¼ walkshed extending from the City’s current multi-use trail segments. As with other maps, the walkshed follows roadway segments that would likely offer pedestrian accessibility, while taking into account barriers such as major arterial roadways and drainage channels. **Map 3.8** suggests that roughly 21.6 percent of residential areas in Las Cruces are within ¼ (five minutes) of a multi-use trail corridor.

Whether used for fitness, recreation, or transportation purposes, a well-conceived multi-use trail system is based on the concept of “access” before “distance.” If residents cannot easily access the network than its potential is diminished. This Plan therefore does not recommend a targeted level of service for multi-use trails based on linear mileage. Instead additions to the City’s multi-use trail network should adhere to the recommendations of the City’s adopted Active Transportation Plan. Level of service measures regarding linear mileage (0.25 miles per 1,000 residents) and proximity (percent of residential area within ¼ mile walkshed) should only be used to monitor progress in trail construction.

FIGURE 3.26, MULTI-USE TRAILS, LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)<sup>1</sup>

TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE			CURRENT LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019)		
RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD (2012)	RECOMMENDED MILEAGE (2019)	RECOMMENDED MILEAGE (2045) <sup>2</sup>	EXISTING MILEAGE	EXISTING SERVICE STANDARD	EXISTING SURPLUS / (DEFICIT)
0.25 MILES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	26.0 MILES	35.4 MILES	26.7 MILES	0.26 MILES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	0.7 MILES

1. 104,161 residents (est. 2019): Based on 101,706 residents per US Census, American Community Survey population estimates (2017) plus 1.2 percent annual population growth.

2. 141,565 residents (est. 2045): ESRI; Mesilla Valley MPO; Economic & Planning Systems



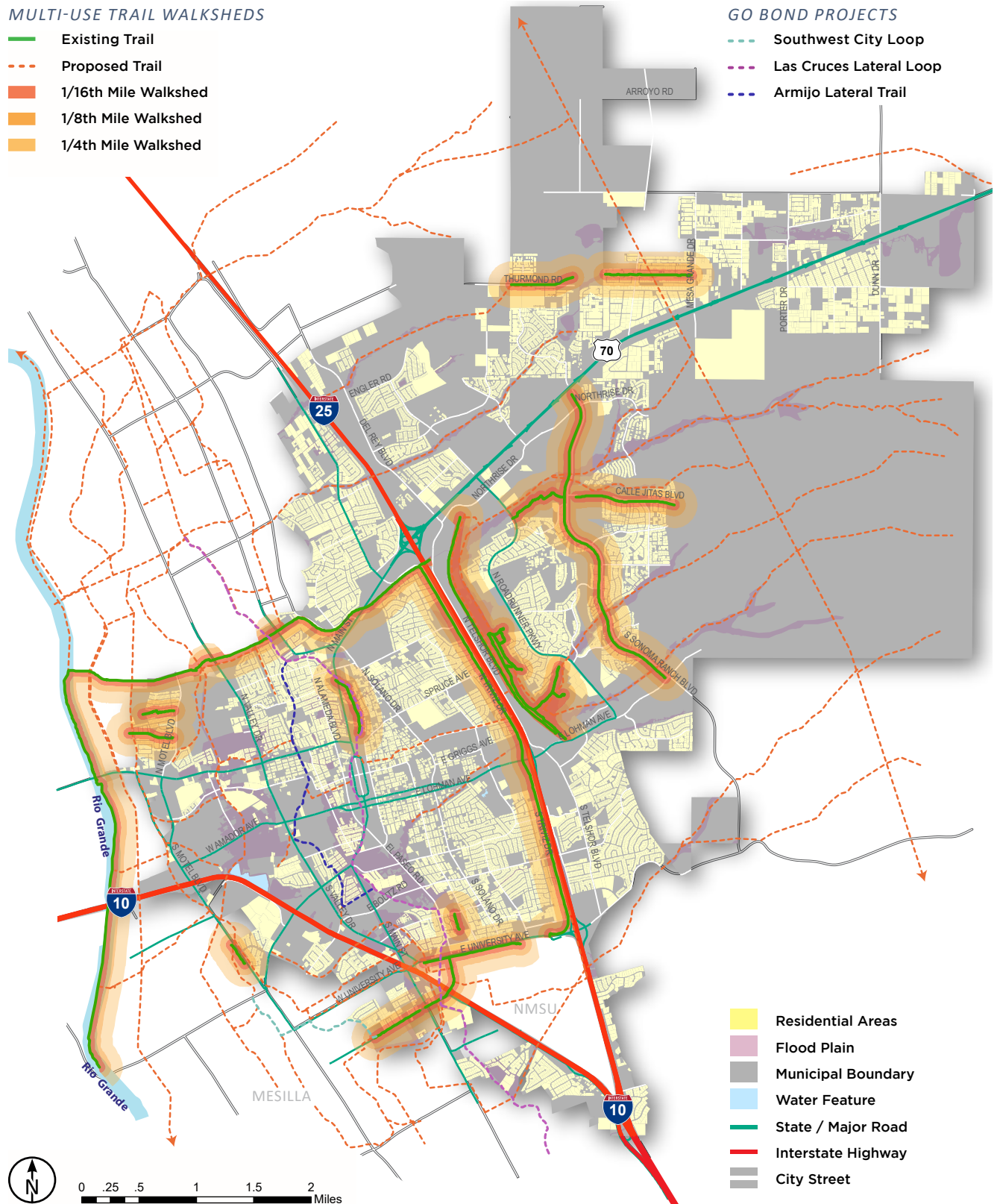
### MAP 3.8, MULTI-USE TRAILS, ACCESSIBILITY

#### MULTI-USE TRAIL WALKSHEDS

- Existing Trail
- Proposed Trail
- 1/16th Mile Walkshed
- 1/8th Mile Walkshed
- 1/4th Mile Walkshed

#### GO BOND PROJECTS

- Southwest City Loop
- Las Cruces Lateral Loop
- Armijo Lateral Trail



## SECTION 4: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND EVENTS

FIGURE 3.27, RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AND EVENT PARTICIPATION, 2013-2017

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS				EVENTS			
NUMBER OF PROGRAMS OFFERED			PERCENT PARTICIPATION RATE	NUMBER OF EVENTS			PERCENT PARTICIPATION RATE
2013	2017	% CHANGE		2013	2017	% CHANGE	
117	171	46%	UNDETERMINED <sup>1</sup>	35	36	2.8%	40%

Source: City of Las Cruces

1. In 2013, attendance was not tracked using ETRAK. The data for events is an estimate provided by the City of Las Cruces.

### PROGRAM AND EVENT PARTICIPATION

The City of Las Cruces continually assesses and modifies its recreational programs and events to meet resident preferences. **Figure 3.27, Recreational Programming and Event Participation, 2013-2017**, indicates that between 2013 and 2017, the number of recreational programs offered by the City increased by 46 percent. Changes in total participation and the rate of participation have not been included in this master planning effort because 2013 records are insufficient to verify participation.

The City has since acquired a programming software which allows it to more accurately track recreational program participation. In 2017, City recreational programs attracted over 106,564 participants. **Figure 3.27** indicates that the total annual number of City-sponsored events increased by 2.8 percent between 2013 and 2017. Estimated participation in City events grew by 151 percent (from 37,633 attendees to 82,318 attendees) during that timeframe – amounting to a participation rate increase of 40 percent when divided by the total number of events offered.

*Teenagers participating in after school activities at the Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center.*



## RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

As of 2017, the most popular recreational programs offered by the City based on attendance include lap swim, after school program kindergarten - 5th grade, teen connection after school, fitness group/exercise swim session, and pickleball. One popular program for seniors is zumba gold while other popular youth programs include advanced and intermediate gymnastic and youth basketball for 3rd through 5th grade.

Some City-offered programs are experiencing rapid increases in overall participation and participation rates (by total number of sessions offered). **Figure 3.28, Change in Recreational Program Participation**, identifies the top 10 recreational programs by increases in attendance between 2015 and 2017. The programs listed in **Figure 3.28** have been offered by the City of Las Cruces for at least two (2) consecutive years during the timeframe assessed.

In contrast to program growth highlighted in **Figure 3.28**, other City-sponsored programs have been discontinued or otherwise continue to experience declines in participation. Prime examples of programs with declining enrollment include: youth cheer for third and fourth grade, Learn to Swim, and Learn to Swim for Preschoolers. Discontinued programs include:

- Youth Indoor Soccer Ages 4 - 7
- Youth Cheer PreK/K and 3rd - 6th Grade
- Hands On Discoveries
- Dream League Soccer

The reasons behind declines in participation or program discontinuance are not always attributable to lack of interest. Some programs have been discontinued due to a lack of qualified instructors, while others have been disrupted by competition for facilities or inadequate resources.

FIGURE 3.28, CHANGE IN RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

PROGRAM NAME	ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE			
	2015	2016	2017	% CHANGE
YOUTH GYMNASTICS - ADVANCED	23	151	241	948%
YOUTH GYMNASTICS - INTERMEDIATE	46	278	411	793%
JUVENILE CITATION PROGRAM - OUTDOOR POOL	42	381	317	655%
FRENGER SWIM LESSONS - PRESCHOOL	15	30	94	527%
YOUTH GYMNASTICS - TUMBLING	N/A	20	120	500%
YOUTH TUMBLING	N/A	20	120	500%
OPEN SWIM	2,711	17,492	15,610	476%
ZUMBA GOLD FOR SENIORS	128	795	564	341%
AQUA FIT	751	3,381	3,044	305%
FRENGER SWIM LESSONS - ADULT	N/A	2	8	300%

Source: City of Las Cruces

## CITY EVENT PARTICIPATION

Annual City-sponsored events have experienced an increase in participation since 2013. **Figure 3.29, City Event Participation**, identifies the most popular City-sponsored events by estimated attendance. Much of the increase in the total number of City-sponsored events can be attributed to the opening of the Plaza de Las Cruces during the five-year assessed timeframe.

A handful of annual events such as the World’s Biggest Swim Lesson, Karaoke, and Walk n Roll have experienced declining attendance.

## PROGRAMMING GAPS

Respondents to the online public survey distributed during the master planning process generally indicate a high level of satisfaction with the City’s athletic and other recreational program offerings (see **Figures 3.12** and **3.13**, page 94). Collectively, both figures suggest that the greatest recreational programming need is for seniors over the age of 55, and teens (the latter group typically being difficult to service due to competition with school district sports and activities, and part-time jobs).

FIGURE 3.29, CITY EVENT PARTICIPATION

PROGRAM NAME	ESTIMATED ATTENDANCE					PERCENT CHANGE
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	
TEEN SPLASH	N/A	15	75	300	575	3,733%
TEEN MOBILE UNIT/VARIOUS EVENTS	2,100	3,150	4,725	7,085	10,630	406%
SPORTSDAYS	N/A	3,401	5,218	11,989	14,120	315%
4TH OF JULY ELECTRIC LIGHT PARADE	3,300	3,300	3,300	3,300	7,000	112%
PUMPKIN PATCH SPLASH	N/A	N/A	40	65	82	105%
TEEN MOBILE UNIT/CAMPUS INVASION	N/A	N/A	1,600	2,000	2,800	75%
CINCO DE MAYO	N/A	N/A	110	116	176	60%
KIDS EXPO	250	250	300	320	350	40%
GREAT PUMPKIN CANDY DROP	4,000	4,800	5,200	5,500	5,500	38%
MOVIES IN THE PARK	3,600	3,840	4,080	4,560	4,800	33%
ANNUAL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING	1,500	1,500	1,500	1,500	2,000	33%
MONTHLY DANCES	N/A	1,432	1,930	1,495	1,821	27%
EGGSTRAVAGANZA	N/A	215	112	126	267	24%
MAYOR'S JAZZ FEST	1,100	1,200	1,300	1,300	1,300	18%
COMMUNITY SCHOOLS (PARTNERSHIP)	N/A	N/A	N/A	2,880	3,240	13%
COLOR RUN	80	96	115	98	85	6%

Source: City of Las Cruces

Overall, attendance in youth and adult sports programs is increasing, which is consistent with the desire expressed by master planning participants to add additional youth and adult sports offerings. Likewise, attendance in senior programs, fitness classes/series, and camps/lessons is also increasing, consistent with feedback received during public open houses. City investment in instructors and facilities that can increase the hours or number of sessions available to support popular programs offers the City the best opportunity to recover programming costs. Targeted fee increases could be tied directly to investments that improve program access and the participant experience.

With fixed indoor and outdoor recreational facilities designed to cater to specialized interests, the Parks and Recreation Department is more readily able to adjust recreational programming schedules to address changing community interests. By offering recreational activities at properties directly managed by the department, program logistics rarely require coordination with other municipal departments. Further, it is often only necessary for the department to provide the facility – relying on multiple recreational partners to manage programming logistics and/or curriculum (see page 76).

City-sponsored annual (or one-time) events are generally more difficult for Las Cruces to plan, administer, and manage than recreational programs. Public events involve much larger assemblies of people; require specialized planning for advertisement, entertainment, volunteering, traffic management, crowd management, and staff overtime; and require coordination among a much larger number of City departments and non-municipal partners. Although public feedback during the master planning process suggests a greater public desire for more music-related and family oriented events, modification of the City’s annual public events calendar should occur in a very deliberate manner with consideration given to the possible discontinuation of under-performing events so that City staff resources are not overcommitted during the calendar year.



*The rapid increase in the popularity of pickleball has added to public interest in additions to indoor recreation space.*

## RECREATION SERVICES BUDGET

City-sponsored recreational programs and events are managed by the Parks and Recreation Department’s Recreation Section and the Youth Services Section. A portion of the Parks and Recreation Department’s general fund revenues come from fees generated through associated program registrations and facility usage/ reservations. **Figure 3.30, Programming and Fee Revenues**, compares the total amount of recreational program and event fee revenues that were generated in fiscal year 2011-2012 and 2017-2018 compared to the combined Recreation Section and Youth Services Section budget.

**Figure 3.30, Programming and Fee Revenues**, illustrates that from fiscal year 2011 to 2012 and 2017 to 2018, programming and fee revenues have increased by over 3.2 percent. In fiscal year 2011 to 2012, recreational program and event fee revenues equated to 17.6 percent of the Recreation Division budget. In addition, the budget of the combined Recreation Section and Youth Services Section (titled the Recreation Division in fiscal year 2011 to 2012), decreased by five percent. In fiscal year 2017 to 2018, recreational program and event fee revenues equated to 20.8 percent of the combined Recreation Section and Youth Services Section budget.

### FEES AND FACILITY USE POLICY

Fees are assessed and established on an annual basis by City Council and are documented within the City’s Parks and Recreation Section Fees and Charges / Facility Use Policy (**Appendix F**). The City’s list of fees spans eight pages including costs related to program registration, special events, tournaments, admissions, rentals, merchandise, and parking/vending.

The Facility Use Policy establishes targeted cost recovery benchmarks for the use of City facilities and participation in City-administered recreational programs. Cumulative cost recovery targets for City recreational programs range between 85-100 percent of direct costs (defined as “partial” to “full” cost recovery). Category-specific cost recovery targets for recreational programs include:

- **Aquatic Programs.** 33 percent target (Minimal Cost Recovery)
- **Youth Programs.** 85 percent target (Partial Cost Recovery)
- **Adult and Special Programs.** 100 percent target (Full Cost Recovery)

For purposes of cost recovery, the City’s policy defines “direct costs” as: “Costs directly associated with providing activities and/or services required for program functionality. Examples: cost for instructor/leader, supplies, materials, building rental, advertising, etc.”

**FIGURE 3.30, PROGRAMMING AND FEE REVENUES<sup>1</sup>**

FISCAL YEAR 2011 - 2012	
REC. DIVISION BUDGET	\$3,721,058.00
EARNED/GENERATED REVENUES <sup>2</sup>	
PROGRAM & EVENT FEES	\$654,602.62
PROGRAM/EVENT FEES AS (%) OF REC. BUDGET	17.6%
FISCAL YEAR 2017 - 2018	
COMBINED REC. SEC. & YOUTH SERVICES BUDGET	\$3,533,831.00
EARNED/GENERATED REVENUES <sup>2</sup>	
PROGRAM AND EVENT FEES	\$736,404.38
PROGRAM/EVENT FEES AS (%) OF REC. BUDGET	20.8%

Source: City of Las Cruces and Las Cruces Park and Recreation Department Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2012.

1. Actual year-to-date (fiscal year); 2. Program and event fees only. Excludes parking, facility rental, and other fees.

Note: In fiscal year 2011 to 2012, the Recreation Section and Youth Services Section was the Recreation Division.

## SECTION 5: OPERATIONAL ANALYSIS

An overview of the Parks and Recreation Department's organizational structure was provided in **Chapter 2, Las Cruces Parks System**. The initial overview provided cursory information on the department's functions, staffing levels, and budget per capita.

This section provides a more detailed analysis of Parks and Recreation funding and staff resources.

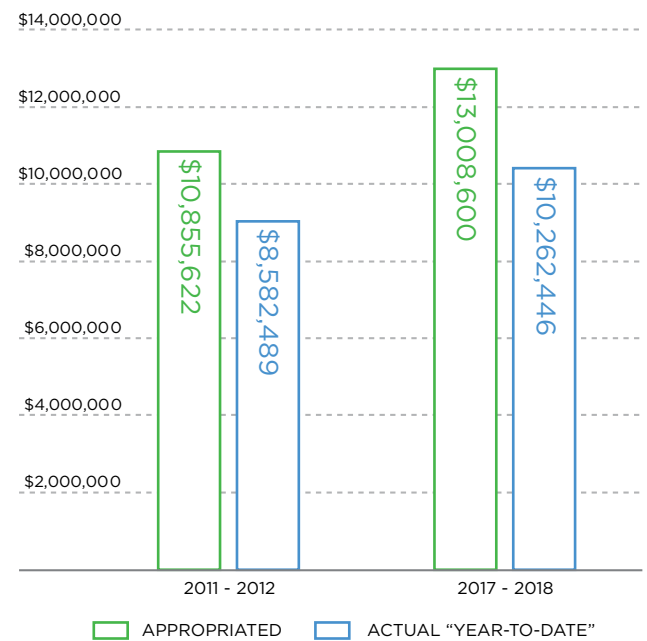
### OPERATIONAL BUDGET

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department's annual operational budget is comprised of three (3) principal funding categories. Primary sources of funding for the department's annual operations include:

- **Las Cruces General Fund.** *These funds are comprised primarily of general tax revenue and impact fees allocated by the City and provide for the administration and operation of city services.*
- **Fees and Other Sources.** *Revenue generated directly by the Parks and Recreation Department through services, programs, special events, and other activities offered directly to the public.*
- **Grants.** *Funding provided by the State of New Mexico and other agencies for a variety of items including special programs and projects.*

**Figure 3.31, Parks and Recreation Budget**, illustrates appropriated and revised budgets for the Parks and Recreation Department in fiscal year 2011-12 and fiscal year 2017-18. The "appropriated" budget is approved by the City Council prior to the beginning of a fiscal year while the "revised" budget accounts for re-allocations, revised projections, new revenues, and transfers that occur over the course of the fiscal year.

**FIGURE 3.31, PARKS AND RECREATION BUDGET**



Source: City of Las Cruces

**Figure 3.31** illustrates that the 2017-2018 appropriated budget increased by 19.8 percent from the 2011-2012 budget. However, the actual 2017-18 fiscal year budget shows a 20 percent increase over the 2011-12 actual budget. Although increases to the department's annual budget have been significant, other data presented throughout this Plan indicates that increases in parkland acreage and recreational programming have significantly outpaced budget allocations.

FIGURE 3.32, FUNDING FOR PARKS & RECREATION OPERATING EXPENDITURES<sup>1</sup>

FUNDING SOURCE	2011-2012		2017-2018	
	AMOUNT <sup>1</sup>	% OF FUNDING	AMOUNT <sup>1</sup>	% OF FUNDING
TOTAL EXPENDITURES <sup>1</sup>	\$8,582,489	N/A	\$10,262,446	N/A
ACTUAL REVENUES <sup>1</sup>	AMOUNT <sup>1</sup>	% OF EXPENDITURES	AMOUNT <sup>1</sup>	% OF EXPENDITURES
GENERAL FUND	\$7,546,688	87.9%	\$7,503,636	73.1%
GRANTS	\$298,262	3.5%	\$561,520	5.5%
FEES & OTHER SOURCES <sup>2</sup>	\$737,539	8.6%	\$2,197,289	21.4%

Source: Park Metrics, City of Las Cruces

1. Actual year-to-date (fiscal year); 2. Includes: earned/generated revenues (i.e. program, event, and facility rental fees) and other sources (i.e. donations, advertising, and sponsorships).

### OPERATING EXPENDITURES BY SOURCE

**Figure 3.32, Funding for Parks and Recreation Operations**, illustrates department funding for the 2011-12 and 2017-18 fiscal years per principal funding category. The general fund is the department's primary funding source of operating expenditures.

Since the 2011-12 fiscal year, the general fund has been used to augment department operations at a decreased rate while revenues from fees has increased significantly as a percentage of the overall budget. By comparison, three (3) assessment communities which participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program utilize general fund tax support for only 57.4, 60.0, and 63.6 percent of their parks and recreation operational budget. The *2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review* indicates that the national average of general fund tax support for parks and recreational operating expenditures is only 59 percent - while earned/generated revenue accounts for 25 percent.

### OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA

**Figure 3.33, Operating Expenditures Per Capita**, compares Las Cruces' 2017-18 operating expenditures per capita to four (4) assessment communities which participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program.

FIGURE 3.33, OPERATING EXPENDITURES PER CAPITA, 2017-18

COMMUNITY	AMOUNT
BROKEN ARROW, OK	\$ 36
FORT COLLINS, CO	\$ 160
PLANO, TX	\$ 108
ROUND ROCK, TX	\$ 104
LAS CRUCES <sup>1</sup>	\$ 100

Source: Park Metrics, City of Las Cruces

1. Actual year-to-date (fiscal year)

Las Cruces' per capita operating expenditures for parks and recreation was \$100.00 dollars for fiscal year 2017-18. This represents a 14.5 percent increase in per capita operating expenditures from fiscal year 2011-12.

Las Cruces ranked fourth in per capita expenditure behind all communities measured except for Broken Arrow. The City of Broken Arrow ranks last as their per capita expenditure was \$36.00 dollars (pop. 110,000, budget \$4,144,000). It should be noted that all assessment communities - regardless of the rate of per capita expenditure - fund their parks and recreation system with a much higher percentage of fees (earned/generated revenue).



## SECTION BUDGETS

**Figure 3.34, Parks and Recreation Section Budgets**, illustrates the Parks and Recreation Department's Section revised budgets for both the 2011-12 and the 2017-18 fiscal years. (Note: The 2011-12 Administration Section budget was contained in the "non-subsection" portion of the budget.) The information in **Figure 3.34** will differ from **Figure 3.32** because the later figure listed "actual" revenues and expenditures.

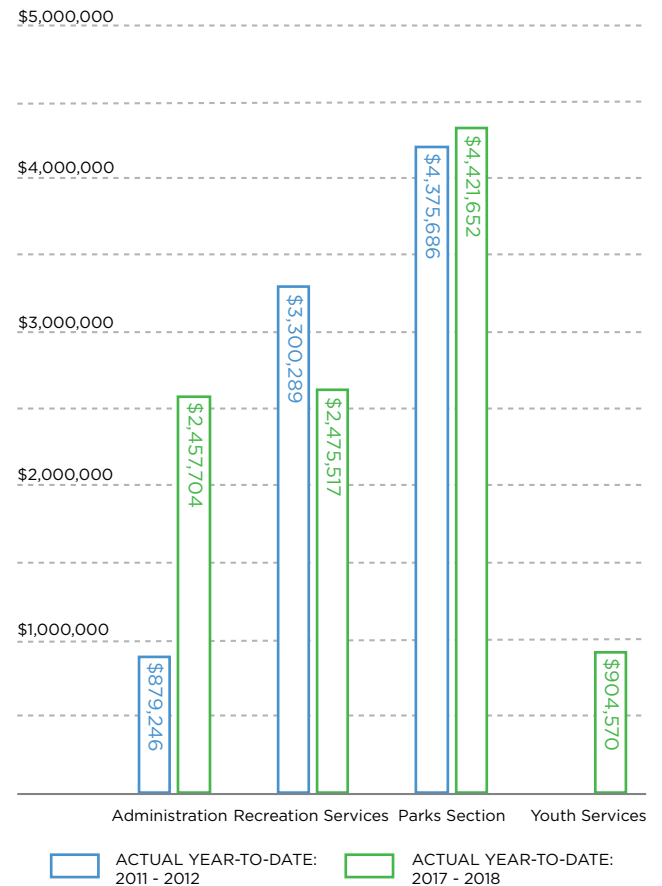
**Figure 3.34** indicates that the Administration Section budget has increased by \$1,578,458 dollars (almost 180 percent) between the assessed budget years. The Recreation Services Section budget has decreased by 25 percent between the 2011-12 and 2017-18 fiscal years. Decreases in funding for the Recreation Section's three (3) divisions is:

- **Aquatics.** 25% reduction in funds
- **Athletics.** 34% reduction in funds
- **Recreational Services.** 17% reduction in funds

Part of the decrease in funding for the Recreation Section can be attributed to departmental reorganization which included the addition of the Youth Services Section. Cumulatively, the Recreation Section and Youth Services Section 2017-18 fiscal year budget is almost identical to the 2011-12 budget for the Recreation Section alone.

**Figure 3.34** illustrates that the Parks Section budget has increased by \$45,966 dollars (1%) from the 2011-12 fiscal year. This coincides with the addition of park space and facilities between 2012 and 2018. The relationship between the Parks Section budget and increased maintenance responsibilities is discussed in more detail beginning on page 146.

**FIGURE 3.34, PARKS AND RECREATION SECTION BUDGETS, 2012 AND 2018**



Source: City of Las Cruces

The Youth Services Section was created prior to the 2018 fiscal year. This section combined Youth Services, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, and the Juvenile Citation Program. These programs were divided among multiple city departments prior to being merged within the Parks and Recreation Department. Youth programs comprise 70 percent of the total Youth Services Section budget.

## CAPITAL BUDGET

Capital improvement funds are funds appropriated on an annual basis for capital projects. The capital budget for parks and recreation facilities is separate from the Parks and Recreation Department's operating budget.

The amount of available capital funds will vary greatly from year to year based on projects. These funds are used specifically for capital projects such as the build of new parks. The primary source of capital funds are impact fees and General Obligation Bonds (GO Bonds) discussed later in this section.

## GENERAL OBLIGATION (GO) BONDS

The residents of Las Cruces approved a general obligation Bond through a 2018 special election. General Obligation (GO) bonds are issued by a jurisdiction for the purpose of funding capital improvement projects which provide a public benefit and generates little to no revenue.

The approved 2018 GO bond allowed approximately \$19.6 million to be provided for parks and recreation projects. A complete list of GO bond project is located in the **Appendix G**.

## REVENUES FOR OPERATING EXPENDITURES

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department generated \$980,687.43Z in revenue during the 2017-18 fiscal year as part of funds moved into the city General Funds. The Other Revenue category which includes grants, park zone fees, and donations and memorials total \$1,216,601.76 in 2018.

### STATE OF NEW MEXICO IMPACT FEES

*Impact fees are defined by the State of New Mexico as "a charge or assessment imposed by a municipality or county on new development in order to generate revenue for funding or recouping the cost of capital improvements or facility expansion necessitated by and attributed to the new development" (NM § 5-8-2)*

*Impact fees provide the City of Las Cruces funding to provide new park facilities for the purpose of maintaining a consistent level of parks and recreation services.*

*Park and recreation impact fees generated \$1,345,594 dollars in fiscal year 2017-18 to fund capital improvement projects throughout the City of Las Cruces for the 2018 Fiscal Year. Impact fees collected by the City of Las Cruces must be used within a four year time period.*

**Figure 3.35, Earned/Generated Revenue (2017-18)**, (facing page) illustrates revenue generators for the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department during the 2017-18 fiscal year. Recreational Program fees generated just over 22 percent of all earned or generated revenue while special events accounted for less than one (1) percent.

The largest revenue generators for the "Other Revenue Sources" category were Park Zone Fees which generated 55 percent of all earned or generated revenue during the fiscal year. As previously illustrated in **Figure 3.32** (page 142), combined accounts for just over 21 percent of the City's annual parks and recreation operating expenditures.

**FIGURE 3.35, EARNED/GENERATED REVENUE (2017-18)<sup>1</sup>**

REVENUE DESCRIPTION	AMOUNT
<b>PROGRAM AND EVENT FEES</b>	
SPECIAL EVENTS	\$4,546.00
AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM FEES	\$242,207.12
RECREATION PROGRAM FEE	\$490,123.19
OTHER FEES	\$162,899.95
OTHER REVENUE / RENTAL INCOME	\$80,911.17
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$980,687.43</b>
<b>OTHER REVENUE SOURCES<sup>2</sup></b>	
PARKING FEES	\$1,213,321.00
DONATIONS & MEMORIALS	\$3,280.76
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$1,216,601.76</b>

Source: City of Las Cruces, Parks and Recreation 2017-2018 Budget  
 1. Actual year-to-date (fiscal year); 2. Excludes grants

**FIGURE 3.36, PARKS & RECREATION DEPARTMENT STAFF, 2018**

SECTION	2017-2018		
	FULL TIME STAFF	FTE <sup>1</sup>	PERCENT OF DEPARTMENT FTE <sup>1</sup>
ADMINISTRATION	9	9	6%
RECREATION SERVICES	30	62.3	38%
PARKS	62	62	38%
YOUTH SERVICES	13	28.7	18%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>114</b>	<b>162</b>	<b>100 %</b>

Source: City of Las Cruces  
 1. Full time equivalent positions

## STAFFING LEVELS

Staffing levels for the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department were originally introduced in **Chapter 2** (page 45). **Figure 3.36, Parks and Recreation Department Staff**, shows the total number of full time employees and full time equivalent positions for the Parks and Recreation Department in the 2017-2018 fiscal year.

**Figure 3.37, Staffing Levels for 2018**, (page 146) compares Las Cruces' full time employees and total full time equivalent (FTE) positions to four (4) assessment communities which participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program. **Figure 3.37** reveals that in fiscal year 2017-18 Las Cruces provided 15.8 FTE parks and recreation positions per 10,000 residents. Las Cruces' 2018 rate of parks and recreation FTE positions per 10,000 residents has grown by 60 percent since fiscal year 2011-12 and exceeds the average nationwide staffing levels derived from organizations that participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program. Nationwide FTE employee averages according to Park Metrics statistics is 8.3 full time equivalent positions per 10,000 residents.

**Figure 3.38, Staffing Levels FTE Comparison for Benchmark Communities**, (page 147) compares the City's recreational programming and operations and maintenance (O&M) staffing levels with four (4) assessment communities that participate in the NRPA's Park Metric program. The figure suggests Las Cruces' distribution of recreational programming and O&M FTEs is consistent with comparable communities. These figures are also consistent with the NRPA's *2019 NRPA Agency Performance Review* which indicates that staff dedicated to programming average about 29 percent of total staff, while O&M staff account for 49 percent of all parks and recreation staff on average.

FIGURE 3.37, STAFFING LEVELS FOR 2018

COMMUNITY	FULL TIME STAFF	FTE <sup>1</sup>	FTE <sup>1</sup> PER 10,000
BROKEN ARROW, OK	42	76.1	6.3
FORT COLLINS, CO	118	279.9	16.7
PLANO, TX	288	288	10.2
ROUND ROCK, TX	83	105	9.3
LAS CRUCES	114	162	15.8

Source: Park Metrics, City of Las Cruces  
 1. Full time equivalent positions

## OPERATIONAL NEEDS

### REVENUE SOURCES

NRPA records reveal that the City of Las Cruces places a slightly greater reliance on general fund revenues for parks and recreation services than most local and regional parks and recreation agencies nationwide. In spite of a higher than average reliance on general fund revenues for operational expenditures, the City's fee-based revenues (earned/generated revenues) have increased significantly - consistent with corresponding increases in programs offered, events managed, and public participation.

Further adjustments in fee-based revenues should be considered so that the Parks and Recreation Department's operational budget can be balanced in a manner that is more consistent with national averages. Although there is concern that fee increases may reduce recreational program accessibility, stakeholders who participated in the master planning process largely indicated that existing fees were very reasonable. Fee increases can be calibrated so that residents of need are less likely to be left without access to municipal recreational services.

## STAFFING

Although Las Cruces employs a high level of FTE positions for parks and recreation services, staffing levels have not kept pace with addition maintenance and programming demands. In 2012, the Parks Section maintained 680 acres of parks and recreational facilities with 56 staff members. The Parks section now maintains 1,537 acres of parkland and an additional 148 acres of rights-of-way and landscaped areas with 62 staff members.

Staffing for the Parks Section should be taken into consideration with the addition of acreage to the park system. Additional staff might be hired at a defined ratio per acres added to the parks system.

Similar staffing considerations should also be taken into account with the Recreation Section. As with the Parks Section, Recreation Section and Youth Services Section staffing growth has not kept pace with increases in recreational programs offered and public participation rates. Staffing increases to service recreational program and event growth should be tied to recreational fee increases.

FIGURE 3.38, STAFFING LEVELS FTE COMPARISON FOR BENCHMARK COMMUNITIES

COMMUNITY	RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING STAFF (2017-18)			OPERATIONAL AND MAINTENANCE STAFF (2017-18)			
	TOTAL NUMBER OF FTES <sup>1</sup>	PERCENT OF DEPARTMENT FTES <sup>1</sup>	FTES <sup>1</sup> PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	TOTAL NUMBER OF FTES <sup>1</sup>	PERCENT OF DEPARTMENT FTES <sup>1</sup>	FTES <sup>1</sup> PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	FTES <sup>1</sup> PER ACREAGE MAINTAINED
BROKEN ARROW, OK	14.46	19%	0.13	57.1	75%	0.52	20.0
FORT COLLINS, CO	114.76	41%	0.69	71.65	26%	0.43	13.2
PLANO, TX	25.92	9%	0.09	210.24	73%	0.75	20.8
ROUND ROCK, TX	30.45	29%	0.27	60.9	58%	0.54	37.3
LAS CRUCES	62.3	38.3%	0.61	62	38.4%	0.61	24.8

Source: Park Metrics, City of Las Cruces  
 1. Full time equivalent positions

*Increases to athletic programming fees may help balance the departmental budget and reduce reliance on general fund taxes.*



## SECTION 6:

### REGULATORY TOOLS

---

Public funding for parks system development is rarely sufficient to keep pace with the increasing needs of a growing population. Likewise, the availability of public funding alone does not guarantee that parks system growth will occur in a manner that ensures equitable community-wide access to parkland, open space, and recreational amenities. As with water, waste water, and roads, parks should be viewed as an essential public improvement that should be incorporated into a community's land development process. City-initiated efforts to purchase, develop, and maintain new park spaces should be augmented with regulatory tools that enable Las Cruces to require public parks and/or private recreational amenities as part of new development or redevelopment activities.

Regulatory tools can be applied by local government to development activity in both a "passive" and "pro-active" manner. A passive approach refers to a regulation or policy where the governing authority may acquire a public resource or asset through the development process but has limited control in determining the type of asset or resource that is offered. In contrast, a pro-active approach provides clear regulatory guidelines allowing the City to determine the form in which a public resource or asset will be acquired during the land development process.

#### IMPACT FEES

Chapter 33 (Development Impact Fee) of the Las Cruces Land Development Code authorizes the City of Las Cruces to charge an impact fee to new development for parks and recreation facilities. The City's most recent impact fee resolution was approved in 2013 (although an update to the impact fee has been proposed as part of a Study prepared concurrent with this Plan (see **Appendix A**). Las Cruces' 2013 impact fee resolution includes a policy on the optional provision of neighborhood parks as part of new development – allowing the developer to reduce their portion of impact fees paid to the City, and to use the City's pool of collected impact fees to pay themselves back for the cost of neighborhood park improvement. This policy affords the City with little opportunity to proactively guide park size, location, and improvements in a way that meets parks system service standards.

#### LAND DEVELOPMENT CODE

The Las Cruces Land Development Code contains most of the City's regulations that relate to private development and the provision of associated public facilities and infrastructure. Land development regulations may include standards allowing for parkland dedication and improvement, multi-use trail development, open space preservation, and the designation of private common areas and amenities centers.



Metro Verde Splash Pad Park (above) was dedicated to Las Cruces in accordance with the neighborhood parkland policies established by the 2013 parks and recreational facilities impact fee resolution. The park is bisected by overhead power lines that create hazards for park users.

## PARKLAND DEDICATION AND IMPROVEMENT

Parkland dedication and improvement provisions allow a local government to require the dedication of parkland and construction of associated recreational amenities as part of new development. Dedication and improvement requirements must be roughly proportional to the scale of new development, but are written to provide the local government with the discretion to determine appropriate parkland type, size, location, and preferred amenities consistent with adopted plans. Absent these governing provisions, public entities can often be left with undesirable parkland parcels with limited accessibility and utility.

Parkland dedication and improvement provisions allow the governing authority the option of accepting fees-in-lieu of parkland or park improvements. Fees-in-lieu provisions are based on a value per dwelling unit and may affect the way a community calculates impact fees on a case-by-case basis. Parkland dedication and improvement provisions are often added to municipal code as an independent chapter or article with broad applicability to many development types, or simply added to “reservations” of “improvements” sections of a community’s subdivision regulations.

The Las Cruces Land Development Code does not include standardized parkland dedication or improvement requirements. The City’s Downtown Development Code does refer to “civic spaces” such as plazas, greens, and squares, but the Code provides no formal implementation measures.

The City’s 2013 resolution adopting parks and recreation impact fees included standards by which neighborhood parkland may be required as part of new development. The associated minimum standards do not however provide the City with the ability to determine preferred park size, location, and improvements. Current policy also lacks direction on maintenance bonds tied to recreational amenities. Rather, these considerations are left to interpretation on a case-by-case basis – placing the City in a position of having to respond to developer-initiated proposals. Further, absent codified parkland dedication requirements, developers may opt not to construct parkland inhibiting the City’s ability to meet preferred parkland proximity guidelines.

### MULTI-USE TRAIL CORRIDORS

The Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan (2018) recommends a city-wide bikeway network that includes over 100 miles of multi-use trails located within public street rights-of-way and along other off-street corridors. Communities recommending such extensive multi-use trail networks often utilize land development provisions that, at a minimum, require trail easement dedication when new development is proposed in the vicinity of the projected trail corridor. Such provisions may also require actual trail segment construction and/or the construction of walkway and bikeway access between the new development and the multi-use trail corridor.

The Las Cruces Land Development Code does not require the dedication of multi-use trail easements, trail construction, or trail access requirements as part of the land development or subdivision process. Trail corridor reservation or construction as part of the development process is currently limited to case-by-case negotiations - predominantly when a developer is engaged in the planned unit development process.



*Land development regulations may require bicycle and pedestrian connectivity from within new developments to internal or adjacent parkland and multi-use trail corridors.*



## OPEN SPACE

An increasing number of communities are establishing open space lands programs that allow for the reservation of properties deemed by the community to be culturally, historically, or naturally significant. Although public parks may include land area that is programmed as natural space (see pages 42 and 43), land development regulations typically apply distinct definitions to “open space” and “parks,” and include parallel standards for the dedication or reservation of each category of public lands.

The Las Cruces Land Development Code does not contain provisions for open space reservation because the City does not currently manage an open space lands program.

## COMMON AREAS/AMENITY AREAS

Many communities require that new development provide privately owned and maintained common areas and/or amenity centers to supplement public parks, open space, and public gathering spaces. Within land development regulations, private common areas and recreational amenities are typically incorporated as a requirement of multi-family development. Designated public gathering areas and other social spaces are increasingly being required by local governments as part of new office, retail, or other employment centers that exceed varying size thresholds.

The Las Cruces Land Development Code does not require privately owned common areas, recreational facilities, or other social spaces as part of new residential and non-residential development.

*Public gathering space required as part of new non-residential development is often leveraged by the property owner and building tenants as a value-added extension of outdoor eating areas.*



## SECTION 7:

### SUMMARY OF KEY NEEDS AND OPPORTUNITIES

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan's needs assessment highlights an extensive, complex, and vibrant municipal parks and recreation system that services a significant portion of Las Cruces' recreational needs. The assessment process also reveals opportunities to improve parks and recreation service delivery to better serve current public recreation preferences and anticipated future demand.

The following themes are derived from the needs assessment and are arranged according to the Plan's eight (8) goals. Associated Plan objectives and recommended actions are discussed in **Chapter 4, Plan Recommendations**.

#### GOAL

**1 PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.** Provide an increased parkland level of service by adding new park space that is widely distributed throughout the city and by ensuring that the provision and development of new parkland occurs concurrent with new development.

*The City of Las Cruces' 2012 parkland target levels of service should be revised slightly to allow the City to focus on developing preferred parkland types, with a focus on neighborhood and community scale parks. Parkland acquisition efforts should prioritize proximity guidelines over raw acreage to ensure equitable accessibility to parkland. The City should consider the development of an open space lands program, in addition to continued efforts to increase recreational park space. Land development ordinances should be amended to ensure that parkland, park improvements, and multi-use trails are developed in a manner that is consistent with adopted City and regional plans.*

#### GOAL

**2 COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY.** Provide a community-wide system of multi-use trails that support residents' and visitors' fitness, recreation, and transportation needs, while linking community destinations such as parks, open space, schools, and other community activity centers.

*Multi-use trail system development should occur in a manner that not only serves recreational needs, but also improves the system's dual role as an element of the City's multi-modal transportation network. Land development regulations should provide the City with the tools to require trail connectivity as part of the development process. Capital project emphasis should be in improving roadway crossings and wayfinding. A separate recreational trail system should be developed linking the City to surrounding natural features and supporting hiking and mountain biking.*

## GOAL

3

**PARK AMENITIES.** Increase community-wide recreational choice by incorporating new indoor and outdoor facilities into the municipal park system portfolio.

*The City should swiftly implement the capital improvement projects that were included as part of the 2018 general obligation bond approved by Las Cruces voters. Clear target levels of service should be established for core recreational activities and facilities, while targeted enhancements to existing specialized facilities such as skate parks, the shooting range, and archery range/RC airplane field should be evaluated. Feasibility studies should be completed for addition aquatic and indoor recreation facilities while continued annual investments should be made into shade structures, signage, restrooms, and other accessory facilities.*

## GOAL

4

**PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE.** Provide a high level of park land and facility maintenance that places equal emphasis on landscapes, hard-scapes, and structures.

*Using the results of this Plan's conditions assessment, specific funding sources should be established for the ongoing replacement of accessory facilities and recreational equipment. Irrigation system improvements should be mapped and prioritized to reduce water loss through leakage. Satellite shop facilities should be considered to improve the efficiency of maintenance activities while a uniform staffing ratio should be created that is tied to parkland acreage. Uniform policies should be created, in cooperation with the City Art Board, for the donation, installation, maintenance, and removal of public art from City-owned properties.*

## GOAL

5

**PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING.** Increase residents' and visitors' enjoyment of existing and new park spaces through the application of standard park design and programming practices.

*Greater standardization of park facilities and amenities should be incorporated into a central design manual. System-wide standards should include a uniform branding and signage program, and a lighting standards manual that applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimizes impacts on adjacent properties and city-wide viewsheds. A lighting safety assessment should be conducted with the participation of the Police Department to improve parkland security. All conceptual park design plans should include a M.O.R.E. assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Department budget following capital expenditure.*

## GOAL

**6 RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS.** Increase public accessibility to recreational opportunities by offering a diverse suite of programs that cater to varying community interests, ages, and abilities.

*Provide additional recreational programs to service areas of high demand, with an emphasis on youth and adult sports, and senior programming. Enhance program-specific reporting to link future program investments to the City's established cost recovery targets. Tie fee adjustments directly to capital and operational investments that increase access to popular programming through the provision of features such as lighting (to extend field access), and instructors, coaches, and officials (to increase the total number of athletic and non-athletic program sessions offered).*

## GOAL

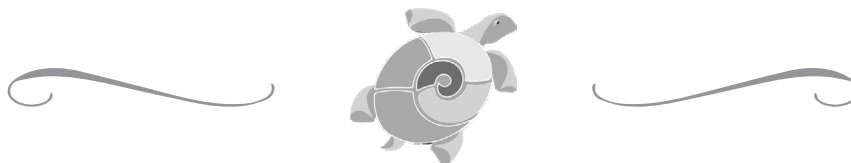
**7 COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS.** Connect residents and visitors to recreational space and programs through a robust and sustained public outreach effort, and by leveraging partnerships with other recreational, educational, and human service providers.

*Work with the Community Outreach Office and other City departments to improve community relations and leverage partnerships to provide additional recreational services or to assist in park facility maintenance or other volunteer opportunities. Increase public polling to assess participant satisfaction with City-sponsored recreational programs and events to assist in determining program adjustments. Develop partnerships with state and federal agencies, and advocacy groups, with the intent of providing facility and programming linkages between municipally owned properties and recreational assets and surrounding open space lands.*

## GOAL

**8 ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT.** Improve the efficiency of park and recreation service delivery by aligning administrative and operational practices with Master Plan goals.

*Seek to achieve CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association. Adjust the organizational structure of the Parks and Recreation Department to support CAPRA accreditation efforts. Make similar adjustments to annual reporting, performance measuring, board coordination, and professional development that improve the efficiency of parks and recreation service delivery. Make significant modifications to fees and charges to improve cost recovery percentages, reduce dependency on the general fund for operational expenditures, and more closely align for national budgeting practices.*





# 4

## CHAPTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*Tortugas Mountain viewed from Paseo de Oñate Park.*

## SECTION 1: PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

---

This Plan includes 97 recommended actions categorized according to the City’s eight (8) parks and recreation system goals. These actions are intended to address the findings presented in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**, to facilitate the growth and enhancement of Las Cruces’ parkland properties, recreational facilities, and recreational programs and events.

The goals, objectives, and actions introduced in **Chapter 4** are not listed according to priority, although some actions have been grouped together due to anticipated overlapping outcomes. A summary table of all actions related to a specific goal is located at the end of each section of the chapter. Prioritization of actions related to each of the eight (8) Plan goals is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

Finally, the recommendations contained in this Plan are not exclusive. They should not be viewed as a limiting factor when considering other future actions or initiatives intended to enhance the Las Cruces parks and recreation system. Changing conditions and unanticipated events may reveal other opportunities for parks and recreation system improvement that have not been revealed as part of the master planning process. Should a future action or initiative advance one (1) of the eight (8) goals contained in this Master Plan in the opinion of Plan administrators and City policy makers then it may be pursued with as much energy as the recommendations herein. In contrast, where activities or initiatives diverge significantly from this Plan, the City should amend the plan document (see Plan Administration in **Chapter 5**, page 217).

The City of Las Cruces will lead the efforts to implement the recommendations contained in this Plan. More specifically, it is presumed that the City’s Parks and Recreation Department will remain the primary Plan administrator while other municipal departments, boards and commissions, and City Council will fulfill vital roles in Master Plan implementation. **Chapter 5** includes more thorough recommendations regarding Plan administration and implementation.

## GOAL 1:

### PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL STATEMENT:** PROVIDE AN INCREASED PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE BY ADDING NEW PARK SPACE THAT IS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE CITY; AND BY ENSURING THAT THE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKLAND OCCURS CONCURRENT WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT.

Municipal parks system accessibility cannot be measured solely through the availability of parkland acreage. “Access” also refers to the proximity of parks to places of residence, the facilities that are available at each location, the scale of each park space, and how parkland is programmed.

Furthermore, community interests will continue to evolve – as will the form of Las Cruces’ built environment. The Las Cruces parks and recreation system must expand and adjust to ensure that parks remain accessible to current and future residents and are programmed to address Las Cruces’ needs.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1.** EXPAND AND MAINTAIN A MUNICIPAL PARKS SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES VARIOUS PARKLAND TYPES TO ADDRESS DIVERSE INTERESTS AND IS WELL-DISTRIBUTED TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL LAS CRUCENS.

Neighborhood and community parks form the collective core of most municipal parks systems. The City of Las Cruces should strive to meet and exceed minimum target levels of service for both park types. In addition, concurrent efforts should be made to diversify the type of park space that is available to residents and provide more direct connectivity between the growing City footprint and surrounding open spaces.

**ACTION 1.1.1. LEVEL OF SERVICE - PARKLAND.** Utilize the acreage and proximity service standards presented in **Figure 4.1, Parkland Target Level of Service (2019-2045)**, as a guide for establishing a minimum city-wide level of service for community and neighborhood parkland.

*Parkland target levels of service (LOS) are advisory and aspirational. The levels of service established in **Figure 4.1** should be viewed as minimum targets. Should targets be exceeded during the planning period, the City should consider new benchmarks. When considering parkland acquisition within service gap areas (**Map 3.3**, page 107), proximity guidelines should be augmented by equity considerations such as: **A)** Proximity to transit routes; **B)** Concentrations of multi-family housing and affordable developments; **C)** Population density; and, **D)** Areas of low household income.*

*The absence of other park types from **Figure 4.1** does not mean that other parks introduced in **Chapter 2**, should not be added to the municipal system in the future. Civic, regional, pocket, and other special park types should still be incorporated into the Las Cruces parks and recreation system on a case-by-case basis.*



FIGURE 4.1, PARKLAND, TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019-2045) <sup>1</sup>

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE			
	RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2019) <sup>1</sup>	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2045) <sup>1</sup>	PROXIMITY GUIDELINE
COMMUNITY	2.0 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	208.3 ACRES	283.13 ACRES	1/4 MILE WALKSHED <sup>2</sup>
NEIGHBORHOOD	1.0 ACRE / 1,000 RESIDENTS	104.1 ACRES	141.52 ACRES	

1. 104,161 residents (est. 2019): Based on 101,706 residents per US Census, American Community Survey population estimates (2017) plus 1.2 percent annual population growth. Assumes 141,565 residents (est. 2045).

2. "Walkshed" refers to an accessible pathway such as a sidewalk or trail extending from the outside edge of a park property.

**ACTION 1.1.2. CIVIC PARKS.** Incorporate civic park space into new mixed-use developments and similar development that is intended to promote a dense, urban, and pedestrian-friendly environment.

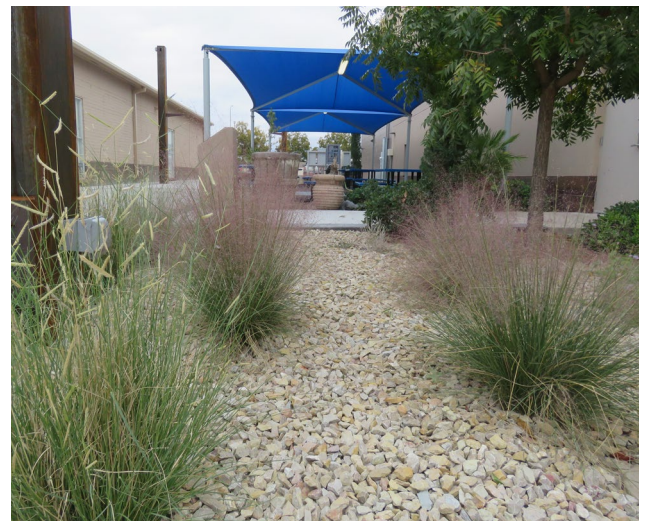
Civic parks are integral to and contribute to the character and function of dense, mixed-use development types. Beyond meeting active recreational needs, provision of civic park space may be required in addition to other parkland level of service standards.

Although introduced in the Downtown Development Code as "civic space," Las Cruces does not have the regulatory tools to require the incorporation of civic parks into new development or redevelopment projects. Amendments should be made to the Downtown Development Code, planned development provisions, and other components of the Las Cruces Land Development Code that promote the development of mixed-use urban spaces. Because civic parks can be provided at varying scales, land development provisions may allow this park type to meet neighborhood park requirements, pocket park, or community park needs on a case-by-case basis.

The City's improved downtown callacitos are individually small but collectively important in weaving civic space into the downtown.

**ACTION 1.1.3. EAST MESA COMMUNITY PARK.** Prepare a design for the East Mesa Community Park incorporating the recreational facilities identified as part of the publicly-approved general obligation bond. Work with the Mesilla Valley MPO and other City departments to include an alignment for an extension of E. Lohman Avenue.

Construction of the East Mesa Community Park will be a key step in implementing the City's minimum community parkland acreage targets. Park development will also improve walkshed-based proximity guidelines (see **Figure 4.1**, above).



**ACTION 1.1.4. COMMUNITY PARKS.** Construct a new community park (in addition to the East Mesa Community Park) in an underserved area.

Although design and construction of the East Mesa Community Park is projected to begin in the relatively near future, the City will need to plan for additional future community park space. New community parks should be located in areas depicted in **Map 3.3** (page 107) to reduce service area gaps.

Unlike neighborhood parks – which may be constructed as part of the land development process - the larger service area of community parks will require the City to collect impact fees for future community park construction. Because a community park can also serve a neighborhood park function, the City may opt to write parkland dedication requirements in such a manner that land acquisition for one or more future community parks may be linked to land dedication and assembly across multiple future developments.

**ACTION 1.1.5. OPEN SPACE LANDS PROGRAM.** Establish and fund a municipal open space program to acquire, manage, and maintain natural areas and open space lands.

The City should conduct a feasibility assessment to determine the cost of initiating and managing an open space lands program. The open space lands program should focus on property with significant ecological or cultural benefit, that preserves viewsheds, and that links developed portions of the City to other public lands. An open space lands program should not be limited to the municipal limits but should also include property in the City's extraterritorial zone.

An open space lands program should be managed by the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department and be treated as a system that is parallel to the current parks and recreation system. Funding may be provided through a voter-approved ¼ cent sales tax increase and will account for property acquisition (including conservation easements), land management, recreational facility development, and general staffing.

**ACTION 1.1.6. EXTRATERRITORIAL ZONE.** Actively plan and coordinate with Doña Ana County for the acquisition of parks and open space within or near the ETZ.

**ACTION 1.1.7. NON-MUNICIPAL PARKLAND.** Work with Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana County, and other entities to determine if some municipal recreational activities can be provided on properties not owned by the City of Las Cruces.

**ACTION 1.1.8. PARKLAND PURCHASE OPTIONS.** Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to acquire parkland, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.

Actions 1.1.6, 1.1.7, and 1.1.8 promote enhanced partnerships with other local entities to extend the reach of recreational services offered by the City of Las Cruces. Any efforts to develop an open space lands program by the City will require coordination with Doña Ana County to reduce potential County zoning conflicts.

Many public schools are located within identified parkland service area gaps. The potential conversion of some public school land into public park space or the modification of current school district policies limiting public access could provide a low-cost alternative to parkland acquisition in some underserved areas.

## BERNALILLO COUNTY OPEN SPACE LANDS PROGRAM

Bernalillo County is one (1) of four (4) communities that currently fund and manage an open space lands program. Originally approved by voters in 1998 through a property tax referendum and bond referendum, funding for the program was renewed by voters in 2000, 2006, and 2014.

To guide the use of mill levy funds for the program, the County is now working with the Trust for Public Land to implement the program based on a "Greenprint" analysis that joins community input with state-of-the art mapping and modeling to establish priorities for future land acquisition. For more information on Bernalillo County's Greenprint initiative go to: <https://www.bernco.gov/community-services/greenprint.aspx>.

## OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO PROVIDE NEW PARKLAND AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR LAS CRUCES' GROWING POPULATION.

The majority of Las Cruces' existing municipal parks system is the result of publicly funded capital improvement projects. While such public investments will be necessary in the future to guarantee further construction of the system, public efforts should be augmented by the land development process. From a community development perspective, parkland and recreation facilities should be viewed as essential public facilities – similar to other public infrastructure networks. To ensure that new parks are developed in a manner that is consistent with the findings and recommendations of this Plan the City must update its regulatory tools.

### **ACTION 1.2.1. ORDINANCES – PARKLAND DEDICATION.** Amend the Las Cruces Development Code to require the dedication of neighborhood park space as part of new development.

*The City's 2013 impact fee policy resolution promoted the dedication of neighborhood parkland as part of new development. The policy is not a requirement of developers and - where used for marketing purposes - is worded in a manner that provides the City with little ability to dictate new park location (for the purpose of proximity and access), suitable land characteristics, and preferred amenities. The policy allows the developer to reimburse themselves for improvements from the impact fees that the City would otherwise collect, the policy decreases the amount of impact fees that can be applied to community park acquisition and development.*

*In contrast, a parkland dedication ordinance can provide the City with the tools to require neighborhood parkland as part of new development and to determine the location, distribution, and amenity requirements of such land. A parkland dedication ordinance should include at least the following provisions:*

- **Parkland.** *The ordinance would require a minimum acreage per dwelling unit to be reserved for public parkland.*
- **Siting.** *Siting provisions would allow the City to determine the ideal location within the development for parkland to be located. Criteria may include: Walkshed proximity to dwelling units within the development; spacing from other public parks; land suitability; street layout; orientation of dwelling units to the park space; and, adjacency to future development where dedicated land can be consolidated into a larger park.*
- **Improvements.** *The ordinance could require the construction of a minimum level of recreational and accessory facilities that address facility targets identified in this Plan. The City may opt to delay park development until a later time and not require up-front improvements. Reasons for delay may be a desire to consolidate land for a larger park space, or the desire to public design process for the land.*
- **Fees-in-Lieu.** *Depending on City objectives, fees could be assessed in lieu of parkland dedication and improvements. The City may opt to charge these fees where the cumulative parkland acreage within an individual development would fall below minimum size requirements for a neighborhood park, or where it determines that the timing of improvements should be delayed. If insufficient acreage in the development exists to construct a neighborhood park, these fees may be applied to a proximate neighborhood or community park.*
- **Maintenance Bonds.** *The ordinance should require the provision of a maintenance bond for any developer-constructed neighborhood parkland.*

*Implementation of a parkland dedication ordinance may require that the City's impact fee policy be adjusted concurrently to remove neighborhood parkland value from the equation on a per-development basis. The formula for a parkland development ordinance's fees-in-lieu however, would be based on land values within each individual development rather than using a city-wide formula.*

**ACTION 1.2.2. POCKET PARK PERFORMANCE CRITERIA.** Allow small pocket parks to be constructed in new developments in lieu of neighborhood parks only in accordance with specific performance criteria.

Although well-designed, programmed, and located pocket parks can be an asset to a municipal parks system, in most cases they should not serve as a substitute to the neighborhood or community parks that are being developed to maintain the City's parkland level of service. Instead, pocket parks should be considered an addition to minimum parkland level of service targets. The size of pocket parks makes it difficult to program the space so that it meets a broad range of recreational interests. In addition, pocket parks are often proposed as part of new development where the subdivision plan has left irregular lot remnants, or where a developer wishes to donate undesirable property to meet minimum parkland dedication requirements.

In conjunction with a municipal parkland dedication ordinance (Action 1.2.1), clear regulatory standards should be established in the Las Cruces Land Development Code that allow the City to determine the conditions under which it would accept pocket parks in lieu of, or in addition to, neighborhood parkland dedication. Example conditions could include:

- The pocket park(s) is constructed in conjunction with a larger neighborhood or community park;
- Enhances Las Cruces' city-wide multi-use trail system by serving as a trailhead park;
- Enhances a prominent cultural, historic, or natural feature;
- Serves as a civic space in conjunction with mixed-use development;
- Is accessible either by being centrally located within the development or is in close proximity to other neighborhood or community parks in the surrounding area;
- The cumulative acreage of all pocket parks exceeds the minimum neighborhood park acreage required for the development;
- The cumulative facilities within all pocket parks exceeds minimum recreational facility requirements as determined by the City.

When reviewing each new development application, land development provisions should provide the City with the authority to determine which combinations of the above pocket park performance criteria may warrant pocket park dedication as part of a development proposal.

**ACTION 1.2.3. ORDINANCES – COMMON AREA.** Amend the Las Cruces Land Development Code to require common areas and recreational amenities as part of new multi-family development, and public gathering space in large retail and commercial developments.

The Plan's gap analysis (Map 3.3, page 107) reveals that even the most robust parkland development initiatives can leave areas that are underserved by public facilities. There also exist some user groups (seniors, children, and persons with physical disabilities) for whom a ¼ mile walkshed measure is insufficient to guarantee convenient access to recreational facilities or outdoor space. To address these deficiencies many communities require the minimum common area and/or recreational amenities as part of new development. A more recent trend has seen a growing number of communities amend their land development regulations to require outdoor social space be incorporated into retail, office, and other non-residential developments that exceed square footage thresholds. Savvy developers have leveraged these new requirements into outdoor spaces that enhance the leasing values of their properties.



Social space incorporated in a commercial shopping plaza. Future tenants can utilize the space for outdoor seating and performances.

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 1)

The two (2) objectives and 11 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.2, Parkland Acquisition & Development, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.2, PARKLAND ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT. PROVIDE AN INCREASED PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE BY ADDING NEW PARK SPACE THAT IS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE CITY; AND BY ENSURING THAT THE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKLAND OCCURS CONCURRENT WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT.	
OBJECTIVE 1.1. EXPAND AND MAINTAIN A MUNICIPAL PARKS SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES VARIOUS PARKLAND TYPES TO ADDRESS DIVERSE INTERESTS AND IS WELL-DISTRIBUTED TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL LAS CRUCENS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 1.1.1. Level of Service - Parkland.</b> Utilize the acreage and proximity service standards presented in <b>Figure 4.1, Parkland, Target level of service (2019-2045)</b> , as a guide for establishing a minimum city-wide level of service for community and neighborhood parkland.	158
<b>Action 1.1.2. Civic Parks.</b> Incorporate civic park space into new mixed-use developments and similar development that is intended to promote a dense, urban, and pedestrian-friendly environment.	159
<b>Action 1.1.3. East Mesa Community Park.</b> Prepare a design for the East Mesa Community Park incorporating the recreational facilities identified as part of the publicly-approved general obligation bond. Work with the Mesilla Valley MPO and other City departments to include an alignment for an extension of E. Lohman Avenue.	159
<b>Action 1.1.4. Community Parks.</b> Construct a new community park (in addition to the East Mesa Community Park) in an underserved area.	160
<b>Action 1.1.5. Open Space Lands Program.</b> Establish and fund a municipal open space program to acquire, manage, and maintain natural areas and open space lands.	160
<b>Action 1.1.6. Extraterritorial Zone.</b> Actively plan and coordinate with Doña Ana County for the acquisition of parks and open space within or near the ETZ.	160
<b>Action 1.1.7. Non-Municipal Parkland.</b> Work with Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana County, and other entities to determine if some municipal recreational services can be provided on properties not owned by the City of Las Cruces.	160
<b>Action 1.1.8. Parkland Purchase Options.</b> Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to acquire parkland, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.	160
OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO PROVIDE NEW PARKLAND AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR LAS CRUCES' GROWING POPULATION.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 1.2.1. Ordinances – Parkland Dedication.</b> Amend the Las Cruces Land Development Code to require the dedication of neighborhood park space as part of new development.	161
<b>Action 1.2.2. Pocket Park Performance Criteria.</b> Allow small pocket parks to be constructed in new developments in lieu of neighborhood parks only in accordance with specific performance criteria.	162
<b>Action 1.2.3. Ordinances – Common Area.</b> Amend the Las Cruces Land Development Code to require common areas and recreational amenities as part of new multi-family development, and public gathering space in large retail and commercial developments.	162

## GOAL 2:

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

**GOAL STATEMENT:** PROVIDE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS THAT SUPPORT RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' FITNESS, RECREATION, AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, WHILE LINKING COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS SUCH AS PARKS, OPEN SPACE, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS.

Las Cruces' emerging multi-use trail network is providing an increasing number of residents with easy access to pathways that serve a dual recreation-transportation purpose. Expansion of this network should be a key objective of the City's efforts to provide access to recreational facilities and to construct a multi-modal transportation network.

Completion of the multi-use trail network will require a concerted effort to provide trail users with safe passage at roadway intersection and other barriers. The multi-use trail network should also be augmented by a parallel system of informal and low-impact recreational trails for hiking and mountain biking that extend beyond the municipal limits and increase the linkages between the City and the area's surrounding natural features.

#### **OBJECTIVE 2.1. CONSTRUCT A COMMUNITY-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK THAT LINKS PLACES OF RESIDENCE TO COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.**

The majority of Las Cruces' existing multi-use trail network is the result of publicly funded capital improvement projects. While such public investments will be necessary in the future to guarantee further construction of the network, public efforts should be augmented by the land development process.



**ACTION 2.1.1. LEVEL OF SERVICE – MULTI-USE TRAILS.** Construct and maintain a city-wide multi-use trail network that is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.

*The City's multi-use trail level of service – including mileage, routing, and proximity - will be consistent with and determined by the City's Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan. The City should however, monitor the pace of future trail construction by using the current level of .26 miles of trail per 1,000 residents as a benchmark, and by annually monitoring the amount of residential areas within a ¼ mile walkshed of multi-use trails (currently 21.6 percent of all residential areas, see page 134). Should either of these measures decrease significantly within the next 10 years, then the City should review and amend proposed network routes.*

**ACTION 2.1.2. MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK.**

Amend land development regulations to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new development where a proposed trail route is depicted in the City's Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.

*The Las Cruces Land Development Code should be amended to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new residential and non-residential development and redevelopment where a trailway corridor is identified on the City's Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan. Where the easement would provide for the extension of an existing multi-use trail segment (or a pending segment where funding has been identified or private construction is proposed) than the City should require that the trail segment be constructed within the easement as part of development approval. The City should develop clear standards regarding multi-use trail construction, dedication, and bonding for maintenance.*

**ACTION 2.1.3. UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE SYSTEM.**

Coordinate with NMDOT, Doña Ana County, Adventure Cycling Association, and other stakeholders to establish the first segment of the United States Bicycle Route System in New Mexico. Ensure that the City's on-street bicycle routes and multi-use trails link to the system.

*Similar to the Rio Grande Trail Commission's efforts to build a cross-state trail, the Adventure Cycling Association has long been a champion of the nation's growing on-street United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS). Both proposed networks bisect Las Cruces and both seek to build participating communities' active tourism markets. Proposed Route #15 of the USBRS National Corridor Plan stretches north from El Paso into Colorado, while Route #90 extends west from Las Cruces, to an existing designated segment in Arizona. Las Cruces should lead local partnership efforts with NMDOT to establish the State's first segments of the USBRS.*

**UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE SYSTEM**

*The United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is a national network of public bicycle travel routes introduced in 1982 by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The concept was reinvigorated in 2003 an AASHTO task force, and the program is now actively promoted by both AASHTO and the Adventure Cycling Association. The program is a means to promote both active transportation, "active tourism" - a growing sector of the leisure and travel industry that combines physical activity with connectivity to a region's cultural, historical, and natural assets. Beyond cycling, the active tourism market includes a variety of interests such as: hiking, mountain biking, paddling, rock climbing, etc.*

*USBRS routes are identified by Adventure Cycling Association a National Corridor Plan and can include routes on roadways and trails. National Corridor Plan routes are not highway specific - but allow local jurisdictions to work with their State's department of transportation to designate specific corridors within an identified area. Over 13,536 miles of United States Bicycle Route have been established across 26 states - but no designated routes currently exist in New Mexico.*

*For more information, visit: <https://www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system>*

*The green USBRS sign (M1-9; MUTCD Manual [2009]) was given interim approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for optional use in place of the original black M1-9 USBRS sign.*



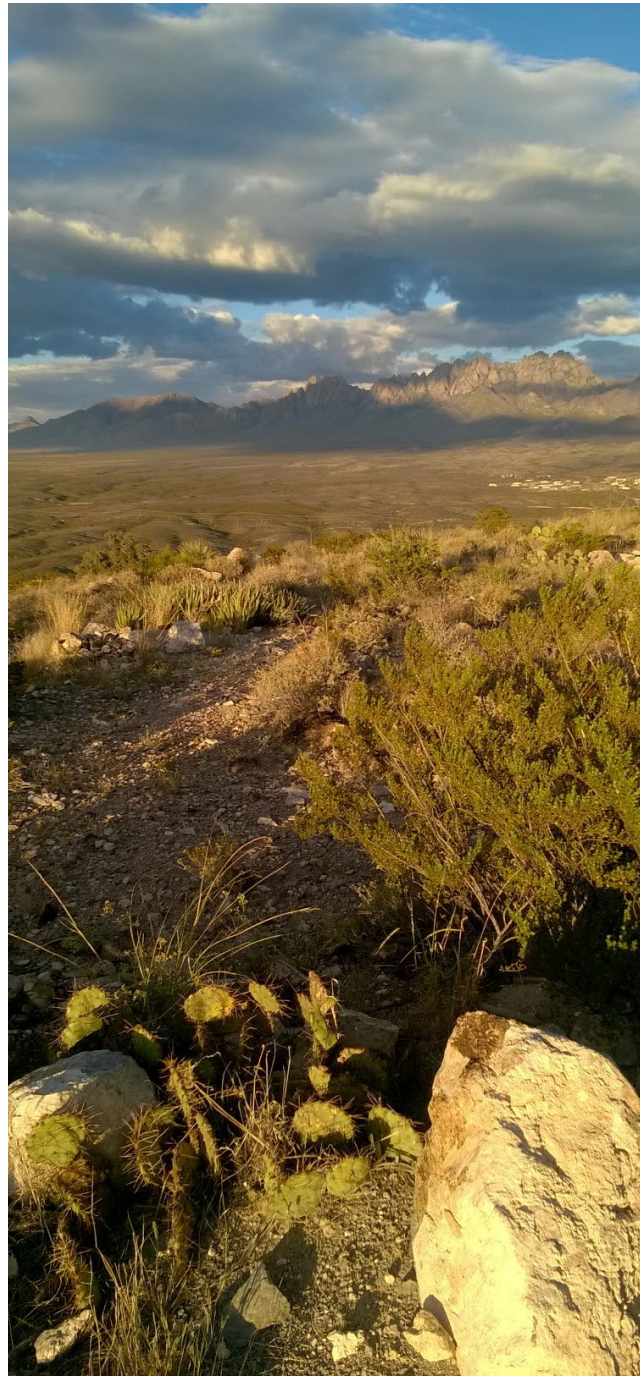
**OBJECTIVE 2.2. DEVELOP A LOW-IMPACT RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM THAT PROMOTES CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO LOW-IMPACT OUTDOOR RECREATION PURSUITS.**

The City’s multi-use trail network is being constructed with a degree of formality that serves a dual recreation-transportation purpose and ensures maximum access to all user groups. The City however, has not previously placed great emphasis on less-formal trail facilities that provide minimally improved hiking and single-track biking trails to the multiple open spaces within and surrounding the City. Where the City’s long-range planning documents propose that most new development and formal multi-use trail segments should end, there remains the potential to provide a system of hiking and mountain biking trails to link the City to surrounding open spaces, to provide more immediate access to outdoor recreation needs, and to develop an adventure tourism market that capitalizes on ongoing regional efforts.

**ACTION 2.2.1. RECREATIONAL TRAILS – RIO GRANDE TRAIL.** Prioritize the construction of segments of the City’s multi-use trail network that will also serve as a principal segment of the Rio Grande Trail.

Las Cruces and Doña Ana County have already constructed a significant segment of multi-use trail along the Rio Grande River Corridor. Both entities should work with the Rio Grande Trail Commission to begin actively marking these completed segments. The City should also support additional efforts by the County or proximate municipalities to expand from the City’s current network.

*The recreational hiking trails that surround and ascend Tortugas Mountain could be expanded to provide walking and biking linkages to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.*





**ACTION 2.2.2. RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM.** Work with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, State Land Office, and advocacy organizations such as the Friends of the Organ Mountains and Southern New Mexico Trails Alliance to develop a series of designated low-impact recreational trails that provide non-motorized connections between the developed areas of Las Cruces to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks N.M.

*Development of a recreational trail system may be implemented in conjunction with a potential open space lands program (see Action 1.1.5., page 160). Both efforts will require significant buy-in from – and coordination with – other advocacy and governmental partners.*

*Unlike a multi-use trail network, the recreational trail system is envisioned as a marked system of hiking and biking paths possessing minimal surface improvements other than those necessary to cross topographic barriers. Alternatively, the City should look for opportunities to create a closed-loop system of mountain biking trails that can be used for daily recreation and intermittent off-road bicycling competition.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2.3. PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO THE CITY'S MULTI-USE TRAIL AND RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS.**

The pathways and bikeways that comprise a municipality's on-street and off-street active transportation and recreational trail systems are easier to design and construct than are the supporting facilities at intersections, drainage channels, and trailheads that provide potential users with safe access. Failure to invest in these important accessory facilities will diminish the utility of even the most expensive multi-use trail networks. The City must emphasize capital investments and regulatory amendments that improve access to Las Cruces' current and proposed multi-use trail and recreational trail systems.

**ACTION 2.3.1. MULTI-USE TRAILS – CONNECTIVITY.** Amend land development regulations to require direct pathway connections between new development and the city-wide multi-use trail network.

*The Las Cruces Land Development Code should be amended to require bikeway and walkway connectivity from new residential and non-residential development to the City's trail networks. Access easements and pathway construction can be required as part of new development where a trail exists, funding has been allocated or construction, or the developer is responsible or construction of the trail segment.*

*Only easements may be required where trail alignment remains conceptual only. The City may consider additional guiding provisions regarding pathway spacing and frequency, alignment, and construction standards.*

**ACTION 2.3.2. MULTI-USE TRAILS – INTERSECTIONS.** Prioritize the improvement of multi-use trail/roadway intersections to create safer network interconnectivity. Fund hand-actuated signalization and other traffic control enhancements for bicyclists and pedestrians at key intersections and at mid-block crossing points.

*The City should prepare concurrent amendments to the Las Cruces Land Development Code Regulations and various construction standards manuals to facilitate traffic control enhancements related to railway crossings at streets and across drainage channels. The incorporation of these features can be required as part of the land development process.*

*The City should also incorporate railway/roadway traffic control improvements into the capital improvements plan on a recurring basis. Improvements would include hand-actuated signal enhancements at existing controlled intersections and hand actuated improvements at uncontrolled intersections. Prioritization should be based on railway traffic counts collected by the City.*



Not everyone will have a multi-use trail at their doorstep - even after construction of the City's recommended multi-use trail network. Access to multi-use trails will require the City of Las Cruces to design and construct trailheads of varying scale that support trail network use by adjacent residents, and by those who may have to drive to access the facility.

**ACTION 2.3.3. TRAILHEADS.** Improve trailhead accommodations. Distinguish between minor trailheads (those with basic accommodations such as seating, signage, and fix-it stations) and major trailheads (which may also include parking, restrooms, and pavilions).

Las Cruces should prepare uniform standards for the design of major and minor trailheads. Major trailhead design assumes that a percentage of trail users accessing at a given point will drive to the trail while minor trailhead design assumes that most users accessing the trail at a given location come from the surrounding neighborhood.

The City should consider an in-house amendment of the Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan to identify where major and minor trailheads should be constructed. Subsequent and corresponding additions to the City's capital improvements plan should be considered.

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 2)

The three (3) objectives and 8 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.3, Community Connectivity, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.3, COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 2: COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY. PROVIDE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS THAT SUPPORT RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' FITNESS, RECREATION, AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, WHILE LINKING COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS SUCH AS PARKS, OPEN SPACE, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS.	
OBJECTIVE 2.1. CONSTRUCT A COMMUNITY-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK THAT LINKS PLACES OF RESIDENCE TO COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 2.1.1. Level of Service – Multi-use Trails.</b> Construct and maintain a city-wide multi-use trail network that is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.	164
<b>Action 2.1.2. Multi-use Trail Network.</b> Amend land development regulations to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new development where a proposed trail route is depicted in the City's Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.	165
<b>Action 2.1.3. United States Bicycle Route System.</b> Coordinate with NMDOT, Doña Ana County, Adventure Cycling Association, and other stakeholders to establish the first segment of the United States Bicycle Route System in New Mexico. Ensure that the City's on-street bicycle routes and multi-use trails link to the system.	165
OBJECTIVE 2.2. DEVELOP A LOW-IMPACT RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM THAT PROMOTES CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO LOW-IMPACT OUTDOOR RECREATION PURSUITS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 2.2.1. Recreational Trails – Rio Grande Trail.</b> Prioritize the construction of segments of the City's multi-use trail network that will also serve as a principal segment of the Rio Grande Trail.	166
<b>Action 2.2.2. Recreational Trail System.</b> Work with the US Bureau of Land Management, State Land Office, and advocacy organizations such as the Friends of the Organ Mountains and Southern New Mexico Trails Alliance to develop a series of designated low-impact recreational trails that provide non-motorized connections between the developed areas of Las Cruces to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks N.M.	167
OBJECTIVE 2.3. PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO THE CITY'S MULTI-USE TRAIL AND RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 2.3.1. Multi-use Trails – Connectivity.</b> Amend land development regulations to require direct pathway connections between new development and the city-wide multi-use trail network.	167
<b>Action 2.3.2. Multi-use Trails – Intersections.</b> Prioritize the improvement of multi-use trail/roadway intersections to create safer network interconnectivity. Fund hand-actuated signalization and other traffic control enhancements for bicyclists and pedestrians at key intersections and at mid-block crossing points.	167
<b>Action 2.3.3. Trailheads.</b> Improve trailhead accommodations. Distinguish between minor trailheads (those with basic accommodations such as seating, signage, and fix-it stations) and major trailheads (which may also include parking, restrooms, and pavilions).	168

## GOAL 3:

### PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

**GOAL STATEMENT:** INCREASE COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATIONAL CHOICE BY INCORPORATING NEW INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES INTO THE MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEM PORTFOLIO.

The City’s recent voter-approved general obligation bond provides a source of new revenues that will be used to significantly enhance the recreational opportunities available to Las Cruces. Bond funds will be used for specific capital projects that increase resident access to athletic fields, sports courts, trails,

aquatic facilities, and more. Regardless, this master planning process reminds the City that there remain a large amount of unfunded recreational and accessory facility needs that should be incorporated into the City’s capital improvements plan in the future.

#### OBJECTIVE 3.1. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF LAS CRUCENS.

The demand-based assessment conducted as part of the Plan (see **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**) identifies multiple recreational activities enjoyed by Las Cruces. Complimentary assessment techniques reveal opportunities to expand the City’s recreational facility offerings beyond that currently provided, and in addition to those for which significant public interest was expressed.

**ACTION 3.1.1. LEVEL OF SERVICE – RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.** Construct, rehabilitate, and/or replace standard system-wide recreational facilities consistent with the level of service recommendations established in the parks and recreation master plan.

*Target levels of service (LOS) for recreational facilities are advisory and aspirational. The levels of service established in **Figure 4.4, Recreational Facilities, Target level of service (LOS) (2019-2045)** should be viewed by the City as minimum targets. Should these targets be exceeded at any time during the planning period, the City should consider the establishment of new benchmarks. The absence of a specific recreational activity or facility from **Figure 4.5** does not mean that it should not be included within the City’s municipal parks system. **Figure 4.5** identifies only a limited number of “core” recreational facility types that are essential components of most municipal parks systems.*

FIGURE 4.4, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) (2019-2045)<sup>1</sup>

FACILITY	CURRENT AVAIL.	CURRENT LOS (PER RESIDENTS)	TARGET LOS (PER RESIDENTS)	LEVEL OF NEED (2019)	2019 SURPLUS OR DEFICIT (BASED ON TARGET)	2045 NEED BASED ON 141,565 POP.
<b>ATHLETIC FIELDS</b>						
BASEBALL AND SOFTBALL FIELDS	15	1 PER 6,944	1 PER 7,000	MODERATE	0	20
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS	11	1 PER 9,469	1 PER 10,000	MODERATE	1	14
SOCCER FIELDS <sup>2</sup>	4	1 PER 26,040	1 PER 20,000	MODERATE	-1	7
<b>SPORTS COURTS</b>						
BASKETBALL COURTS	21	1 PER 4,960	1 PER 5,000	MODERATE	+1	28
PICKLEBALL COURTS <sup>3</sup>	8	1 PER 13,020	1 PER 8,000	HIGH	-5	18
TENNIS COURTS	18	1 PER 5,786	1 PER 6,000	MODERATE	+1	24
VOLLEYBALL COURTS	5	1 PER 20,832	1 PER 18,000	MODERATE	-1	8
<b>AQUATICS</b>						
POOL <sup>4</sup>	4	1 PER 26,040	1 PER 20,000	HIGH	-1	7
SPLASH PAD	2	1 PER 52,080	1 PER 25,000	MODERATE	-2	6
<b>MISCELLANEOUS RECREATIONAL FACILITIES</b>						
DISC GOLF COURSES	1	1 PER 104,161	1 PER 50,000	MODERATE	-1	3
PLAYGROUNDS	95	1 PER 1,096	1 PER 1,250	MODERATE	+12	113
RECREATIONAL CENTERS <sup>5</sup>	74,024 SF <sup>4</sup>	710 SF	900 SF PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	HIGH	- 19,700 SF <sup>5</sup>	127,400 SF <sup>5</sup>
SKATE PARKS <sup>6</sup>	36,000 SF	346 SF	350 SF PER 1,000 RESIDENTS	MODERATE	-465 SF	49,500 SF
<b>MISCELLANEOUS SOCIAL FACILITIES</b>						
DOG PARKS	1	1 PER 104,161	1 PER 40,000	MODERATE	-2	4
PAVILIONS	58	1 PER 1,795	1 PER 1,500	HIGH	-11	94
PICNIC FACILITIES (TABLES, BBQ PITS)	235	2.26 PER 1,000	2 PER 1,000	HIGH	27	283

1. This figure duplicates and conforms to Figure 3.25, Recommended Facility Level of Service (LOS), Las Cruces

2. City-owned fields only.

3. Number of "current available" includes all exclusive and shared court space at Apodaca Park. Estimated need in 2045 reflects courts used exclusively for pickleball.

4. Outdoor only. There are up to five additional competitive swimming pool categories.

5. Square footages include City-owned community centers and recreation centers.

6. Category includes skate parks and skate spots.

**ACTION 3.1.2. GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROJECTS.**

Amend the five-year capital improvements plan to incorporate the parks and recreation projects included in the general obligation bond approved by voters in 2018.

Many of the recreational and accessory amenities that have been identified as “preferred” by Las Cruces participating in this master planning process have already been included in the 2018 voter-approved general obligation bond. Approved projects include improvements to the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex, Unidad Park, trails, athletic fields, sport courts, and the addition of a new community park on the East Mesa. A full list of all general obligation bond projects is included in **Appendix G**.

**ACTION 3.1.3. ACCESS – CITY COMPLEX.** Review access policies to the City Complex including the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to allow for predictable access to both recreational amenities.

The City Complex site includes the former City landfill and some remaining waste collection facilities. The nature of the site requires greater surveillance and access controls than a typical municipal park property. The City should coordinate with interest groups that utilize and contribute to the upkeep of the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to ensure that access to these special facilities is not unnecessarily inhibited.

**ACTION 3.1.4. AQUATICS – SPLASH PADS.** Replace the Apodaca Pool with a splash pad facility.

**ACTION 3.1.5. AQUATICS – SWIMMING POOLS.** Construct a new swimming pool on park property located east of Interstate 25.

The target levels of service for recreational facilities (**Figure 4.4**, page 171) include recommendations on the minimum number of splash pads and swimming pools that should be provided for residents of Las Cruces. (Target levels of service for swimming pools applies to recreational pools – not competition pools as proposed for the Las Cruces Natatorium at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.) In seeking to meet the Plan’s target levels of service, the City should prioritize conversion of the swimming pool at Apodaca Park to a splash pad, and the construction of a new community pool in City Council District Numbers 5 or 6. In considering the location of a new swimming pool, the City should consider the proximity map for aquatics presented in this Plan (**Map 3.7**, page 131).

**ACTION 3.1.6. INCLUSIVE PLAY AREAS.** Incorporate inclusive playground facilities into various regional, community, and neighborhood parks to provide a greater distribution of facilities to serve individuals with physical disabilities.

**ACTION 3.1.7. ATHLETIC FIELDS – MIRACLE LEAGUE FIELD.** Construct a baseball field consistent with Miracle League standards to enable the establishment of a local baseball league for children with disabilities.

Recreational facility accessibility should include efforts to diversify the type of facilities available for persons with disabilities. In addition to the City’s inclusive playscape within R.L. Young Park, similar facilities should be distributed throughout other areas of the City. Inclusivity efforts should also incorporate facilities for organized athletics. The City should consult with local service organizations to establish potential demand for the construction of a Miracle League Field and plan for design and construction subject to confirmed need and interest.

**ACTION 3.1.8. CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENTS.** Incorporate completed conceptual park design projects into the capital budget.

**ACTION 3.1.9. APODACA PARK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PLAN.** Prepare a conceptual master plan for an expanded Apodaca Park.

*The Parks and Recreation Department has led multiple conceptual design workshops for existing and proposed neighborhood parks. As these plans are finalized and a M.O.R.E. assessment and cost estimate (page 186) is completed for each, phased improvements should be added to the City's capital improvements plan.*

*In conjunction with the property owner of the former Las Cruces Country Club, a conceptual design plan should be prepared for Apodaca Park that aligns with the recommendations of the Apodaca Blueprint. Initiate the conceptual site plan following further determination on the arrangement of additional land area that may be dedicated to the park based on potential site plans, plats, or zoning proposals approved by the City, and potential public/private partnerships.*

**ACTION 3.1.10. INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES.** Conduct a feasibility study for the addition of indoor recreation space with an emphasis on gymnasium and multi-purpose meeting room space.

*Master planning participants consistently emphasized the need for more indoor recreation opportunities. This desire is based both on local climate, and on the perception that a greater number of meeting rooms, fitness rooms, and gymnasium space would provide more recreational programming options than currently offered. Any feasibility study related to increases in indoor recreation space square footage should consider and compare estimated costs related to the addition of one or more new recreation centers and the renovation/expansion of existing community and recreation centers.*

*BMX pump tracks mix hardscape and landscape features to provide durability and a variety of options for approaches to jumps, banking, ramps, and balancing.*

**ACTION 3.1.11. PUMP TRACK.** Construct a BMX pump track in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex to provide trick riders with a similar level of service as skaters a BMX track riders.

*Building off of the popularity of the Las Cruces Skate Park and the BMX track, the City should construct a BMX pump track to augment its extreme sports offerings. Pump tracks offer opportunities for trick riding and – as a parallel facility to skate parks – decrease the conflicts that can occur between skaters and bike riders when both compete for space at the skate park. Although municipalities do not construct pump tracks as frequently as skate parks, an increasing number are investing in these relatively affordable facilities. The presence of the City's BMX track suggests that there exists a built-in user group for a potential pump track.*



**ACTION 3.1.12. SHADE STRUCTURES.** Invest in shade structures in conjunction with playscapes and adjacent seating areas. Prioritize the placement or replacement of shade structures in locations as identified in the parks conditions assessment.

*Shade structure selection should not only consider cost and durability, but also designs that can minimize glare from hard sun angles in the early morning and late afternoon hours. Accordingly, coordination within the Parks and Recreation Department should also consider the grouping of shade structures with trees and other vegetation to create a shade “oasis” where natural and man made elements provide a concentration of space obscured from direct sunlight.*

**ACTION 3.1.13. SHOOTING SPORTS.** Expand the number of bays at the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range to support additional skeet and trap shooting.

*The City’s shooting range is an asset that is unique to many municipal parks and recreation systems. There is sufficient space to further develop the shooting range facilities in manner that would make it more attractive to larger regional competitions. A feasibility study and conceptual development plan should be prepared to determine the costs associated with facility improvement and expansion for the purposes of economic development.*

**ACTION 3.1.14. SKATE PARK – RENOVATIONS.**

Redesign and renovate the skate park at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.

**ACTION 3.1.15. SKATE PARK - FACILITY ADDITIONS.** Increase skate park accessibility by incorporating “skate spot” features into selected parks that are distributed throughout the City.

*Las Cruces’ centralized skate park is exhibiting signs of wear and a need for basic maintenance. The current layout of the facility however, includes large areas where additional features could be incorporated to improve the user experience. Likewise, accessory spaces around the skatepark may be enhanced to provide a greater degree of comfort for spectators and skaters who are resting during their visits. The City should consult with an experienced skatepark designer to prepare a design for a complete skate retrofit.*

*Skatepark design services may also be retained for a complementary series of skate spots to be distributed among a series of existing parks at various locations in the City. Updates to the Las Cruces Skate Park and the addition of complimentary skate spots around the City should collectively enable the City to meet and exceed the minimum level of service target for skateparks while improving accessibility.*

**ACTION 3.1.16. TEEN FACILITY.** Add indoor recreation facilities designed to meet the needs and interests of teenagers and incorporating amenities that allow for after-school socialization and study. Construct as a stand-alone facility or as a portion of a renovated or expanded community or recreation center.

*Teen facility feasibility and cost may be incorporated into the overall study proposed for indoor recreation space (Action 3.1.10, page 173). The feasibility and design process for a teen facility must incorporate significant outreach efforts at the City’s high schools and middle schools, and among various youth organizations. The City should utilize the Youth Board as a method of outreach, and as an integral advisory body throughout the feasibility and design process. Location of a potential teen facility should consider locations within the current municipal parks system where teens may be inclined to congregate.*



## SKATE SPORTS

Skate sports including skate boarding, in-line skating, and scooters have grown significantly as an active alternative to team-based sports and traditional athletics. Skate parks have become core elements of many municipal parks systems, and a centralized facility of substantial size is not uncommon in cities of similar size to Las Cruces.

Although centralized skate park facilities are a logical way for cities to meet minimum level of service recommendations (square footage and # of facilities) more can be done to increase skate park accessibility. A high percentage of skaters are school-aged children – many without the ability to drive to a single centralized skate park. Skate park accessibility can be increased dramatically by distributing additional skate park square footage across a dispersed system of “skate spots.” Skate spots are mini-skate parks with limited features that range between 3,000 and 6,000 square feet and can be installed within neighborhood-scale parkland. Skate spots should be viewed as accessory to full-sized skate parks and should not limit a municipal commitment to skate park construction.



The 20,000 SF municipal skatepark in Plano, Texas (above) includes street sections, bowls and shaded areas for spectators. The 4,500 skate spot in Schertz, Texas, includes basic street features and grinding rails can be expanded over time as demand and funding allows. Source: SPA Skateparks.

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 3)

The one (1) objective and 16 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.5, Park Facilities and Amenities, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.5, PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 3: PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES. INCREASE COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATIONAL CHOICE BY INCORPORATING NEW INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES INTO THE MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEM PORTFOLIO.	
OBJECTIVE 3.1. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF LAS CRUCENS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 3.1.1. Level of Service – Recreational Facilities.</b> Construct, rehabilitate, and/or replace standard system-wide recreational facilities consistent with the level of service recommendations established in the parks and recreation master plan.	170
<b>Action 3.1.2. General Obligation Bond Projects.</b> Amend the five-year capital improvements plan to incorporate the parks and recreation projects included in the general obligation bond approved by voters in 2018.	172
<b>Action 3.1.3. Access – City Complex.</b> Review access policies to the City Complex including the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to allow for predictable access to both recreational amenities.	172
<b>Action 3.1.4. Aquatics – Splash Pads.</b> Replace the Apodaca Pool with a splash pad facility.	172
<b>Action 3.1.5. Aquatics – Swimming Pools.</b> Construct a new swimming pool on park property located east of Interstate 25.	172
<b>Action 3.1.6. Inclusive Play Areas.</b> Incorporate inclusive playground facilities into various regional, community, and neighborhood parks to provide a greater distribution of facilities to serve individuals with physical disabilities.	172
<b>Action 3.1.7. Athletic Fields – Miracle League Field.</b> Construct a baseball field consistent with Miracle League standards to enable the establishment of a local baseball league for children with disabilities.	172
<b>Action 3.1.8. Conceptual Park Design and Improvements.</b> Incorporate completed conceptual park design projects into the capital budget.	173
<b>Action 3.1.9. Apodaca Park Conceptual Design Plan.</b> Prepare a conceptual master plan for an expanded Apodaca Park.	173
<b>Action 3.1.10. Indoor Recreation Facilities.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for the addition of indoor recreation space with an emphasis on gymnasium and multi-purpose meeting room space.	173
<b>Action 3.1.11. Pump Track.</b> Construct a BMX pump track in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex to provide trick riders with a similar level of service as skaters a BMX track riders.	173
<b>Action 3.1.12. Shade Structures.</b> Invest in shade structures in conjunction with playscapes and adjacent seating areas. Prioritize the placement or replacement of shade structures in locations as identified in the parks conditions assessment.	174
<b>Action 3.1.13. Shooting Sports.</b> Expand the number of bays at the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range to support additional skeet and trap shooting.	174
<b>Action 3.1.14. Skate Park – Renovations.</b> Redesign and renovate the skate park at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.	174
<b>Action 3.1.15. Skate Park - Facility Additions.</b> Increase skate park accessibility by incorporating “skate spot” features into selected parks that are distributed throughout the City.	174
<b>Action 3.1.16. Teen Facility.</b> Add indoor recreation facilities designed to meet the needs and interests of teenagers and incorporating amenities that allow for after-school socialization and study. Construct as a stand-alone facility or as a portion of a renovated or expanded community or recreation center.	174

# GOAL 4:

## PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE

**GOAL STATEMENT:** PROVIDE A HIGH LEVEL OF PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE THAT PLACES EQUAL EMPHASIS ON LANDSCAPES, HARDSCAPES, AND STRUCTURES.

The Las Cruces parks and recreation system performs well when measured according to the 12 conditions assessment categories that measure landscapes, hardscapes, and structures on all municipal parkland. Nonetheless, there can always be improvement in the quality of park spaces

maintained for the public. This Plan’s conditions assessment assigned higher scores to the quality of the City’s grounds than it did hardscapes, structures, and other accessory elements (i.e. signs, drinking fountains, park benches, etc.)

### OBJECTIVE 4.1. SCHEDULE SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS THAT REDUCE AND ELIMINATE PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE DEFICIENCIES.

This Plan reveals a few system-wide features for which the Parks and Recreation Department should place particular emphasis on improving. These system-wide recommendations do not negate the need for park-specific maintenance projects.

**ACTION 4.1.1. GENERAL PARK ENHANCEMENTS.** Utilize the park-by-park results of the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment to prioritize annual updates to recreational and accessory amenities within low-scoring parks.

**ACTION 4.1.2. CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT.** Prepare a bi-annual update to the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment and prepare a supporting record of accomplishments report.

*This Plan includes a conditions assessment for all 94 municipal park properties. The results of this assessment should be used by the Parks and Recreation Department as the basis for future maintenance projects. A bi-annual update of the conditions assessment will ensure that future project prioritization remains consistent with changing conditions, and that progress can be tracked.*

**ACTION 4.1.3. ADA ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS.** Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. Assess planned and existing parks and trails for compliance with ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

*This ongoing requirement should be accounted for during all conceptual park design processes, final design, and during compilation of a parks system design standards manual (Action 5.1.3, page 184).*



The Entrada del Sol is one of more than 52 public art installations that is currently located on City property and managed by the City of Las Cruces.

**ACTION 4.1.4. IRRIGATION SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS.**

Incorporate standard specifications for irrigation systems into a parks system design standards manual.

**ACTION 4.1.5. IRRIGATION SYSTEM UPGRADES.**

Commission a system-wide inspection of irrigation systems in City park properties and other municipal property.

*The City’s finite water resources, and overall commitment to sustainability, necessitate that it prioritize water system distribution projects to mitigate leakage. A system-wide inspection should inventory irrigation heads via GPS to keep track of maintenance for head replacement. The results of a system-wide irrigation infrastructure inspection should be incorporated into this Plan’s conditions assessment and that funding of system upgrades be prioritized consistent with standard specifications.*

**ACTION 4.1.6. PUBLIC ART - DONATION AND INSTALLATION.**

Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to prepare a uniform policy for the donation and installation of art on public properties. The policy should link art installation to identified CIP projects to ensure maximum site integration.

**ACTION 4.1.7. PUBLIC ART – COLLECTION ASSESSMENT AND MAINTENANCE.**

Conduct a collection assessment and prepare a corresponding and comprehensive maintenance plan to evaluate the condition and maintenance needs of the City’s existing public art collection. Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to establish a long-term maintenance and collection management policy.

*The City of Las Cruces actively supports the acquisition and installation of public art on City-owned and maintained property. The City Art Board was established in 2013, followed incrementally by a public art funding policy, and a strategic plan. The City initiated a public art master plan in Spring 2019.*

*City parks, public street rights-of-way, community facilities, and other miscellaneous City-owned properties are home to an ever-increasing inventory of public art installations. As the public art inventory grows, and existing installations age, it will be necessary for the City to conduct a recurring collection assessment, and to draft and implement clear policies related to donation, installation, maintenance, and collection management (i.e., “deaccession” – the removal of artwork from the inventory).*

**ACTION 4.1.8. TRAFFIC CONTROL.** Add bollards at strategic park locations (such as Apodaca Park) to prevent park visitors from driving motor vehicles on locations other than designated driveways and parking areas.

*Motor vehicle encroachment is a significant contributor to the deterioration of public grounds. Although bollards may provide for an immediate low-cost solution in providing barricades between motor vehicle parking areas and public parkland, a future design standards manual (Action 5.1.3., page 184) should incorporate alternative designs for barriers that incorporate a variety of options or hard structures and vegetation.*

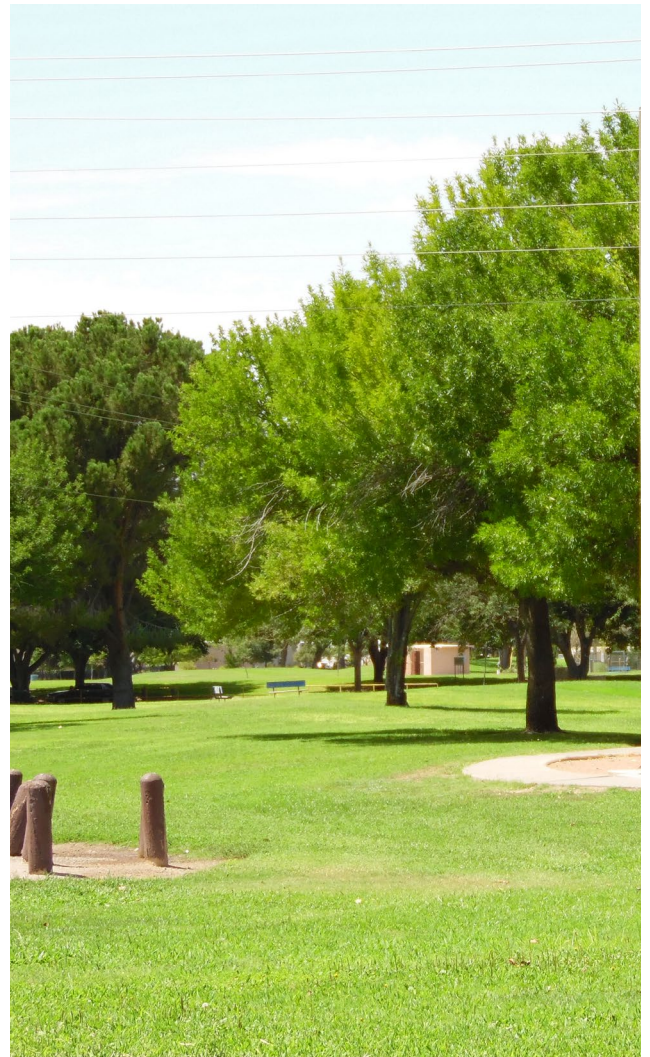
**ACTION 4.1.9. URBAN FORESTRY.** Work with the Community Development and Public Works Department to create standard street cross-sections that incorporate street trees. Update design standards in the Las Cruces Land Development Code related to the installation and management of trees planted in public street rights-of-way and on other public properties.

*Street trees are a key element to provide “active roadsides” along public streets that invite public activity. Street trees benefit pedestrians within parkways by providing necessary shade, and by also serving as a physical barrier between the roadside space and adjacent motor vehicles. Street cross-sections that incorporate trees as a roadside feature are an important component of creating urban mixed-use environments.*

*Great care has been taken by the City to maintain sufficient tree canopy in many City Parks (Valley View Park pictured). Such initiatives should also be promoted in roadside areas of street rights-of-way as part of the City's ongoing initiatives to promote active transportation and a healthy community.*

**ACTION 4.1.10. VOLUNTEER PROJECTS.** Identify a series of facility maintenance or upgrade projects that are of a complexity and scale that special interest of volunteer groups can undertake with minimal Parks Section oversight.

*The materials that would support potential volunteer projects do not necessarily need to be funded by the City. A list of volunteer projects could be compiled at the initiative of the City (subject to PRAB oversight), and may include estimated material costs. Such projects – although essential - should be of a lower priority to the City and represent improvements for which imminent public funding is not expected.*



## OBJECTIVE 4.2. CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING METHODS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO AUGMENT ONGOING MAINTENANCE INITIATIVES.

**ACTION 4.2.1. FEE STRUCTURE - ATHLETICS.** Adjust athletic programming fees to cover a higher percentage of the estimated long-term maintenance costs of publicly-approved major capital investments.

*The City of Las Cruces generates a lower percentage of annual earned or generated revenues to pay for operational expenditures than the national average and many of the comparable communities assessed as part of this master planning effort. The City attempts to keep fee rates low to ensure that recreational programs remain accessible to the broadest possible cross-section of residents. The City however must consider ways to recoup some of the long-term maintenance costs associated with voter-approved projects that will upgrade athletic fields and sport courts.*

*Athletic programming fees may be adjusted for those programs that will directly benefit from the pending GO-bond funded facility upgrades. The Parks and Recreation Department should compare the cost of select improvements with the estimated life of the facility and factor these inputs into its recreational programming cost recovery targets. Athletic programming fee adjustments will not account for all estimated long-term maintenance costs but may be assessed through a combination of increases to registration fees and field or court rentals.*

**ACTION 4.2.2. FUNDING – ACCESSORY FACILITY REPLACEMENT.** Provide a direct annual funding source that will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to quickly replace non-recreational equipment such as garbage cans, benches, shade structures, signage, and more.

**ACTION 4.2.3. FUNDING - EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT.** Create an equipment replacement fund to periodically replace treadmills, weight machines, aquatic equipment, outdoor athletic equipment, and more on an as-needed basis.

*The Parks and Recreation Department should provide an estimated cost for minimum annual facility replacement targets and restructure annual budget proposals to include replacement fund line items due to depreciation.*

**ACTION 4.2.4. SATELLITE SHOP FACILITIES.** Identify suitable locations in the northeastern part of the city to construct satellite shop facilities as a supplement to the central maintenance yard.

*Satellite shop facilities will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to position some maintenance equipment closer to parkland and public grounds on the eastern side of the city. The satellite shop can be of limited scale, and may be incorporated into an existing City-owned property.*

**ACTION 4.2.5. SPECIAL EVENTS.** Measure staff hours and general City expenditures related to preparation, management, and post-event activities to determine full costs related to event support.

*Most City-sponsored special events do not require entrance fees for the public to participate. This informal policy is in place to encourage public participation regardless of income group. As a result, the City has not established a minimum cost recovery goal for special events. Although the City has consciously chosen not to recoup fees for sponsoring community events, an unintended consequence of potentially expanding events calendars is that City staff can be increasingly removed from their typical daily responsibilities. A cost-assessment of the City's annual special events should consider participating staff from all City departments, and should be part of the recommended parks and recreation annual report (Action 8.2.1, page 199).*



*The Las Cruces International Mariachi Conference brings thousands of performers and spectators to the City. Coordinating the use of City facilities requires the support of various City departments, and countless volunteers.*

**ACTION 4.2.6. STAFFING RATIOS.** Adopt a ratio-based system whereby park maintenance staff is added at a uniform rate concurrent with parkland additions to ensure a proper level of maintenance.

*Between 2012 and 2017, the parkland acreage per Parks Section staff member that had to be maintained increased from 12.1 acres/employee to 24.7 acres/employee. While it is true that only a small percentage of this acreage is considered “active use” (e.g. requiring significant maintenance), the number of active use acres maintained by Parks Section employee still almost doubled between 2012 and 2017 (Active use acres: 2012: 4.2 acres/employee; 2017: 7.7 acres/employee). These figures do not count the addition of street rights-of-way and alleys to the inventory of property that must be maintained by the Parks Section. Future increases to the City’s parkland inventory should not continue to result in dramatic increases to the acres per employee ratios presented in this Plan.*

**ACTION 4.2.7. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION.**

Improve field staff’s access to handheld GPS and web-based equipment to improve field maintenance and inventory activities.

*The City’s ongoing efforts to improve record-keeping have led to the purchase of software and hardware that more efficiently tracks programming, budgeting, and mapping. Many of these resources have been limited to technology that is utilized by office personnel. Inventory and mapping capability can be greatly enhanced by providing field maintenance staff with enhanced handheld GPS and web-based equipment that can be used for inventory projects and maintenance scheduling and activities.*

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 4)

The two (2) objectives and 17 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.6, Parkland and Facility Maintenance, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.6, PARKLAND & FACILITY MAINTENANCE, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 4: PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE. PROVIDE A HIGH LEVEL OF PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE THAT PLACES EQUAL EMPHASIS ON LANDSCAPES, HARDSCAPES, AND STRUCTURES.	
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.1. SCHEDULE SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS THAT REDUCE AND ELIMINATE PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE DEFICIENCIES.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 4.1.1. General Park Enhancements.</b> Utilize the park-by-park results of the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment to prioritize annual updates to recreational and accessory amenities within low-scoring parks.	177
<b>Action 4.1.2. Conditions Assessment.</b> Prepare a bi-annual update to the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment and prepare a supporting record of accomplishments report.	177
<b>Action 4.1.3. ADA Accessibility Standards.</b> Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. Assess planned and existing parks and trails for compliance with ADA Standards for Accessible Design.	177
<b>Action 4.1.4. Irrigation System Specifications.</b> Incorporate standard specifications for irrigation systems into a parks system design standards manual.	178
<b>Action 4.1.5. Irrigation System Upgrades.</b> Commission a system-wide inspection of irrigation systems in City park properties and other municipal property.	178
<b>Action 4.1.6. Public Art - Donation and Installation.</b> Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to prepare a uniform policy for the donation and installation of art on public properties. The policy should link art installation to identified CIP projects to ensure maximum site integration.	178
<b>Action 4.1.7. Public Art – Collection Assessment and Maintenance.</b> Conduct a collection assessment and prepare a corresponding and comprehensive maintenance plan to evaluate the condition and maintenance needs of the City’s existing public art collection. Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to establish a long-term maintenance and collection management policy.	178
<b>Action 4.1.8. Traffic Control.</b> Add bollards at strategic park locations (such as Apodaca Park) to prevent park visitors from driving motor vehicles on locations other than designated driveways and parking areas.	179
<b>Action 4.1.9. Urban Forestry.</b> Work with the Community Development and Public Works Department to create standard street cross-sections that incorporate street trees. Update design standards in the Las Cruces Land Development Code related to the installation and management of trees planted in public street rights-of-way and on other public properties.	179
<b>Action 4.1.10. Volunteer Projects.</b> Identify a series of facility maintenance or upgrade projects that are of a complexity and scale that special interest of volunteer groups can undertake with minimal Parks Section oversight.	179
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.2. CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING METHODS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO AUGMENT ONGOING MAINTENANCE INITIATIVES.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 4.2.1. Fee Structure - Athletics.</b> Adjust athletic programming fees to cover a higher percentage of the estimated long-term maintenance costs of publicly-approved major capital investments.	180
<b>Action 4.2.2. Funding – Accessory Facility Replacement.</b> Provide a direct annual funding source that will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to quickly replace non-recreational equipment such as garbage cans, benches, shade structures, signage, and more.	180
<b>Action 4.2.3. Funding - Equipment Replacement.</b> Create an equipment replacement fund to periodically replace treadmills, weight machines, aquatic equipment, outdoor athletic equipment, and more on an as-needed basis.	180
<b>Action 4.2.4. Satellite Shop Facilities.</b> Identify suitable locations in the northeastern part of the city to construct satellite shop facilities as a supplement to the central maintenance yard.	180
<b>Action 4.2.5. Special Events.</b> Measure staff hours and general City expenditures related to preparation, management, and post-event activities to determine full costs related to event support.	180
<b>Action 4.2.6. Staffing Ratios.</b> Adopt a ratio-based system whereby park maintenance staff is added at a uniform rate concurrent with parkland additions to ensure a proper level of maintenance.	181
<b>Action 4.2.7. Technology Integration.</b> Improve field staff’s access to handheld GPS and web-based equipment to improve field maintenance and inventory activities.	181



## GOAL 5:

### PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

**GOAL STATEMENT:** INCREASE RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' ENJOYMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW PARK SPACES THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STANDARD PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING PRACTICES.

Perceptions of parks system quality extend beyond the City's ability to expediently fix deteriorating equipment, or maintain lawns, tree canopy, and other vegetation. Pride of ownership also requires that municipal parks are presented in a uniform and recognizable manner.

The adoption of consistent design practices to be applied throughout the Las Cruces parks and recreation system can increase the efficiency by which the City maintains its parks, recreation, and open space assets; and, promotes public confidence in overall system quality.

**OBJECTIVE 5.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE FEATURES AND FACILITIES.**

Consistent with the objectives and actions recommended in conjunction with Goal #4, this Plan's conditions assessment reveals opportunities to improve parkland and facility condition through standardized design practices.

#### **ACTION 5.1.1. BRANDING AND SIGNAGE PROGRAM.**

Prepare a system-wide branding plan and design manual. Develop consistent standards for identification, informational, regulatory, and way-finding signage, and banners.

*The purpose of the branding and signage program is to establish a system-wide community "brand" for the Las Cruces parks system, an action which contributes to the City's overall sense of place for residents and visitors. The primary objectives would be to greet visitors with consistent, attractive signage design which makes a good first impression; provides information about the park, what to do and where to go, and who to call; and reinforces the community identity. The intent is not to make all aspects of every park look the same; but to clearly identify that you are in the Las Cruces park system. This branding and signage program could be developed as a standalone design manual, or a section of an overall parks system design standards manual (see Action 5.1.3).*

**ACTION 5.1.2. CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN.** Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.

*Preparing conceptual park designs prior to development or redevelopment is a good mechanism to ensure the City is being forward-thinking, effective and efficient with the City's limited resources. Conceptual master plans also provide clarity and justification when pursuing various grant opportunities. A good conceptual master plan should include the following components:*

- Review of existing studies and reports;
- Detailed inventory and analysis of existing conditions;
- Design and development workshop or public engagement charrette process;
- Conceptual or schematic site plan preparation focused on the program and location of proposed uses, facilities, and amenities;
- Maintenance, Operations, Revenue, and Expenses (MORE) assessment (See Action 5.1.8);
- Opinion of probable construction costs; and,
- Phasing plan and next steps.

**ACTION 5.1.3. DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL.**

Prepare a parks system design standards manual to identify the intended character of preferred amenities and structures. Existing facilities may be replaced according to the recommendations of the standards manual beginning with non-permanent fixtures.

*The intent of the parks system design standards manual would be to provide consistent design and construction guidelines across all the Las Cruces' park facilities. It should include a library of options which could be applied in response to individual park conditions. While it will not cover every facet of design or construction for a park, it will provide for a consistent look and feel across all parks and establish a minimum level of quality. It should also help to improve efficiency for maintenance and operations. The guidelines should indicate that new and improved park facilities and amenities be:*

- *Designed and constructed of durable and long-lasting materials;*
- *Designed to maximize shade opportunities;*
- *Designed and constructed using water- and energy-efficient fixtures;*
- *Designed and constructed with an emphasis on low maintenance requirements;*
- *Designed for flexibility of use; and*
- *Designed with a cohesive system of styles and materials to create a "brand" within all City parks (see Action 5.1.1).*

**ACTION 5.1.4. PARK, FACILITY, AND PROGRAM PLANNING.**

Involve residents and stakeholders in conceptual site planning and programming for specific park properties and recreational facilities, and in recreational program development or modification, to facilitate project understanding and garner public support.

*For new development or redevelopment, public involvement could be accomplished through a targeted neighborhood design charrette, which is intended to gather resident input on unique features, types of amenities, and overall theme. Ideas may include such things that are normally not associated with standard park design (e.g., incorporation of special events, arts and culture, heritage, eco-tourism, sustainability, etc.). For input on recreational program development or modification, it may be more appropriate to gather stakeholder input through targeted meetings, community surveys or town halls. Overall, these types of stakeholder input processes develop longer-term support and community buy-in. They are also great opportunities to identify community members who wish to participate in park "build" or "clean up" days, to establish park-specific "Friends Of" groups, and generally just to increase a sense of community ownership over individual parks.*

**ACTION 5.1.5. LIGHTING - SAFETY ASSESSMENT.**

Conduct a park-by-park safety assessment with the Police Department to identify locations where security lighting upgrades are most necessary consistent with the City's outdoor lighting ordinance (including compliance with "dark sky" guidelines), and appropriate City design standards manuals.

*While certain parks and trails are closed dusk to dawn, others allow use long after dark. Particularly in the wintertime, it may be dark as early as 5:00 p.m. This oftentimes means that certain parks and park amenities will be used after dark. To improve the safety (and perception of safety) for all park users, the City should evaluate and fund improvements to establish adequate lighting in all parking lots, trails, restrooms, and other areas where users will be after dark. Proposed improvements could be combined into a single capital improvement project addressing lighting issues in all parks.*

**ACTION 5.1.6. LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY.** Incorporate lighting standards into a parks system design manual that promotes an appropriate amount of lighting for the use that is being illuminated and applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimize the impact on adjacent properties and city-wide viewsheds.

*In general, the City should develop park and trail lighting standards which accomplishes three purposes: **A)** Provides a safe lighting system for the welfare of users; **B)** Mitigates the environmental impact of sport field lighting on the community (see sidebar); and, **C)** Ensures that the established standards continue to be met over the life-cycle of the lighting fixture. Accordingly, the standards should follow the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) 2011 joint IDA-IES Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) which was written to help municipalities in developing their outdoor lighting regulations. The proposed regulations should rely on the Backlight, Uplight, and Glare (BUG) rating system established by IESNA as a means to protect against light pollution, light trespass, nighttime sky glow, and visual glare.*

**ACTION 5.1.7. LOW-IMPACT DESIGN PRACTICES.**

Work with the Las Cruces Sustainability Office to incorporate low-impact development and green building design practices into parkland and facility development and renovation projects.

*Sustainable measures should always be incorporated as part of the design of parks and trails. Specific measures include the use of native plants that have low water requirements, little maintenance needs, and are well-adapted to the local soil and climatic conditions. Native grasses are prime examples of plants that survive well on rain water, do not need soil improvements to speak of, and do not need regular mowing. A complete list of appropriate Southwestern native plants for the Las Cruces area can be found at <https://www.utep.edu/leb/pdf/recplant.pdf>. Another sustainable measure is Low Impact Development (LID) which is a stormwater tool whereby runoff water is captured into bioretention areas to clean the runoff while being an amenity for people to enjoy, and habitat for songbirds. All low impact design practices should be consistent with the City's adopted Sustainability Action Plan.*

## SPORT FIELD LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY

*New Mexico is known for its clear night skies and there has been an increased focus on protecting those viewsheds from light pollution. The City also has a need to illuminate sport courts and fields to facilitate evening play schedules. In general, adequately meeting these dual needs does provide for a degree of incompatibility. Consequently, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) has developed a Criteria for Community-Friendly Outdoor Sports Lighting guidelines that upholds the values for meeting both needs. The criteria ensures "outdoor sports lighting design minimizes obstructive light spill and glare into surrounding neighborhoods and natural areas, and meets sustainability and climate-friendly goals, and reduces sky glow to the greatest extent practicable."*

*For more information, go to: <https://www.darksky.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IDA-Criteria-for-Community-Friendly-Outdoor-Sports-Lighting.pdf>*

*Low profile and low-glare LED lighting at LeConte Family Field, Clemson, South Carolina. Source: Musco Lighting*



**ACTION 5.1.8. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION ESTIMATES.** Include a M.O.R.E. assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) within all conceptual park design plans to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Department budget following capital expenditure.

*Development of a conceptual master plan (see Action 5.1.2) is an important precursor to understanding the long-term programmatic configuration and extent of uses, as well as identifying the requisite capital investment costs needed to get it built. However, this is where many cities stop their master planning process. As a result, oftentimes, parks and recreation departments are left with a completed capital project and inadequate resources and staffing to operate and maintain it for the future. Accordingly, the City should include a Maintenance, Operations, Revenue, and Expenses (MORE) assessment as part of every conceptual master planning process. The MORE assessment should include an evaluation of the following:*

- *Estimated annual maintenance costs for maintaining park and trail facilities (structure and amenities), including envisioned contract and equipment maintenance (e.g., 2.5% of initial equipment costs). Estimates could come from existing evaluation of maintenance costs in Las Cruces, or from metrics provided by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA);*
- *Estimated additional FTE personnel needed to accommodate the increased maintenance responsibilities associated with the proposed park;*
- *Estimated additional one-time or re-occurring equipment purchases; and,*
- *Projected revenues based on current City rental rates and/or contracts for similar programmed uses. For proposed uses not part of the City's existing system, comparable rates should be projected from comparable facilities in other parts of New Mexico.*

**ACTION 5.1.9. WAY-FINDING.** Implement a multi-use trail way-finding system including directional signage, mileage markers, and location maps.

*Having a recognizable, safe, and navigable trail system is a priority for the City's parks and trail system. Through a well-planned and consistent way-finding signage program, both residents and visitors will be able to navigate the parks and trails and visually identify with the community. Way-finding signage, which can also aid in emergency response situations, would need to be located at key points and should consist of park entry signage, trail entry kiosks (see example below), trail maps, brochures, a website, and internal trail way-finding signage. Internal milepost markers should occur at ½ mile intervals. The way-finding signage program could be developed as a standalone design manual, or a section of an overall parks system design standards manual (see Action 5.1.3).*



*A way-finding manual can be incorporated into a system-wide design standards manual that ties messaging into preferred material styles for signage structures and other accessory park features.*

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 5)

The one (1) objective and 9 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.7, Park Design and Programming, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.7, PARK DESIGN & PROGRAMMING, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 5: PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING. INCREASE RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' ENJOYMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW PARK SPACES THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STANDARD PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING PRACTICES.	
OBJECTIVE 5.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE FEATURES AND FACILITIES.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 5.1.1. Branding and Signage Program.</b> Prepare a system-wide branding plan and design manual. Develop consistent standards for identification, informational, regulatory, and way-finding signage, and banners.	183
<b>Action 5.1.2. Conceptual Park Design.</b> Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.	183
<b>Action 5.1.3. Design Standards Manual.</b> Prepare a parks system design standards manual to identify the intended character of preferred amenities and structures. Existing facilities may be replaced according to the recommendations of the standards manual beginning with non-permanent fixtures.	184
<b>Action 5.1.4. Park, Facility, and Program Planning.</b> Involve residents and stakeholders in conceptual site planning and programming for specific park properties and recreational facilities, and in recreational program development or modification, to facilitate project understanding and garner public support.	184
<b>Action 5.1.5. Lighting - Safety Assessment.</b> Conduct a park-by-park safety assessment with the Police Department to identify locations where security lighting upgrades are most necessary consistent with the City's outdoor lighting ordinance (including compliance with "dark sky" guidelines), and appropriate City design standards manuals.	184
<b>Action 5.1.6. Lighting Technology.</b> Incorporate lighting standards into a parks system design manual that promotes an appropriate amount of lighting for the use that is being illuminated and applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimize the impact on adjacent properties and city-wide viewsheds.	185
<b>Action 5.1.7. Low-Impact Design Practices.</b> Work with the Las Cruces Sustainability Office to incorporate low-impact development and green building design practices into parkland and facility development and renovation projects.	185
<b>Action 5.1.8. Maintenance and Operation Estimates.</b> Include a M.O.R.E. assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) within all conceptual park design plans to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Department budget following capital expenditure.	186
<b>Action 5.1.9. Way-finding.</b> Implement a multi-use trail way-finding system including directional signage, mileage markers, and location maps.	186

## GOAL 6:

### RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

**GOAL STATEMENT:** INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY OFFERING A DIVERSE SUITE OF PROGRAMS THAT CATER TO VARYING COMMUNITY INTERESTS, AGES, AND ABILITIES.

Policy makers in the City of Las Cruces have a strong record of supporting the delivery of public recreational programs and events to the residents of Las Cruces. To ensure maximum accessibility to City-sponsored programs and events, fees and cost recovery margins for targeted offerings remain low.

The continuation of policies that subsidize a substantial percentage of the costs of City-sponsored programs and events must be balanced with the costs associated with an ever-expanding suite of programs and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of current and future residents.

#### OBJECTIVE 6.1. MONITOR AND REFINE THE METHODS BY WHICH RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC.

Public feedback received during the master planning process suggests that Las Cruces would like access to an expanded suite of recreational program offerings for all age groups. Future adjustments to the City's annual programming schedule must however be supported by an expanded amount of measurable data that verifies anecdotal evidence of public preferences received through one-on-one interaction with individual residents.

**ACTION 6.1.1. AQUATICS – COMPETITION.** Support competitive youth swimming programs upon completion of the 50-meter lap pool at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. Consider sponsoring an instructional swim league catering to entry-level swimmers of varying ages.

*Development of expanded aquatics programming – including swim competition - should occur in conjunction with the natatorium at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. At that time, a designated aquatics program director position should be filled to maximize usage of the City's pools.*

**ACTION 6.1.2. COMMUNITY EVENTS.** Continue to promote and expand family-oriented programming, special events, festivals and concerts, to enhance community identity, activity and education. Utilize the City's parks, trails and recreation facilities as settings for community events where possible.

*Significant expansion of community event offerings should only occur in conjunction with the completion of cost assessment for the City's ongoing special events (Action 4.2.5, page 180), improvements to recreation program reporting (Action 6.1.5, page 189), and the creation of a designated position to oversee and market programs (Action 8.1.2, page 199). These activities are necessary to ensure that staff resources are adequate to support expanded event calendars.*



The cost for operation and maintenance of the City's pending competition swimming pool will require the development and administration of new aquatics programs. Source: ASA Architects

**ACTION 6.1.3. ATHLETIC PROGRAMMING.** Continue to leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver athletics programming.

**ACTION 6.1.4. PROGRAMMING STAFF.** Expand the relationship with NMSU to increase students' opportunities to coach, instruct, or teach in conjunction with municipal recreational programs on a temporary or part-time basis.

Updates to annual program schedules should only be proposed where a confirmed source of instructors and officials has been identified. While NMSU students serve as a potential source of coaches and instructors, an increasing number of high school students are being recruited in other communities through their coaches and teachers to instruct and serve as mentors to bantam-level children within the sports or other programs in which they participate. An under-utilized example of high-school aged mentorship opportunities is at skate parks and pump tracks where kids of all ages and skill levels readily interact.

**ACTION 6.1.5. HEALTHY COMMUNITY.** Review City policies regarding food and alcohol consumption and tobacco use at municipal properties.

The City's alcohol and tobacco use policies provide clear expectations and direction to residents regarding appropriate conduct at municipal property and facilities. The City however, has the opportunity to take on a greater advocacy role in regard to the promotion of healthy food options at municipal park properties and public grounds and at City-sponsored events. Concessionaire and vending machine policies should be assessed to determine how a greater variety of food options can be incorporated into food offerings at City properties and promoted. Ongoing efforts to provide healthy food options in City vending machines may be augmented by healthy labeling programs such as Fit Pick, a program created and trademarked by the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA).

**ACTION 6.1.6. PROGRAM REPORTING.** Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, attendance, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.

Prepare and distribute standardized exit surveys to be completed by recreational program participants at the conclusion of a course, program, or other activity. Incorporate recreational program survey information into the proposed annual report prepared for review by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Action 8.2.1, page 199). Utilize survey results to rank program popularity and to propose annual adjustments to offerings.

FIGURE 4.8, MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF EARNED/GENERATED REVENUE

	BROKEN ARROW, OK	PLANO, TX	FORT COLLINS, CO	LAS CRUCES, NM
EARNED/GENERATED REVENUE (YEAR)				
TOTAL AMOUNT (DOLLARS)	\$787,830.00	\$10,888,086.23	\$6,585,347.92	\$2,197,289
% OF ALL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	20.0%	35.9%	24.6%	21.4%
MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (YEAR)				
TOTAL AMOUNT (DOLLARS)	\$70,788.00	\$83,793.00	\$60,110.00	\$40,924
MEDIAN HH INCOME VERSUS LAS CRUCES (+/-)	+73.0%	+97.4%	+46.9%	N/A

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau (2017): S1701; NRPA, Park Metrics

**ACTION 6.1.7. COST RECOVERY.** Review and update cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.

**Figure 4.8, Earned and Generated Revenues Versus Household Income,** illustrates that Las Cruces’ cumulative earned and generated revenues account for a lower percentage of overall annual operating expenditures than other assessment communities. The figure also illustrates however, that the City’s median household income is between 46 and 73 percent lower than other communities – accounting to some degree for the City’s policy of keeping recreational programming fees low. Nonetheless, there may be room for targeted registration or rental fee increases that balance the need to offset costs with the desire to provide services in an equitable manner.

The Parks and Recreation Department’s 2019-2020 Fees and Charges/Facility Use Policies identifies targeted cost recovery goals for the direct costs of all recreational programs, and for aquatics, youth, and adult programs separately. The City’s progress in meeting these cost recovery targets has not, however, been tracked – and thus was not reported within this Plan. The Parks and Recreation Department must provide an annual update on its progress toward meeting established cost recovery targets and use this information to consider fee adjustments.

**OBJECTIVE 6.2. EXPAND PROGRAM OFFERINGS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF UNDER-SERVED USER GROUPS.**

Continued efforts must be made to generate programs that will interest teens. The Parks and Recreation Department’s Youth Board should lead teen polling efforts in conjunction with high school and middle school student governments.



Teens playing kickball at the Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center.



**ACTION 6.2.1. TEEN PROGRAMMING.** Work with youth organizations to identify and create a suite of programs that interest teens.

*Continued efforts must be made to generate programs that will interest teens. The Parks and Recreation Department's Youth Board should lead teen polling efforts in conjunction with high school and middle school student governments. Consider focusing teen "programming" on events rather than scheduled multi-day courses or programs. For instance, the City could solicit student governments to advertise and promote a series of competitions between teams comprised of students within each school and then culminating with a competition of each school's champion. (Random) examples may include art, spikeball, archery (with instruction), coed and pool-based volleyball, and more. It is important to remember that the success of teen program is just as dependent on the locale of the event as it is on the specific activity.*

**ACTION 6.2.2. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.** Use the Community School platform to provide targeted after-school and other programming options to residents within specific neighborhoods and school attendance areas.

*Recreational program offering should be distributed not just among City-owned facilities, but also directly within neighborhoods served by a Community School.*

**ACTION 6.2.3. SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMMING.** Continue to increase the City's offerings of special needs programming to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of physical, mental, and social activities.

*Las Cruces should work with local service organizations to affirm the perceived degree of need for athletic and non-athletic programming catering to individuals with disabilities. The pending construction of the City's natatorium – combined with this Plan's recommendation for a Miracle Field (Action 3.1.7, page 172) – may provide the venues for aquatic and sports programming for persons with special needs. Applicable local service and sports organizations can collectively assist the City when compiling a curriculum and identifying instructors/coaches for special needs programs.*

**ACTION 6.2.4. SPECIAL INTEREST SPORTS.** Add special interest sports instruction to the City's recreational programs which take advantage of existing facilities.

*The City of Las Cruces provides multiple venues to accommodate sporting activities that extend beyond typical field sports, court sports, and aquatics. Representative examples in Las Cruces include venues for: skate sports, BMX track riding, archery, disc golf, RC model airplane, and shooting sports. Many of these "special interest" sports accommodate limited user groups but offer recreational opportunities for person that lack interest in typical team sports. The City should work with representatives of applicable organizations and businesses to add special interest sport instruction opportunities to its current suite of recreational programs to increase utilization of unique recreational venues and facilities. Expansion of the user groups for these facilities will increase public interest in the care of each venue, addresses latent recreational demand, and may offer future cost recovery opportunities for the City.*

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 6)

The two (2) objectives and 11 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.9, Recreational Programs, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.9, RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 6: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS. INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY OFFERING A DIVERSE SUITE OF PROGRAMS THAT CATER TO VARYING COMMUNITY INTERESTS, AGES, AND ABILITIES.	
OBJECTIVE 6.1. MONITOR AND REFINE THE METHODS BY WHICH RECREATIONAL PROGRAMING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 6.1.1. Aquatics – Competition.</b> Support competitive youth swimming programs upon completion of the 50-meter lap pool at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. Consider sponsoring an instructional swim league catering to entry-level swimmers of varying ages.	188
<b>Action 6.1.2. Community Events.</b> Continue to promote and expand family-oriented programming, special events, festivals and concerts, to enhance community identity, activity and education. Utilize the City’s parks, trails and recreation facilities as settings for community events where possible.	188
<b>Action 6.1.3. Athletic Programming.</b> Continue to leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver athletics programming.	189
<b>Action 6.1.4. Programming Staff.</b> Expand the relationship with NMSU to increase students’ opportunities to coach, instruct, or teach in conjunction with municipal recreational programs on a temporary or part-time basis.	189
<b>Action 6.1.5. Healthy Community.</b> Review City policies regarding food and alcohol consumption and tobacco use at municipal properties.	189
<b>Action 6.1.6. Program Reporting.</b> Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, attendance, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.	189
<b>Action 6.1.7. Cost Recovery.</b> Review and update cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.	190
OBJECTIVE 6.2. EXPAND PROGRAM OFFERINGS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF UNDER-SERVED USER GROUPS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 6.2.1. Teen Programming.</b> Work with youth organizations to identify and create a suite of programs that interest teens.	191
<b>Action 6.2.2. Community Schools.</b> Use the Community School platform to provide targeted after-school and other programming options to residents within specific neighborhoods and school attendance areas.	191
<b>Action 6.2.3. Special Needs Programming.</b> Continue to increase the City’s offerings of special needs programming to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of physical, mental, and social activities.	191
<b>Action 6.2.4. Special Interest Sports.</b> Add special interest sports instruction to the City’s recreational programs which take advantage of existing facilities.	191

### SPECIAL INTEREST SPORTS: TRAVIS COUNTY BMX TRACK

*Northeast Metropolitan Park in Travis County, Texas, includes the Central Texas BMX Track. Ranked as one of the top tracks in the nation, the Central Texas BMX track is only one a few to meet new UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) specifications as well as all USA BMX requirements. The track supported by Central Texas BMX, a non-profit corporation that provides education and promotes youth and adult cycling.*

*Central Texas BMX operates USA BMX sanctioned, practices, races, and clinics at the Travis County facility. To increase BMX ridership, Central Texas BMX offers licensed coaching to new riders of all ages, and in the past has offered on-site bicycle rental for new riders to test their interest in the sport.*

## GOAL 7:

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

**GOAL STATEMENT:** CONNECT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS THROUGH A ROBUST AND SUSTAINED PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORT, AND BY LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

The mission statement of the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department (page 44) does not suggest that the City is solely responsible for providing recreational services to the public; nor, that its efforts are confined to municipally owned and maintained parkland. Rather, its mission is to provide "...services to residents and visitors so they can experience a diverse, vibrant, prosperous, active, engaged, connected, happy, and inclusive community."

With such a community-driven focus, the City of Las Cruces should continue to leverage partnerships with other organizations to provide recreation services without limitation to who owns the property or facility, or who operates or manages the specific service, so long as such services can be provided efficiently and equitably.

**OBJECTIVE 7.1. ACTIVELY MARKET THE AVAILABILITY OF MUNICIPAL PARKLAND, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND CITY-SPONSORED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

Despite the Parks and Recreation Department's robust online presence, many master planning participants indicated a lack of awareness regarding the types of recreational facilities and programs that the City offers.

- ACTION 7.1.1. COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN.** Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office and Public Information Office to establish clear policies and procedures for coordinating community outreach efforts related to park maintenance and programming.
  - ACTION 7.1.2. COMMUNITY OUTREACH.** Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, neighborhood organizations, homeowners' associations, service organizations, churches, and businesses to identify volunteer community service projects for basic park maintenance and improvement.
- Outreach coordination with other City departments may be enhanced by the addition of a dedicated outreach specialist within the Parks and Recreation Department (Action 8.1.2, page 198). Regardless, the Parks and Recreation Department must increase the frequency of its online presence and outreach activities to include even those functions that are seemingly mundane. For instance, there is very little energy spent on advertising daily maintenance activities, yet park conditions are a topic of unending public interest. Savvy daily use of social media tools by the Parks and Recreation Department can be encouraging to the public by helping them anticipate ongoing operational and programming activities of which they are otherwise unaware.*

**ACTION 7.1.3. ONLINE PARKS APP AND MAPPING TOOL.** Work with other City departments to provide improved access to interactive on-line parks system mapping features that identify the location of specific park properties and facilities in relation to specific queries including park name, facility type, addresses, and more.

*Continue to refine the online parks app and mapping tools by tying online maps to images of park facilities, descriptions of assets at each location, and rental schedules tied to each facility in the park that allow users to determine whether a facility will be available for rental or use even before they consider applying.*

**ACTION 7.1.4. MARKETING – GENERAL.** Continue to develop and refine the Park and Recreation Department’s marketing image (i.e. style, formats, message, etc.).

**ACTION 7.1.5. MARKETING – TOURISM.** Work with the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to develop information packets that promote municipal parks and recreational programs aimed at tourists and new residents.

*Only a small percentage of master planning participants expressed interest in the leveraging of municipal parkland and recreational facilities for purposes of enhancing the local tourist economy. Although near-term investments into the municipal parks system are not principally targeted for the development of regional tournaments or events, collaboration with local economic development organizations can help the City pay for the upkeep of key facilities by through targeted advertising campaigns.*

## **OBJECTIVE 7.2. EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MAXIMIZE ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS.**

Las Cruces maintains relationships with other entities which promote quality of life and public health initiatives. These partnerships should be maintained while new partnerships should be developed to expand the reach of the City’s parks and recreation assets.

**ACTION 7.2.1. ADVOCACY GROUP.** Support community-initiated efforts to create a “friends” group that can provide volunteers, funding, or in-kind contributions, and oversee advocacy efforts to supplement municipal parks and recreation services.

**ACTION 7.2.2. FUNDING PARTNERS.** Create partnerships with advocacy and special interest groups to access funding for various recreational activities such as youth leagues, special events, athletic competitions, special use facilities, and concerts.

*Non-profit organizations are not bound to many of the same rules for donations and other contributions as are governmental entities. A “Friends” advocacy group can support service delivery within an entire public parks and recreation system or focus their efforts on a specific park space.*

**ACTION 7.2.3. CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS.** Encourage the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations to support development and management of a municipal open space lands program.

**ACTION 7.2.4. TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS.** Foster the development and capacity of local volunteer trail advocates (including the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance) to help with trails planning efforts, garner community support, leverage community resources, and play a role in stewardship and maintenance of trail facilities.

*The ongoing success of a municipal open space lands or multi-use and recreational trail network will require community investment that extends beyond public tax dollars. Day-to-day operational and programming activities necessary to ensure the public lands and recreational facilities serve the public interest often require the direct investment of resident time and labor.*

**ACTION 7.2.5. HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.** Continue to explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MountainView Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and the Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.

*One of the six (6) essential benefits of a well-managed and maintained municipal parks and recreation system is that it improves health and well-being (Figure 1.1, page 5). Ongoing partnerships with local healthcare providers should be geared toward the promotion of daily habits and lifestyles that include activities for which public parkland and facilities are designed to support.*

**ACTION 7.2.6. LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS.** Continue to foster the partnership with Las Cruces Public Schools to utilize school sites for the placement of publicly accessible recreation facilities and programs through cooperative joint-use agreements. Explore additional opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools as the city grows.

The creative use of public school properties and facilities could assist the City in rapidly reducing many of the identified parkland service gaps (Map 3.3, page 107), and in increasing attendance at City-sponsored recreational programs.

**ACTION 7.2.7. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.** Continue the Neighborhood Watch program to reduce vandalism and improve the sense of security at municipal parks.

*Neighborhood Watch efforts may be augmented and invigorated by the development and participation of parks-related advocacy groups (Action 7.2.1, page 194) and the designation of licensed law enforcement officers as park rangers (Action 8.1.5).*

**ACTION 7.2.8. STATE AND FEDERAL LANDS.** Continue to foster partnership opportunities on state and federal lands promoting outdoor activities including shooting sports, hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, rock climbing, off-road sports and similar activities in a way that does not adversely affect other resources.

*It is presumed that undeveloped state and federal lands may be ideal locations in which to target development of an open space lands program (Action 1.1.5., page 160) and a network of recreational trails (Action 2.2.1, page 166). Coordination with these entities will be essential to the success of either of these municipal-led initiatives; or, to encourage state or federally initiated efforts to expand areas of designated open space, or development of facilities to provide new outdoor recreation opportunities.*

**ACTION 7.2.9. TREE CITY USA.** Continue efforts with other City departments to obtain Tree City USA designation by preparing and adopting tree policies or ordinances.

*Shade is one of the most essential assets identified by the public during the master planning process that will improve the municipal park experience. Likewise, the benefits of tree canopies within public street rights-of-way and on other public grounds is critically important in developing the full potential of these spaces for public use and enjoyment. The Parks and Recreation Department should coordinate with the Community Development and Public Works Departments to prepare tree policies and ordinances that align with City land development ordinances and construction design standards.*

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 7)

The two (2) objectives and 14 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.10, Community Outreach and Partnerships, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.10, COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 8: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS. CONNECT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS THROUGH A ROBUST AND SUSTAINED PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORT, AND BY LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.	
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.1. ACTIVELY MARKET THE AVAILABILITY OF MUNICIPAL PARKLAND, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND CITY-SPONSORED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 7.1.1. Community Relations Plan.</b> Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office and Public Information Office to establish clear policies and procedures for coordinating community outreach efforts related to park maintenance and programming.	193
<b>Action 7.1.2. Community Outreach.</b> Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, neighborhood organizations, homeowners’ associations, service organizations, churches, and businesses to identify volunteer community service projects for basic park maintenance and improvement.	193
<b>Action 7.1.3. Online Parks App and Mapping Tool.</b> Work with other City departments to provide improved access to interactive on-line parks system mapping features that identify the location of specific park properties and facilities in relation to specific queries including park name, facility type, addresses, and more.	194
<b>Action 7.1.4. Marketing – General.</b> Continue to develop and refine the Park and Recreation Department’s marketing image (i.e. style, formats, message, etc.).	194
<b>Action 7.1.5. Marketing – Tourism.</b> Work with the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to develop information packets that promote municipal parks and recreational programs aimed at tourists and new residents.	194
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.2. EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MAXIMIZE ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 7.2.1. Advocacy Group.</b> Support community-initiated efforts to create a “friends” group that can provide volunteers, funding, or in-kind contributions, and oversee advocacy efforts to supplement municipal parks and recreation services.	194
<b>Action 7.2.2. Funding Partners.</b> Create partnerships with advocacy and special interest groups to access funding for various recreational activities such as youth leagues, special events, athletic competitions, special use facilities, and concerts.	194
<b>Action 7.2.3. Conservation Organizations.</b> Encourage the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations to support development and management of a municipal open space lands program.	194
<b>Action 7.2.4. Trail Organizations.</b> Foster the development and capacity of local volunteer trail advocates (including the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance) to help with trails planning efforts, garner community support, leverage community resources, and play a role in stewardship and maintenance of trail facilities.	194
<b>Action 7.2.5. Healthcare Providers.</b> Continue to explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MountainView Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and the Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.	195
<b>Action 7.2.6. Las Cruces Public Schools.</b> Continue to foster the partnership with Las Cruces Public Schools to utilize school sites for the placement of publicly accessible recreation facilities and programs through cooperative joint-use agreements. Explore additional opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools as the city grows.	195
<b>Action 7.2.7. Neighborhood Watch.</b> Continue the Neighborhood Watch program to reduce vandalism and improve the sense of security at municipal parks.	195
<b>Action 7.2.8. State and Federal Lands.</b> Continue to foster partnership opportunities on state and federal lands promoting outdoor activities including shooting sports, hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, rock climbing, off-road sports and similar activities in a way that does not adversely affect other resources.	195
<b>Action 7.2.9. Tree City USA.</b> Continue efforts with other City departments to obtain Tree City USA designation by preparing and adopting tree policies or ordinances.	195

## GOAL 8:

### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

**GOAL STATEMENT:** IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PARK AND RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY BY ALIGNING ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES WITH MASTER PLAN GOALS.

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department has continued to improve the methods by which it collects data related to parks and recreation system conditions and user preferences. The personnel structure of the department has also been altered to improve overall service delivery to Las Cruces.

Additional steps can always be taken to not only improve reporting practices, but to provide greater efficiency in day-to-day administration and operations.

**OBJECTIVE 8.1.** FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT CAN ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF LAS CRUCES.

This Plan reveals a few system-wide features for which the Parks and Recreation Department should place particular emphasis on improving. These system-wide recommendations do not negate the need for park-specific maintenance projects.

**ACTION 8.1.1. ACCREDITATION.** Achieve CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association.

CAPRA accreditation affirms that a parks and recreation agency provides its community with the highest level of service. By extension, CAPRA accreditation means that the governing authority has elected to provide its staff with the necessary resources to operate and maintain its parks and recreation system in an efficient manner. **Figure 4.11** highlights the benefits of CAPRA accreditation:

Attainment of CAPRA accreditation will require funding for associated training and for hosting CAPRA volunteers for an on-site visit due the application process.

FIGURE 4.11: CAPRA BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION	
FOR YOUR COMMUNITY...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Demonstrates that the agency meets national standards of best practice.</li><li>• Recognizes the community as a great place to live.</li><li>• Can help secure external financial support and reduce costs for the community.</li><li>• Holds an agency accountable to the public and ensures responsiveness to meet their needs.</li><li>• Ensures that all staff are providing quality customer service.</li></ul>
FOR YOUR AGENCY AND STAFF...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Positive public and political recognition.</li><li>• Proves to decision makers, stakeholders and the public that the agency is operating with the best practices of the profession.</li><li>• Increases credibility and can improve internal and external funding.</li><li>• Improves overall operations and increases efficiency.</li><li>• Enhances staff teamwork and pride by engaging all staff in the process.</li><li>• Creates an environment for regular review of operations, policies and procedures, and promotes continual improvement.</li></ul>

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association

**ACTION 8.1.2. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – EVENTS AND OUTREACH.** Add a special events manager/coordinator and a social media/marketing position to the Recreation Section. Positions may be created or may be re-assigned from within existing City staff resources.

**ACTION 8.1.3. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – FACILITIES.** Assign a facilities manager to exclusively oversee the maintenance and renovation of buildings and structures operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. The dedicated facilities manager may be added to the Parks section of the Department or remain within the Facilities Management section of Public Works.

**ACTION 8.1.4. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – PLANNING.** Establish a permanent long-range planning position to oversee annual reporting and long-range planning activities in conjunction with CAPRA standards.

*The department positions recommended within Actions 8.1.2, 8.1.3, and 8.1.4 are essential to advancing the objectives and other actions recommended within this Plan. They also support the City’s pending efforts to achieve CAPRA accreditation by providing the Parks and Recreation Department with an in-house “suite” of staff resources to improve the efficiency of various departmental functions. All recommended positions may be created as new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, may result from re-assignment within the department, or as a result of re-assignment from another City department.*

*An events and outreach position, and planning position, may be added to the Parks and Recreation Department’s Administration Section. Among other duties, the parks planner may serve the central role of collecting and disseminating parks and recreation data (see Objective 8.2, facing page). A facilities position may be added to the Parks Section. The proposed facilities position is of importance as the condition assessment conducted as part of this Plan indicated that the City scores much lower on the condition of structures and facilities than it does on public grounds. This may be in part to the current limitations placed on the Parks and Recreation Department in maintain vertical structures.*

**ACTION 8.1.5 DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – PUBLIC SAFETY.** Establish a Park Ranger Section to be staffed by state accredited law enforcement officers to monitor municipal park properties and to oversee security at public events.

*This Plan’s needs assessment suggests that at least some of the local population perceives city parks to be unsafe. This perception may be based less on actual violent crime and more on loitering and the physical condition of some parks that suggests a condition of deferred maintenance or problem with vandalism. The accreditation of park rangers as law enforcement officers (much like school resource officers) could provide greater direct security oversight of park property and could help monitor security at public events. Public Safety at municipal park property and at public events should remain under the purview of the Las Cruces Police Department, but positions could be added or result from re-assignment within the department.*

**ACTION 8.1.6. RIGHTS-OF-WAY.** Evaluate the transfer of alley and right-of-way maintenance to another City Department so that the Parks and Recreation Department can focus on their core mission of providing recreational services to the community.

*It is not unusual for Parks and Recreation Departments to be responsible for the maintenance of all public grounds. In contrast however, it is equally common for municipal Public Works Departments to be responsible for the maintenance of public street rights-of-way and other landscaped areas due to their overlapping street and utility maintenance responsibilities. Reassignment of the maintenance of street rights-of-way to the Public Works Department will require the transfer of comparable funding and staff resources. Nonetheless, such a transfer would allow remaining Parks and Recreation maintenance staff to focus on specialized groundskeeping and turf management that is necessary to ensure that athletic fields and play areas can endure constant wear and tear.*



**ACTION 8.1.7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers; to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA), the New Mexico Recreation and Park Association, the Sports Turf Managers Association, and other applicable organizations.

Professional development opportunities are not only essential for increasing the knowledge base of your parks and recreation staff, they provide other intangible benefits. Conferences and seminars allow participants from different jurisdictions to share experiences with their colleagues. Professional accreditation opportunities illustrate a connection between an organization's stated goals and its commitment to providing its employees with the tools to achieve those goals.

*In assessing the appropriate level of annual funding for parks and recreation professional development opportunities, the City should consider not just management-level employees, but also non-managerial staff. The absence of professional development opportunities for support staff (professional accreditation, conferences, seminars) can create a disconnect between employees and their overarching mission statements and goals. The availability of robust professional development opportunities for support staff is also an important recruitment tool when filling vacant positions.*

## **OBJECTIVE 8.2. AUGMENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS TO CALIBRATE AND IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.**

Responsiveness to the public's parks and recreation preferences and needs requires well-collected and thoroughly analyzed data that is maintained on a continual basis. (Such data should not be compiled and disseminated only when a community's parks and recreation master plan is being prepared.) The Parks and Recreation Department has acquired new software in the last few years that has improved its ability to collect data. There is however, a need to do more to package and disseminate that data for administrators and policy makers to make future operational decisions based on verifiable information.

Please note that in addition to the four (4) actions associated with this objective, there are additional reporting actions that are recommended and associated with Goal #6, Recreational Programs (pages 188 - 192).

**ACTION 8.2.1. ANNUAL REPORT.** Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding and stewardship of tax dollars, fees, and other charges and distribute the report as widely as possible.

*An annual agency report prepared by the Parks and Recreation Department, with the oversight of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, should be generated for public consumption. The annual report should be a highly graphic document that is simple to read, presents data which can be compared to other assessment communities/parks and recreation agencies, and can be digitally distributed to the public. The NRPA's annual Agency Performance Review presents a suitable model.*

*The annual report recommended by this action is in addition to data submitted to the Finance Department and included within the annual budget. Although preparation of the departmental annual report could correspond to the timing of the annual municipal budget, the latter document is difficult for many laypersons to understand and does not include multiple data sets that would garner public interest including: recreational program participation, parkland acreage, facility distribution, and more.*

**ACTION 8.2.2. BOARD COORDINATION.** Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other standing City boards and the City Council to improve coordination and to discuss policy matters pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities, and funding.

**ACTION 8.2.3. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.** Partner with the Historic Preservation Committee and City Art Board to ensure that local historical and cultural resources on public properties are maintained.

*Although Las Cruces City Land Development Code establishes the powers and duties of the City's various boards and commissions, the scope of interests of many appointed boards and commissions will overlap. A concerted effort must be made by the City to ensure that boards and commissions are communicating directly with each other when pending agenda topics affect both bodies. For example, possible parkland dedication ordinances which would be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission are a direct implementation step of this Plan. Possible public art installation policies recommended by the City Art Board will affect property under the purview of the PRAB.*

*Board coordination often requires more than just staff representation. On a topic-by-topic basis a one or more representatives should be representing their board's or commission's position to other appointed City bodies where interests overlap. Where the lack of a pending topic does not necessitate such direct interaction, periodic joint workshops should be scheduled between the PRAB and other key appointed bodies. Such a workshop could coincide with the release of an annual report (Action 8.2.1, page 199).*

**ACTION 8.2.4. PERFORMANCE MEASURES.** Actively participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program on a recurring basis including the input of annual agency updates into the Park Metrics program, and the evaluation of updated agency performance reports.

*The Parks and Recreation Department utilizes the NRPA's Park Metrics program to evaluate how other public parks and recreations agencies deliver services to constituents within their jurisdictions. Las Cruces however, does not currently contribute its own data into the program. Uploading budget, staffing, programming, facilities, and parkland data into the Park Metrics program is a simple process and would ensure that much of the data organized and submitted by Las Cruces on an annual basis is arranged in a manner consistent with national peers (making comparison assessments more useful). Likewise, the City may opt to participate in other national metrics such as the Trust for Public Land's Parks Score program and 10-Minute Walk initiative.*

*Participation in the Park Metrics program should not obligate the City of Las Cruces to measure all data sets in a corresponding manner to NRPA. For instance, this Plan recommends the target levels of service for indoor recreation centers be measured according to square footage instead of number of facilities. The City should always prioritize local needs and processes when determining how to best to organize and submit data to national advocacy and industry groups.*



## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 8)

The two (2) objectives and 14 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.12, Administration and Management, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.12, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 8: ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT. IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PARK AND RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY BY ALIGNING ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES WITH MASTER PLAN GOALS.	
<b>OBJECTIVE 8.1. FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT CAN ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF LAS CRUCES.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 8.1.1. Accreditation.</b> Achieve CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association.	197
<b>Action 8.1.2. Department Organization – Events and Outreach.</b> Add a special events manager/coordinator and a social media/marketing position to the Recreation Section. Positions may be created or may be re-assigned from within existing City staff resources.	198
<b>Action 8.1.3. Department Organization – Facilities.</b> Assign a facilities manager to exclusively oversee the maintenance and renovation of buildings and structures operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. The dedicated facilities manager may be added to the Parks section of the Department or remain within the Facilities Management section of Public Works.	198
<b>Action 8.1.4. Department Organization – Planning.</b> Establish a permanent long-range planning position to oversee annual reporting and long-range planning activities in conjunction with CAPRA standards.	198
<b>Action 8.1.5. Department Organization – Public Safety.</b> Establish a Park Ranger Section to be staffed by state accredited law enforcement officers to monitor municipal park properties and to oversee security at public events.	198
<b>Action 8.1.6. Rights-of-way.</b> Evaluate the transfer of alley and right-of-way maintenance to another City Department so that the Parks and Recreation Department can focus on their core mission of providing recreational services to the community.	198
<b>Action 8.1.7. Professional Development.</b> Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers; to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA), the New Mexico Recreation and Park Association, the Sports Turf Managers Association, and other applicable organizations.	199
<b>OBJECTIVE 8.2. AUGMENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS TO CALIBRATE AND IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.</b>	
<b>Action 8.2.1. Annual Report.</b> Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding and stewardship of tax dollars, fees, and other charges and distribute the report as widely as possible.	199
<b>Action 8.2.2. Board Coordination.</b> Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other standing City boards and the City Council to improve coordination and to discuss policy matters pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities, and funding.	200
<b>Action 8.2.3. Historical and Cultural Resources.</b> Partner with the Historic Preservation Committee and City Art Board to ensure that local historical and cultural resources on public properties are maintained.	200
<b>Action 8.2.4. Performance Measures.</b> Actively participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program on a recurring basis including the input of annual agency updates into the Park Metrics program, and the evaluation of updated agency performance reports.	200

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# 5

## CHAPTER

# IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*Pioneer Womens Park*

## SECTION 1:

### IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM PARAMETERS

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the City's principal guide for providing parks and recreation services to Las Cruces' current and future residents in an efficient and equitable manner. This Plan is not a capital facilities plan, but rather an operational guide that provides suggestions on how to enhance parks and recreational service delivery while identifying future opportunities capital and non-capital investments.

This Plan's implementation program includes three (3) principal components. The **implementation action plan** categorizes and prioritizes the Plan actions that were introduced in **Chapter 4** to present an orderly framework for pending City initiatives. The **plan administration** section outlines the roles and responsibilities of City officials and implementing partners, while a section on **funding** highlights key funding sources that may aid in advancing implementation activities.

#### IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

Effective implementation of Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan recommendations will require a coordinated effort among community leaders and residents, elected and appointed officials, and external agencies. To offer superior parks and recreation services to the residents of Las Cruces, the City must also partner with local, state, and federal entities that can be of assistance in growing and improving the parks and recreation system now and in the future.

Key contributors in implementing this effort will include:

- *Las Cruces elected and appointed officials;*
- *City Management and staff;*
- *Doña Ana County;*
- *New Mexico Department of Transportation (NMDOT);*
- *New Mexico State Land Office;*
- *United States Bureau of Land Management;*
- *Las Cruces Public Schools;*
- *Mesilla Valley Economic Development Alliance (MVEDA);*
- *Elephant Butte Irrigation District;*
- *Athletic leagues;*
- *Adjacent communities (on projects that benefit both communities);*
- *Area property and business owners and the development community;*
- *Community volunteers and stakeholders; and*
- *Additional affected agencies and entities.*

A comprehensive parks and recreation implementation action plan is introduced in **Figure 5.1, Prioritized Implementation Action Plan**, (page 207). Within the figure, all actions recommended in **Chapter 4** are categorized according to type of action and estimated timeframe within which the action will be initiated. **Figure 5.1** also identifies implementing partners, and whether a specific implementation initiative is estimated to be require ongoing effort and attention.

## IMPLEMENTATION TOOLS

The actions recommended within this Plan are represented within **Figure 5.1** (facing page) by one (1) or more of the following five (5) categories:

- **Financial Investment.** *Capital improvements (for inclusion in a 5-year capital improvements plan) or general fund expenditures.*
- **Operational Change.** *New or altered programs, staffing, or operational procedures.*
- **Policy.** *Official procedures or policies used to make City decisions.*
- **Regulation.** *Council approved regulations used to direct growth or additional actions in the City.*
- **Study.** *Additional study or examination required to determine the best result.*

Some recommended Plan actions may meet the definition of multiple implementation categories.

## PRIORITIZATION

The actions listed within the implementation action plan (**Figure 5.1**, facing page) are also divided among three (3) levels of prioritization:

- **High Priority Actions.** *Actions which should be initiated within the next one to two years (2019 - 2021) although completion may extend across a larger timeframe. These are the City's top priorities for implementation.*
- **Moderate Priority Actions.** *Actions which may be initiated within the next three to five years (2022- 2025).*
- **Long-Term Priority Actions.** *Most of these actions are projected to be implemented in the long term (2026+) and may be further prioritized in following Plan updates. These actions are therefore not listed in a numbered order.*

Regardless of suggested priority, it is presumed that many of this Plan's recommended actions will require ongoing effort and attention by the City. Ongoing actions are acknowledged in **Figure 5.1**.

## PRIORITIZATION FACTORS

Any action listed in **Figure 5.1** could be initiated sooner than suggested if unique circumstances or opportunities occur. Nonetheless, implementation priority suggested in this Plan was informed by the following prioritization factors:

- *Level of need based on community input (online survey results, stakeholder meetings, public open houses, prioritization survey, etc.);*
- *Level of need based on the needs assessment; and*
- *Conditions assessments of current park facilities in the City.*

## USING THE ACTION PLAN

As previously suggested, the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Master Plan's implementation action plan is not include a comprehensive list of new capital improvements projects. This Plan serves as a guide for future operational adjustments and investments, and for potential future additions to the capital improvements plan. **Appendix G, GO Bond** and **Appendix H, Capital Improvements Plan**, lists both GO Bond and Capital Improvements projects.















*In 2018, the voters of Las Cruces approved the General Obligation Bond (GO Bond) to fund capital improvements and improve the community.*

Additional instructions regarding Plan administration are located in the "Plan Administration" section beginning on page 219.











FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
<b>GOAL #1: PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT.</b> PROVIDE AN INCREASED PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE BY ADDING NEW PARK SPACE THAT IS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE CITY; AND BY ENSURING THAT THE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKLAND OCCURS CONCURRENT WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT.							
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.1.</b> EXPAND AND MAINTAIN A MUNICIPAL PARKS SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES VARIOUS PARKLAND TYPES TO ADDRESS DIVERSE INTERESTS AND IS WELL-DISTRIBUTED TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL LAS CRUCENS.							
1.1.1	<b>Level of Service - Parkland.</b> Utilize the acreage and proximity service standards presented in <b>Figure 4.1, Parkland, Target level of service (2019-2045)</b> , as a guide for establishing a minimum city-wide level of service for community and neighborhood parkland.					POLICY	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
1.1.2	<b>Civic Parks.</b> Incorporate civic park space into new mixed-use developments and similar development that is intended to promote a dense, urban, and pedestrian-friendly environment.					POLICY/ REGULATION	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
1.1.3	<b>East Mesa Community Park.</b> Prepare a design for the East Mesa Community Park incorporating the recreational facilities identified as part of the publicly-approved general obligation bond. Work with the Mesilla Valley MPO and other City departments to include an alignment for an extension of E. Lohman Avenue.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ STUDY	CITY
1.1.4	<b>Community Parks.</b> Construct a new community park (in addition to the East Mesa Community Park in an underserved area.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
1.1.5	<b>Open Space Lands Program.</b> Establish and fund a municipal open space program to acquire, manage, and maintain natural areas and open space lands.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ POLICY	BLM/ CITY/ NEW MEXICO STATE LAND OFFICE
1.1.6	<b>Extraterritorial Zone.</b> Actively plan and coordinate with Doña Ana County for the acquisition of parks and open space within or near the ETZ.					POLICY	DOÑA ANA COUNTY
1.1.7	<b>Non-Municipal Parkland.</b> Work with Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana County, and other entities to determine if some municipal recreational services can be provided on properties not owned by the City of Las Cruces.					POLICY	DOÑA ANA COUNTY/ LPS
1.1.8	<b>Parkland Purchase Options.</b> Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to acquire parkland, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
<b>OBJECTIVE 1.2.</b> UTILIZE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO PROVIDE NEW PARKLAND AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR LAS CRUCES' GROWING POPULATION.							
1.2.1	<b>Ordinances – Parkland Dedication.</b> Amend the Las Cruces Development Code to require the dedication of neighborhood park space as part of new development.					REGULATION	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
1.2.2	<b>Pocket Park Performance Criteria.</b> Allow small pocket parks to be constructed in new developments in lieu of neighborhood parks only in accordance with specific performance criteria.					POLICY/ REGULATION	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
1.2.3	<b>Ordinances – Common Area.</b> Amend the Las Cruces Development Code to require common areas and recreational amenities as part of new multi-family development, and public gathering space in large retail and commercial developments.					REGULATION	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB













\*O=Ongoing

FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
<b>GOAL #2: COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY.</b> PROVIDE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS THAT SUPPORT RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' FITNESS, RECREATION, AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, WHILE LINKING COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS SUCH AS PARKS, OPEN SPACE, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS.							
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.1.</b> CONSTRUCT A COMMUNITY-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK THAT LINKS PLACES OF RESIDENCE TO COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.							
2.1.1	<b>Level of Service – Multi-use Trails.</b> Construct and maintain a city-wide multi-use trail network that is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
2.1.2	<b>Multi-use Trail Network.</b> Amend land development regulations to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new development where a proposed trail route is depicted in the City's Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.					REGULATION	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
2.1.3	<b>United States Bicycle Route System.</b> Coordinate with NMDOT, Doña Ana County, Adventure Cycling Association, and other stakeholders to establish the first segment of the United States Bicycle Route System in New Mexico. Ensure that the City's on-street bicycle routes and multi-use trails link to the system.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ STUDY	ADVENTURE CYCLING ASSOCIATION/ CITY/ DOÑA ANA COUNTY/ NMDOT
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.2.</b> DEVELOP A LOW-IMPACT RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM THAT PROMOTES CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO LOW-IMPACT OUTDOOR RECREATION PURSUITS.							
2.2.1	<b>Recreational Trails – Rio Grande Trail.</b> Prioritize the construction of segments of the City's multi-use trail network that will also serve as a principal segment of the Rio Grande Trail.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	
2.2.2	<b>Recreational Trail System.</b> Work with the US Bureau of Land Management, State Land Office, and advocacy organizations such as the Friends of the Organ Mountains and Southern New Mexico Trails Alliance to develop a series of designated low-impact recreational trails that provide non-motorized connections between the developed areas of Las Cruces to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks N.M.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ STUDY	
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.3.</b> PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO THE CITY'S MULTI-USE TRAIL AND RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS.							
2.3.1	<b>Multi-use Trails – Connectivity.</b> Amend land development regulations to require direct pathway connections between new development and the city-wide multi-use trail network.					REGULATION	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
2.3.2	<b>Multi-use Trails – Intersections.</b> Prioritize the improvement of multi-use trail/roadway intersections to create safer network interconnectivity. Fund hand-actuated signalization and other traffic control enhancements for bicyclists and pedestrians at key intersections and at mid-block crossing points.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ POLICY/ STUDY	CITY
2.3.3	<b>Trailheads.</b> Improve trailhead accommodations. Distinguish between minor trailheads (those with basic accommodations such as seating, signage, and fix-it stations) and major trailheads (which may also include parking, restrooms, and pavilions).					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ POLICY/ STUDY	CITY/ DOÑA ANA COUNTY











\*O=Ongoing

FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
<b>GOAL #3: PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES. INCREASE COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATIONAL CHOICE BY INCORPORATING NEW INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES INTO THE MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEM PORTFOLIO.</b>							
<b>OBJECTIVE 3.1. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF LAS CRUCENS.</b>							
3.1.1	<b>Level of Service – Recreational Facilities.</b> Construct, rehabilitate, and/or replace standard system-wide recreational facilities consistent with the level of service recommendations established in the parks and recreation master plan.					REGULATION	CITY
3.1.2	<b>General Obligation Bond Projects.</b> Amend the five-year capital improvements plan to incorporate the parks and recreation projects included in the general obligation bond approved by voters in 2018.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
3.1.3	<b>Access – City Complex.</b> Review access policies to the City Complex including the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to allow for predictable access to both recreational amenities.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
3.1.4	<b>Aquatics – Splash Pads.</b> Replace the Apodaca Pool with a splash pad facility.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
3.1.5	<b>Aquatics – Swimming Pools.</b> Construct a new swimming pool east of Interstate 25.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
3.1.6	<b>Inclusive Play Areas.</b> Incorporate inclusive playground facilities into various regional, community, and neighborhood parks to provide a greater distribution of facilities to serve individuals with physical disabilities.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY/ NON-PROFIT
3.1.7	<b>Athletic Fields – Miracle League Field.</b> Construct a baseball field consistent with Miracle League standards to enable the establishment of a local baseball league for children with disabilities.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY/ NON-PROFIT
3.1.8	<b>Conceptual Park Design and Improvements.</b> Incorporate completed conceptual park design projects into the capital budget.					STUDY	CITY/ RESIDENTS
3.1.9	<b>Apodaca Park Concept Design Plan.</b> Prepare a master plan for an expanded Apodaca Park.					STUDY	CITY/ RESIDENTS
3.1.10	<b>Indoor Recreation Facilities.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for the addition of indoor recreation space with an emphasis on gymnasium and multi-purpose meeting room space.					STUDY	CITY
3.1.11	<b>Pump Track.</b> Construct a BMX pump track in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex to provide trick riders with a similar level of service as skaters a BMX track riders.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY/ DONORS
3.1.12	<b>Shade Structures.</b> Invest in shade structures in conjunction with play scapes and adjacent seating areas in locations as identified in the parks conditions assessment.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
3.1.13	<b>Shooting Sports.</b> Expand the number of bays at the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range to support additional skeet and trap shooting.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY/ DONORS
3.1.14	<b>Skate Park – Renovations.</b> Redesign and renovate the skate park at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY/ DONORS
3.1.15	<b>Skate Park - Facility Additions.</b> Increase skate park accessibility by incorporating “skate spot” features into selected parks that are distributed throughout the City.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
3.1.16	<b>Teen Facility.</b> Add indoor recreation facilities designed to meet the needs and interests of teenagers.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY









\*O=Ongoing

FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
GOAL #4: PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE. PROVIDE A HIGH LEVEL OF PARK LAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE THAT PLACES EQUAL EMPHASIS ON LANDSCAPES, HARD-SCAPES, AND STRUCTURES.							
OBJECTIVE 4.1. SCHEDULE SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS THAT REDUCE AND ELIMINATE PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE DEFICIENCIES.							
4.1.1	<b>General Park Enhancements.</b> Utilize the park-by-park results of the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment to prioritize annual updates to recreational and accessory amenities within low-scoring parks.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
4.1.2	<b>Conditions Assessment.</b> Prepare a bi-annual update to the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment and prepare a supporting record of accomplishments report.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
4.1.3	<b>ADA Accessibility Standards.</b> Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. Assess planned and existing parks and trails for compliance with ADA Standards for Accessible Design.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
4.1.4	<b>Irrigation System Specifications.</b> Incorporate standard specifications for irrigation systems into a parks system design standards manual.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
4.1.5	<b>Irrigation System Upgrades.</b> Commission a system-wide inspection of irrigation systems in City park properties and other municipal property.					STUDY	CITY
4.1.6	<b>Public Art - Donation and Installation.</b> Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to prepare a uniform policy for the donation and installation of art on public properties. The policy should link art installation to identified CIP projects to ensure maximum site integration.					POLICY	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
4.1.7	<b>Public Art – Collection Assessment and Maintenance.</b> Conduct a collection assessment and prepare a corresponding and comprehensive maintenance plan to evaluate the condition and maintenance needs of the City’s existing public art collection. Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to establish a long-term maintenance and collection management policy.					POLICY/ STUDY	CITY COUNCIL/ CITY STAFF/ P&Z/ PRAB
4.1.8	<b>Traffic Control.</b> Add bollards at strategic park locations (such as Apodaca Park) to prevent park visitors from driving motor vehicles on locations other than designated driveways and parking areas.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
4.1.9	<b>Urban Forestry.</b> Work with the Community Development and Public Works Department to create standard street cross-sections that incorporate street trees. Update design standards in the Las Cruces Development Code related to the installation and management of trees planted in public street rights-of-way and on other public properties.					POLICY/ REGULATION	CITY
4.1.10	<b>Volunteer Projects.</b> Identify a series of facility maintenance or upgrade projects that are of a complexity and scale that special interest of volunteer groups can undertake with minimal Parks Section oversight.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY/ NON-PROFIT

\*O=Ongoing

FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)






ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
<b>OBJECTIVE 4.2. CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING METHODS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO AUGMENT ONGOING MAINTENANCE INITIATIVES.</b>							
4.2.1	<b>Fee Structure - Athletics.</b> Adjust athletic programming fees to cover a higher percentage of the estimated long-term maintenance costs of publicly-approved major capital investments.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
4.2.2	<b>Funding – Accessory Facility Replacement.</b> Provide a direct annual funding source that will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to quickly replace non-recreational equipment such as garbage cans, benches, shade structures, signage, and more.					POLICY	CITY
4.2.3	<b>Funding - Equipment Replacement.</b> Create an equipment replacement fund to periodically replace treadmills, weight machines, aquatic equipment, outdoor athletic equipment, and more on an as-needed basis.					POLICY	CITY
4.2.4	<b>Satellite Shop Facilities.</b> Identify suitable locations in the northeastern part of the city to construct satellite shop facilities as a supplement to the central maintenance yard.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
4.2.5	<b>Special Events.</b> Measure staff hours and general City expenditures related to preparation, management, and post-event activities to determine costs related to event support.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY/ CVB
4.2.6	<b>Staffing Ratios.</b> Adopt a ratio-based system whereby park maintenance staff is added at a uniform rate concurrent with parkland additions to ensure a proper level of maintenance.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
4.2.7	<b>Technology Integration.</b> Improve field staff’s access to handheld GPS and web-based equipment to improve field maintenance and inventory activities.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY

\*O=Ongoing

The play equipment at Henry Benavidez Community Center could benefit from equipment replacement funding.















FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
GOAL #5: PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING. INCREASE RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' ENJOYMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW PARK SPACES THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STANDARD PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING PRACTICES.							
OBJECTIVE 5.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE FEATURES AND FACILITIES.							
5.1.1	<b>Branding and Signage Program.</b> Prepare a system-wide branding plan and design manual. Develop consistent standards for identification, informational, regulatory, and way-finding signage, and banners.					POLICY	CITY
5.1.2	<b>Conceptual Park Design.</b> Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.					STUDY	CITY/ RESIDENTS
5.1.3	<b>Design Standards Manual.</b> Prepare a parks system design standards manual to identify the intended character of preferred amenities and structures. Existing facilities may be replaced according to the recommendations of the standards manual beginning with non-permanent fixtures.					POLICY	CITY
5.1.4	<b>Park, Facility, and Program Planning.</b> Involve residents and stakeholders in conceptual site planning and programming for specific park properties and recreational facilities, and in recreational program development or modification, to facilitate project understanding and garner public support.					STUDY	CITY/ RESIDENTS
5.1.5	<b>Lighting - Safety Assessment.</b> Conduct a park-by-park safety assessment with the Police Department to identify locations where security lighting upgrades are most necessary consistent with the City's outdoor lighting ordinance (including compliance with "dark sky" guidelines), and appropriate City design standards manuals.					STUDY	PRAB/ POLICE
5.1.6	<b>Lighting Technology.</b> Incorporate lighting standards into a parks system design manual that promotes an appropriate amount of lighting for the use that is being illuminated and applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimize the impact on adjacent properties and city-wide viewsheds.					POLICY	CITY
5.1.7	<b>Low-Impact Design Practices.</b> Work with the Las Cruces Sustainability Office to incorporate low-impact development and green building design practices into parkland and facility development and renovation projects.					POLICY/ REGULATION	CITY
5.1.8	<b>Maintenance and Operation Estimates.</b> Include a M.O.R.E. assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) within all conceptual park design plans to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Department budget following capital expenditure.					POLICY	CITY
5.1.9	<b>Way-finding.</b> Implement a multi-use trail way-finding system including directional signage, mileage markers, and location maps.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ REGULATION	CITY










\*O=Ongoing

FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
GOAL #6: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS. INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY OFFERING A DIVERSE SUITE OF PROGRAMS THAT CATER TO VARYING COMMUNITY INTERESTS, AGES, AND ABILITIES.							
OBJECTIVE 6.1. MONITOR AND REFINE THE METHODS BY WHICH RECREATIONAL PROGRAMING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC.							
6.1.1	<b>Aquatics – Competition.</b> Support competitive youth swimming programs upon completion of the 50-meter lap pool at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. Consider sponsoring an instructional swim league catering to entry-level swimmers of varying ages.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY/ YOUTH ORGANIZATIONS
6.1.2	<b>Community Events.</b> Continue to promote and expand family-oriented programming, special events, festivals and concerts, to enhance community identity, activity and education. Utilize the City’s parks, trails and recreation facilities as settings for community events where possible.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY/ CVB/ NMSU/ NON-PROFITS
6.1.3	<b>Athletic Programming.</b> Continue to leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver athletics programming.					POLICY	NON-PROFITS
6.1.4	<b>Programming Staff.</b> Expand the relationship with NMSU to increase students’ opportunities to coach, instruct, or teach in conjunction with municipal recreational programs on a temporary or part-time basis.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	NMSU
6.1.5	<b>Healthy Community.</b> Review City policies regarding food and alcohol consumption and tobacco use at municipal properties.					POLICY	CITY
6.1.6	<b>Program Reporting.</b> Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, attendance, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.					STUDY	CITY
6.1.7	<b>Cost Recovery.</b> Review and update cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.					STUDY	CITY COUNCIL/ PRAB
OBJECTIVE 6.2. EXPAND PROGRAM OFFERINGS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF UNDER-SERVED USER GROUPS.							
6.2.1	<b>Teen Programming.</b> Work with youth organizations to identify and create a suite of programs that interest teens.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	YOUTH BOARD/ PRAB
6.2.2	<b>Community Schools.</b> Use the Community School platform to provide targeted after-school and other programming options to residents within specific neighborhoods and school attendance areas.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY/ LCPS
6.2.3	<b>Special Needs Programming.</b> Continue to increase the City’s offerings of special needs programming to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of physical, mental, and social activities.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	NON-PROFITS
6.2.4	<b>Special Interest Sports.</b> Add special interest sports instruction to the City’s recreational programs which take advantage of existing facilities.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	NON-PROFITS

\*O=Ongoing






FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
<b>GOAL #7: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS. CONNECT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS THROUGH A ROBUST AND SUSTAINED PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORT, AND BY LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.</b>							
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.1. ACTIVELY MARKET THE AVAILABILITY OF MUNICIPAL PARKLAND, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND CITY-SPONSORED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.</b>							
7.1.1	<b>Community Relations Plan.</b> Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office and Public Information Office to establish clear policies and procedures for coordinating community outreach efforts related to park maintenance and programming.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
7.1.2	<b>Community Outreach.</b> Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, neighborhood organizations, homeowners' associations, service organizations, churches, and businesses to identify volunteer community service projects for basic park maintenance and improvement.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
7.1.3	<b>On-line Parks App and Mapping Tool.</b> Work with other City departments to provide improved access to interactive on-line parks system mapping features that identify the location of specific park properties and facilities in relation to specific queries including park name, facility type, addresses, and more.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT	CITY
7.1.4	<b>Marketing – General.</b> Continue to develop and refine the Park and Recreation Department's marketing image (i.e. style, formats, message, etc.).					NON-CAPITAL INVESTMENT	CITY
7.1.5	<b>Marketing – Tourism.</b> Work with the Convention and Visitors' Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to development information packets that promote municipal parks and recreational programs aimed at tourists and new residents.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CHAMBER OF COMMERCE/ CONVENTION AND VISITORS' BUREAU
<b>OBJECTIVE 7.2. EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MAXIMIZE ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS.</b>							
7.2.1	<b>Advocacy Group.</b> Support community-initiated efforts to create a "friends" group that can provide volunteers, funding, or in-kind contributions, and oversee advocacy efforts to supplement municipal parks and recreation services.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
7.2.2	<b>Funding Partners.</b> Create partnerships with advocacy and special interest groups to access funding for various recreational activities such as youth leagues, special events, athletic competitions, special use facilities, and concerts.					POLICY	CITY
7.2.3	<b>Conservation Organizations.</b> Encourage the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations to support development and management of a municipal open space lands program.					POLICY	CITY
7.2.4	<b>Trail Organizations.</b> Foster the development and capacity of local volunteer trail advocates (including the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance) to help with trails planning efforts, garner community support, leverage community resources, and play a role in stewardship and maintenance of trail facilities.					POLICY	CITY

\*O=Ongoing



FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)












ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
7.2.5	<b>Healthcare Providers.</b> Continue to explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MountainView Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and the Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.					POLICY	CITY
7.2.6	<b>Las Cruces Public Schools.</b> Continue to foster the partnership with Las Cruces Public Schools to utilize school sites for the placement of publicly-accessible recreation facilities and programs through cooperative joint-use agreements. Explore additional opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools as the city grows.					POLICY	LCPS
7.2.7	<b>Neighborhood Watch.</b> Continue the Neighborhood Watch program to reduce vandalism and improve the sense of security at municipal parks.					POLICY	NEIGHBORHOOD ASSOCIATIONS/ POLICE
7.2.8	<b>State and Federal Lands.</b> Continue to foster partnership opportunities on state and federal lands promoting outdoor activities including shooting sports, hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, rock climbing, off-road sports and similar activities in a way that does not adversely affect other resources.					POLICY	BLM/ STATE
7.2.9	<b>Tree City USA.</b> Continue efforts with other City departments to obtain Tree City USA designation by preparing and adopting tree policies or ordinances.					POLICY	CITY

\*O=Ongoing

The provision of senior programs promotes the City's efforts of being a healthy community.



FIGURE 5.1, PRIORITIZED IMPLEMENTATION ACTION PLAN (CONT.)

ACTION ID	ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
		1-2	3-5	6-10+	O*		
GOAL #8: ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT. IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PARK AND RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY BY ALIGNING ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES WITH MASTER PLAN GOALS.							
OBJECTIVE 8.1. FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT CAN ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF LAS CRUCES.							
8.1.1	<b>Accreditation.</b> Achieve Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association.					POLICY	CITY
8.1.2	<b>Department Organization – Events and Outreach.</b> Add a special events manager/coordinator and a social media/marketing position to the Recreation Section.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
8.1.3	<b>Department Organization – Facilities.</b> Assign a facilities manager to exclusively oversee the maintenance & renovation of buildings and structures operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. The dedicated facilities manager may be added to the Parks section of the Department or remain within the Facilities Management section of Public Works.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
8.1.4	<b>Department Organization – Planning.</b> Establish a permanent long-range planning position to oversee annual reporting and long-range planning activities in conjunction with CAPRA standards.					FINANCIAL INVESTMENT/ OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY
8.1.5	<b>Department Organization – Public Safety.</b> Establish a Park Ranger Section to be staffed by state accredited law enforcement officers to monitor municipal park properties and to oversee security at public events.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE/ STUDY	POLICE
8.1.6	<b>Rights-of-way.</b> Evaluate the transfer of alley and right-of-way maintenance to another City Department so that the Parks and Recreation Department can focus on their core mission of providing recreational services to the community.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE/ STUDY	PUBLIC WORKS
8.1.7	<b>Professional Development.</b> Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers, to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the NRPA, the New Mexico Recreation and Park Association, the Sports Turf Managers Association, and other applicable organizations.					POLICY	CITY
OBJECTIVE 8.2. AUGMENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS TO CALIBRATE AND IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.							
8.2.1	<b>Annual Report.</b> Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding and stewardship of tax dollars and fees & charges and distribute the report as widely as possible.					POLICY	PRAB
8.2.2	<b>Board Coordination.</b> Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other standing City boards and the City Council to improve coordination and to discuss policy matters pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities and funding.					POLICY	CITY COUNCIL/ OTHER CITY BOARDS/ PRAB
8.2.3	<b>Historical and Cultural Resources.</b> Partner with the Historic Preservation Committee and City Art Board to ensure that local historical and cultural resources on public properties are maintained.					POLICY	CITY ART BOARD/ HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE
8.2.4	<b>Performance Measures.</b> Actively participate in the NRPA’s Park Metrics program on a recurring basis including the input of annual agency updates into the Park Metrics program, and the evaluation of updated agency performance reports.					OPERATIONAL CHANGE	CITY

\*O=Ongoing

## SECTION 2:

### PLAN ADMINISTRATION

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department will oversee day-to-day management of this Plan. As evidenced by the growth of Las Cruces over the last decade, conditions in the City of Las Cruces will continue to change during the Master Plan's 10-plus year horizon. As the population of Las Cruces changes, the community could indicate a special need for a facility or program not prioritized in this Plan; an unexpected funding source could become available; or, implementation of recommended Plan actions could occur in an order or at a pace that is different from the priorities shown in **Figure 5.1, Prioritized Implementation Action Plan** (pages 207 - 218).

A review and update of this Plan should be conducted on a yearly basis, or when significant changes arise. For instance, Action 8.2.1 in **Chapter 4** recommends an annual report. These updates could be issued in short report format and attached to this Master Plan for easy use. Four (4) primary focus areas subject to periodic evaluation should consist of:

- **Facility Inventory and Conditions Assessment (Action 4.1.2, page 177).** *An inventory of new or improved City-owned facilities should be documented on an ongoing basis. In addition, this inventory should reference major changes or enhancements to the City's park properties and facilities.*
- **Community Involvement (Action 5.1.2, page 183; Action 6.1.5, page 189).** *This Master Plan reflects the attitudes voiced by the present community members of Las Cruces. Periodic surveys are suggested to provide a continuing account of resident attitudes. To make an accurate evaluation of the changes in opinions, it is suggested that upcoming surveys contain comparable questions to those contained within this Plan.*
- **Facility Use and Program Participation (Action 6.1.5, page 189).** *Facility use is an important factor in determining the need for additional facilities. Similarly, measures of program participation will help Las Cruces to determine how to adjust its recreational program and event offerings over time to best meet latent public demand. The City should continue to compile its "recreation and facility annual activity reports" and use the findings to adjust Master Plan recommendations as required.*
- **Implementation Program.** *As items from the Action Plan (Figure 5.1, Prioritized Implementation Action Plan) are implemented, updates should be made to each to sustain an up-to-date work program for City staff, and elected and appointed officials.*

### PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

The 2006 New Mexico Statutes – Section 5-8-3 – Authorization of fee states the following:

*"A municipality and county may enter into a joint powers agreement to provide capital improvements within an area subject to both county and municipal platting and subdivision jurisdiction or extraterritorial jurisdiction and may charge an impact fee under the agreement, but if an impact fee is charged in that area, the municipality and county shall comply with the Development Fees Act."*

The City's Impact Fee Study states that impact fees can only be used for capital improvements. Therefore, improvements made to parks are effected by both the Development Fees Act and the City's Impact Fee Study.

## ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT AND AMENDMENT

Before to the beginning of the yearly budget process, Parks and Recreation Department staff should create and present a yearly progress report to the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) on the status of the actions in the implementation action plan and other relevant topics (in accordance with Action 8.2.1 (Annual Report), page 199). Staff should also work with elected and appointed officials to determine if the implementation action plan should be amended.

Annual report preparation should also serve as an opportunity to update the PRAB and City Council on the department's status of attaining CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies).

## FIVE-YEAR UPDATE

A five-year plan update should be conducted to update land use assumptions and parkland/facility inventories; and, providing current information needed to update parks and recreation impact fees in accordance with the State of New Mexico's Development Impact Fees Act. A five-year Plan update also serves as an opportunity to solicit additional public opinion about recreational preferences and target levels of service.

## CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT

Several actions listed under Goal #4, Parkland and Facility Maintenance, are related to this Plan's conditions assessment. Suggested actions include a bi-annual update to the park and recreation master plan's conditions assessment to ensure the adequate maintenance of the parks system. The conditions assessment can also be used to prioritize park enhancements, starting with the amenities in the lowest scoring parks first.

## INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

Responsibility for the day-to-day oversight and management of this Parks Master Plan will be shared among the Parks and Recreation Department, City Manager's Office, and Public Works Department. Other City departments will also be involved with assisting in Plan administration including: Community Development, Public Outreach, and Police.

The Parks and Recreation Department will also need to coordinate with the Mesilla Valley Metropolitan Planning Organization (MPO) and Doña Ana County to ensure that the Plan is being implemented consistently with the plans from these organizations.

## BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS

Although the Parks and Recreation Department will be responsible for the oversight of this Plan, it is not the department responsible for establishing municipal park and recreation policy. Master Plan administration and implementation decisions must reflect the continuing direction of the City Council, and advisory boards. This section affirms the roles of important City boards and commissions in ensuring that the Plan - including upcoming revisions and implementation actions - remains the main guide influencing City park system growth.

### PARKS AND RECREATION ADVISORY BOARD

The City of Las Cruces Code of Ordinances shows the responsibilities of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) for the City of Las Cruces. This section of code consists of the provision that the Board:

*"...shall review all business and operations of the several parks and recreation areas and the recreation programs of the city; shall investigate any problems relating thereto; shall receive, review and present community recommendations; and shall ensure that the city council is fully apprised of parks and recreation matters at all times." (ch 2, § 2-348, City of Las Cruces Code of Ordinances)*

The PRAB acts as the City's advisory body for preparing and executing the City's parks master plan. Yearly Plan reviews suggested in herein should be conducted in consultation with the PRAB, and all future revisions should contain Board approval. The PRAB should be consulted when creating parks and recreation policy in other City planning documents – including the City's comprehensive plan.

### CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS ADVISORY COMMITTEE

The Las Cruces City Code establishes the duties of powers of the City's Capital Improvements Advisory Committee (CIAC). One of the CIAC's main responsibilities is to monitor and assess execution of the capital improvements plan. Continual coordination between the CIAC and PRAB will be important to ensure that capital improvement projects are consistent with this Plan.

The responsibility of the CIAC is to guide the city in adopting land use assumptions - consisting of an explanation of the service area and projection of changes and land uses, densities, intensities and residents in the service area in a minimum a five-year time frame - for purposes of recommending impact fees for various public services to the City Council.

### PLANNING AND ZONING COMMISSION

The responsibilities of the Las Cruces Planning and Zoning Commission are established in City Charter and the Las Cruces City Code. The review and oversight of a municipal comprehensive plan is included within the Commission's powers. Frequent coordination among the Commission and the PRAB will be essential to guarantee that comprehensive plan policies and recommendations align with this Plan.

The Planning and Zoning Commission is also responsible for managing the City's subdivision regulations and zoning ordinance. Their coordination with the PARB will be necessary to process land development regulation amendments recommended by this Plan.



*The historic Pioneer Womens' Park was established by the first members of the Women's Improvement Association. The park was deeded to the City in 1942.*

## OTHER BOARDS AND COMMISSIONS HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMITTEE

The Historic Preservation Committee helps City staff create standards for a city-wide historic preservation ordinance . The Committee and the PARB will need to coordinate to guarantee that historic buildings are protected and preserved in the City. The responsibilities of the Historic Preservation Committee include creating local historic districts and the creation of design guidelines/standards.

## CITY ART BOARD

The City Art Board makes official recommendations to the City Council relative to the acquisition and commissioning of municipal art installations. Coordination between the City Art Board and the PARB will be important to ensure that public art is commissioned and managed in a manner that is consistent with the recommendations in this Plan. The City Art Board will assume a primary role in assisting City staff in the creation of guidelines, programming, and management of policies, rules and regulations and recommendation for new art related projects and programs.

## SECTION 3:

### PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING STRATEGIES

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Investment in the Las Cruces parks and recreation system of a scale to maintain current levels of service and to match the aspirational targets proposed in this Plan requires the use of creative funding strategies. Although minor enhancements to current parks can frequently be completed by employing local funds, additional park, open space, and large facility projects may require other additional funding sources.

This section lists and describes some key (and common) funding implementation assistance opportunities. An extensive list of park and recreation funding opportunities is found in **Appendix E**.

#### KEY CITY-GENERATED FUNDING SOURCES

General Fund expenditures (i.e., non-capital expenditures) are mainly used for enhancements or repairs to existing parks and facilities. Typical general fund expenditures are for minor repair and replacement efforts. *(Note: Funding sources listed in this section are to prioritized.)*

#### MUNICIPAL BONDS

Debt financing through the issuance of municipal bonds is the most common method to fund park and open space projects. This kind of funding is an approach in which a city issues a bond, obtains an immediate cash payment to finance projects, and must repay the bond with interest over a set timeframe. General obligation bonds are the most common form of municipal bond and are the main bond type for park and open space projects.

#### BOND REFERENDUM

The Plan suggests immense capital needs, renovation and additional amenities, to meet the desires and demands of community members in Las Cruces. Following the completion of the recently approved 2018 GO bond, a new bond referendum could be held to fund an additional round of capital improvements that address needs referenced in this Plan. These bonds would be general obligation bonds introduced by City Council approval and resident vote. Similarly, a bond referendum or 1/4 cent sales tax referendum may provide funds for the creation of an open space lands program as recommended herein (Action 1.1.5, page 160).

#### REVENUE BONDS

A revenue bond is a municipal bond supported by the revenue from a specific project. Revenue bonds finance profit generating projects and are protected by a definite revenue source.

#### PROGRAM FEES AND FACILITY RENTALS

As referenced in **Chapter 3**, revenue generated directly by the Parks and Recreation Department through services, programs, special events, and other activities offered directly to the public accounts for almost 22 percent of all parks and recreation revenue. The City must continually evaluate how these fees can be calibrated to better share the costs of recreational programs while remaining affordable to those residents with the greatest need for public services (see Action 6.1.6, page 190).

## TAX INCREMENT FINANCING/PUBLIC IMPROVEMENT DISTRICTS

These related tools permit a development district to divert part of its property taxes to fund infrastructure enhancements in its area including plazas, pocket parks, linear parks, and additional kinds of facilities. In New Mexico, this tool is referred to as a Tax Increment Development District (TIDD).

## UTILITY PARTNERSHIPS

This type of partnership can be created for the purpose of providing and improving linear parks and trails in utility easements. This partnership usually does not include financial contributions. Although, through use agreements and/or easements, it makes property for trail corridors available at little or no cost to the public. Drainage corridors maintained by the Elephant Butte Irrigation District (EBID) are a principal example of where utility partnerships can be leveraged for public access.

## PARK DEVELOPMENT FEES (AND IMPACT FEES)

The City of Las Cruces currently collects impact fees as part of new residential development for the acquisition and improvement of new parkland. Whether assessing impact fees or not, many communities require direct parkland contributions through their land development regulations. Land development regulation requirements for parkland often include a fee-in-lieu provision that allow the community to collect a fee instead of parkland where necessary. Still other provisions may require a separate park development fee in addition to land dedication.

## UTILITY BILL CONTRIBUTIONS

In several communities, community members are permitted to add a minor amount to their utility bills to fund specific park enhancements. For example, the City of Colleyville, Texas, offers a Voluntary Park Fund, which permits residents to contribute \$2.00 per month through their water utility bills. This results in around \$150,000 per year, which is used to fund park enhancements in their city.

## PRIVATE DONATIONS

Private donations from involved residents, businesses, and organizations can support the parks and recreation system development. An official park contribution and donation program can be used to gather property and financial contributions for use in the City.

## SPECIAL REVENUE FUND

A special revenue fund is an account set up by a government entity devoted to funding a specific project. This account is sponsored by taxpayers and offers assurance that funding will go to an identified need.

## REAL ESTATE TRANSFER FEES

Since parks increase value to neighborhoods, some municipalities have turned to real estate transfer fees to assist in paying for required renovations.

## SALES TAX

The income source is extremely popular for funding park and recreation agencies either in part or entirely. The typical sales tax rate is one cent for operations and one half cent for capital.



## KEY GRANT FUNDING SOURCES

Grants can provide a substantial source of further funding for parks, but should not be used as the main source for park creation since funding is not guaranteed and local matches are often required.

- **Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)** - *This National Park Service fund is broken out in two (2) funding types: state grants and federal acquisition. State grants are dispersed to all 50 states, DC, and other territories based on factors such as number of residents. State grant funds can be used for park development and for purchase of parkland or easements.*
- **Urban Park and Recreation Recovery Grants** - *The Urban Park and Recreation Recovery (UPARR) program was started in November 1978 to offer matching grants and technical support to economically distraught municipal communities for restoration of critically desired recreation facilities.*
- **Community Development Block Grants** - *These funds are projected to create practical municipal areas by offering decent housing and an appropriate living location, and by increasing economic opportunities, primarily for low and moderate income individuals.*
- **National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) Grant** - *For 2009, the National Urban and Community Advisory Council has fixed their standards for the US Forest Service's Urban and Community Forestry challenge cost share grant program. Grants will be divided into two groups: innovation grants and best practices grants.*
- **Foundation and Company Grants** - *Can help in direct funding for projects, whereas others exist to assist resident efforts get established with small seed funds or technical and promotional support.*
- **Trust for Public Land Action Fund** - *This nonprofit corporation activates community support for measures that generate public funds for land conservation.*

## LAND ACQUISITION TOOLS/METHODS

This Plan's recommended actions include measures to acquire property for parkland, trails, and open space. Property acquisition need not be limited to outright fee-simple purchase of property. Multiple methods of property acquisition can be exercised to provide greater public access to parkland and open space.

### DIRECT PURCHASE METHODS

#### MARKET VALUE PURCHASE

By means of a written purchase and sale agreement, Las Cruces buys property at the current market price based on an independent assessment. Timing, purchase of real estate taxes and further contingencies are negotiable.

#### PARTIAL VALUE PURCHASE (OR BARGAIN SALE)

In a bargain sale, the property-owner decides to sell for less than the land's fair market value. A property-owner's choice to continue with a bargain sale is unique and private; property-owners with a solid sense of community pride, extensive public past or worries around capital gains are likely contenders for this method. In addition to cash profits on closing, the property-owner could be eligible to a charitable income tax deduction based on the difference among the property's fair market value and its final cost.

#### LIFE ESTATES & BEQUESTS

If a property-owner wants to stay on the land for an extended period or until death, many differences on a sale agreement exist. In a life estate agreement, the property-owner could remain to live on the property by giving a remainder interest and retaining a "reserved life estate." In a bequest, the property-owner entitles in a will or trust document that the land is to be shifted to Las Cruces after death.

### OPTION TO PURCHASE AGREEMENT

This is a binding agreement among a property-owner and the City that would only apply according to the circumstances of the selection and restricts the seller's authority to withdraw an offer. When in place and signed, the option agreement could be activated at a upcoming, definite day or on the conclusion of chosen circumstances. Option agreements can be made for any period of time and can contain all of the language related to concluding a property sale.

### IRREVOCABLE REMAINDER TRUSTS

Irrevocable remainder trusts allow persons to leave a part of their wealth to a public entity in a trust fund that permits the fund to increase over a time and then is accessible for recipient to use a part of the interest to support exact park and recreation amenities or programs that are selected by the executor.

### RIGHT OF FIRST REFUSAL

In this arrangement, the property-owner grants the City the initial opportunity to obtain land for sale. The contract does not determine the sale amount for the land, and the property-owner can refuse to sell it for the amount offered by the purchaser.

### SUBORDINATE EASEMENTS – RECREATION / NATURAL AREA EASEMENTS

This is offered when Las Cruces allows utility companies, businesses, or residents to create an upgrade above ground or below ground on their land for an established amount of time and an established price to be received by Las Cruces on a yearly basis.

### CONSERVATION AND/OR ACCESS EASEMENTS

A property-owner willingly decides to sell or give specific privileges associated with their land (usually the right to divide or develop), and a private group or public agency decides to hold the right to implement the property-owner's promise not to exercise those rights. Conservation easements could result in an income tax deduction and reduced property taxes and estate taxes. Usually, this method is used to provide trail corridors where only a minor part of the property is required or for the protection of natural resources and habitat.

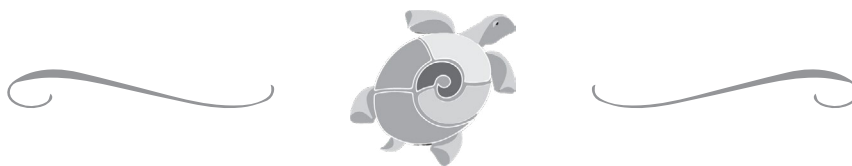
### LANDOWNER INCENTIVE MEASURES

#### DENSITY BONUSES

Density bonuses are a development means used to inspire a variety of public land use purposes, typically in urban settings. They offer the incentive of being able to develop at densities past existing regulations in one location, in return for concessions in another.

#### TRANSFER OF DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS

The transfer of development rights (TDR) is an incentive-based development means that permits property owners to trade the right to develop land to its fullest in one area for the right to develop past rules in another location. Local governments could create the precise locations in which development could be restricted and the locations in which development of past regulation could be permitted.







# LAS • CRUCES

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

