

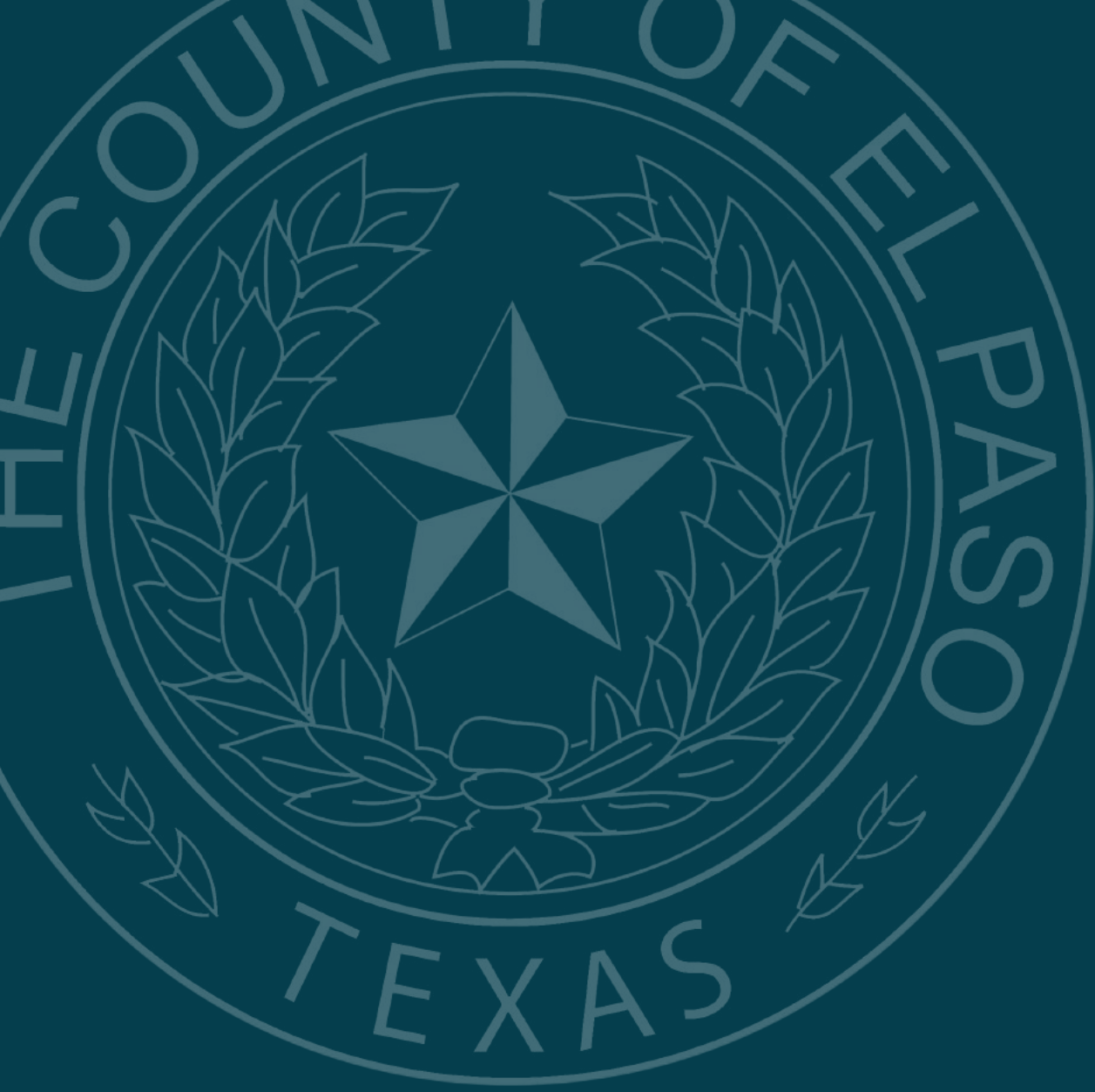
GREAT PARKS FOR EVERYONE



EL PASO COUNTY

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

OCTOBER 2021



EL PASO COUNTY

**PARKS AND RECREATION
MASTER PLAN**

Acknowledgments

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was developed by El Paso County 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 El Paso County Parks and Recreation Master Plan 2021.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments.....	v
Figures, Tables, and Appendices.....	ix
Abbreviations.....	xiv
CHAPTER 1, INTRODUCTION & PLANNING CONTEXT	
PLAN PURPOSE AND PARAMETERS.....	3
Purpose.....	3
Planning Area.....	4
PLAN STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT.....	7
Plan Development.....	8
Public Engagement.....	8
COMMUNITY CONTEXT.....	9
Demographic Profile.....	10
Wealth Profile.....	12
Health Profile.....	13
PARK AND RECREATION PLANNING IN EL PASO COUNTY.....	15
Park Planning In Texas.....	15
Review of Relevant Plans.....	15
Record of Accomplishments.....	16
CHAPTER 2, EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM	
DEFINING PARK SPACE.....	19
Park Classifications.....	19
Park Programming.....	21
EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION.....	22
Park Administration.....	22
El Paso County Parkland.....	23
Recreational Facilities.....	43
Recreational Programming.....	45

PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS.....	47
Public Service Providers.....	47
Additional Partners, Programs, and Facilities.....	48
CHAPTER 3, NEEDS ASSESSMENT	
ASSESSING PARK SYSTEM NEEDS.....	53
Methods of Park System Assessment.....	53
Public Needs and Preferences.....	54
Initial Feedback.....	55
PARK SYSTEM ASSETS AND FACILITIES.....	57
Parkland Service Standards.....	58
Future Parkland Service Needs.....	59
Recreational Facilities and Amenities.....	64
Parkland Dedication.....	67
Park Design and Development.....	69
Park System Conditions.....	71
Facility Conditions.....	72
El Paso County Park Properties.....	77
Conditions Summary.....	85
OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT.....	86
Staffing and Operation Expenditures.....	86
Maintenance Categories.....	87
Capital Budget.....	93
CHAPTER 4, PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	
PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS.....	97
GOAL 1: PARKS SYSTEM GROWTH.....	99
GOAL 2: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS.....	104
GOAL 3: PROGRAMS AND EVENTS.....	125

GOAL 4: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE.....128

ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....134

Character and Conditions..... 134

Ascarate Park Challenges and Opportunities..... 136

Ascarate Park Vision..... 137

SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.....142

Character and Conditions..... 142

Sportspark Challenges and Opportunities..... 144

Sportspark Vision..... 144

CHAPTER 5, IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

Implementation Program Parameters..... 149

Parks and Recreation Work Program..... 151

Plan Administration and Implementation..... 161

Funding Strategies..... 163

Figures

Figure 1.1, Regional Context Map.....	4
Figure 1.2, Planning Area Map.....	5
Figure 1.3, Plan Components.....	7
Figure 1.4, Parks and Recreation Master Planning Timeline.....	8
Figure 2.1, Park Classifications.....	20
Figure 2.2, Park Programming.....	21
Figure 2.3, Park Programming By Park Classifications.....	21
Figure 2.4, Organizational Structure.....	22
Figure 2.5, Parks and Recreation Operating Budget (FY 2021).....	22
Figure 2.6, El Paso County Parkland Inventory Map.....	24
Figure 2.7, Park Amenity Legend.....	24
Figure 2.8, Paso Del Norte Trail.....	49
Figure 3.1, Park System Assessment Types.....	53
Figure 3.2, Public Outreach Strategies.....	54
Figure 3.3, Top 3 Most Used Parks and Recreation Service Providers.....	55
Figure 3.4, Top 3 Most Used County Parks.....	55
Figure 3.5, Barriers to Park Use.....	55
Figure 3.6, El Paso County Park Planning Areas.....	58
Figure 3.7, Regional /Community Park Service Needs.....	60
Figure 3.8, Neighborhood Park Service Needs.....	62
Figure 3.9, Recreational Facilities, High Priority Investments.....	64
Figure 3.10, City Of El Paso, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (East).....	67
Figure 3.11, Conditions Assessment By Park.....	77
Figure 3.12, Full Time Employees By Responsibility.....	86
Figure 3.13, Sources of Operating Expenditures.....	86
Figure 3.14, Core Program Requirements.....	90
Figure 3.15, High Priority Recreational Programs.....	91
Figure 3.16, Special Event Priorities.....	91

Figure 4.1, Parks and Recreation Master Plan Goals.....	97
Figure 4.2, Ascarate Park Existing Conditions.....	135
Figure 4.3, Ascarate Park Vision Concept.....	140
Figure 4.4, Sportspark Existing Conditions.....	143
Figure 4.5, Sportspark Vision Concept.....	145
Figure 5.1, Parks System Investment Highlights.....	151

Tables

Table 2.1, El Paso County Park System, Existing Parkland.....	23
Table 2.2, El Paso County Park System, Common Recreational Facilities.....	44
Table 2.3, El Paso County Recreational Programs and Events (2019).....	46
Table 2.4, El Paso County Parks and Recreation Intergovernmental Agreements (2020).....	48
Table 3.1, Parkland Service Needs.....	57
Table 3.2, Minimum Parkland Dedication Ordinance Provisions.....	68
Table 3.3, Minimum County Park Facility Guidelines.....	70
Table 3.4, Park System Condition Categories.....	71
Table 3.5, Maintenance Summary (2020).....	87
Table 3.6, Summary of Maintenance Funding (2020).....	88
Table 3.7, Recreational Programming Age Segment Analysis.....	90
Table 3.8, Service Classifications.....	92
Table 3.9, Status of Capital Projects From 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan.....	93
Table 4.1, Opinion of Probable Construction Costs, Assumptions and Disclaimers.....	98
Table 4.2, Parks System Growth, Summary of Goals, Objectives and Actions.....	99
Table 4.3, Neighborhood Parks, Target Level of Service.....	100
Table 4.4, Parks System Investments, Summary of Goals, Objectives and Actions.....	104
Table 4.5, Agua Dulce Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	109
Table 4.6, Coyote (Tornillo) Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	110
Table 4.7, Estrella Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	111
Table 4.8, Gallegos Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	112
Table 4.9, Horizon Hills Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	113
Table 4.10, Risinger Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	114
Table 4.11, Rio Grande River Trail, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	115
Table 4.12, San Elizario Placita, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	116
Table 4.13, Sparks Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	117
Table 4.14, San Felipe Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	118
Table 4.15, Veterans (Fabens) Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs.....	119

Table 4.16, Westway Park, Probable Near-Term Improvement Costs..... 120

Table 4.17, Recreational Facilities, Example Level of Service Metrics..... 122

Table 4.18, Programs and Events, Summary of Goals, Objectives and Actions..... 125

Table 4.19, Operations and Maintenance, Summary of Goals, Objectives and Actions..... 129

Table 4.20, Ascarate Park Implementation Strategy..... 141

Table 4.21, Sportspark Implementation Strategy..... 146

Table 5.1, Parks and Recreation Policy Program..... 152

Table 5.2, Parks and Recreation Investment Program..... 158

Appendices

Appendix A - Opinion Survey - Findings Report

(separately bound report)

Appendix B - Parks And Recreation Operations Assessment

(separately bound report)

Appendix C - Funding Sources Guide

(separately bound report)

Abbreviations

CAPRA = Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies

CCC = Civilian Conservation Corps

EBID = Elephant Butte Irrigation District

FTE = Full-time Equivalent

IDA = Dark Sky Association

IESNA = Illuminating Engineering Society of North America

LWCF = Land and Water Conservation Fund

MLO = Model Lighting Ordinance

MOB = Mothers on Board

MORE = Maintenance, Operations, Revenue, and Expenses

MUD = Municipal Utility Districts

MWR = Morale, Welfare, and Recreation

NRPA = National Recreation and Parks Association

NUCFAC = National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council

OPCC = Opinion of Probable Construction Costs

PARD = Parks and Recreation Department

PDNHF = Paso del Norte Health Foundation

PIR = Priority Investment Rating

TLOS = Target Level of Service

TDR = Transfer of Development Rights

TORP = Texas Outdoor Recreation Plan

TPWD = Texas Parks and Wildlife Department

TRPA = Texas Recreation and Parks Account

UPARR = Urban Park and Recreation Recovery





CHAPTER 01

INTRODUCTION & PLANNING CONTEXT

PLAN PURPOSE AND PARAMETERS	3
PLAN STRUCTURE AND DEVELOPMENT	7
COMMUNITY CONTEXT	9
PARKS AND RECREATION PLANNING IN EL PASO COUNTY	15

Plan Purpose and Parameters

PURPOSE

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Master Plan was initiated in early 2020 to establish a long-term vision of the role that the County’s system of parks, facilities and programs would play in meeting the recreational needs of county residents. To successfully implement that vision, this Plan affirms the mission of the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department and identifies essential investments and operational enhancements necessary to provide quality park spaces and recreational resources. Plan vision, goals, and strategies seek to balance the recreational services provided by El Paso County with those offered by other public service providers.

The master planning process was initiated following a restructuring of the El Paso County Public Works Department which resulted in an influx of resources to a newly-autonomous Parks and Recreation Department. This citizen-supported vision document is a guide not only for the day-to-day activities of the County’s Parks and Recreation Department, but also for elected officials and staff to make decisions regarding land acquisition, park and trail improvements, and maintenance of existing and future recreation facilities - all of which are elements for creating a park and recreation system that is an asset to the community.

THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM MASTER PLAN INCLUDES...

- A LONG-TERM “VISION” FOR THE ROLE THAT THE PARKS AND RECREATION SYSTEM WILL PLAY IN ENHANCING QUALITY OF LIFE.
- THE DEFINED “MISSION” FOR THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT.
- A RECORD OF COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATIONAL PREFERENCES AND NEEDS.
- AN INVENTORY OF CURRENT PARK SYSTEM ASSETS AND CONDITIONS.
- A PLAN FOR SYSTEM-WIDE GROWTH TO KEEP PACE WITH A GROWING POPULATION.
- A LIST OF PRIORITIZED PARK INVESTMENTS TO MAINTAIN CURRENT FACILITIES AND PROVIDE NEW OPPORTUNITIES.
- STRATEGIES TO IMPROVE OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCIES IN ADMINISTERING AND MAINTAINING THE COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.
- STRATEGIES TO INCREASE PARK SYSTEM REVENUES WITHOUT BURDENING LOCAL RESIDENTS.
- PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES TO IMPROVE RECREATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY TO EL PASOANS.
- AN ACTION PLAN FOR IMPLEMENTATION.

WHY PLAN FOR PARKS? THE NRPA'S “THREE PILLARS”...

According to the National Recreation and Parks Association, public parks play an important role in enhancing three “pillars” of community well-being: health and wellness, conservation, and social equity. While these are foundational elements of parks and recreation, there are many more quality of life benefits that are extensions of the “Three Pillars.”

Communities across the country increasingly view vibrant park systems as an “essential” public service that is as important to community quality of life as infrastructure and public safety.

HEALTH AND WELLNESS

Providing the resources and tools for improved community health.

CONSERVATION

Protecting open space, connecting children to nature, and engaging communities in conservation practices.

SOCIAL EQUITY

Ensuring all people have access to the benefits of local parks and recreation.





VALUE & BENEFITS OF PARKS AND RECREATION

In positioning a park system to serve residents in accordance with the NRPA's three pillars, service providers can invest in assets that accentuate six inherent benefits of parks:

- 1 IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELL-BEING
- 2 SAFE DESTINATION AND HAVEN FOR YOUTH
- 3 INCREASED OPPORTUNITIES FOR VOLUNTEERISM
- 4 REVENUE OPPORTUNITY FROM TOURISM
- 5 ELEMENT OF A COMPETITIVE ECONOMIC PORTFOLIO
- 6 CONSERVATION OF VALUABLE NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES

PLANNING AREA

REGIONAL CONTEXT

El Paso County is the westernmost county in the state of Texas, as shown in **Figure 1.1: Regional Context Map**. The County straddles the Rio Grande Valley, shares a border with Mexico and New Mexico and is approximately 600 miles west of Dallas, Texas and 300 miles south of Albuquerque, New Mexico. The City of El Paso, the County seat, is the 6th largest city in Texas, the 20th largest city in the United States and the largest U.S., city bordering Mexico.

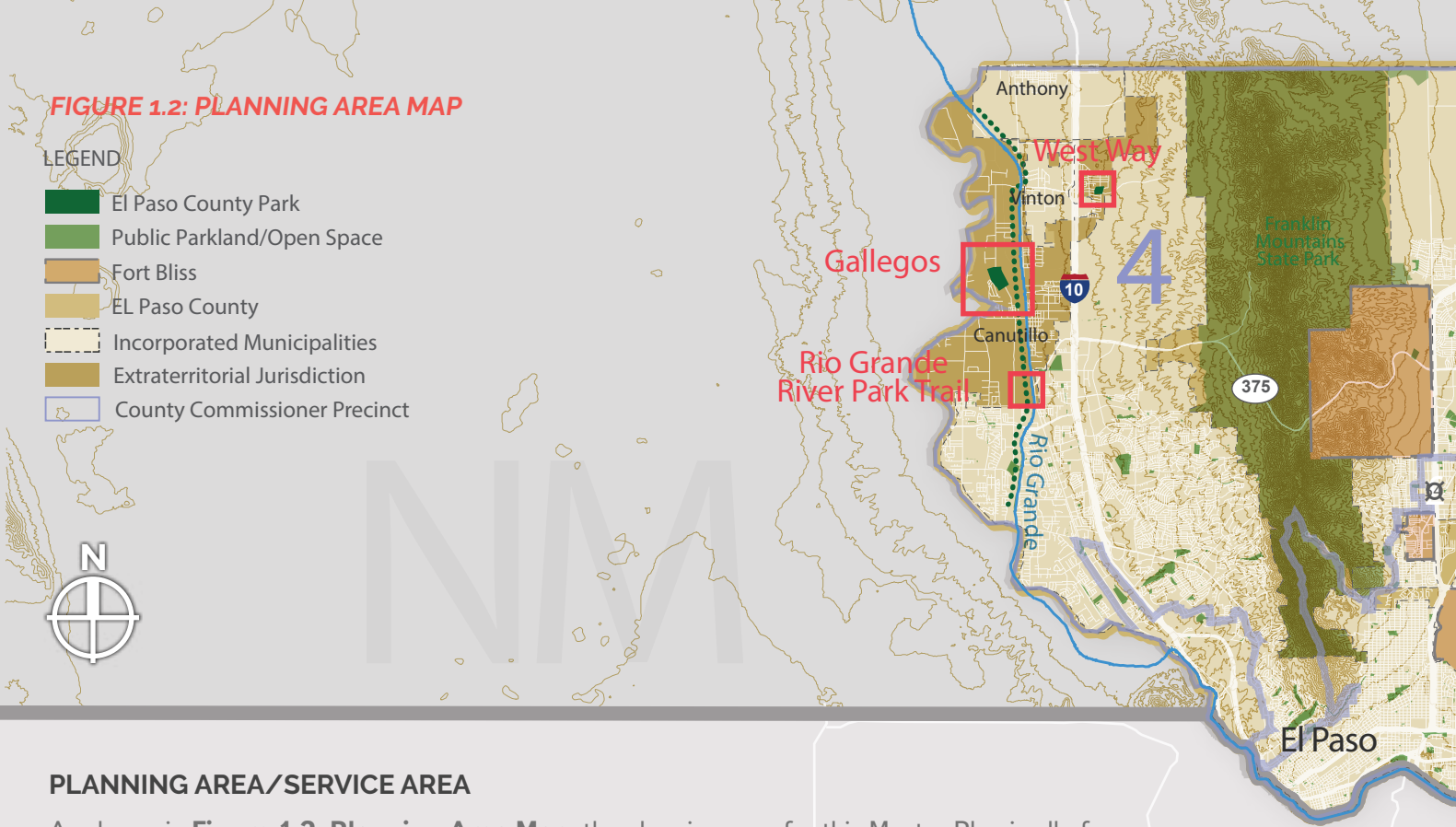
El Paso County, as its name suggests, has long been a “pass” for many travelers, but the natural features of the area make it an increasingly popular outdoor sports location - particularly for mountain biking, rock climbing, and all-terrain vehicle riding. Interstate 10, the southernmost cross-country highway, runs through El Paso County. The Bridge of the Americas, informally known as Puente Libre, is located within the City of El Paso and is a border crossing into Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. Collectively, El Paso and Ciudad Juárez anchor an international metropolitan area of over 2.1 million residents (as of 2019)¹.

FIGURE 1.1: REGIONAL CONTEXT MAP



1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey - 5 Year Estimates

FIGURE 1.2: PLANNING AREA MAP



PLANNING AREA/SERVICE AREA

As shown in **Figure 1.2: Planning Area Map**, the planning area for this Master Plan is all of El Paso County. The County is 1,011 square miles (647,209 acres) and, as of the end of 2019, contains 873,688 people for a population density of 1.34 persons per acre. Roughly 85 percent of the region’s residents live in the City of El Paso while the remainder reside in small municipalities, unincorporated townships and rural areas along the U.S.-Mexico border. The population density for residents living outside of the City of El Paso is 0.26 persons per acre.

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department serves all residents of El Paso County. It is important however to note that there is a difference in this Plan’s **planning area** (as represented by **Figure 1.2**) and the El Paso County Park and Recreation Department’s three **service areas** (as defined in the table below). This distinction is highlighted below and influences recommendations contained in this Plan for the enhancement of the County-owned and maintained system.

EL PASO COUNTY AS PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDER

El Paso County Government’s role as recreation provider varies by geography:

AS PRINCIPAL SERVICE PROVIDER:

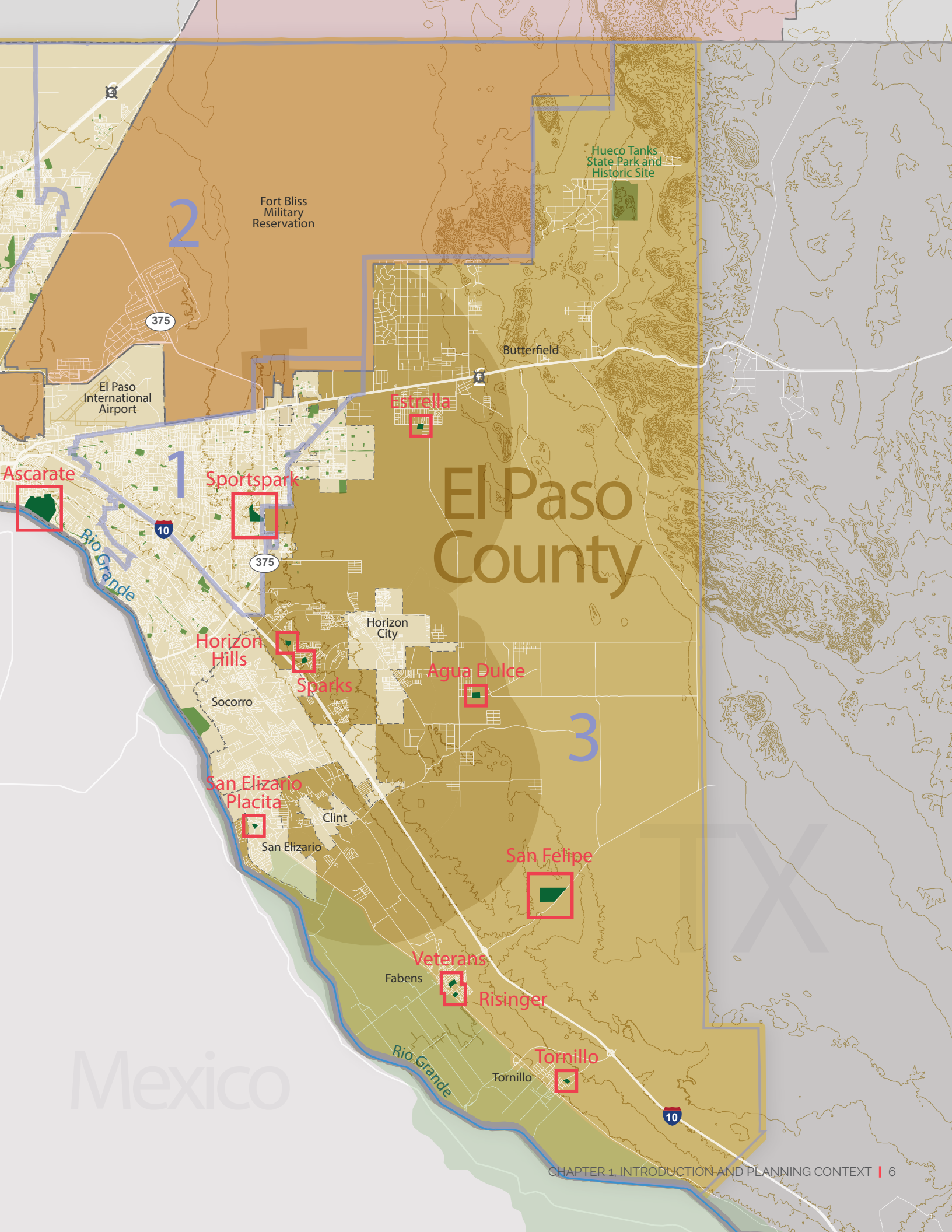
El Paso County serves as the principal parks and recreation service provider for residents of unincorporated El Paso County.

AS SECONDARY SERVICE PROVIDER:

The location of County-owned and maintained neighborhood and community parks make the County a potential service provider for other area communities of: Anthony, Canutillo, Clint, Fabens, Horizon City, San Elizario, Socorro, Tornillo, and Vinton.

AS TERTIARY SERVICE PROVIDER:

Soldiers residing on Fort Bliss may enjoy the same recreational amenities that are provided to non-military residents who reside in El Paso County full-time.



El Paso County

2

Fort Bliss
Military
Reservation

Hueco Tanks
State Park and
Historic Site

375

El Paso
International
Airport

Butterfield

Estrella

Ascarate

Sportspark

Rio Grande

10

375

Horizon
Hills

Horizon
City

Sparks

Agua Dulce

Socorro

3

San Elizario
Placita

Clint

San Elizario

San Felipe

Veterans

Fabens

Risinger

Tornillo

Tornillo

Rio Grande

10

Mexico



Cruise Ascarate, Ascarate Park

Plan Structure and Development

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is organized into five chapters, as illustrated in **Figure 1.3: Plan Components**. The five chapters are reflective of the process used to develop the Plan.

FIGURE 1.3: PLAN COMPONENTS

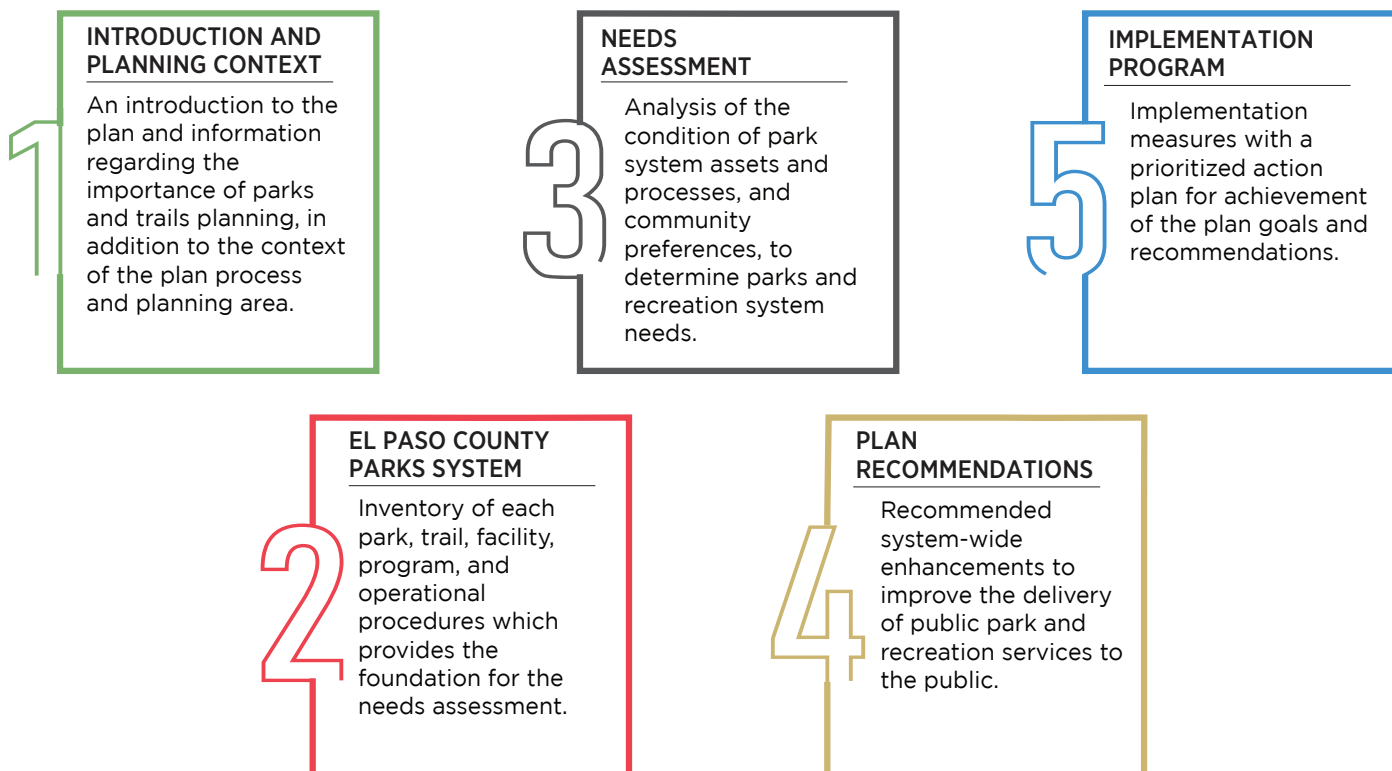




FIGURE 1.4: PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLANNING TIMELINE



PLAN DEVELOPMENT

This Plan is the product of El Paso County’s first public parks and recreation master planning process. It was initiated following an internal strategic planning effort prepared by El Paso County Parks and Recreation staff entitled “County Regional Park Plan” and presented to the Commissioner’s Court in special session on July 26, 2018. This Plan builds upon the initial staff-led effort.

The 2021 El Paso County Parks and Recreation Master Plan has been prepared by a consultant team selected by the Parks and Recreation Department. During the planning process, County staff provided data and document review assistance, and assistance with public engagement.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

The El Paso Parks and Recreation Master Plan process included opportunities for the public to provide input, ideas, and concerns about parks and recreational facilities within El Paso County. The following methods were utilized to obtain input regarding local recreational preferences:

- *Online survey*
- *Statistically-valid survey*
- *Stakeholder meetings*
- *Public open houses*

The results of public outreach activities are presented in the “demand-based” assessment section of **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**.

Community Context

El Paso County was created from the Bexar District in 1849, organized in 1850 and finally incorporated in 1911. Portions of El Paso were taken from Culberson County in 1911 and Hudspeth County in 1915. El Paso County is situated at the westernmost corner of Texas.

El Paso County is home to beautiful Franklin Mountains and the expansive Chihuahuan Desert. The County is also home to Fort Bliss military installation, government and the military, wholesale and retail distribution, education, tourism, maquiladora plants, varied manufacturing, oil refining, cotton, and food processing are all major parts of the El Paso County economy.

Key statistical demographic, wealth, and health indicators of El Paso County's population are presented on **pages 10 through 14**. Influenced to a large degree by the structure of the local economy, lower than average wealth and health indicators illustrate a sustained local need to augment private recreation and health amenities with a robust network of publicly-supported and accessible recreational amenities.

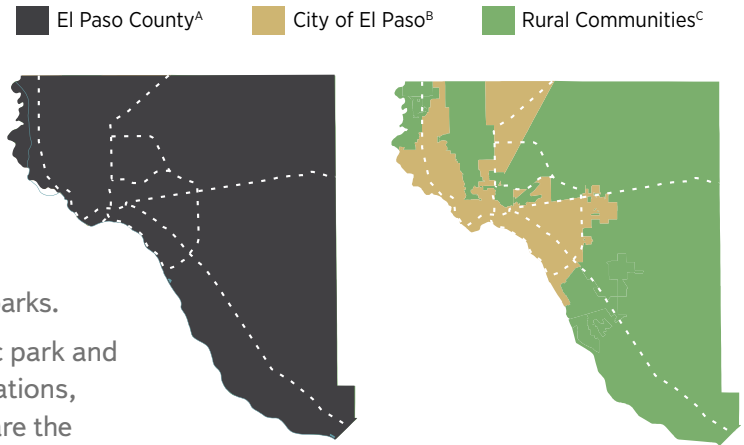
The Franklin Mountains provide a breathtaking and omni-present backdrop to many of the parks owned and maintained by El Paso County, and to the community as a whole.



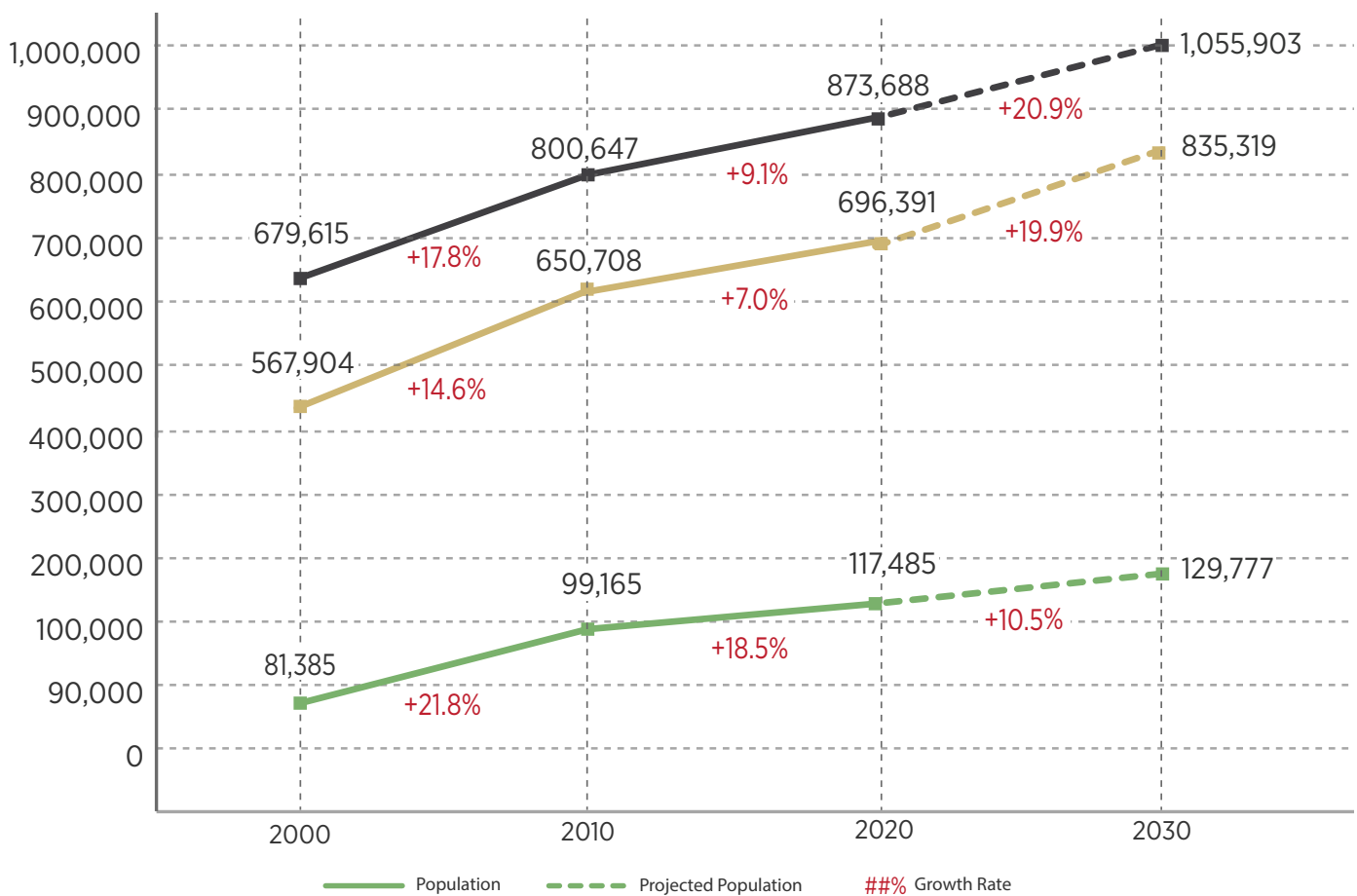
DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

El Paso County Government provides parks and recreation services for all El Pasoans. Individuals living within the municipal limits of the City of El Paso also have direct access to additional recreational services provided by the City. Residents of unincorporated El Paso County and smaller municipalities must rely almost exclusively on County parks.

Given the County’s role as principal or ancillary public park and recreation service provider to city and non-city populations, many of the statistics on **pages 11 through 14** compare the characteristics of all El Pasoans with city of El Paso residents and non-residents.



Population Projection ¹



- A. ■ El Paso County = All incorporated and unincorporated.
- B. ■ City of El Paso = Inside municipal limits.
- C. ■ Rural Communities = All areas (incorporated and unincorporated) outside City of El Paso municipal limits.

1. Source: U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey - 5 Year Estimates 2019

QUICK FACT: DEMOGRAPHICS



Between 2010 and 2018 the population of unincorporated El Paso County¹ has increased by 18.5 percent to over 117,485 persons. During this same period, the total amount of parkland acreage operated and maintained by El Paso County increased by only 0.36 percent to 826 acres. Residents in unincorporated El Paso County are served by a much lower ratio of public parkland versus residents in the City of El Paso.

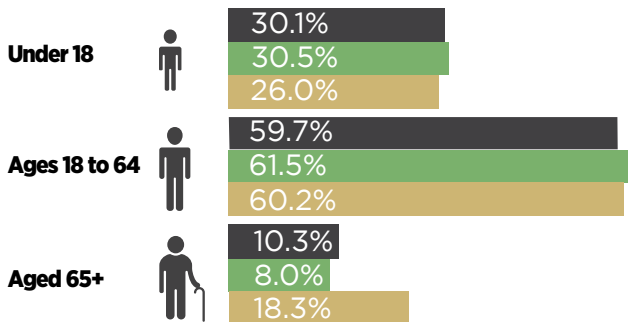
1. Includes the municipalities of Anthony, Clint, Horizon City, San Elizario, Socorro and all other areas outside of an incorporated area.

Overall Population

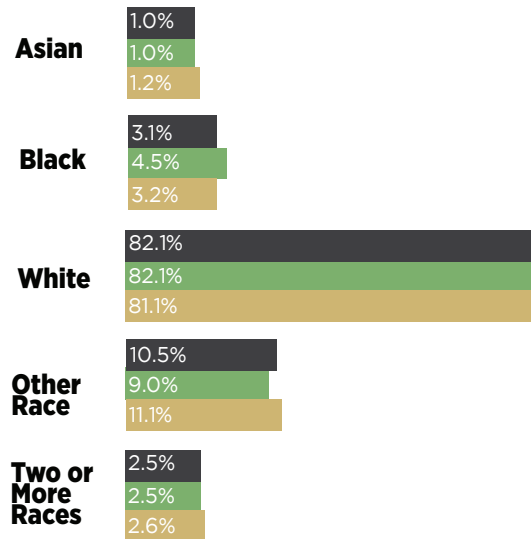


El Paso County^A
873,688
 City of El Paso^B
756,203
 Rural Communities^C
117,485

Population by Age



Race



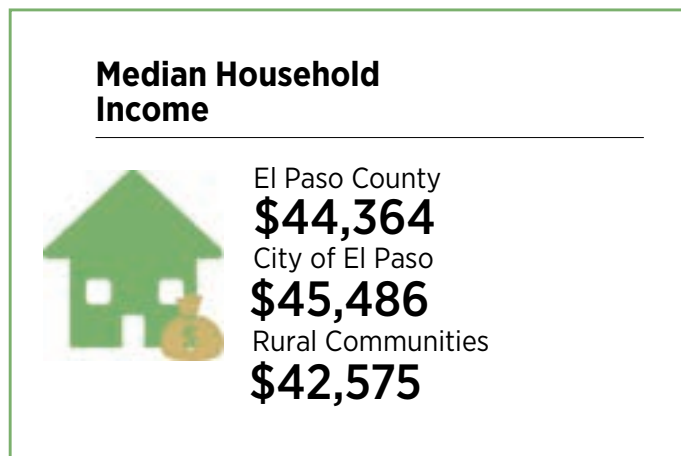
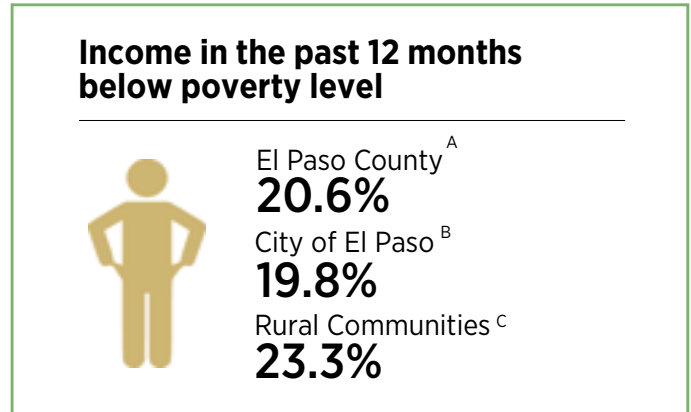
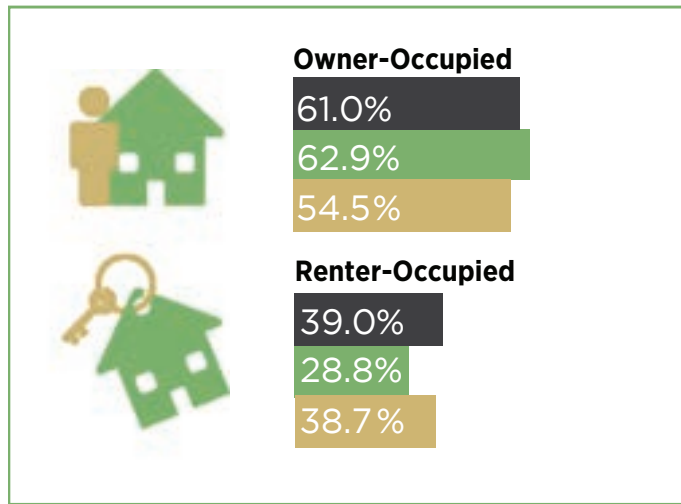
Ethnicity



A. El Paso County = All incorporated and unincorporated. B. City of El Paso = Inside municipal limits. C. Rural Communities = All areas (incorporated and unincorporated) outside City of El Paso municipal limits.

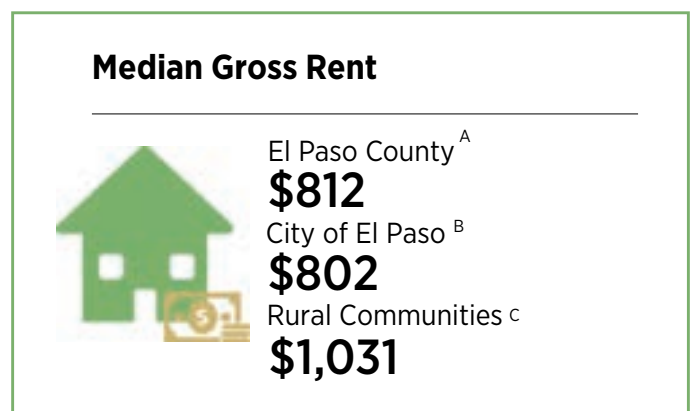
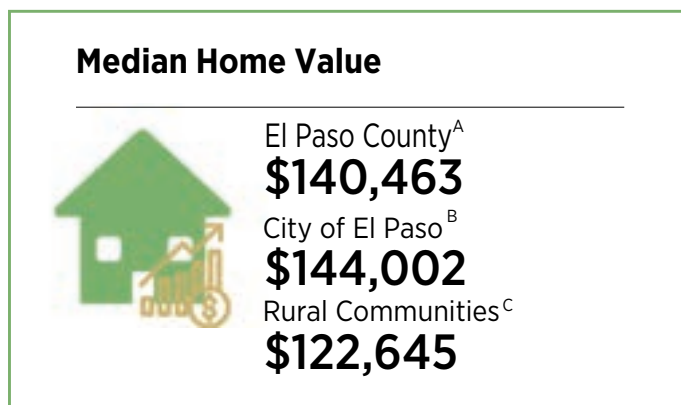
Source (All figures): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey - 5 Year Estimates 2019

WEALTH PROFILE



QUICK FACT: WEALTH

While residents of El Paso County’s rural communities have a lower median household income and higher levels of poverty than to the County’s urbanized population, median gross rent is substantially higher. This results in residents of rural communities dedicating higher percentages of their income to living costs. Such costs are further exacerbated when considering elevated transportation expenses due to longer commuting distances and times.



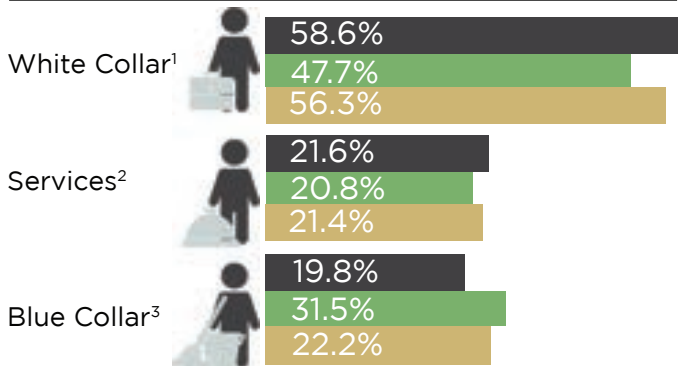
A. El Paso County = All incorporated and unincorporated.

B. City of El Paso = Inside municipal limits.

C. Rural Communities = All areas (incorporated and unincorporated) outside City of El Paso municipal limits.

Source (All Figures): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey - 5 Year Estimates

Employment by Industry Sector



1. Relating to the work done or those who work in an office or other professional environment.

2. Any industry that produces value, such as customer service, management, advice, knowledge, design, data and experiences.

3. Relating to manual work or workers, particularly in industry.

HEALTH PROFILE

Parks and recreation play a critical role in the health of a community by providing spaces to move and play. The graphics on the **facing page** are indicators of the health of the El Paso County community.

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 figures are augmented by additional data on El Paso County residents provided by Healthy Paseo del Norte.

Avg. Size Household



El Paso County ^A
3.06
 City of El Paso ^B
2.99
 Rural Communities ^C
3.58

Percentage of Single Parent Homes:



El Paso County ^A
25.9%
 City of El Paso ^B
26.2%
 Rural Communities ^C
23.1%

QUICK FACT: HEALTH



According to the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's 2020 County Health Rankings and Roadmaps (**facing page**), El Paso County ranks 134 out of 254 Texas counties in terms of community-wide health factors, and 111 out of 254 in health outcomes — including measures of diet and exercise. Public parks and recreation providers can greatly influence positive change in measures of diet and exercise by offering expanded access exercise opportunities and general physical activity.

A. El Paso County = All incorporated and unincorporated.

B. City of El Paso = Inside municipal limits.

C. Rural Communities = All areas (incorporated and unincorporated) outside City of El Paso municipal limits.

Source (All Figures): U.S. Census Bureau, American Community Survey - 5 Year Estimates

Physical Health



73.9%

of people reported having more than five consecutive days of insufficient exercise

Mental Health



23.5%

of people reported having more than five consecutive days of poor mental health

Obesity



35%

of adults over 30 are obese

Disability



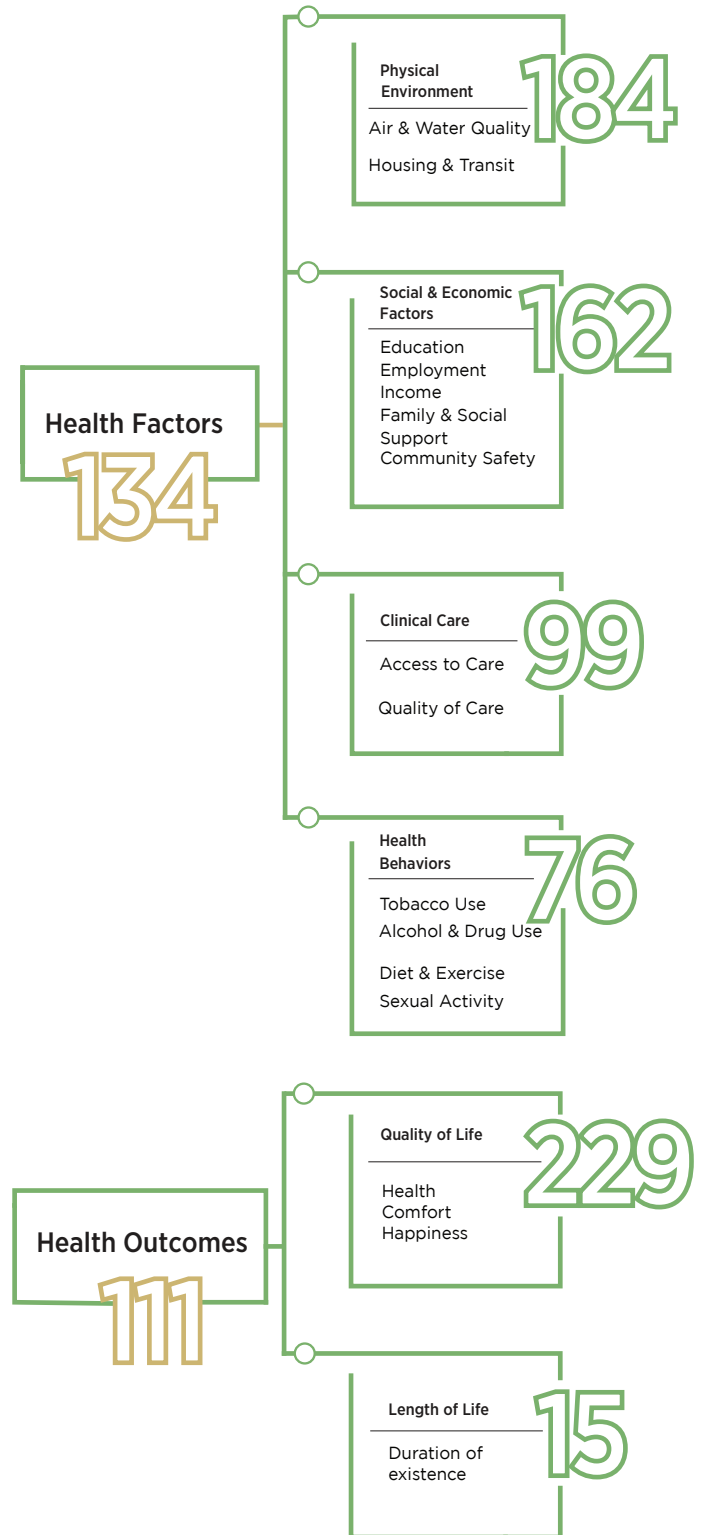
13.3%

of people live with a disability

Source: Healthy Paso del Norte



Ranking Out of 254 Texas Counties



Source: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

Park and Recreation Planning in El Paso County

PARK PLANNING IN TEXAS

TEXAS PARKS AND WILDLIFE DEPARTMENT (TPWD) COMPLIANCE

The TPWD recommends that parks master plans retain validity for 10 years and should include a five-year update. Consistent with TPWD recommendations, a “qualifying” plan increases a local government entity’s competitiveness when applying for TPWD grant funding. To remain in compliance with the TPWD guidelines, a list of priorities for the next five and ten year period shall be maintained during implementation. For purposes of grant applications, an effective set of actions, informed by recognized needs, have been recommended in this Plan to increase the quality of life of residents.

TEXAS OUTDOOR RECREATION PLAN (TORP)

The Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) Act of 1965 authorized the distribution of matching federal grants to states and local governments for statewide outdoor recreation planning, and to leverage public and private investment outdoor recreation through the acquisition and development of property and facilities. The State of Texas’s 2018 TORP fulfills an eligibility requirement allowing Texas to continue receiving its allotted appropriation through the LWCF program. Each state is required to produce a statewide comprehensive outdoor recreation plan at least once every five years. The TORP was last updated in 2018.



For residents to lead active, healthy lives, the physical environment must enable and encourage physical activity. Trails and outdoor recreation opportunities are an excellent way for people to get outdoors, exercise, and explore their neighborhoods. Completing a trail network that connects all of El Paso County has many benefits to residents, visitors, and the local economy.



PASO DEL NORTE TRAIL MASTER PLAN (OCTOBER 2018)

REVIEW OF RELEVANT PLANS

El Paso County has a history of engaging in planning initiatives, including special studies and plans for targeted needs, districts, corridors, and the parks system. The following is a list of previous planning efforts related to El Paso County and how they have influenced the development and maintenance of the County parks and recreation system:

- *El Paso County Regional Park Plan: This special session with the Parks and Recreation Division was held in 2018 to discuss mission, goals, and project scope. The plan was approved and led to funding of this Master Plan.*
- *El Paso County: 2018-2019 Strategic Plan: While not directly related to parks, this planning effort set a County-wide vision and policies. Future parks and recreation efforts will contribute to the vision to become a vibrant bi-national community.*
- *El Paso County Stormwater Master Plan Update: Coordination with stormwater planning is important because many drainage areas can be utilized for parks and trails.*
- *El Paso Resiliency Strategy: This planning effort was coordinated among multiple departments and is a mechanism for resiliency-thinking, which can be incorporated into future planning efforts like the Parks and Recreation Master Plan.*
- *Paso del Norte Trail Master Plan: This community-driven plan created the blueprint for a County-wide trail. The Parks and Recreation master plan can serve as a tool to move this trail forward and create policy guidance.*
- *El Paso Mission Trail Comprehensive Plan: This plan created a vision for the historic trail area of the El Paso Mission Valley. The Parks and Recreation Master Plan is an opportunity to carry forward recommendations related to parks and trails.*

RECORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS

ACTION PLANS YIELD RESULTS! At the beginning of the master planning process, the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department identified a series of recent accomplishments in the County’s efforts to build and maintain a parks and recreation system that met the need of its citizens. Recent project, partnership, and organizational accomplishments include:

- *(2016) Estrella Park improvements. Includes extending green space, sand volleyball court, perimeter sidewalks, benches and trees.*
- *(2016) Agua Dulce Park improvements. Includes playground updates, solar lighting, perimeter sidewalks, benches, green space, landscaping and trees.*
- *(2017) Partnership with Fabens ISD. Re-established for the creation of two playgrounds and accessible sidewalks in Veterans Park.*
- *(2018) El Paso County restructures it’s organization from Parks and Special Events to Parks and Recreation.*
- *(2018) Recipient of a KABOOM Grant to fund a playground at Tornillo Park.*
- *(2019) Recipient of the All-Abilities Playground Grant for Ascarate, Gallegos, and Risinger Parks.*
- *(2020) El Paso County increases Parks and Recreation Department budget by 22% percent from FY2017 to FY2020.*
- *(2020) Special Events Division Marketing staff were hired.*
- *(2020) Many seasonal positions were converted to full-time equivalent (FTE) positions.*



Agua Dulce Park prior to enhancements (above) and after enhancements (below).







CHAPTER 02

EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM

DEFINING PARK SPACE	19
EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION	22
PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS	47



Playscape at Coyote Park in Tornillo

Defining Park Space

The El Paso County parks and recreation system is comprised of 12 parks of varying scale that serve the residents of El Paso County¹. As with most communities, El Paso County’s 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”).

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.

PARK CLASSIFICATIONS

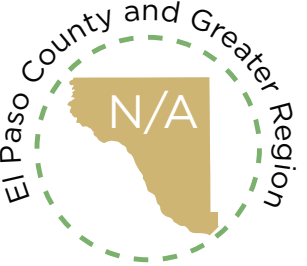
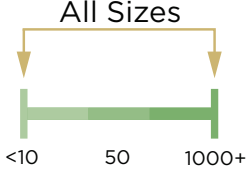

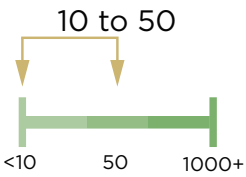

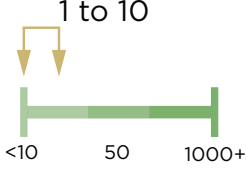
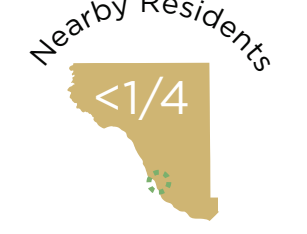
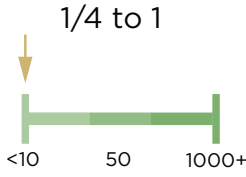
Park and recreation systems include multiple park types to serve different geographic service areas, purposes, and intended users. Understanding the distinct characteristics of different park types assists a community in identifying system gaps and overlaps in the County park system, and determining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

Building from standard industry practices, this Plan classifies El Paso County’s parkland within seven broad park classifications. **Figure 2.1: Parks Classifications** outlines the characteristics of the following park types:

- *Regional Park*
- *Community Park*
- *Neighborhood Park*
- *Pocket Park*
- *Linear Park*
- *Special Use Park*
- *Civic Space*

1. Includes River Park Trail which is maintained but not owned by El Paso County.

FIGURE 2.1: PARK CLASSIFICATIONS¹

STANDARD PARK TYPE	SERVICE AREA (MILES)	SIZE (ACRES)	GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS
REGIONAL PARK	 <p>El Paso County and Greater Region N/A</p>	 <p>All Sizes <10 50 1000+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts events, festivals and tournaments • Located near major roads • Accessed primarily by car • Unique regional amenities or specialized facilities
COMMUNITY PARK	 <p>Multiple Neighborhoods 1-2+</p>	 <p>10 to 50 <10 50 1000+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hosts events and festivals • Located near major roads • Accessed by bike/walking as well as car • Active and passive facilities cater to local needs. • Often include open space for unstructured recreation and natural areas
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	 <p>Adjacent Neighborhood 1/4-1/2</p>	 <p>1 to 10 <10 50 1000+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evenly distributed throughout residential areas • Accessed primarily by walking and biking • Active and passive amenities for all ages • Organized play opportunities
POCKET PARK	 <p>Nearby Residents <1/4</p>	 <p>1/4 to 1 <10 50 1000+</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Located very close to residents • Accessed entirely by walking and biking • Extremely accessible but small size limits amenities offered

UNIQUE PARK TYPES

LINEAR PARK

- Follow natural or man made corridors
- Facilitate pedestrian and bicycle travel
- Provide links to other parks, schools, neighborhoods, civic buildings, and other destinations.
- Often serve as open space

SPECIAL USE PARK

- Designed to serve a unique or niche use such as skate park, dog park, shooting range, motocross park, etc.
- Athletic complexes
- Natural areas/open space

CIVIC SPACE

- May host Events/Festivals
- Located in city centers or dense urban environments
- Defined by social space and not active recreation
- May include greens, squares, plazas, or parkways

1. All guidelines serve as representative examples only. Actual park design, features, and classifications will vary on a case-by-case basis.

PARK PROGRAMMING

While the general park classifications presented on pages 19 and 20 provide context regarding property distribution and level of service, additional consideration must be given to how park space is programmed to serve different functions and users. Pre-determining how park space should be programmed - during design and prior to construction - provides a clearer connection between public needs and expectations.

Park providers are taking an increasingly proactive 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 2.2: Park Programming Classifications identifies three distinct park programming categories: recreational, social, and natural space. In addition to these 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 they intend to program the space so that, residents do not develop a false expectation about the degree of public access and activity which may ultimately be promoted at the location.

Figure 2.3: Comparison of Park Classifications and Park Programming, compares the general suitability of the three park programming categories by park classification.

FIGURE 2.2: PARK PROGRAMMING

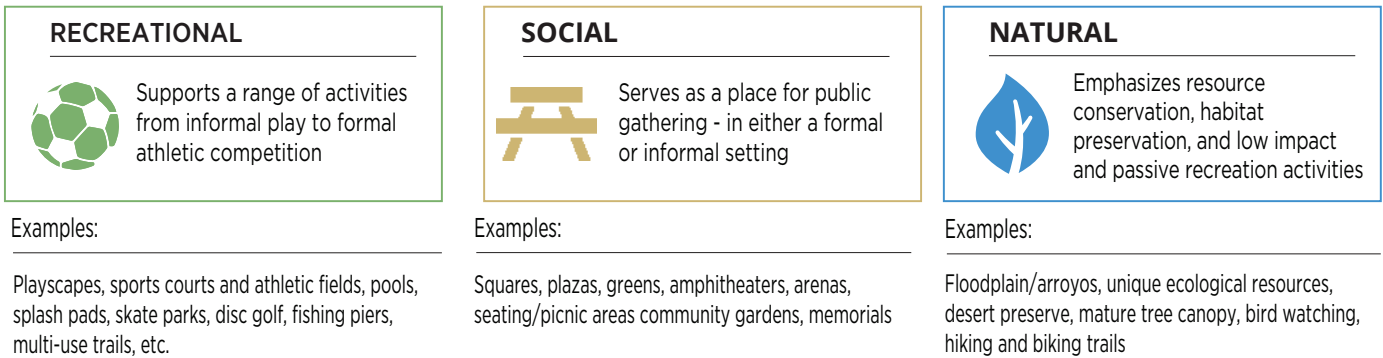


FIGURE 2.3: PARK PROGRAMMING BY PARK CLASSIFICATIONS¹

PROGRAM TYPES	PARK CLASSIFICATIONS				
	REGIONAL	COMMUNITY	NEIGHBORHOOD	CIVIC	SPECIAL USE
RECREATIONAL					
SOCIAL					
NATURAL					

1. The use of one of these icons denotes that the park space programming type may be a prominent or common feature.

El Paso County Parks and Recreation

The City of El Paso is the principal public parks and recreation provider for the majority of residents in El Paso County. In contrast, El Paso County government has assumed the role of principal parks and recreation provider for the residents of unincorporated portions of the County and of smaller metropolitan communities that are otherwise underserved by public parks and recreation amenities. Regardless, in all instances the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department has been able to provide additional niche services to all incorporated and unincorporated residents.

PARK ADMINISTRATION

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) serves under the umbrella of the Public Works Department. **Figure 2.4: Organizational Structure**, displays the administrative structure of the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Division and identifies the number of full time employees (FTEs) by division. At the beginning of 2020, the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Division employed 76 full time and 25 seasonal staff.

Figure 2.5: Parks and Recreation Operating Budget (FY 2021), displays the PAR's approved operating budget for fiscal year 2021 by division and sources of operating expenditures. Based on the 2019 actual budget and estimated 2021 operating budget, there will be a budget increase of 14.8 percent.



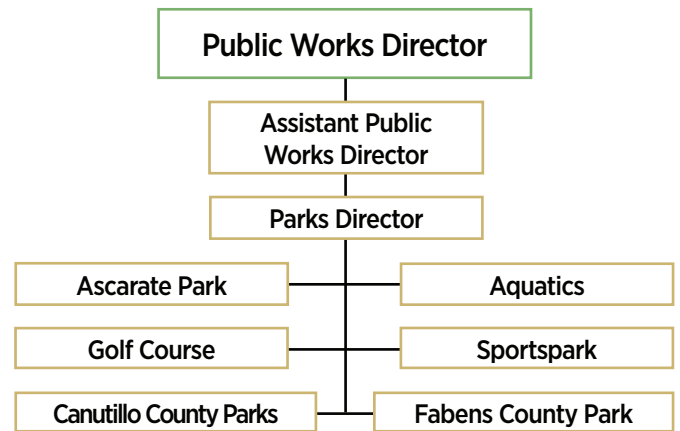
DID YOU KNOW?

IN 2019, THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT:

- Registered 16,475 youth and 2,600 adult participants in baseball /softball programs at the Sportspark.
- Collected \$151,987 of rental revenue from 19 tournaments at the sportspark
- Collected \$60,623 of revenue from private pool rentals
- Generated \$121,995 of rental revenue from special events

Source: El Paso County PAR Budget Infographic

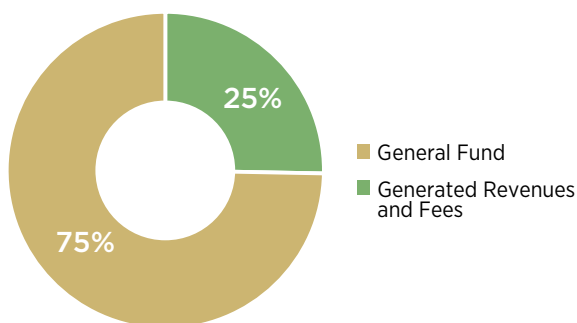
FIGURE 2.4: ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE



Source: El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department

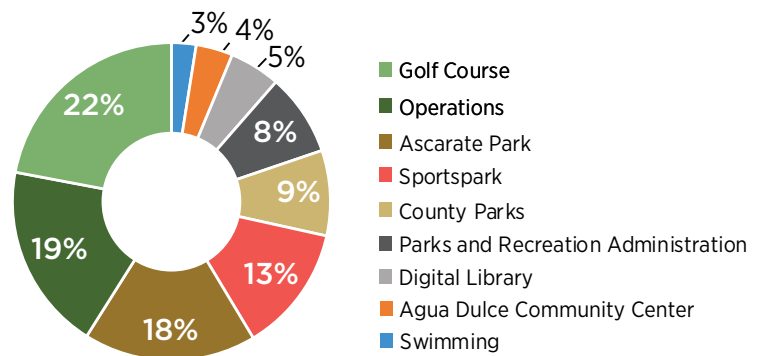
FIGURE 2.5: PARKS AND RECREATION OPERATING BUDGET (FY 2021)

2021 Operating Budget Sources
(\$7,724,878)



Source: El Paso County FY2021 Adopted Budget

2021 Operating Budget by Division



EL PASO COUNTY PARKLAND

Table 2.1, El Paso County Park System, Existing Parkland illustrates that as of 2020 El Paso County operates 12 parks totaling 817 acres. The County’s total park land acreage equals roughly 3.17 acres of parkland per 1000 residents in the rural communities of El Paso County.

TABLE 2.1: EL PASO COUNTY PARK SYSTEM, EXISTING PARKLAND¹

PARK	ADDRESS	OWNER	PRECINCT	ACRES
REGIONAL PARKS				
ASCARATE PARK ²	6900 Delta Dr.	EPC	2	407.7
ASCARATE LAKE	6900 Delta Dr.	EPC	2	48.8
ASCARATE GOLF COURSE	6900 Delta Dr.	EPC	2	231.8
GALLEGOS PARK	6209, 7361 Bosque Rd - Canutillo	Leased	4	62.6
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS³				
AGUA DULCE PARK	15371 Kentwood Ave.	EPC	3	9.1
ESTRELLA PARK	14590 Greg Drive - Montana Vista	EPC	3	5
HORIZON HILLS PARK	12650 Mark Twain Ave. - Horizon Area	EPC	3	2.6
RISINGER PARK	301 Grace St - Fabens	EPC	3	1.2
SPARKS PARK	12899 Sparks Dr.	EPC	3	2.9
WESTWAY PARK	1301 Zinn Rd.	EPC	4	3
CIVIC SPACE				
SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA	1521 San Elizario Rd - San Elizario	EPC	3	0.5
LINEAR PARK				
RIVER TRAIL	Borderland Rd to Vinton Rd	Leased	4	120.3
SPECIAL USE PARKS				
SAN FELIPE PARK	16501 Fabens Carlsbad Cut-Off Rd.	EPC	3	156.8
SPORTSPARK	1780 Zaragosa Rd.	EPC	1	45.3
				TOTAL ACRES: 817

1. Includes parks that area owned and/or operated by El Paso County. 2. Cumulative acreage includes Ascarate Golf Course and Ascarate Lake. 3. Excludes Coyote Park (Tornillo ISD) and Veterans Park (Fabens ISD) although El Paso County partners to provide recreational services at both locations.

SYSTEM WIDE PARKLAND INVENTORY

A summary of each park operated by El Paso County (and including “partnership” parks owned by the El Paso County Water Improvement Control District #4 and Tornillo ISD) is provided on pages 25-42. Iconography has been incorporated into each park summary so that readers can easily identify what amenities are offered at each location. **Figure 2.7, Park Amenity Legend** defines each of the symbols used in this Plan.

An assessment of the physical condition of each park operated and maintained by El Paso government is found in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**.

FIGURE 2.6: EL PASO COUNTY PARKLAND INVENTORY MAP

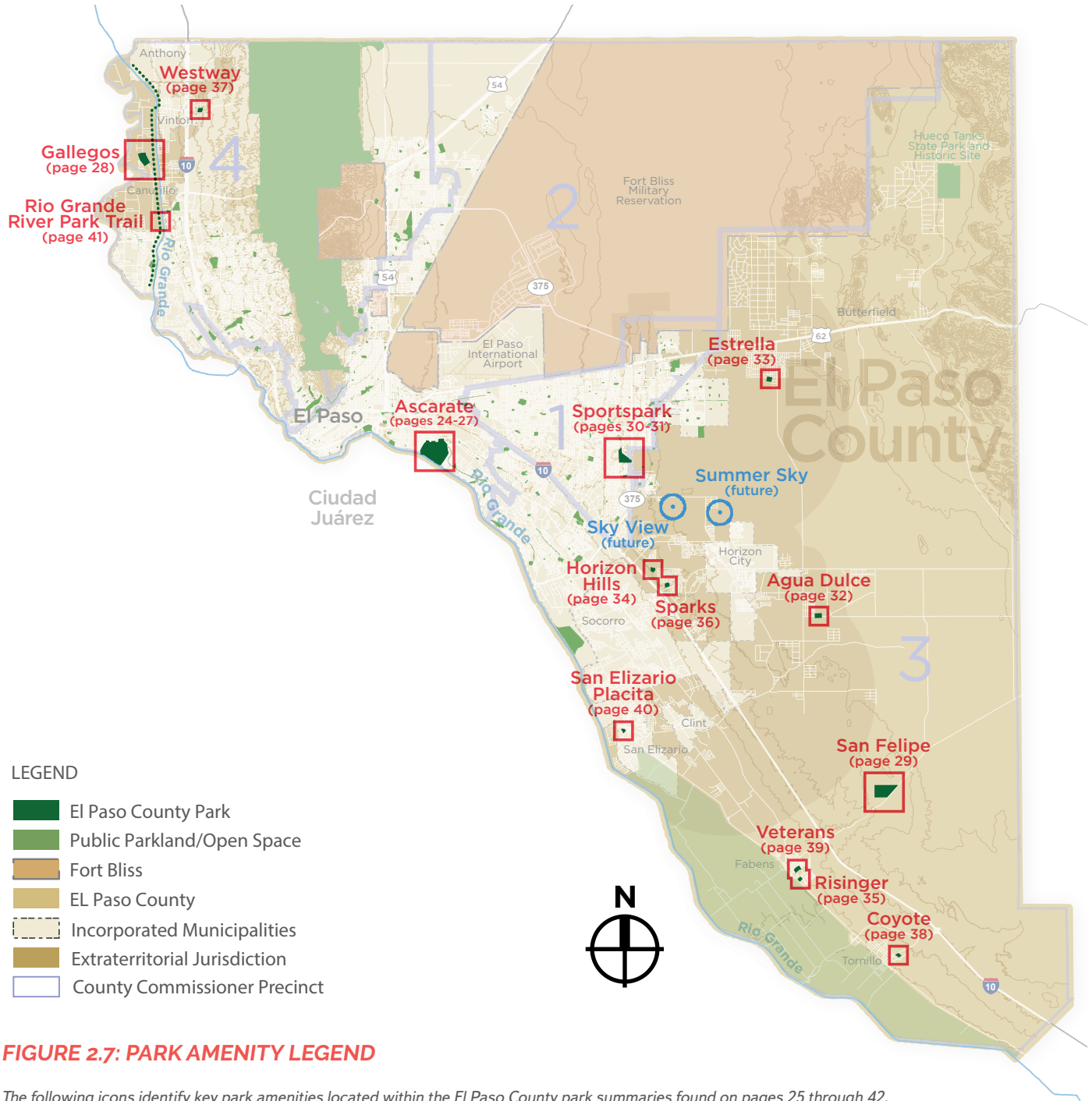
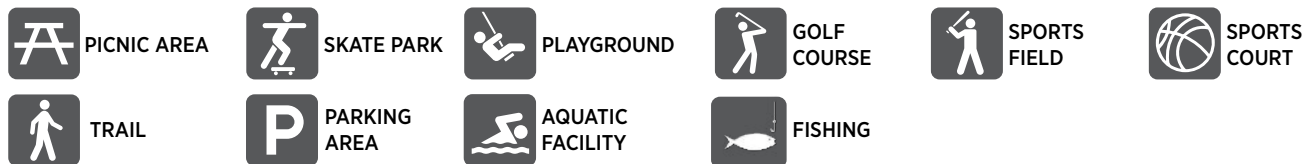


FIGURE 2.7: PARK AMENITY LEGEND

The following icons identify key park amenities located within the El Paso County park summaries found on pages 25 through 42. The majority of these symbols are derived from iconography utilized by the National Park Service.





ASCARATE PARK

CLASSIFICATION: REGIONAL PARK

Ascarate Park is El Paso County government’s premier public park facility. The park is located in Commissioner Precinct 2, and within the city of El Paso municipal limits at 6900 Delta Drive, El Paso. Ascarate Park contains 407.8 acres and includes the Ascarate Golf Course and Ascarate Lake.

Located within the south central portion of the city, Ascarate Park is a regional park that serves the entire region of El Paso and beyond with its vast array of unique offerings.

Ascarate Park offers visitors access to covered picnic tables, multiple playgrounds, sports courts, baseball fields, soccer fields, park trails, lakes for fishing, and an aquatic center.

There are multiple off-street parking lots within Ascarate Park to serve vast crowds during holidays and special events. Over 1,145 dwelling units are located within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park and it is bordered by a segment of the expanding county-wide Paseo del Norte [multi-use] trail.



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 6900 DELTA DR.
ACREAGE: 407.8 ACRES
PRECINCT: PRECINCT 2
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Ascarate Park is the largest public-use recreational park in El Paso County. Although admission fees apply for vehicles and parking, the park also serves as the principal neighborhood park for many city of El Paso residents living within walking distance.



Ascarate Park contains six baseball and softball fields.



The Ascarate Park Aquatics Complex contains a 50-meter competition pool.

ASCARATE GOLF COURSE (ASCARATE PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 6900 DELTA DR.
ACREAGE: 176.4 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #2
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

The Ascarate Golf Course is a 176.4 acre amenity located within Ascarate Park. Ascarate Golf Course features 27-holes featuring a "Main 18" course and a "Delta 9" short hole course perfect for individuals new to golf.

Golf course amenities include a lighted practice facility and driving range, putting greens, chipping greens, practice bunker, and a clubhouse with a pro shop and cafe - all located in central El Paso.



With a "Main 18" and "Delta 9" course, people of all ages and skill levels can play at the Ascarate Golf Course.



Ascarate Golf Course is the oldest in the city.

ASCARATE LAKE (ASCARATE PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 6900 DELTA DR.
ACREAGE: 48.8 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #2
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

Ascarate Lake is a key amenity located within Ascarate Park. Comprised of two bodies of water, Ascarate Lake and the associated “duck pond” are the metropolitan area’s most popular location for fishing and hosts many annual fishing events. Its popularity is enhanced by the proximity of other surrounding park amenities.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

With the assistance of Texas Parks and Wildlife (TPWD), El Paso County keeps the lake stocked year-round with trout (winter), catfish (summer), largemouth bass, black bass, sun perch, blue gill, carp, shad, crappie hybrid sunfish and minnows. The lake is also open to kayaks and small boats with trolling motors.



The fishing dock is highly used at Ascarate Park.



People come from across the region to fish at Ascarate Lake.

GALLEGOS PARK (CLASSIFICATION: REGIONAL PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 6209, 7361 BOSQUE RD - CANUTILLO
ACREAGE: 62.6 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #4
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO WATER

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



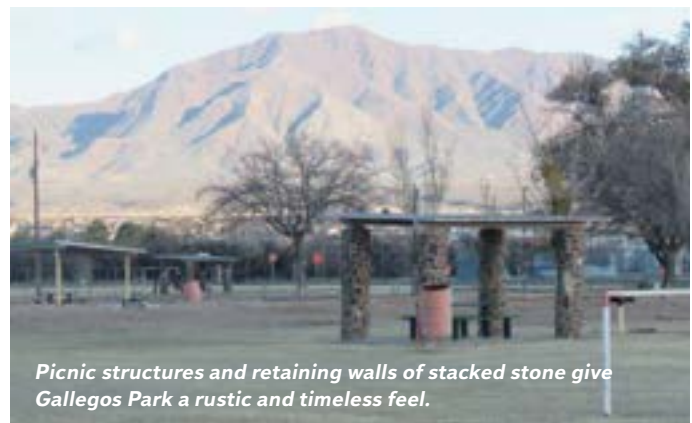
Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Gallegos Park serves the residents of northwest El Paso County. The park offers two baseball & t-ball fields, four multi-use fields striped primarily for soccer, a skate park, playscape, multiple picnic pavilions and the Canutillo Pool. Public restrooms are available at the pool building.

Gallegos Park is classified as a regional park because it hosts large tournaments for a variety of sports across its multi-use fields, but it also serves the immediate “neighborhood park” needs of residents living in over 122 dwelling units located within a 1/4 mile (five-minute) walkshed of the park.



Consistent with other County parks, shade structures have been installed over the play structures at Gallegos Park



Picnic structures and retaining walls of stacked stone give Gallegos Park a rustic and timeless feel.

SAN FELIPE PARK (CLASSIFICATION: SPECIAL USE PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 16501 FABENS CARSLBAD CUT-OFF RD
ACREAGE: 156.8 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

San Felipe Park is located in far southeastern El Paso County near Fabens. Property within this special use park has traditionally been used for off-road vehicle and motocross use. Trail conditions are highly variable and accessory facilities offered to patrons has been limited to picnic shelters and grills.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

El Paso County has begun a process of increasing public land area and improving park conditions and amenities through grants from the TPWD. Planned upgrades including security and restrooms will improve the immediate visitor experience as El Paso County works to convert San Felipe Park into a premier motor sports destination.



Park trails are unregulated and change from rider to rider and through the seasons.



Pending upgrades to San Felipe Park will serve as the first phase of the park's transition to a premier motocross facility.



SPORTSPARK

CLASSIFICATION: SPECIAL USE PARK

The El Paso County SportsPark is a 45.3 acre special use park catering to baseball, softball, and t-ball. The SportsPark is recognized as a premier regional facility and is designed to accommodate local competitive play and attract regional and national tournaments.

Although owned and maintained by El Paso County, the SportsPark is located within the El Paso city limits. The specialized nature of the park requires that access be highly regulated. Surrounding resident utilize proximate City-owned parks for the daily recreational needs.

SportsPark fields are lighted to accommodate daytime and night time competition. The El Paso County SportsPark is dedicated to the following objectives:

- *To promote sportsmanship*
- *To increase and encourage youth sports participation*
- *To enhance learning in the sport of baseball*
- *To teach fundamental social skills with an emphasis on teamwork*
- *To develop sound baseball skills*
- *To promote volunteerism through coaching*
- *To introduce competition*
- *To have participants meet new friends and have fun in a positive team environment*



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 1780 ZARAGOSA RD.
 ACREAGE: 45.3 ACRES
 COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #1
 OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Featuring ten combined baseball, softball and t-ball fields, the Sports park is El Paso County’s “little league” facility. The Sports park is extremely popular with all ages and hosts youth leagues, adult leagues, and numerous regional tournaments throughout the year. Accessory facilities within the Sports park include restrooms, covered seating, concessions, batting cages and a centrally-located playscape.

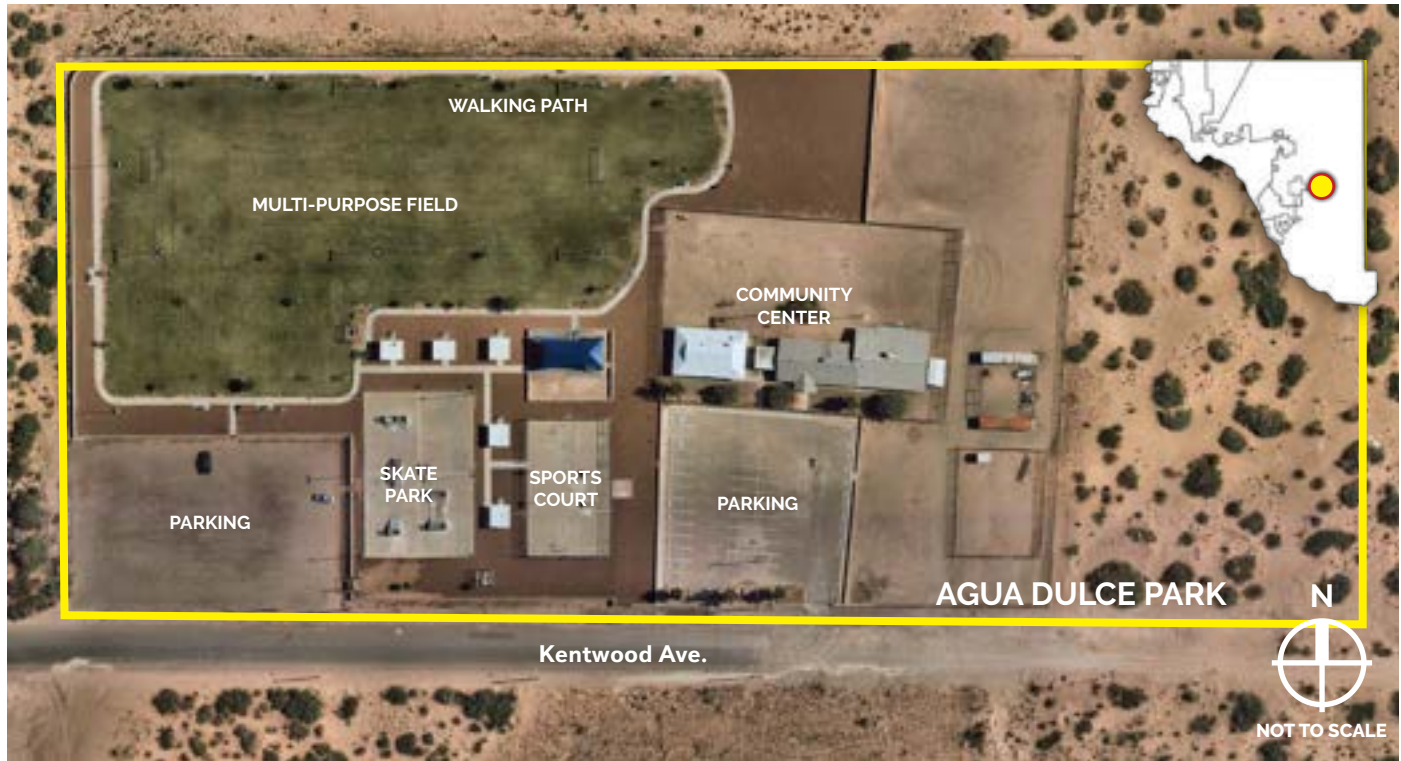


El Paso County continues to invest in new shade structures to make seating areas and public gathering spaces more comfortable.



Public gathering spaces are centrally located to accommodate game-day schedules which shift among multiple fields.

AGUA DULCE PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 15371 KENTWOOD AVE - AGUA DULCE
ACREAGE: 9.1 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

Agua Dulce Park is a 9.1 acre park located southeast of Horizon City. The park is adjacent to the Agua Dulce colonia but is surrounded on three sides by undeveloped land. Primarily serving adjacent residents, there are 81 dwelling units within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Primary amenities at Agua Dulce Park include covered picnic tables and playscape, a sports court, a multi-purpose field, and skate park. There are scattered trees in the park, primarily around the edges of the play field. Off-street parking allows visitors to drive to the park primarily due to a lack of accessible sidewalks or bike paths.



Clustering of play area, sport court, and skate park.



Playscape shade structures are an essential park feature.

ESTRELLA PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 14590 GREG DRIVE - MONTANA VISTA
ACREAGE: 5 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

Estrella Park is a five-acre park located east of the city of El Paso. Surrounding land uses include single-family residential or undeveloped land. Primarily serving adjacent residents, there are 128 dwelling units within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park although off-street parking is also offered.



Large well maintained play area, sport court, and skate park.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Primary amenities at Estrella Park include covered picnic tables, a playground, a sports court and a sand volleyball court, open space, skate park and an internal walking path loop. The park is mostly covered in well-maintained turf grass and offers many spaces for open play and picnicking.



Playscape shade structures are an essential park feature.

HORIZON HILLS ESTATES PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 12650 MARK TWAIN AVE - HORIZON AREA
ACREAGE: 2.6 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Horizon Hills Estates Park is a 2.6 acre park located within the Horizon Hills Estates development. This new addition to the El Paso County parks and recreation system is centrally located within the surrounding neighborhood and ideally positioned to serve as a visual center-piece to surrounding residential dwellings.

Horizon Hills Estates Park amenities include a sports court, playground, and open play area - features that are standard elements required by the County for neighborhood park acceptance. Designed primarily for surrounding residents, the park provides no dedicated off-street parking or restroom facilities.



The park is nestled in the middle of a residential area.



Playscape shade structures are an essential park feature.

RISINGER PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 301 GRACE ST - FABENS
ACREAGE: 1.2 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

Risinger Park is a 1.2 acre park located in the unincorporated community of Fabens. It provides basic recreational amenities to surrounding residents - with over 188 dwelling units within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Risinger Park offers covered picnic tables, a playground, and a sports court. Trees line the outside perimeter of the park. There is no dedicated off-street parking or restrooms available - requiring users to walk or ride bikes to access the park.



The sports court helps promote an active lifestyle.



Many picnic facilities are functional but in a deteriorated condition.

SPARKS PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 12899 SPARKS DR.
ACREAGE: 2.9 ACRES
PRECINCT: PRECINCT 3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

Sparks Park serves the residents of the Sparks neighborhood near Horizon City. The park is one of the only places where people living in the Sparks community can participate in recreational activities and provides immediate access to 145 dwelling units that are located within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Sparks Park offers covered picnic tables, a playground, skate park, and a sports court. The park has dedicated off street parking provided and is adjacent to a County Sheriff precinct. The park provides open space for outdoor play activities and picnicking.



Shaded play structures allow for summer recreation.



The skate park provides recreation for youth.

WESTWAY PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 1301 ZINN RD.
ACREAGE: 3 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #4
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

Westway Park is located in far northwest El Paso County just east of the Town of Vinton. The neighborhood park is located within an established residential area with 358 dwelling units located within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed.

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Westway Park is conveniently located near Deanna Davenport Elementary School. Amenities include covered picnic tables, a playground, sports court, a sports field and a walking path loop. On-street parking provided along the southern edge of the park property.



The Westway Park sports field is intended for local recreational use.



Trees provide shade along the park's walking path.

COYOTE PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)*



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 600 OT SMITH ROAD - TORNILLO
ACREAGE: 14.4 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: TORNILLO ISD

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

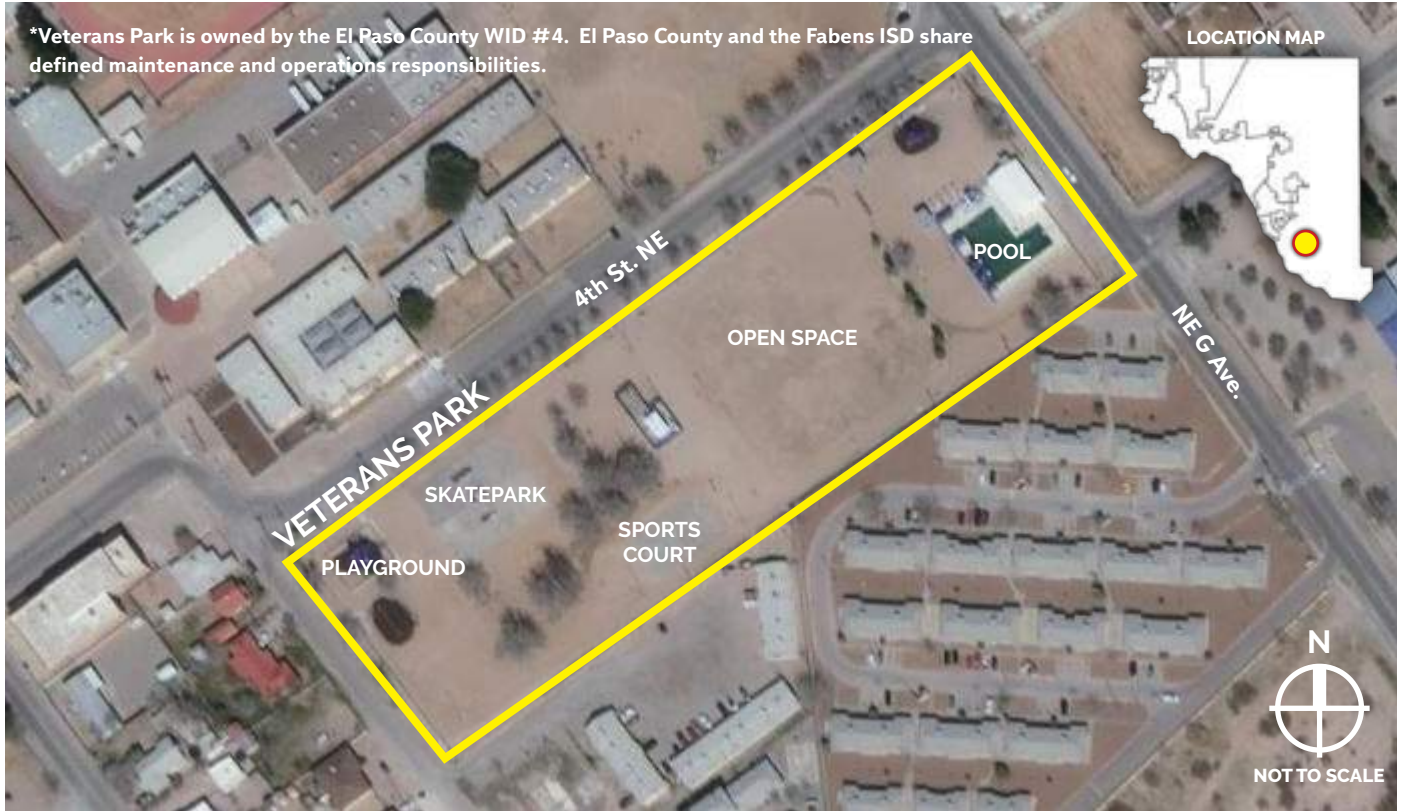
Coyote Park serves the residents of the unincorporated community of Tornillo in far southeastern El Paso County and is directly accessible to 84 dwelling units - which are located within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park. Park features include covered picnic tables, a playground, skate park, sports field.

Coyote Park provides dedicated off street parking and open space for outdoor play activities and picnicking. It is owned and maintained by the Tornillo ISD but has been recently renovated and re-equipped through an agreement with El Paso County.



VETERANS PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)*

*Veterans Park is owned by the El Paso County WID #4. El Paso County and the Fabens ISD share defined maintenance and operations responsibilities.



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 602 4TH ST NE - FABENS
ACREAGE: 5.7 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY WICD #4

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

Veterans Park (also known as “O’Donnell Park”) serves the residents of Fabens. The park is located in a residential area adjacent to Fabens ISD school buildings. There are 247 dwelling units within a 1/4 mile (5 minute) walkshed of the park. The park offers a playground, a skate park, and a baseball field.

By joint use agreement, Veterans Park is available for Fabens ISD activities in exchange for school district maintenance of the grounds. El Paso County PARD operates the Veterans Park Pool which provides for recreational swimming, and maintains recreational equipment within the park.



Veterans Park Pool is operated by El Paso County.



Most park equipment has been installed by El Paso County but Fabens ISD maintains the park grounds.

SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA (CLASSIFICATION: CIVIC SPACE)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: 1521 SAN ELIZARIO RD - SAN ELIZARIO
ACREAGE: 0.5 ACRES
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #3
OWNERSHIP: EL PASO COUNTY

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

San Elizario Placita is an historic civic space in the heart of San Elizario that can be used for public gatherings and performances. The site is located in a historic core of town in the vicinity of Old El Paso County Jail Museum, San Elizario City Hall, and the Presidio Chapel of San Elizario. The placita's Veterans Memorial further emphasizes the space's historic and cultural importance.

Besides serving as a venue for important community events, the San Elizario Placita provides a day-to-day space for relaxation for the residents of the surrounding Alvarez and Wilbourn neighborhoods. The placita is also located directly adjacent to and overlooks the Lorenzo G. Alcaron Elementary School field space. Trees line the outside perimeter of the park. There is no parking available so users must walk or ride bikes to access the park.



The gazebo is the central feature of the placita.

RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL (CLASSIFICATION: LINEAR PARK)



KEY FEATURES:

ADDRESS: BORDERLAND RD TO VINTON RD
DISTANCE: ~5 MILES (120.3 ACRE EASEMENT)
COMMISSIONER PRECINCT: #4
OWNERSHIP: CITY OF EL PASO

PRIMARY AMENITIES:



Amenity icon definitions: page 24.

The Rio Grande River Trail is an approximately five-mile section of paved multi-use trail extending between the towns of Vinton and Canutillo along the Rio Grande. The 8-foot wide trail support walking, running, bicycling and provides amenities for riverside views and relaxation. The pathway includes a series of wayside seating areas spaced roughly 1/4 to 1/2 miles apart to support the general comfort of trail users.

The Rio Grande River Trail is part of county-wide Paseo del Norte Trail which is in various stages of planning, design and construction by multiple government and non-profit partners (page 49). This specific segment of the trail is owned by the City of El Paso but is maintained by El Paso County under a lease agreement.



RECREATIONAL FACILITIES

El Paso County parks provide residents and visitors with access to a range of recreational facilities and other accessory amenities. The specialized nature of some parks operated by El Paso County - such as the fishing lake at Ascarate Park or the off-road ATV trails at San Felipe Park - enables users to participate in unique activities that are not widely accessible throughout the region.

The El Paso County parks system has been evolving in recent years from providing specialized services into a principal public recreation service provider for an expanding population outside of the city of El Paso's municipal limits.

To meet the needs of an expanding constituency, the number of neighborhood parks owned and operated by El Paso County continues to increase. Consistent with how the County park system has grown, the El Paso County PARD has leveraged the development process to ensure an equitable distribution of key amenities to county residents such as picnic shelters, playscapes, walking paths, and sport courts. **Table 2.2: El Paso County Park System, Common Recreational Facilities**, identifies six types of recreational facilities that are most commonly found in County-owned or operated parks.



El Paso County continues to weigh the immediate and long-term benefits of hard-top versus soft-top shade structures for playscapes (top left). The County's growing inventory of "sport courts" is limited specifically to basketball courts (top right). The soccer fields at Gallegos Park (below) are suitable for recreational league play, but also can be utilized as multi-purpose fields supporting other sports such as lacrosse, ultimate frisbee, and more.



TABLE 2.2: EL PASO COUNTY PARK SYSTEM, COMMON RECREATIONAL FACILITIES¹

PARK	FACILITY BY TYPE (NUMBER)					
	ATHLETIC FIELDS	PLAYSCAPES	SKATE PARKS	SPORT COURTS	SWIMMING POOLS	WALKING PATHS
REGIONAL PARKS						
ASCARATE PARK	A(6)	X		X(2)	X (Aquatics Center)	X
COMMUNITY PARKS						
GALLEGOS PARK	BC(6)	X		X(2)	X	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS						
AGUA DULCE PARK		X	X	X		X
ESTRELLA PARK		X	X	X		X
HORIZON HILLS PARK		X		X		X
RISINGER PARK		X		X		
SPARKS PARK		X	X	X		
WESTWAY PARK	B(1)	X		X		
SKY VIEW PARK (FUTURE)		X		X		X
SUMMER SKY PARK (FUTURE)		X		X(2)		
CIVIC SPACE						
SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA						
SPECIAL USE PARKS						
RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL						X
SAN FELIPE PARK	A(1)					
SPORTS PARK	AC(10)	X				

1. Not exclusive. Each park may contain other recreational and accessory facilities. Excludes Coyote Park (Tornillo ISD) and Veterans Park and Pool (Fabens ISD) although El Paso County partners to provide recreational services at both locations.

A. Baseball/softball; B. Soccer/multi-purpose; C. Intended and maintained at a higher level for use by organized league play such as tournaments.

*All sports courts are basketball courts, except for Estrella Park which also includes a volleyball court.

The Ascarate Park Aquatics Center includes a 50-meter competition pool. The pools at Gallegos Park (Canutillo Pool) and Veterans Park are limited to recreational use.



RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Park properties operated by the El Paso PARD support a wide range of formal events organized by community organizations and informal events organized by families and other private groups. Although not sponsored by El Paso County, fees collected for the use of facilities for these private gatherings help to recover staffing and other resource costs that are necessary to ensure the orderly use of County park facilities.

El Paso is also the primary sponsor of multiple annual events held primarily at Ascarate Park and the Sportspark, and offers a series of (primarily) athletic programs to city and county residents. **Table 2.3: El Paso County Recreational Programs and Events**, provides an inventory of annual activities sponsored by El Paso County PARD. An overview of associated fees and cost recovery activities is located in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**.

SPECIAL EVENTS

Twelve special events are held by the El Paso PARD. These events range from large events, like the Fourth of July fireworks and the County Fair, to age-specific activities. When combined with special events held by outside organizations, there were 58 events held at El Paso County parks in 2019 attracting over 77,000 guests.

RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING

Ten recreational programs are currently administered by the El Paso PARD. These programs are centered around sports, like swimming, golf, softball, and baseball. There are other recreational programs, like the First Tee Golf Program, that are held by outside organizations at El Paso County parks and facilities.



Ascarate Park is the host venue for many of the community's most important and beloved annual events and traditions.



El Paso PARD's Kids to Parks events and youth sports programs are structured to provide equitable access to recreational activities.

TABLE 2.3: EL PASO COUNTY RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS (2019)¹

ACTIVITY	LOCATION
SPECIAL EVENTS	
4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS	ASCARATE PARK
BOOGIE AFTER SUNSET	ASCARATE PARK
CATFISH CLASSIC	ASCARATE PARK
COUNTY FAIR (IN PARTNERSHIP WITH COUNTY FAIR ASSOC.)	ASCARATE PARK
CRUISE ASCARATE	ASCARATE PARK
KIDS TO PARKS EVENTS	ASCARATE PARK
LIGHTS ON THE LAKE	ASCARATE PARK
NATIONAL NIGHT OUT (SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT)	EL PASO COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE
OVERNIGHT CAMP OUT AND FISHING	ASCARATE PARK
PARKS AFTER DARK MOVIE SERIES	ASCARATE PARK
TROUT TOURNAMENT	ASCARATE PARK
TRUCK OR TREAT CRUISE	ASCARATE PARK
RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS²	
SWIM LESSONS	ASCARATE PARK
PGA PROFESSIONAL GROUP GOLF CLASSES	ASCARATE PARK (GOLF COURSE)
PGA PROFESSIONAL PRIVATE GOLF LESSONS	ASCARATE PARK (GOLF COURSE)
ADULT CO-ED SOFTBALL LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK
ADULT MEN'S SOFTBALL LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK
LAW ENFORCEMENT LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK
YOUTH BASEBALL LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK
YOUTH COACH PITCH LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK
YOUTH SOFTBALL LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK
YOUTH T-BALL LEAGUE	SPORTSPARK

1. Includes only activities organized and administered by El Paso County government. 2. Some listed programs combined in Chapter 3 for purposes of cost recovery analysis.

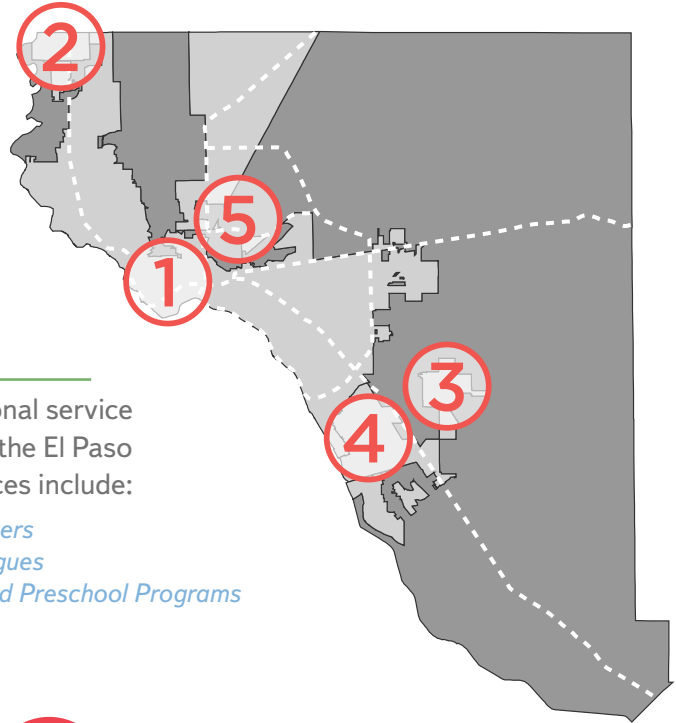


Overnight camp out and fishing event at Ascarate Park.

Parks and Recreation Service Providers

PUBLIC SERVICE PROVIDERS

There are five other jurisdictions that provide parks and recreation services to the public or specific constituents. The City of El Paso operates the most extensive park system in the county while Anthony, Horizon City and Socorro provide municipal parks and recreation services.



1

CITY OF EL PASO

The City of El Paso PARD is the primary recreational service provider for the 600,000-plus persons residing in the El Paso municipal limits. The City’s parks and recreation services include:

- *Over 250 Parks*
- *3,000 Acres of Open Space*
- *Aquatics*
- *Recreation Centers*
- *Rentals*
- *Senior Centers*
- *Sports Leagues*
- *Daycare and Preschool Programs*

2

TOWN OF ANTHONY

The Town of Anthony has approximately 5,600 residents and spans seven square miles.

The Town of Anthony PARD provides the following parks and recreation services:

- *Henry Montessori Memorial Park*
- *Baseball Park*
- *Dog Park*
- *Skate Park*

4

CITY OF SOCORRO

The City of Socorro has approximately 34,500 residents and spans over 22 square miles.

The City of Socorro PARD serves provides the following parks and recreation services:

- *Ten Parks*
- *Two Community Centers*
- *Community Enrichment Classes*
- *Fitness and Wellness Classes*

3

TOWN OF HORIZON CITY

The Town of Horizon City has approximately 20,000 residents and spans nine square miles.

The Town of Horizon City PARD provides the following parks and recreation services:

- *Three Public Parks*
- *Splash Pad*

5

FORT BLISS

The United States Army’s Family and Morale, Welfare, and Recreation (MWR) program provides multiple recreational opportunities on the Fort Bliss military installation. These facilities are private and available to U.S. Army members and their families. Available services include:

- *Biggs Park*
- *Aquatics*
- *Recreation Centers*
- *Golf Complex*
- *Fitness Centers*
- *Intramurals*
- *RV Park and Campground*
- *Youth Sports Plex*

ADDITIONAL PARTNERS, PROGRAMS, AND FACILITIES

PRIVATE FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

There are two large Municipal Utility Districts (MUDs) in El Paso County - Horizon MUD and Paseo del Este MUD. The Horizon MUD does not maintain parks, but maintains Emerald Springs Golf Course. The Paseo del Este MUD maintains 22 parks, that are an average of one acre each, and additional passive open spaces and trails. These parks and other features are private to the residents of the MUD.

SCHOOL PARKS

There are eight school districts in El Paso County. Each of these districts have playgrounds and other recreational amenities, like athletic fields. The El Paso ISD is the only district that allows the public to utilize athletic fields and playgrounds after school hours and on the weekends, although the Clint ISD also allows the public use of a small recreational area adjacent to a middle school.



INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS

El Paso County government has entered into a series of intergovernmental agreements with other public entities relating to the usage, operations and maintenance of specific park properties. These agreements allow the El Paso County PARD to extend their services while minimizing the purchase of new property and allowing other entities to offer services on County properties. **Table 2.4: El Paso County Parks and Recreation Intergovernmental Agreements** highlights key long-term arrangements with partnering public entities.

TABLE 2.4: EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION INTERGOVERNMENTAL AGREEMENTS (2020)¹

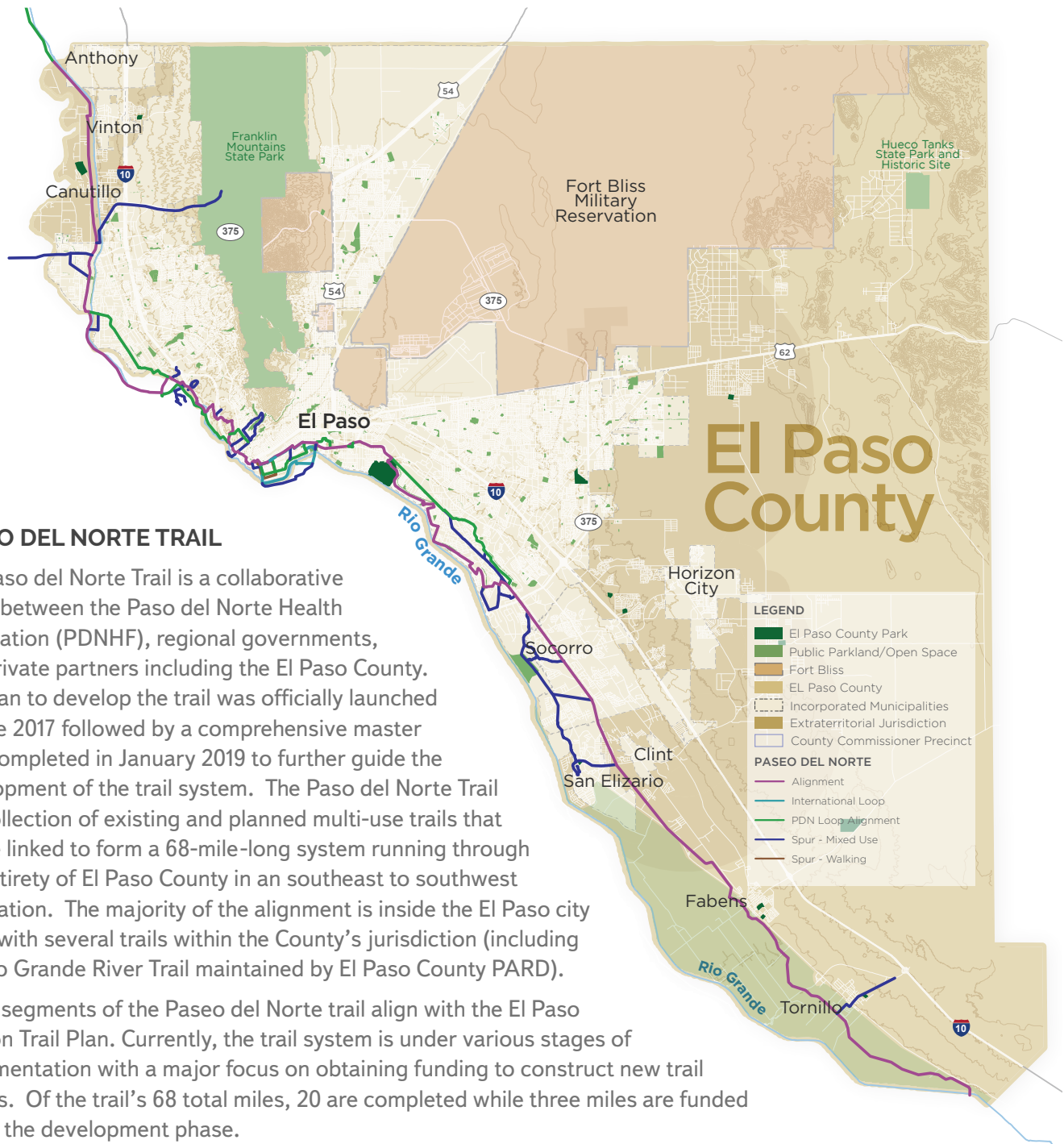
PARK	PARTNER(S)	EXECUTION/ EXPIRATION	HIGHLIGHTS
COYOTE PARK	TORNILLO ISD	02.11.19 / 11.30.38	County funds recreational improvements. Tornillo ISD maintains.
GALLEGOS PARK	EL PASO WATER AND CANUTILLO ISD		County leases and maintains.
RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL PARK	CITY OF EL PASO		County maintains an easement for a portion of the trail.
VETERANS PARK	EL PASO WATER CONTROL DISTRICT #4; FABENS ISD	03.16.17 / 03.16.38	ISD to manage and maintain the park. County to maintain specific amenities and manage the pool.

1. Not all-inclusive. Excludes memorandums of understanding related to the receipt of grant funds for capital facilities.

PUBLIC OPEN SPACES

Franklin Mountain State Park is the largest area of preserved public open space in El Paso County. The park encompasses almost 27,000 acres (40 square miles) and is located entirely within the city of El Paso. Franklin Mountains State Park was acquired by the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) in 1981 and opened in 1987. It is the largest urban park in the United States and contains over 100 miles of trail, camping, and rock climbing. Including Hueco Tanks State Park, the TPWD is the largest owner of public open space in El Paso County.

FIGURE 2.8: PASO DEL NORTE TRAIL



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CHAPTER 03

NEEDS ASSESSMENT

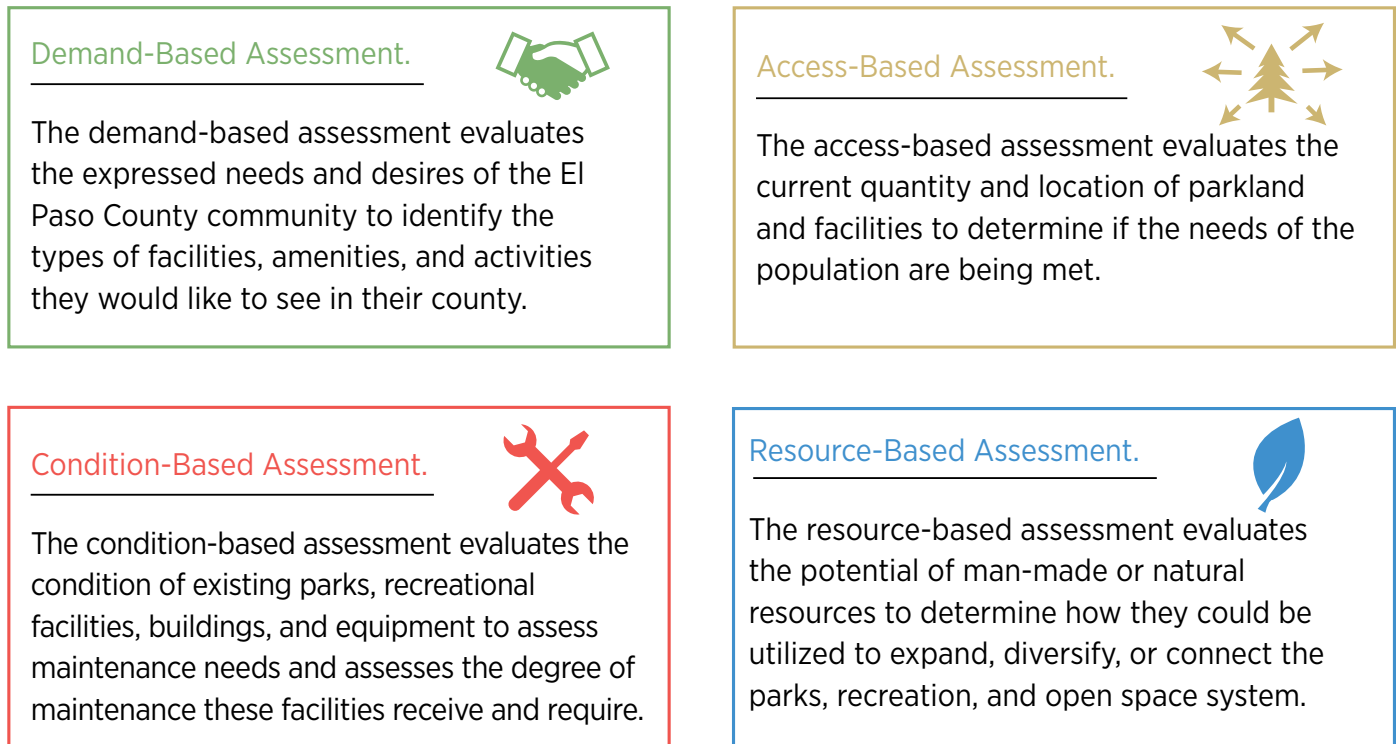
ASSESSING PARKS SYSTEM NEEDS	53
PARKS SYSTEM ASSETS AND FACILITIES	57
OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT	86

ASSESSING PARK SYSTEM NEEDS

METHODS OF PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT

There are four primary methods of assessment for parks systems: demand, resource, access, and condition. Demand, resource, and access-based assessments consider whether a recreational resource is available and accessible in a community. These three methodologies, however, do not measure the condition of parkland grounds and facility repairs.

FIGURE 3.1: PARK SYSTEM ASSESSMENT TYPES



The demand, resource and access assessments are designed to guide the future amount, location and distribution of parkland and recreational facilities whereas the conditions assessment addressed the quality of existing recreational spaces and amenities. The quality, appearance and maintenance of the park system contributes to the image of the community and the perception of its livability. The condition-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 residents and other potential users.

PUBLIC NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

Public participation is an important part of any planning process as it empowers citizens to assist/participate in planning the future of their community. The public participation process aims to build consensus and commitment between elected and appointed officials, County staff, and residents. It is important that the public participation process be documented to ensure adequate opportunities were available for effective participation of diverse populations and that activities were provided and conducted in a thoughtful, courteous, and respectful manner.

Four primary methods of public outreach were employed as part of the El Paso County parks and recreation master planning process.

FIGURE 3.2: PUBLIC OUTREACH STRATEGIES



FOCUS GROUPS

Focus group meetings were held in June 2020 and July 2020 with County officials and other entities that provide recreational services in partnership with the County. The introductory meetings provided an opportunity for user groups that have a high level of interaction with the County to identify important themes regarding municipal parks and recreation service delivery. There were seven focus groups: Ascarate Golf Course, Ascarate Park and Lake, Aquatics, Fabens, Moms on Board (MOBS), Special Events, and Sports Park.



ADVISORY COMMITTEE

A Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (PRAB) was created at the beginning of this plan and was consulted throughout the process. The PRAB's purpose was to act as the County's advisory body for preparing and executing the parks and recreation master plan. Yearly Plan reviews suggested herein should be conducted in consultation with the PRAB, and all future revisions should contain Board approval.



OPEN HOUSES

A virtual open house was facilitated from August 24 - September 7, 2020 as a method of soliciting public participation in the master planning process. An in-person open house was not possible for this plan due to social distancing guidelines set in place to address COVID-19. The virtual open house was used to display information boards, voting "preference" boards, and promote a brief online survey. A final series of in-person public open houses was held in June 2021 to solicit feedback on Plan recommendations.



PUBLIC SURVEYS

There were 2 survey types used in this process, an online survey and a statistically valid survey. The more substantial of the two was the statistically valid survey which required completed surveys based on demographic characteristics, geographic coverage and representation from at least 400 residents to reach 95% confidence. 436 results were collected for the statistically valid survey. Input from these surveys was essential when conducting the demand-based assessment of the parks system.

INITIAL FEEDBACK

For the demand-based assessment, the figures below were created using responses from citizens who took the statistically valid survey conducted as part of the master planning process. Four hundred and thirty six (436) responses were received from across all County Commissioner precincts. These highlights serve as the foundation for the demand-based assessment. The examples below are augmented by other public feedback results distributed throughout this chapter and compiled in the Master Plan appendix.

FIGURE 3.3: TOP 3 MOST USED PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICE PROVIDERS

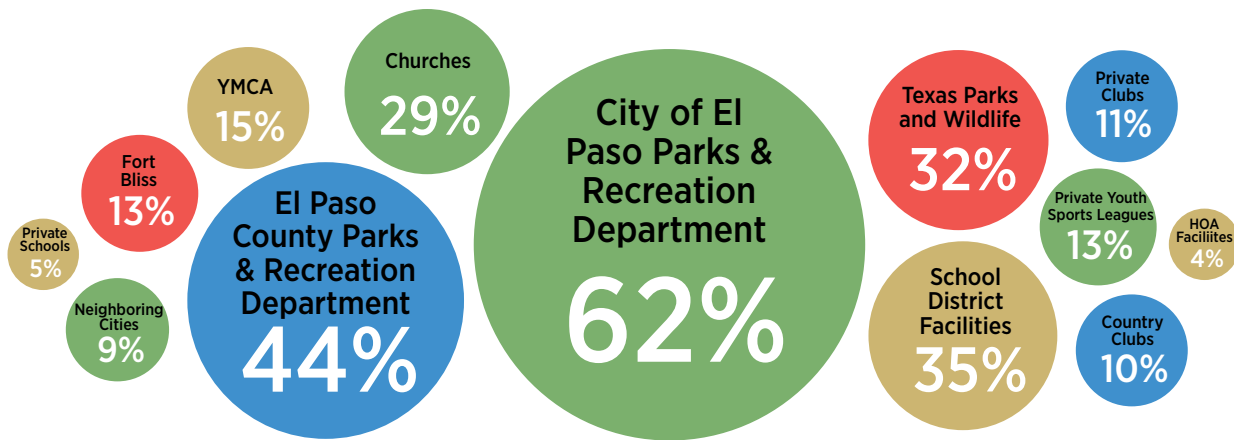


FIGURE 3.4: TOP 3 MOST USED COUNTY PARKS

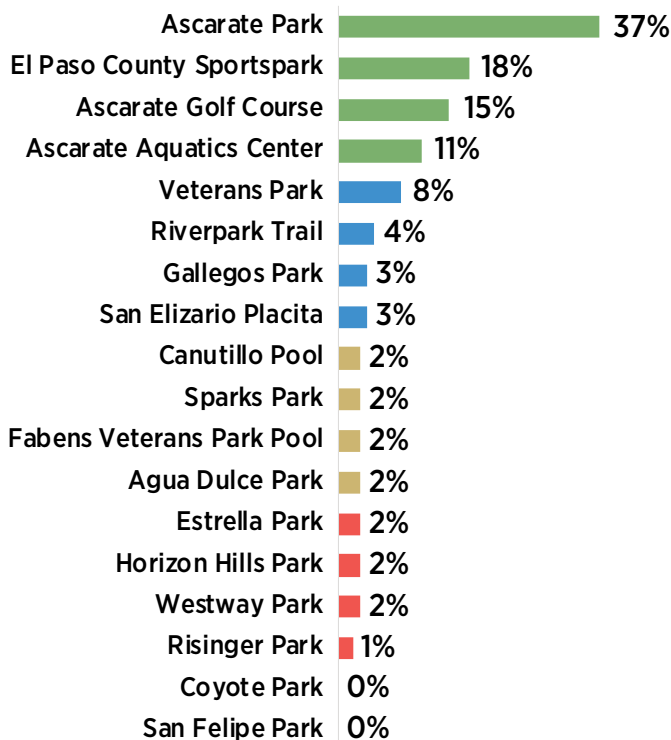


FIGURE 3.5: BARRIERS TO PARK USE



ASCARATE PARK/SPORTSPARK ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

Ascarate Park and El Paso County’s Sportspark are the premier parks in the County’s park system. In their own way, each is a unique and one-of-a-kind resource for the greater El Paso County region. Ascarate is one of the largest parks in the region, and is also the only park with lakes, a rarity in the high desert region. The Sportspark is the premier location for diamond sports (i.e., sports which require diamond-shaped athletic fields) in the region for more than two decades. As such, they warrant specific attention and strategies so that they continue to serve the needs of all residents of the county.

Four stakeholder meetings with park user groups and County officials were held during late 2020 and early 2021. Input received during those meetings, as well as an analysis of existing conditions throughout both parks, indicated the following opportunities and challenges.

ASCARATE PARK COMMENTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- *The park lacks a “loop” road around the park, resulting in traffic generally using one main entrance.*
- *The City of El Paso’s firefighter training facility occupies a prime lakefront portion of the park — relocation of the facility in the future could provide a place for additional publicly accessible features.*
- *Creating a stronger and more readily accessible connection to Loop 375 is needed to make access to the park more convenient in the future.*
- *The two lakes are the most popular attraction in the area, but they need improvements to prevent leaking, stabilize bank edges, and improve water quality.*
- *The park should become a premier location for events, with facilities that accommodate a variety of spectator sizes.*
- *There are multiple opportunities for concessionaires that can provide attractions in the park and help generate revenue that supports the maintenance of the park.*
- *The park could become the focal point of a larger “park district” in which new live/work/play developments around and near the park could help transform this area of the city.*
- *Consider ways to announce events and directions to Ascarate from IH-10 to help guide visitors and encourage use of the park.*

SPORTSPARK COMMENTS & CONSIDERATIONS

- *Overflow parking areas are unpaved but frequently used.*
- *The entrance from the frontage road of Joe Battle Highway (Loop 375) is challenging due to the adjacent residential neighborhood entrance and high speeds along the frontage road.*
- *The external areas of the park lack waiting areas for youth and spectators. Currently they have to wait in paved parking and circulation areas.*
- *Internally, additional space for warm-up and waiting could be useful.*
- *The park lacks strong pedestrian and vehicular connections to adjacent neighborhoods.*
- *The park doesn’t have a walking trail.*
- *Additional fields and support facilities (i.e., parking, restrooms, etc.) could help expand the capacity of the park.*
- *Parking in other areas of the park could help reduce congestion.*
- *Additional seating that could be used for picnicking near the current entrance could serve as amenities for users.*
- *Consider if undeveloped site (used for some debris/landfill in the past) could provide space for expansion of the park.*

A comprehensive set of recommended enhancements to Ascarate Park and the Sportspark can be found in Chapter 4.

PARK SYSTEM ASSETS AND FACILITIES

In the access-based assessment, El Paso County government has not traditionally assumed the primary role of parks and recreation service provider for most county residents. Regardless, population growth in the unincorporated portions of the county has increased the number of residents who are not directly served by a municipal park provider – fueling a greater reliance on El Paso County to provide access to parks and recreation.

This changing circumstance requires that El Paso County government consider: **A)** Taking a pro-active posture in addressing the parks and recreation needs of an expanding population in unincorporated El Paso County; **B)** Adopting prescriptive policies for ensuring **access** to public parkland for unincorporated residents; and, **C)** Preparing park design and construction standards that can be applied to new parks and utilized for the ongoing maintenance of existing system assets.

PARK ACREAGE

This measure defines the quantity of parkland acreage in a community, expressed as a ratio of acreage to population. This metric considers whether there is an adequate amount of community-wide park acreage to serve the resident population today, and to accommodate new residents in the future.

PARK A
#-## ACRES

PARK B
##-### ACRES

PARK DISTRIBUTION

This measure 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.

TABLE 3.1: PARKLAND SERVICE NEEDS

PARK CLASSIFICATION ¹	FUTURE TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE?		NOTES
	ACREAGE TARGET (YES/NO)	PROXIMITY TARGET (YES/NO)	
REGIONAL PARK	No	Yes	Should be subject to a combined level of service target due to similar functions. See page 59.
COMMUNITY PARK	No	Yes	
NEIGHBORHOOD PARK	Yes	Yes	See page 58.
POCKET PARK	No	No	When permitted, should adhere to performance criteria. See page 63.
LINEAR PARK	No	No	May be used to preserve lands or link neighborhoods. See page 63.
SPECIAL USE PARK	No	No	Developed on a case-by-case basis. See page 63.
CIVIC SPACE	No	No	Developed on a case-by-case basis. May adhere to pocket park performance criteria. See page 63.

1. Park classifications described on page 20.

PARKLAND SERVICE STANDARDS

This Plan recommends level of service targets for only a few park and recreational facility types. These targets are aspirational and advisory only. They are meant to assist El Paso County in budgeting adequate funds to maintain current levels of service for key parkland and recreational facilities and to prioritize funding for new community services. **Table 3.1, Parkland Service Needs** (preceding page), provides a summary of parks by type for which El Paso County should establish future target levels of service.

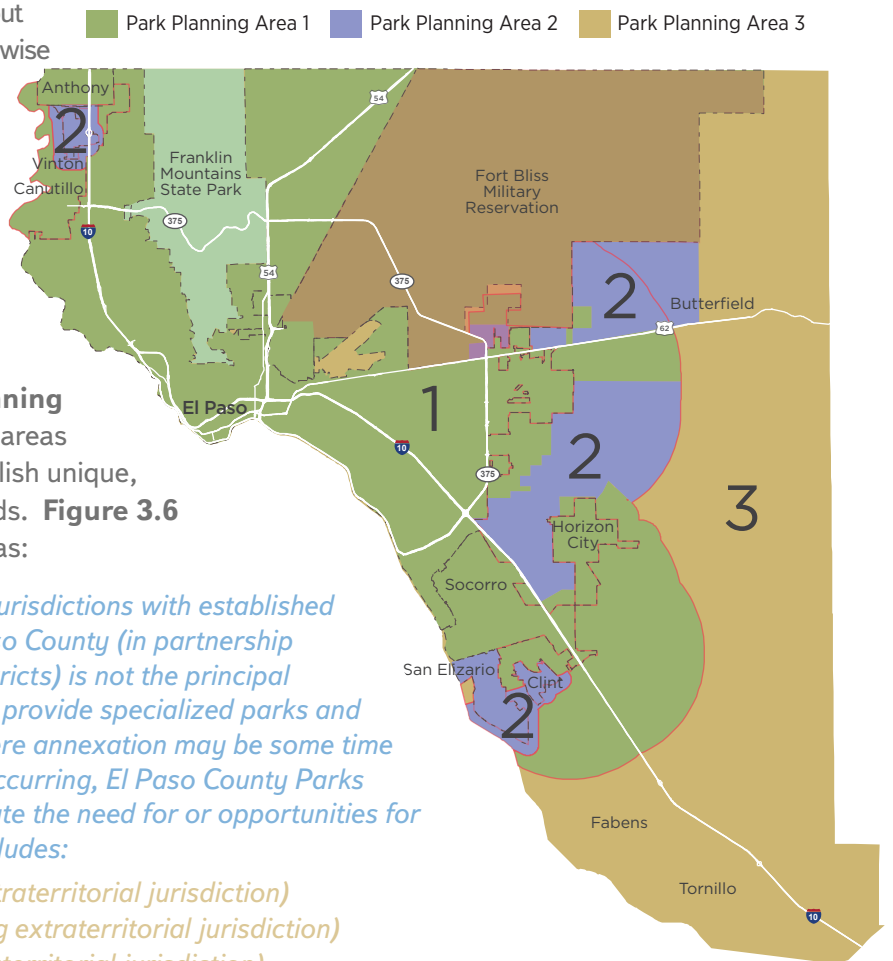
PARK PLANNING AREAS

While many areas of El Paso County remain undeveloped, some areas are already built-out with established neighborhoods or are otherwise located within the extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) of a municipal parks and recreation provider. These distinctions in existing conditions - including built-environment, existing population and overlapping jurisdiction - mean that parkland service standards established by El Paso County should differ according to context.

Figure 3.6, El Paso County Park Planning Areas, identifies three distinct planning areas within which El Paso County could establish unique, context-based parkland service standards. **Figure 3.6** includes the following park planning areas:

- **Park Planning Area 1.** *Municipal jurisdictions with established parks departments and where El Paso County (in partnership with local communities or school districts) is not the principal parks provider. El Paso County may provide specialized parks and recreation services. In ETJ areas where annexation may be some time off but where residential growth is occurring, El Paso County Parks may, on a case by case basis, evaluate the need for or opportunities for new parks. Park Planning Area 1 includes:*
 - **Town of Anthony** (including extraterritorial jurisdiction)
 - **Town of Horizon City** (including extraterritorial jurisdiction)
 - **City of Socorro** (including extraterritorial jurisdiction)
 - **City of El Paso** (including portions of extraterritorial jurisdiction defined as “Preferred Annexation Areas”)
- **Park Planning Area 2.** *Municipal jurisdictions without established parks departments; and areas of unincorporated El Paso County with a high probability of future population growth and the provision of urban services. El Paso County may provide principal parks and recreation services in partnership with other jurisdictions. Park Planning Area 2 includes:*
 - **The municipalities of Clint, San Elizario and Vinton** (including extraterritorial jurisdiction)
 - **City of El Paso** (including portions of ETJ outside of the City’s “Preferred Annexation Areas”)
- **Park Planning Area 3.** *All remaining areas of unincorporated El Paso County. El Paso County will be the principal parks and recreation service provider.*

FIGURE 3.6: EL PASO COUNTY PARK PLANNING AREAS





The ongoing expansion and renovation of Gallegos Park will serve local athletic needs and support tournaments that attract visitors.

FUTURE PARKLAND SERVICE NEEDS

Table 3.1 (page 57) suggests that El Paso County should formalize its role as a principal parks and recreation service provider in unincorporated portions of the County by establishing minimum service targets for regional, community and neighborhood parks. **This section describes recommended acreage and proximity service targets by park type.**

REGIONAL AND COMMUNITY PARKS

El Paso County’s two regional parks — Ascarate Park and Gallegos Park — are a combined 470 acres and comprised over 57 percent of the County’s parkland acreage in 2020. Although classified as regional parks, the distinctions between regional parks and community parks has become increasingly blurred over time as communities gradually expand existing park spaces or add specialized facilities that increasingly cater to audiences from throughout surrounding regions.

While the specialized facilities in Ascarate Park have long served the needs of a regional audience, recent investments in the expansion of athletic field space at Gallegos Park have broadened the clientele that use the park. Still, both parks also serve the day-to-day neighborhood park needs of residents that live in proximity. Due to the overlapping characteristics of regional and community parks, this Plan recommends that El Paso County make little distinction between the two park classifications.

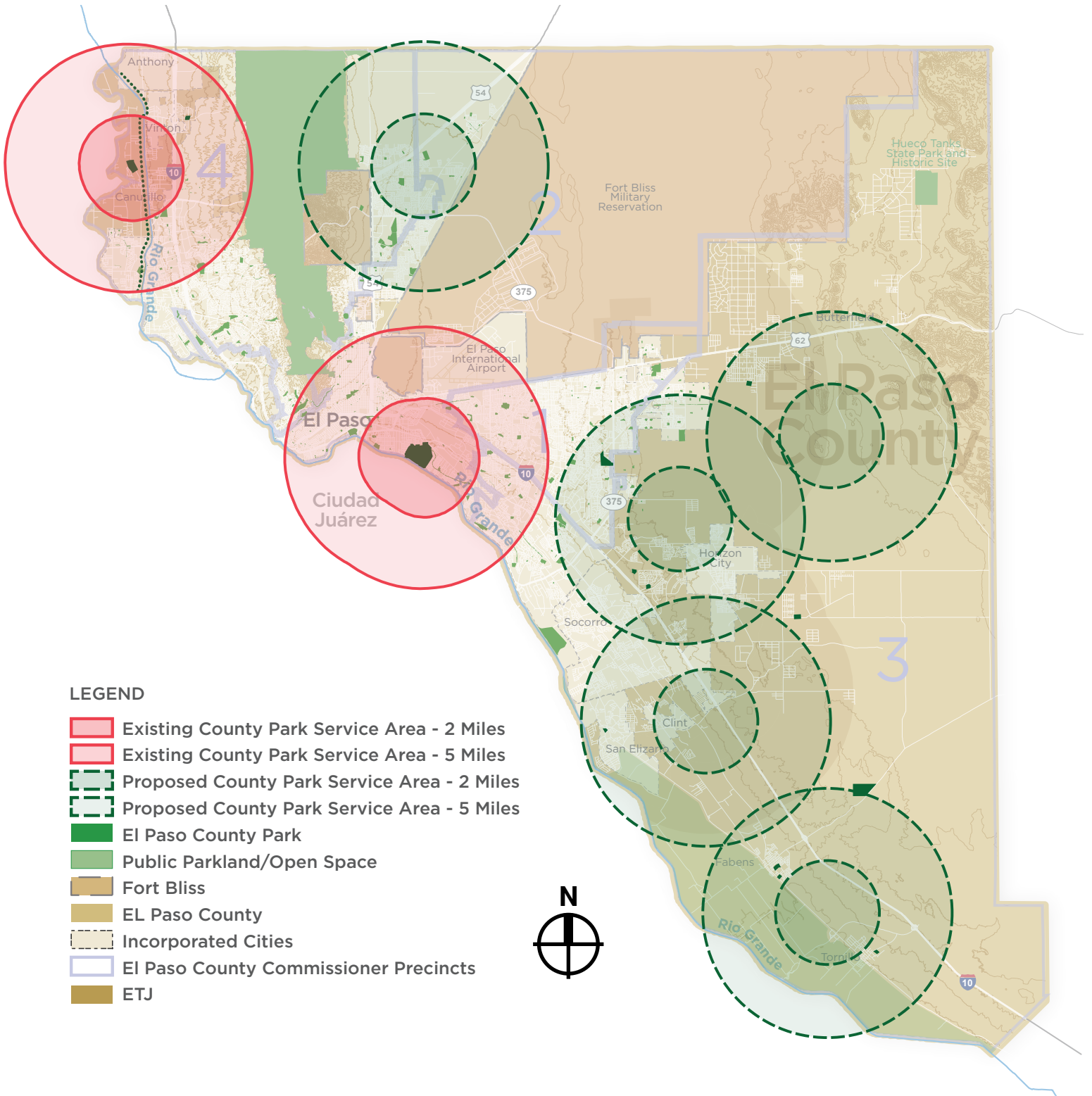
Future Service Needs

El Paso County should establish a combined future service standard for regional and community parks. **The County’s regional/community park service standard should be based solely on “proximity” to surrounding neighborhood and areas of anticipated residential growth.** The location of new regional and/or community parks should however, be limited to unincorporated El Paso County (Park Planning Areas 2 and 3).

Figure 3.7, Regional/Community Park Service Needs, depicts general locations where El Paso County could construct new regional or community parks - taking care to space each park to minimize the overlap of recommended 5-mile service areas. **Figure 3.7** is not site-specific and is intended as a general guide only to illustrate how future regional/community parks should be dispersed. *(For instance, the preferred location of an eastside regional or community may be adjusted in partnership with the City of El Paso to account for joint City/County parkland needs recommended in the City’s **Eastside Growth Management Plan [2019].**)*

Recommendations on minimum regional/community parkland service targets can be found in Chapter 4, Plan Recommendations (page 101).

FIGURE 3.7: REGIONAL/COMMUNITY PARK SERVICE NEEDS



Note: Figure 3.7 is not site-specific and is intended as a general guide only. The final location of future regional or community parks will vary depending on multiple demographic, geographic and economic factors.



New neighborhood parks such as Horizon Hills Park incorporate strong design principles but the responsibility of their long-term care should not be the sole responsibility of El Paso County government.

NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS

El Paso County maintained 6 neighborhood parks totaling almost 24 acres in 2020. During the preparation of this Plan, no fewer than 3 additional neighborhood parks were in the planning or construction phase, signaling the County’s intent to increase its role as a principal park and recreation service provider in unincorporated portions of the County. The County’s role will vary according to each Park Planning Area and will be largely fulfilled through the development of neighborhood parks constructed as part of the land development process.

Future Service Needs

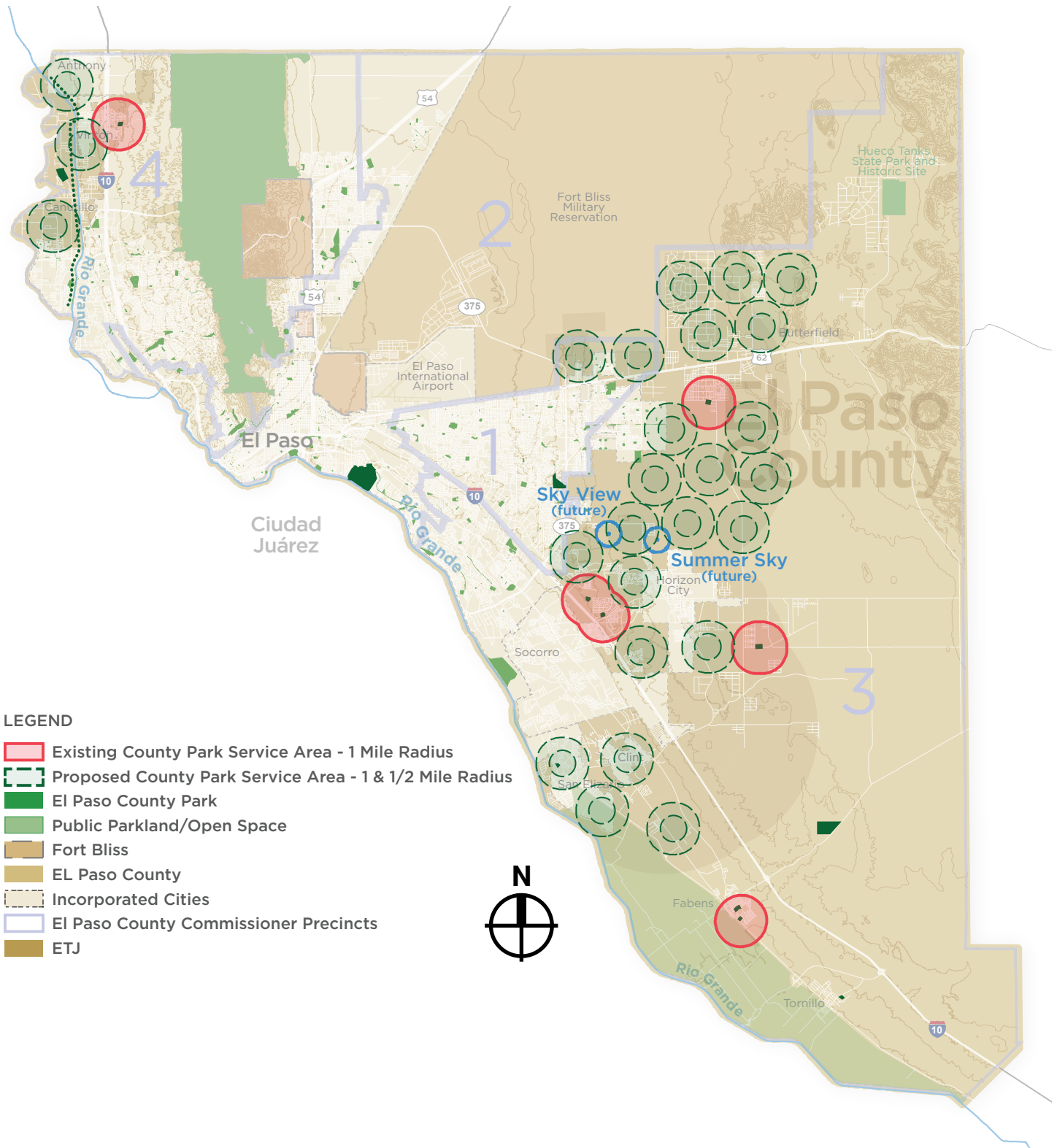
El Paso County should establish a minimum service standard in Park Planning Area #2 of at least 2 acres of neighborhood parkland per 1,000 residents, and a proximity standard of all dwelling units within a 1/2 mile radius of a park (may include a community or regional park in lieu of a neighborhood park). Much of Park Planning Area #2 includes land within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of El Paso and the recommended standards match the target levels of service in the City’s parks and recreation master plan (2014) and the **Eastside Growth Management Plan (2019)**. Attainment of this target level of service should be achieved through partnership between El Paso County and applicable municipalities.

No minimum neighborhood parkland acreage standard is recommended for Park Planning Area #3 due to the low probability of substantial near-term growth (and the diminished capacity to utilize the land development process to fill service gaps). El Paso County may however, strive to reduce service area gaps by establishing a proximity standard whereby clusters of 50 or more dwelling units are located within a 1 mile radius of a park.

Figure 3.8, Neighborhood Park Service Needs, depicts the general locations where El Paso County could construct new neighborhood parks in Park Planning Areas 2 and 3, including potential “partnership parks” constructed by El Paso County and maintained by another governmental entity or even privately owned or maintained parks. **Figure 3.8** is not site-specific and is intended as a general guide only to illustrate how future neighborhood parks could be dispersed.

Recommendations on neighborhood parkland service targets can be found in Chapter 4, Plan Recommendations, on page 100.

FIGURE 3.8: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE NEEDS



Note: Figure 3.8 is not site-specific and is intended as a general guide only. The final location of future regional or community parks will vary depending on multiple demographic, geographic and economic factors.

OTHER PARKS

No additional parkland target levels of service are recommended for the other park classifications introduced in **Chapter 2** (i.e., pocket parks, linear parks, special use parks, civic space). Still, conditions and needs may necessitate the addition of one or more of these classifications within an expanded County parks system.

- **Pocket Parks.** *El Paso County does not currently own or maintain any park space that meets the definition of a pocket park. 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. Consistent with the City of El Paso’s **Eastside Growth Management Plan (2019)**, El Paso County may choose to strategically require the construction of pocket parks in Park Planning Area #2 in locations that lie outside of the 1/2 mile proximity radius of future neighborhood parks. (Note: **Figure 3.8** (page 62) identifies 1/2 and 1 mile radii around neighborhood parks where pocket park placement may be appropriate.)*

Chapter 4 recommends specific standards by which future pocket parks may be added to the municipal parks system.

- **Linear Parks.** *The County’s parkland inventory includes one property — the River Trail - that meets the definition of a linear park. The River Trail is defined as a linear park simply because of the property’s shape, alignment, and ownership characteristics.*

Although the future expansion of El Paso’s multi-use trail network is a desirable addition to the park system, the method of acquisition of trail corridors are acquired or preserved (fee-simple versus easement) will determine whether they may also be defined as a linear park — although this relationship is merely incidental (i.e., the term “linear park” is not synonymous with “trail.” as a trail connotes a facility within a linear park.).

This Plan does not recommend a targeted service standard for linear parks; although, it does include recommendations for future multi-use trail facilities (see Chapter 4).

- **Special Use Parks.** *Special use parks fill niche interests to either **A)** Meet a specific public need; or, **B)** Provide community revenue through tourism or other economic development activity. The El Paso County Sportspark and San Felipe Park are designed to provide specialized facilities for baseball/softball and off-road vehicles, respectively. Both are intended to cater to audiences that extend beyond El Paso County residents. El Paso County also provides facilities for additional special interests such as skateboarding and fishing at other County parks.*

This plan recommends that El Paso County prioritize additional investments in the Sportspark and San Felipe Park over the development of new interest-specific special use parks including dedicated open space and natural preserves. Other special interests such as skating, dog parks, etc., may be addressed by being incorporated into an expanded system of regional or community parks.

- **Civic Space.** *The historic San Elizario Placita is the only purpose-built civic park included within the El Paso County 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 County system that are also programmed for social activity, but these areas are contained within parks that also include co-located recreational or natural spaces.*

This Plan does not propose a future level of service metric for civic spaces. Rather, the County should consider the incorporation of formal social space within future (or redesigned) public parks on a case-by-case basis. Part of conceptual site planning incorporates public input. In addition, civic spaces and similar privately-owned public gathering spaces should be considered as a required component of future mixed-use developments, and retail, office, and other employment centers that exceed certain size thresholds.

RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

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. These measures are often calibrated to mimic comparable standards of communities with similar characteristics or to reflect national performance measures compiled by the National Recreation and Parks Association.

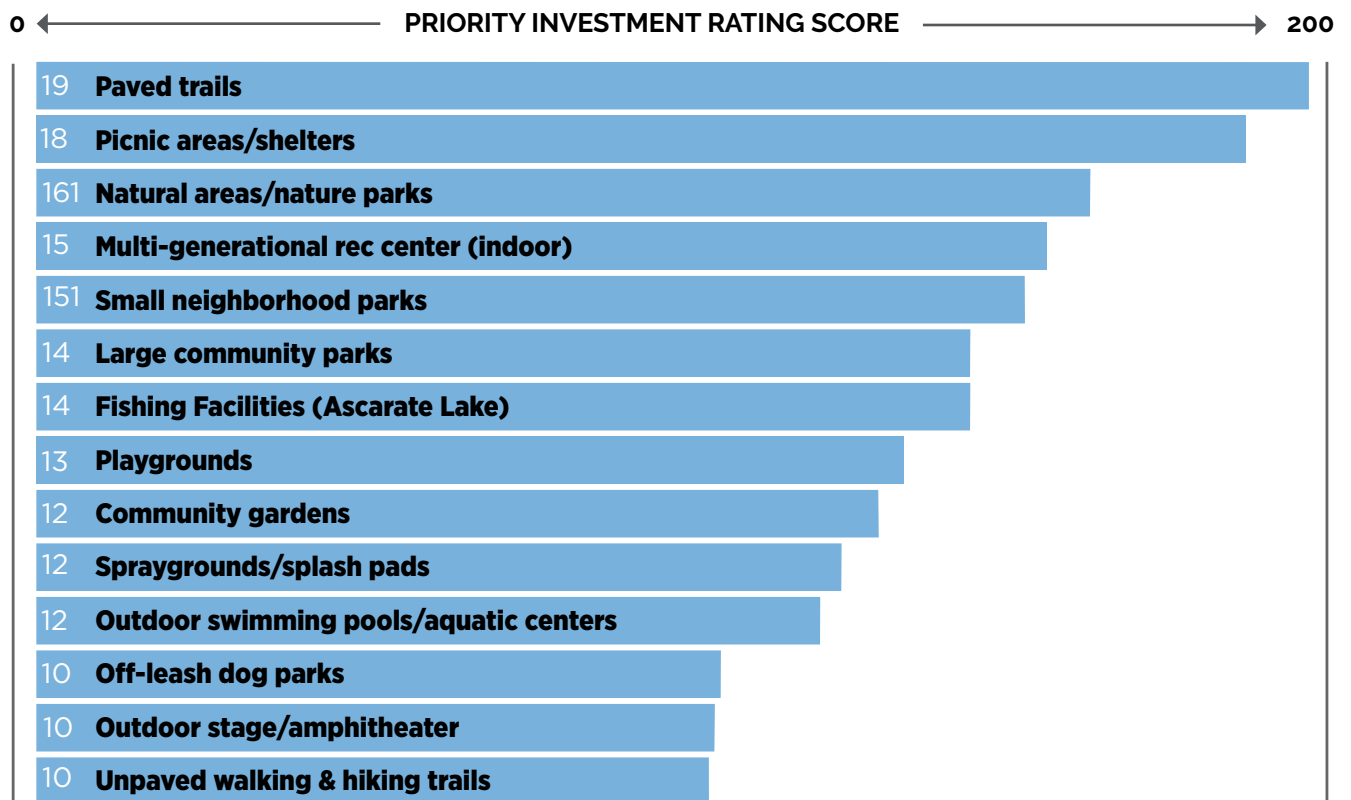
A proximity-based guideline can also be used to measure accessibility to recreational facilities but is not as frequently applied due to the presumed community-wide or regional nature of many facility types such as recreations centers, swimming pools, and athletic fields.



WHAT DO EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS WANT?

Master planning responses efforts reveal a core group of park amenities for which the County should prioritize investment. Priority investments which would align with public feedback are listed below. A full list of priority investments is provided in **Appendix A**.

FIGURE 3.9: RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, HIGH PRIORITY INVESTMENTS¹



1. Based on the Priority Investment Rating (PIR) methodology developed by ETC Institute. Based on a statistically-valid survey administered by ETC Institute in Spring/Summer 2020. Scoring is a ratio of “unmet need ratings” plus “importance ratings” and is described in more detail in **Appendix A**.

FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS

This Plan does not recommend the establishment of minimum target levels of service for recreational facilities based on a facility-to-population ratio at this time – nor a rigid framework based on facility distribution. Adherence to this standard framework would ignore that in many parts of El Paso County residents’ principal recreational facility needs are being provided by a municipality and potentially cause an unnecessary duplication of services.

Rather, El Paso County should base future recreational facility needs on: **A)** The public preferences that were identified during the parks and recreation planning process; and, **B)** A list of common recreational facilities and park amenities that might be expected within any new park space. Facility selection would be on a case-by-case basis but should include selections from the following categories (a more detailed and site-specific list of recommendations is provided in **Chapter 4**):



Athletic field infrastructure in neighborhood parks such as the goal posts at Agua Dulce Park (above left), should be incidental and not intended for competitive play. Sport courts should be provided in most neighborhood parks but should be selected based on identified community preferences.

- **Athletic Fields.** El Paso County should consolidate competitive athletic fields (lighted and unlighted) at the Sportspark and existing/future regional and community parks. Due to space requirements, potential investments in athletic fields at future neighborhood parks should be limited to no more than backstops and/or goals where space allows, to maximize the use of open areas to support informal play. Neighborhood park size and configuration should not however be guided by the need to provide multi-purpose (athletic) field space. Rather, the incorporation of multi-purpose fields in neighborhood parks should be incidental.
- **Sport Courts.** Public feedback suggests that the need for various types of sport courts (e.g., basketball, volleyball, tennis, etc.) is not high among El Paso County residents’ preferences. This does not suggest a lack of interest in these facilities, but rather an abundance of these facilities throughout the combined County and municipal parks systems. The incorporation of various sport courts in future neighborhood parks should be a common investment. The type of sport courts included in future neighborhood parks should consider proximity to similar County or municipal facilities and be guided by public input gathered by County Commissioner precinct as part of this master planning process.

- **Aquatics.** Survey results indicate a high degree of public interest for County investment in indoor and outdoor aquatic facilities, including swimming pools, splash pads and spraygrounds. Still, this Plan does not recommend a minimum target level of service for these facilities; both because at least part of El Paso County’s population is served by municipal facilities, and the costs associated with the construction and maintenance of new aquatic facilities. As with athletic fields, any new swimming pools constructed by El Paso County should be located within regional/community parks, while splash pads and spraygrounds may be an optional facility throughout the County’s network of regional, community, and neighborhood parks.
- **Multi-use Trails.** Multi-use trails rank as the most popular recreational facility desired by El Paso County residents. To meet this demand, the County is actively incorporating multi-use trail segments into new subdivisions and neighborhood parks – relying largely on the use of existing utility easements. While these actions represent sound practices, County trail development is being undertaken without the benefit of a comprehensive county-wide trails master plan or clear level of service targets. (The multi-jurisdictional Paseo Del Norte Trail and Mission Trail plans provide guidance for targeted trail segments, but not a county-wide system.)

As will be discussed in Chapter 4, El Paso County should work with its municipal partners to create a county-wide multi-use trail network leveraging levees, irrigation channels, utility easements, arroyos and other linear corridors. The County’s network should mimic the 1 mile of trail per 10,000 resident ratio adopted by the City of El Paso and network distribution should maximize trail corridor proximity to residential areas in all four County Commissioner precincts.

- **Miscellaneous Amenities.** Picnic areas, shelters, playgrounds, walking trails, and open play areas form the backbone of the most basic neighborhood park amenities.



The new multi-use trail segment at Sky View Park will link to future neighborhoods and community destinations. The utility corridor within which it is located should be incorporated into a county-wide trails master plan.

PARKLAND DEDICATION

El Paso County has assumed an increasingly active role in acquiring and maintaining public parkland through the acceptance of new public parks. The County government’s expanding inventory of public parks is primarily occurring within the City of El Paso’s extraterritorial jurisdiction and has taken place through the construction and dedication of parks as part of the land development process. The County’s growing role as a primary parkland service provider has occurred despite the County’s lack of adopted parkland dedication and development regulations.

DEDICATION AND ACQUISITION PRACTICES

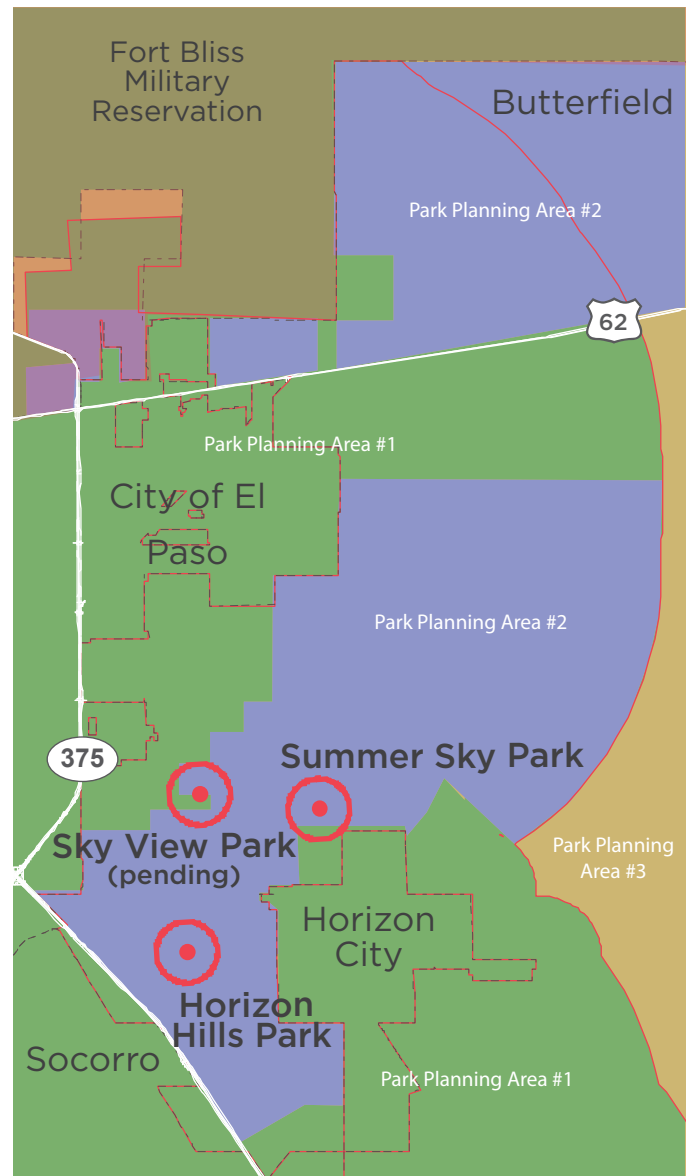
The most recent parks accepted into the El Paso County parks and recreation system are Horizon Hills Park, Sky View Park, and Summer Sky Park (the latter two parks were under construction during the preparation of this Master Plan and are not included in the Plan inventory or conditions assessment). All three parks are located within the extraterritorial jurisdiction of the City of El Paso. The general location of these parks is shown in **Figure 3.10, City of El Paso, Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (East)**.

Figure 3.10 illustrates two (2) subareas within the City of El Paso’s extraterritorial jurisdiction (ETJ) – a “Preferred Annexation Area,” and “Possible Future Annexation Area.” These two types of annexation areas are addressed differently in relation to parkland dedication within municipal code, with the City only accepting new parkland within the Preferred Annexation Areas.

DEVELOPMENT REVIEW

The City of El Paso and El Paso County jointly review subdivisions within the City’s ETJ (City of El Paso, Code of Ordinance § 19.11.010). Within those portions of the ETJ where the City of El Paso does not require the dedication of a public park as part of the development process (“areas of potential annexation,” City of El Paso, Code of Ordinance § 19.11.040), El Paso County has increasingly acquired public parks through the variance process – particularly in conjunction with developer requests to reduce minimum lot size. Absent formal parkland dedication and development requirements, County conditions largely mimic the requirements of the City of El Paso.

FIGURE 3.10: CITY OF EL PASO, EXTRATERRITORIAL JURISDICTION (EAST)



Recent public parks dedicated to El Paso County lie within the City of El Paso’s extraterritorial jurisdiction, but outside of its “preferred annexation areas.”



“CERTAIN” URBAN COUNTIES & PARKLAND DEDICATION

El Paso County government’s authority to regulate the development of subdivisions comes from Subchapter B, Chapter 232 of the Texas Local Government Code. Subchapter B is silent on whether Texas counties can require dedicated parkland as part of the subdivision development process.

Senate Bill 873 amended Chapter 232 of the Texas Local Government Code (2001) by adding Subchapter E (Infrastructure Planning Provisions in Certain Urban Counties). Section 232.100 of Subchapter E applies to the subdivision of land that is: *1) Subject to county regulations under Subchapter A or B; and, 2) In a county that has a population of 150,000 or more and is adjacent to an international border (etc.).*

As defined, Subchapter E applies to El Paso County. Since its passage, some Texas counties have used Subchapter E to enact regulations “necessary to protect health, safety, welfare and morals” - including the dedication and parkland or fees in lieu to purchase parkland. Under the authority granted by subchapter E, Ch. 232, Texas Local Govt. Code Ann., El Paso County should take steps to formalize its parkland dedication and development requirements.

FUTURE PARKLAND DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PROCESSES

El Paso County’s ongoing reliance on the variance process to promote the development and dedication of new public parks to the County creates an environment where future conditions for approval may not always be consistent, may be viewed as arbitrary, and may be subject to future legal challenges. **Should El Paso County continue to take an active role in providing for the minimum parkland target levels of service recommended by this Plan – specifically, through the acceptance of new developer-constructed public parks – it should abandon its current variance-based method of acquisition in favor of a parkland dedication ordinance.** While the provisions of a County parkland dedication ordinance may be similar to the City of El Paso’s, such ordinance should include at least the following minimum provisions:

TABLE 3.2: MINIMUM PARKLAND DEDICATION ORDINANCE PROVISIONS

PROVISIONS	NOTES
PURPOSE AND APPLICABILITY. Type of parkland to be developed, acquired, and/or funded. Scale and type of development subject to the provisions.	Neighborhood parks and linear parks (or multi-use trails). Pocket parks subject to specific performance criteria.
PARKLAND CALCULATION. Ratio of parkland and/or open space to be provided by dwelling unit.	El Paso County currently employs a standard of .01 acres per lot (50 lot minimum). Matches City of El Paso’s single-family standard of 1 acre per 100 lots. (In unincorporated El Paso County, this equals 2.78 acres per 1,000 residents. ¹)
LOCATION AND DIMENSIONAL STANDARDS. Type of land that is suitable for parkland dedication including location within the development. Size, arrangement, and orientation in relation to surrounding parcels and streets.	Will vary by park type and may be partially satisfied by utilizing portions of detention ponds, arroyos, and other similar features.
FEE IN LIEU. Ability to pay a fee in lieu of parkland dedication. Consider the size of development (and potential amount of parkland that may be dedicated) or the presence of sufficient existing parkland in proximity.	Must be worded to provide El Paso County with the discretion to accept or deny fees in lieu of parkland.
DEVELOPMENT STANDARDS. Type, amount, and design of minimum recreational facilities and accessory amenities by park type. May also include multi-use trail easement dedication and construction.	Some facilities may be selected from a list of options, but El Paso County should have discretion to approve proposed facilities based on community-wide needs and proximity to similar facilities.
PARK DEVELOPMENT FEE. Optional fee for future development of dedicated parkland or for application to an alternative (community/regional) park space serving the development and surrounding neighborhoods.	May be required <u>in addition to</u> parkland dedication and or fees-in-lieu of dedication.

1. Based on average household size of 3.59 residents; ESRI Business Analyst.

PARK DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT

As with parkland dedication standards, the park design and development conditions that El Paso County requires developers to meet in order to accept dedication are largely derived from the City of El Paso’s parkland dedication ordinance (City of El Paso, Code of Ordinances, chap. 19.20) and Design and Construction Standards for Park Facilities (2018). Both resources provide thorough guidance for best practices in park design and construction.

PARK PLACEMENT/LOCATION

Future parks dedicated to El Paso County should adhere to the following location guidelines:

Neighborhood Parks

- *Should be placed within a development so that the maximum number of residential dwelling units are within a ¼ mile walkshed (measured via an accessible pedestrian pathway from the residential property to a defined park entrance).*
- *Minimum walkshed should not be bisected by an arterial street. Where the walkshed is bisected by a collector street, such street may not exceed two travel lanes and crosswalks should be defined by signage and pavement markings.*
- *Should be bordered by a combination of street, school, open space or other public destination on at least three sides.*
- *Adjacent homes should face the park space. Instances of houses backing up to the park should be minimized and should employ transparent fencing between the park and residential unit.*
- *When adjacent to a school or other community destination, should have direct pedestrian access between the sites.*
- *May partially include arroyos or detention pond space.*



Shade structures should cover principal picnic seating areas in each neighborhood, community and regional park, and should ideally cover no less than 75 percent of a playground’s fall surface area. The intermittent placement of shade structures at wayside locations along multi-use trails should also be considered.

Linear Parks / Multi-use Trails

- *May be placed along a roadway, utility corridor, arroyo or other similar linear feature (ideally, in accordance with an adopted trails master plan).*
- *Requires signage and pavement markings at roadway crossings that adhere to the Texas Manual for Uniform Traffic Control Devices.*

Recommendations on performance standards for pocket parks – including placement and location - can be found in **Chapter 4**. Since regional and community parks will be constructed solely at the discretion of El Paso County, and not be tied to the subdivision approval process, placement may vary but should adhere to similar design principles that maximize access between the site and adjacent or future residential dwelling units.

MINIMUM FACILITY STANDARDS

The City of El Paso’s Design and Construction Standards for Park Facilities (2018) provide a thorough set of guidelines for the preferred design of recreational facilities and accessory amenities in the City’s parks system. The City’s standards are a reliable starting point for El Paso County in adopting its own parkland development requirements – particularly given that the County’s most recent parkland acquisition activity has been within the City’s ETJ. The County may adopt the City’s standards by reference with exceptions to any specific provisions to reflect County preferences. Maximum consistency between both jurisdictions will help ensure a consistent park development standard throughout the region.



COUNTY PARK FACILITY GUIDELINES

This Plan assumes that El Paso County will take steps to formalize its authority to require parkland dedication and development. **Table 3.3** lists minimum improvement standards which should be incorporated by El Paso County government into any future parkland dedication and development regulations prepared by the County.

Proposed County parkland development guidelines would apply to neighborhood and linear parks. **The guidelines are not all-inclusive but serve as a starting point for future County development provisions.** As presented, they adhere to the minimum recreational facility recommendations presented in this Plan, are derived in part by “legacy” guidelines previously disseminated by the NRPA, and promote consistency with the parkland development provisions of the City of El Paso.

TABLE 3.3: MINIMUM COUNTY PARK FACILITY GUIDELINES¹

FACILITY/AMENITY	PARK TYPE		MINIMUM UNITS	NOTES
	NEIGHBORHOOD	LINEAR		
RECREATIONAL				
PLAYSCAPE	Yes	No	1 per park	Combined playscape structure(s) or separated by age group.
OPEN PLAY AREA	Yes	No	-	Turf area for informal group play.
SPORT COURTS	Yes	No	1 per park	May be multi-purpose. Court type to vary based on proximity to similar facilities. (i.e. basketball, volleyball, tennis, pickleball, racquetball, etc.)
ATHLETIC FIELDS	Varies	No	-	For non-competitive and daytime play only. Depends on dimensions of open play areas. Minimum facilities such as backstops or goals.
IN-PARK (WALKING) PATHS	Yes	Yes	-	Closed-loop system around the perimeter of neighborhood parks. Multi-use trail in linear parks linking destinations.
ACCESSORY				
PARK BENCHES	Yes	Yes	4 per acre	Shaded preferred (structure or vegetation)
PICNIC TABLES/SHELTERS	Yes	Varies	2 per acre	Shaded preferred (structure or vegetation)
COVERED PAVILIONS	Varies	No	-	Optional facility
DRINKING FOUNTAINS	Yes	Varies	1 per park	Optional at multi-use trailheads
PARK SIGNAGE	Yes	Yes	1 per park or major trailhead entrance	-
SECURITY LIGHTING	Yes	Varies	-	Pedestrian-oriented perimeter lighting along adjacent public and private streets and one light at the playground, trailhead, or other focal point.
PERIMETER SIDEWALKS	Yes	N/A	Along all public or private street frontage	Exclusive of off-site sidewalks necessary to link the park to surrounding residences.
WASTE RECEPTACLES	Yes	Yes	1 per acre; or at multi-use trailhead locations	-
RESTROOM	No	Varies	-	Restrooms optional at multi-use trailheads only.
PARKING	Varies	Varies	-	On-street parking for neighborhood and linear parks. Off-street parking optional at multi-use trailheads only.

1. The guidelines are not all-inclusive but serve as a starting point for future County development provisions.

PARK SYSTEM CONDITIONS

The provision of “accessible” park spaces and amenities requires that assets are maintained and remain enticing to residents and other visitors. This Plan measures and ranks the condition of parkland and recreation facilities according to 15 categories described in **Table 3.4, Park System Condition Categories**, below. This information has been used to help determine what improvements are warranted at each County park and to establish investment priorities.

TABLE 3.4: PARK SYSTEM CONDITION CATEGORIES

CATEGORY	PRINCIPAL REVIEW ITEMS
SPORT COURT	PLAYING SURFACE, FENCING, NETTING, STRIPING, WALLS, AND OTHER NON-REMOVABLE FACILITIES ESSENTIAL TO SUPPORT THE ACTIVITY AND DEFINE THE AREA OF PLAY.
SPORT 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.
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 L AWN AREAS INTENDED FOR RANDOM PLAY.
PARKING	OFF-STREET PARKING AREAS AND PROXIMATE ON-STREET PARKING AREAS.
GENERAL FENCING AND RETAINING WALLS	CONDITION OF STRUCTURES
GENERAL SITE FACILITIES	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.
PLANTING AND TREES	HEALTH, MAINTAINED CONDITION, AND COVERAGE OF TREES AND OTHER LANDSCAPING INCLUDING OVERGROWTH. STRATEGIC PLACEMENT OF VEGETATION TO DEFINE PARK SPACES.
TURF	MANICURED L AWN AREAS. CUMULATIVE - MAY INCLUDE SURFACING FOR PREVIOUSLY LISTED CATEGORIES INCLUDING ATHLETIC FIELDS AND OPEN PLAY AREAS.
SIGNAGE	IDENTIFICATION, INFORMATIONAL, AND WAYFINDING SIGNAGE.
SITE LIGHTING	LIGHTING STANDARDS, FIXTURES, AND COVERAGE AREA.
PARK ACCESSIBILITY	BICYCLE, PEDESTRIAN, AND ADA ACCESS TO, FROM, AND WITHIN THE PARK SPACE.

The conditions assessment prepared for this Plan was conducted in August 2020. Scores by category and by park range from one (1) to five (5) - with “1” representing a negative score and “5” a positive score. (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 on the scale below, 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.”



FACILITY CONDITIONS

PARK PATHWAYS/TRAILS

3.8

Most concrete sidewalks and pathways within the County’s park were in good condition. In some cases poor placement, condition of, or a complete absence of curb ramps makes access into the park a potential challenge. Repairs are necessary to avoid more significant damage and subsequent replacement costs. Some parks lacked sidewalks and pathways to main park features, which creates potential access issues.



SPORTS COURTS

2.7

The general condition of sport courts vary widely on a park-by-park basis. Horizon Hills Park and Tornillo Park sport courts remain in great condition, while the sport courts at Estrella Park, Risinger Park and Westway Park are in need of partial repair and/or replacement. In almost all cases, minor damage to the painted surface of the basketball court was noted. One feature noted in virtually all sport courts was an absence of shade, either by trees or a canopy structure.

STRUCTURED PLAY (I.E. PLAYGROUNDS)

4.2

The structured play areas in almost all parks exhibited good condition despite some documented “wear and tear.” In many cases the structured play areas appeared quite new, as was the case in Horizon Hills, EPC Sports Park and Aqua Dulce Park. In contrast, some parks had graffiti and damaged fall surfaces requiring repair. In some cases, the fall surface was either worn away or in need of replacement. Some swing sets had an inferior fall surface underneath or had significant erosion present in this area.



PARKING (OFF-STREET AND ON-STREET)

2.8

On-street parking is provided for many neighborhood parks and pocket parks, while most community parks and sports complexes provide off-street parking. The condition of most off-street parking was good. In many of the parking areas, refinishing and re-striping may be necessary. In some neighborhood parks where only off-street parking is available, parked cars may back up and cause vehicular flow issues within the neighborhood. Some parks do not have handicapped ramps or delineated crosswalks leading from the street to the sidewalk.



PUBLIC GATHERING SPACES

3.4

Parks which were more developed and maintained typically exhibited public gatherings spaces in better condition. Many of the pavilion and park bench areas are old and repair or replacement of elements is needed. Some parks had informal open spaces consisting of lawn areas which served as public gathering spaces; their specific condition and level of shade varied on a park-by-park basis.

SPORTS FIELDS

2.9

With the notable exception of the El Paso County Sports park, most County maintained ballfields are in need of general repair. Turf grass maintenance and management are lacking in most existing baseball fields. The ballfields most lacking in upkeep (Veterans Park) require replacement of nearly all existing features. Many of the ballfields lack shade over bleachers and perimeter fencing is in need of reconditioning. In many of the soccer fields, the goals are either broken or missing nets.





GENERAL SITE FACILITIES

2.6

A large number of parks had skate parks, some in better condition than others. In almost all cases, there was a lack of shade over the layout of the skate park which would result in a harsh summer experience for users.

OPEN PLAY AREAS

3.4

Open play areas were maintained relatively well in a majority of the parks, but some were lacking shade. A common observation at some of the open play areas system-wide was the substandard condition of the turf. While some improvements are needed, the vast majority of parks system-wide contained open play areas which were accessible and usable to visitors.



GENERAL FENCING AND RETAINING WALLS

3.3

In keeping with the local design aesthetic, most of the parks incorporate some type of low stem wall. In most cases this wall feature was in good condition, but in rare cases there was significant damage to a wall. Horizon Hills Park contained a large retaining walls which are in good condition.



ADDITIONAL SITE AMENITIES

3.1

The general condition of additional site amenities, such as trash receptacles, pet waste stations, water fountains and benches, was primarily dependent on the location and condition of the specific park. Newer parks located in more developed areas tended to have newer amenities, such as Horizon Hills and the Sportspark. In some of the more remote parks, such as San Felipe Park, Tornillo Park and Gallegos Park, many of these amenities are in need of repair/replacement, or, in some cases, missing altogether.

PLANTING AND TREES

3.1

A consistent theme among many of the parks is a lack of adequate shade above gathering spaces. Some parks, such as San Felipe Park and Tornillo Park, have a nearly total absence of trees, while San Elizario Plaza and Sparks Park feature healthy shade trees. Most of the parks have few plantings and trees thus providing minimal natural shade coverage. Many trees within the parks require pruning or replacement.



TURF

2.9

A lack of well-maintained turf was a common theme in many of the parks. In some cases, there was a total absence of ground cover with exposed silty soil present. In areas with poor turf cover, surface erosion was present. It is understood that the arid environment makes large areas of irrigated turf impractical, suggesting that some open play areas could be reduced in scale in favor of the placement of some type of aggregate surface.

SIGNAGE

2.8

Many of the signage elements were either in poor condition or not visible from the main street. A few parks, such as San Felipe Park and Sparks Park contain signs which are old and in need of replacement. A few parks contained signage elements, but these were not visible from the main road which would limit visibility to community members and visitors. Some parks contained no signage elements at all. In almost all cases the condition, amount and visibility of signage could be improved.



SITE LIGHTING

3.5

In many cases, function lighting was present which appeared to provide adequate coverage; however, minor aesthetic damage was observed on the poles and other surfaces. Some parks, such as the Rio Grande River Trail and Tornillo Park contained high-quality, solar lighting while other parks contained lighting in need of replacement. Some more secluded parks had large areas with no lighting at all.

PARK ACCESSIBILITY

3.2

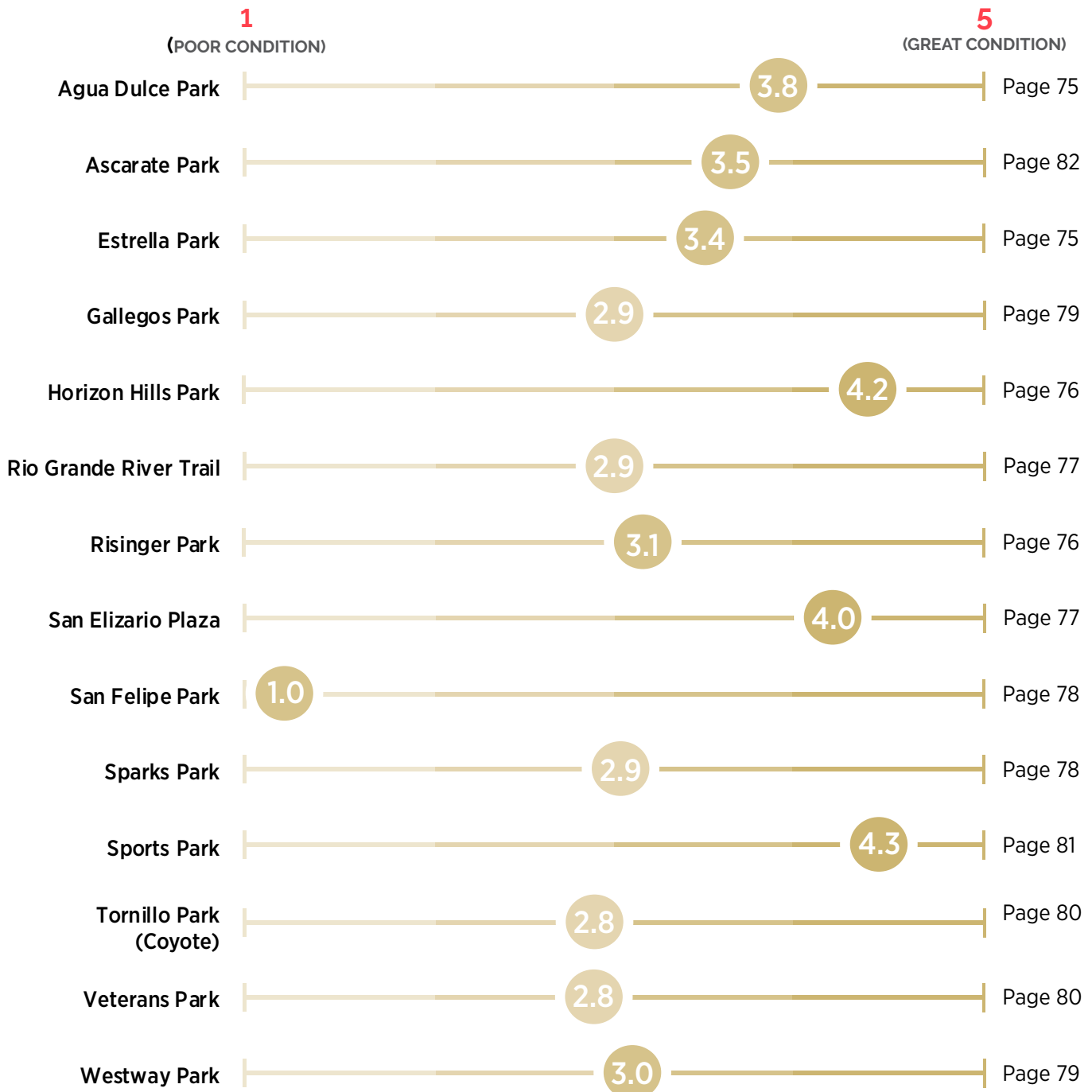
In many cases, accessibility was only limited to a small, more-developed portion of the park, whereas the majority of the park land area was inaccessible. In several cases, there were no curb ramps provided into the park from the parking area, which could limit accessibility. Many parks have no direct bicycle and pedestrian access to and from surrounding residential areas. The connectivity of many older parks to existing neighborhoods could be improved.



EL PASO COUNTY PARK PROPERTIES

Conditions of the El Paso County Park Properties were generally substandard and in need of maintenance. **Figure 3.11, Conditions Assessment by Park** (below), provides a cumulative score for each park. Corresponding summaries of each park can be found on pages 78 through 85. Corresponding conditions assessment forms are maintained by the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department.

FIGURE 3.11: CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT BY PARK



AGUA DULCE PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

3.8

The north western side of Agua Dulce Park consists of a loop trail surrounding a large passive lawn which contains soccer goals. The existing parking area is unpaved and unstriped.³ The existing skate park is lighted, but unshaded and contains graffiti.² The existing basketball court is surrounded by a high chain-link fence that is damaged in places.¹ The court surface is worn and requires resurfacing and repainting. Within the park boundary is the El Paso County Self Help Center; the facility is surrounded by barbed wire and unsightly. The existing playscape is relatively new and in good condition. The existing loop trail is well maintained and lighted, and contains small bump out areas with benches and waste receptacles.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



ESTRELLA PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

3.4

Estrella Park mainly consists of a series of loop trails surrounding a skate park, a basketball court, a playground and a volleyball court. An attractive masonry signage element is located at the front of the park but is not visible from the main road. The existing parking lot is unpaved and lacks striping and ADA accessibility.¹ The existing playground is in good condition and is shaded, but contains graffiti and is lacking a border between the fall surface and turf grass. The picnic tables and pavilions are in good condition and relatively new, and trash cans are provided throughout the park. The existing basketball court is in need of resurfacing and repainting, and the nets are in need of repair. The skate features in the existing skate park are worn and in need of replacement, and there is a lack of shade.³ The volleyball court is in relatively good condition but lacks lighting and shade.² The existing swing set surfacing is worn down and may present a safety hazard.⁴

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



HORIZON HILLS PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

4.2

Horizon Hills Park is a relatively well-maintained neighborhood park located within a new residential community. There is grade change along the park resulting in great scenic quality looking to the west. The central core of the park contains open passive space with few shade trees.³ A new, shaded existing playground is located in the north east corner of the park along with surrounding landscaping and sidewalks. A large masonry retaining wall separates several homes from the park, which is significantly damaged in one area. A large masonry sign is located on the north east corner of the park, but lacks landscaping around it.¹ The basketball court, while new, has damage to the nets, and the benches adjacent to it are unshaded.²

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1

Enhanced landscaping in open bed areas (xeriscape).

2

Providing shading over benches along basketball court.

3

More shade trees bordering the open play area.

RISINGER PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

3.1

The existing basketball court surface within Risinger Park is well-worn with surface cracking visible, and the hoops are worn and in need of replacement or repainting. The existing playground area is in fair condition but shows wear and tear and also contains graffiti.¹⁻² Grass and weeds are growing into the fall surface. A perimeter masonry wall surrounds the park and is in relatively good condition. The existing pavilions, trash cans, BBQ grills and water fountains are well-worn and in need of replacement. The signage element at the entrance to the park is dated with paint peeling and needs replacement. The lighting along the loop path is in relatively good condition but could use a coat of new paint. There are no accessible sidewalk connections to the existing pavilions or basketball court.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1

Replacement/repair of playground equipment.

2

Replacement/repair of playground equipment.

RIVER TRAIL (CLASSIFICATION: LINEAR PARK/TRAIL)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

2.9

The River Trails concrete travelway is in good overall condition, but in some places weeds were growing into the sidewalk. There are small “bump-outs” along the trail which serve as rest/gatherings spaces. These small spaces are in good condition, but there is no shade provided.² There does not appear to be any visible dedicated surface parking areas for users of the trail. A lack of trees and shade along the trail can result in a harsh user experience during hotter weather.¹ There is a minimal amount of turf provided along the trail. Some minor signage elements were observed along the trail, but the overall trail lacks primary signage to draw users into the space or wayfinding signage.³ There is solar lighting provided along some segments of the trail. Accessibility is a challenge in some areas of the trail as curb ramps are not provided and transitions are not smooth from the street to the trailway.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA (CLASSIFICATION: CIVIC SPACE)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

4.0

The pathways within San Elizario Placita are in good condition, with a high-quality pavilion in the center of the space. Most of the parking available is either on-street or parking on a near-by property. The small amount of parking provided is on the south side of the plaza and in need of striping and ADA accessibility.² Decorative, cast-iron benches are arranged around the plaza and are in relatively good condition. A historical exhibit is located on the east-side facing the church, which is well-shaded and in good condition. Large shade trees found throughout the plaza provide excellent shade; however, a large amount of bird droppings are present.⁴ Turf areas are in moderate condition due to the large amount of overhead shade.¹ While an overall signage element is lacking, historic plaques are located throughout the plaza which are in good condition.³

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



SAN FELIPE PARK (CLASSIFICATION: COMMUNITY PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

1.0

This largely unprogrammed park is rural in nature and contains a large amount of native vegetation. The lack of trees, turf, sidewalks, parking, lighting and active/passive amenities make this park very isolated and inaccessible.³ The overarching park feature is one existing ballfield in very poor shape located towards the center of the park. There are three groupings of pavilions located in two main areas of the park, all of which are in poor condition.¹ There is a dilapidated pavilion structure located near the ballfield which would require a total replacement. Evidence of bonfires and firearm activity abound throughout the park.²

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1

Improvement/replacement of general park amenities.

2

Establishment of perimeter fencing and park hours.

3

Defined gathering areas.

SPARKS PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

2.9

The western half of Sparks Park is composed of multiple amenities consisting of a play structure, a swing set, pavilions and open play space with trees. An El Paso County Sheriff's substation is located on the southeastern corner of the site. On the northeastern corner of the site is a skate park and basketball court, both of which are unshaded and show signs of damage and wear. The existing pavilions and picnic tables are in poor shape, with rusted metal and peeling paint.³ The existing playscape and swing set show signs of rusting and peeling paint; both the fall surface under the playscape and swing set are in need of repair/replacement.¹ Informal open play areas are found throughout the park, but are unorganized and lacking shade. Two parking areas are provided, where resurfacing and striping are needed.² There are some large, well-established trees on the west side of the park; the east side contains no trees.⁴

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1

Replacement/repair of playground equipment and fall surface.

2

Replace striping on parking lot.

3

Repair/replacement of pavilions, tables/benches and BBQ grills.

4

Upgrade east side of park with trees and ground cover.

WESTWAY PARK (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

3.0

The Westway Park basketball court is in poor condition, with the surface in need of resurfacing and repainting, and the hoop is old with rust and peeling paint. There is also a lack of shade on the basketball court.¹ The existing paths are in good condition, but there are no sidewalk connections to the basketball court and some of the pavilions. While the playground is in good condition and shaded, the fall surface is in poor condition and in need of replacement. The only parking available is on-street, which might back up into neighborhood during peak times.² There is no fence near the playground which is immediately adjacent to the street, and the fence bordering the ball ballfield is in fair condition. There are a fair number of well-established trees on the west side of the park, but trees and landscaping are lacking on the east side. The loop trail present may need improvements or resurfacing for optimal accessibility.³

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



GALLEGOS PARK (CLASSIFICATION: REGIONAL PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

2.9

The scenic quality looking east towards the mountains from Gallegos Park is excellent. This regional park contains several active sports fields, two basketball courts, a skate park and a playground. A swimming pool is located directly adjacent to the south side but is not within the park property boundary. The basketball court surface is in poor condition and is in need of resurfacing and repainting.¹ The baseball fields are in need of maintenance and repair. The skate park is almost completely devoid of skate features and would require significant upgrades and maintenance. As is typical of other parks in the region, low decorative masonry walls are found within the park, some of which are damaged. While the turf is in relatively good shape around the sports fields, there is an overall lack of trees and landscaping around the park.³

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



COYOTE PARK (TORNILLO PARK) (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

2.8

The existing basketball court in Coyote Park is in good condition, but is unshaded.¹ The skate park contains graffiti and the surface shows cracking which could present a safety hazard.² Some of the skate features have nails sticking out. The baseball field is in poor condition and would require improved fencing, dugouts and surfacing. The asphalt and concrete sidewalks are in relatively good condition and provide a good degree of connectivity. The pavilions with picnic tables are in relatively good condition; the new wooden pergola and benches on west side of park is in great condition. There is a lack of visible signage on the property.³

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1

Providing shade on the basketball court and skate park.

2

Repair to skate park and removal of graffiti.

3

Visible signage element needed.

VETERANS PARK (O'DONNELL PARK) (CLASSIFICATION: NEIGHBORHOOD PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

2.8

The western portion of Veterans Park contains a relatively new playscape and swing set, both of which show visible wear and tear. The fall surface is in fair condition with some damage to the fabric membrane underneath. The overall park contains little to no turf or ground cover. The masonry wall surrounding the playscape has significant damage in areas, requiring repair. While some large trees are located on the west side, the majority of the park site does not contain well-maintained trees. The existing baseball field does not have a perimeter fence and contains almost no turf.¹

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT

1

Upgrade turf ground cover in targeted locations.

SPORTSPARK (CLASSIFICATION: REGIONAL PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

4.3

The large sports complex is relatively new and contains generally new and well-maintained amenities. While the turf within the existing ballfields are in great condition, the turf in other areas of the park is either failing or non-existent, which could result in potential erosion issues.²

The centrally-located playscape is in good condition and has a overhead shade structure, but lacks turf for people to congregate and engage in passive park activities. The open play lawn south of the playscape is irrigated and in good condition, but lacks any type of shade element.³ The majority of sidewalks running in the interior of the park are relatively new and in good condition.

There is a large surface parking lot located towards the northern area of the site which lacks tree islands or any type of shade. Overflow parking occurs to the large just west of the park, and is unpaved and unorganized.⁴ A primary signage element is located at the northern entry off of Zaragoza Road and is in good condition.¹

A conceptual redevelopment plan was prepared for the Sportspark as part of this master planning effort. A full list of recommended enhancements is presented in Chapter 4.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



ASCARATE PARK (CLASSIFICATION: REGIONAL PARK)

CONDITIONS SUMMARY

3.5

The most dominant feature of this key regional park is the public golf course covering the western two-thirds of the park. It is generally flat with minimal trees, and excellent scenic quality to the west. The major natural feature is Ascarate Lake, which bisects the park generally north-south.² The eastern side of the park contains general park development, and features sports fields, sports courts, a swimming facility and many other park amenities.

The sport courts on the northern side of the park are lacking shade and are in need of resurfacing/repainting and general repair.⁴ The basketball court is lacking sufficient lighting. There are several baseball fields located within the park, the majority of which are in good condition. The grouping of four baseball fields are

lacking shade over the existing bleachers. Portions of the decomposed granite pathways along the east side of the lake are overgrown with weeds and requiring maintenance.¹

There are several areas of surface parking throughout the park which show signs of age and use and are in need of repair. There is large mostly empty space towards the center of the park, east of Ascarate Lake which is largely unprogrammed.³ The north entrance displays an aesthetically pleasing signage area, while the south entrance features an older, dated signage element.

A conceptual redevelopment plan was prepared for Ascarate Park as part of this master planning effort. A full list of recommended enhancements is presented in Chapter 4.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR IMPROVEMENT



OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT

The staff of the El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department (PAR) is responsible for recreational programs, special events, and park facilities. In addition to the parkland and facilities analysis presented in the preceding section of this chapter, the Master Plan considers the operational and administrative strengths, challenges, and opportunities experienced by El Paso County government in providing efficient parks and recreation al service delivery. Many of the observations referenced in this section of the Plan are derived from a recreational programming and maintenance study conducted as part of the master planning effort and located in **Appendix B**.

STAFFING AND OPERATION EXPENDITURES

As shown in **Figure 3.12, Full Time Employees by Responsibility**, just over half of El Paso County PAR staff is comprised of operations and maintenance employees. The other half is comprised of programming staff and administration. PAR composition is generally on trend with comparable metrics compiled by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA). When comparing operating expenditures to the NRPA standards (**Figure 3.13, Sources of Operating Expenditures**), El Paso County PAR sources of revenue are less diverse. With an absence of dedicated taxes, levies and grants from which to draw significant annual revenues, El Paso County government will need to explore additional methods to generate earned revenues (via registrations, fees, etc.) if it wishes to reduce its reliance on general fund support as the County parks system expands.

FIGURE 3.12: FULL TIME EMPLOYEES BY RESPONSIBILITY

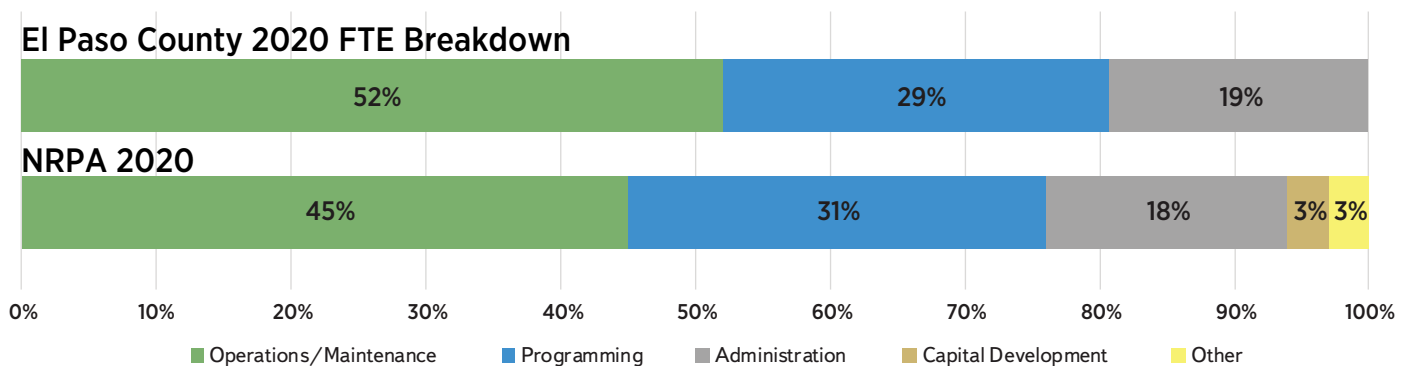
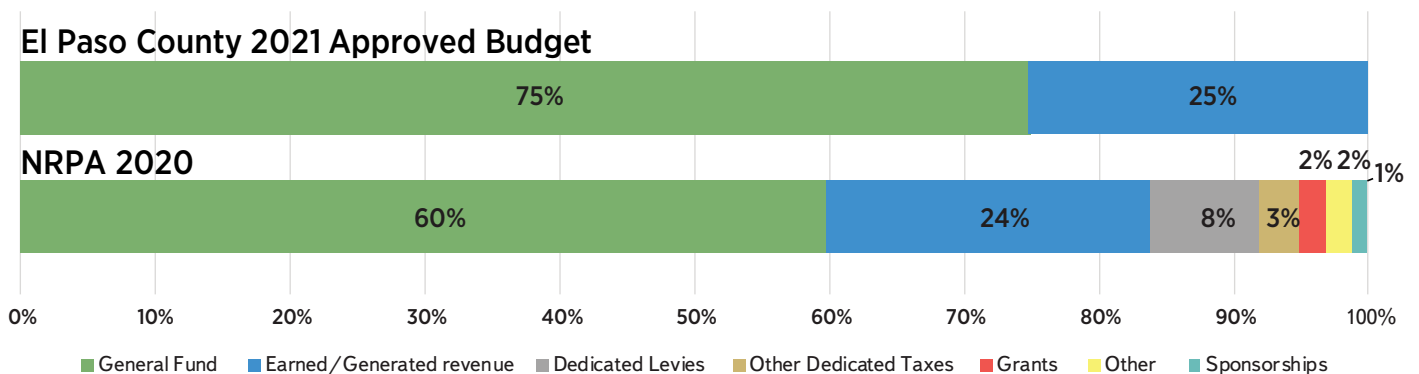


FIGURE 3.13: SOURCES OF OPERATING EXPENDITURES



Source: El Paso County; NRPA Performance Metrics Report (2020)

MAINTENANCE CATEGORIES

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department’s maintenance responsibilities can be divided into four functional areas:

- *General Parks Maintenance*
- *Golf Course Maintenance*
- *Regional Park (Ascarate Park) Maintenance*
- *Sports Complex Maintenance*

The collective annual operating budget for maintenance during the 2020 fiscal year was \$4,680,114 - of which roughly 15 percent was designated to “general park maintenance” (see **Table 3.5**).

MAINTENANCE CATEGORIES

Each of the four core maintenance functional areas managed by El Paso County should have a defined target level of service. Maintenance level of service is generally divided into three categories:

- *Maintenance Mode/Level 1: Applies to parks or sites that require the greatest level of maintenance standard in the system. These parks or sites are often revenue producing facilities, such as the Ascarate Golf Course and Sports Complex, where the quality and level of maintenance has a direct impact on the facility’s ability to maximize revenue generation.*
- *Maintenance Mode/Level 2: Applies to parks or sites that require a moderate level of effort and maintenance standards in the system. These include developed and undeveloped parks with amenities that are heavily used such as Ascarate Regional Park and the other community and neighborhood parks, and special-use facilities found in the El Paso County Parks system.*
- *Maintenance Mode/Level 3: applies to parks or sites that require a nominal level of effort and maintenance standards in the system. These generally include undeveloped parks with minimal amenities such as San Felipe Park.*

TABLE 3.5: MAINTENANCE SUMMARY (2020)

CATEGORY	METRIC
GENERAL PARKS MAINTENANCE	
ANNUAL OPERATION BUDGET	\$696,773
TOTAL ACRE MAINTAINED	364 acres
TOTAL ACTUAL COST PER ACRE	\$1,914
IN-CITY PARKS (ASCARATE, SPORTSPARK, GOLF COURSE) MAINTENANCE	
ANNUAL OPERATION BUDGET	\$3,983,341
TOTAL ACRES MAINTAINED	453 acres
TOTAL ACTUAL COST PER ACRE	\$8,793

Source: El Paso County PARD



Ascarate Park is an example of a revenue-producing property that should be maintained at a Level 1 maintenance mode.

This Plan recommends the following maintenance levels of service¹:

- *General Parks Maintenance - (Level 2 Maintenance Standard: 207 acres) + (Level 3 Maintenance Standard: 157 acres)*
- *Golf Course Maintenance - Level 1-2*
- *Regional Park (Ascarate Park) Maintenance - Level 1-2*
- *Sports Complex Maintenance - Level 1-2*

1. PROS Consulting, El Paso County Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (Appendix B)

TABLE 3.6: SUMMARY OF MAINTENANCE FUNDING (2020)

CATEGORY	2020 ANNUAL MAINTENANCE OPERATION BUDGET	TOTAL MAINTENANCE	TOTAL ACTUAL COST	BEST PRACTICE COST
GENERAL PARKS	\$696,773	364 acres	\$1,914/acre	Level 2 = \$5,000/acre Level 3 = \$300/acre
GOLF COURSE	\$1,678,106	27 holes	\$62,152/hole (\$24,889/hole for potable water)	\$45,000 - \$55,000/hole \$12,500/hole for potable water
REGIONAL PARK (ASCARATE)	\$1,368,342	176 acres	\$7,775/acre	\$8,500/acre
SPORTS PARK	\$936,893	10 athletic fields	\$93,689/field (\$15,000/field for potable water)	\$75,000/field \$2,500/field for potable water

Source: PROS Consulting, El Paso County Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (Appendix B)

MAINTENANCE STAFFING AND FUNDING

Table 3.6, Summary of Maintenance Funding, compares El Paso County’s most recent maintenance budget with actual costs and best practices as presented within this Plan’s companion operational assessment (**Appendix B**).

Of the El Paso County PARD’s four functional areas of maintenance, **Table 3.6** suggests that the General Parks maintenance category is the most deficient in funding and staff resources. Currently, General Maintenance is comprised of approximately eight full-time equivalent employees (FTEs). The best practice ratio of staff per general park acres maintained at a Level 2 standard is 1:20 acres and for parks maintained at a Level 3 standard is 1:75 acres. With the responsibility of actively managing 364 acres of general park land (207 acres at Level 2 and 157 acres (San Felipe Park) at Level 3), the General Parks maintenance operation does not have the staffing capacity to manage the general parks system at Level 2 and Level 3 maintenance standards.

ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES

To better organize maintenance practices, the El Paso County PARD can implement a number of tools and standards related to maintenance. The PARD should update and continue to customize the standards based on the park and recreation values of El Paso County residents and need to be adopted and implemented by staff and followed regardless of whether work is performed by County staff or third-party contractors.

One practice that would tie maintenance metrics to administration and annual planning is a Work Order Management System. This system would help staff to stay ahead of preventative maintenance and limit breakdowns. The system would track unit activity costs, which gives accurate data when planning yearly funding, staffing, and third-party contracts.



RECREATIONAL SERVICES

Access to recreational service providers is an essential component to achieving positive health outcomes. Though El Paso County is not the primary service provider to many residents, the regional draw of several of the County's larger parks creates a great opportunity for cost recovery through fees and services.

PROGRAM FUNDING

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Department organized the 2021 adopted budget into buckets as follows:

- *Agua Dulce Community Center*
- *Ascarate Golf Course*
- *Ascarate Operations*
- *Ascarate Regional County park*
- *County Parks*
- *Digital Library*
- *Golf Course Operations*
- *Parks and Recreation Administration*
- *Sportspark*
- *Sportspark Operations*
- *Swimming Operations*
- *Swimming Pools*

The manner in which the El Paso County PARD organizes its annual operating budget - with an emphasis on the daily operation of specific facilities - presents difficulties in readily identifying direct staffing allocations (full time and FTE) for the County's growing list of recreational programs. Nonetheless, the **El Paso County Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (Appendix B)** conducted as part of this master planning effort provides a basic framework around which a recreational services division may be established within the PARD, and around which staffing and other resource allocations can be clearly identified in future budget years.



RECREATIONAL SERVICES & PERFORMANCE METRICS

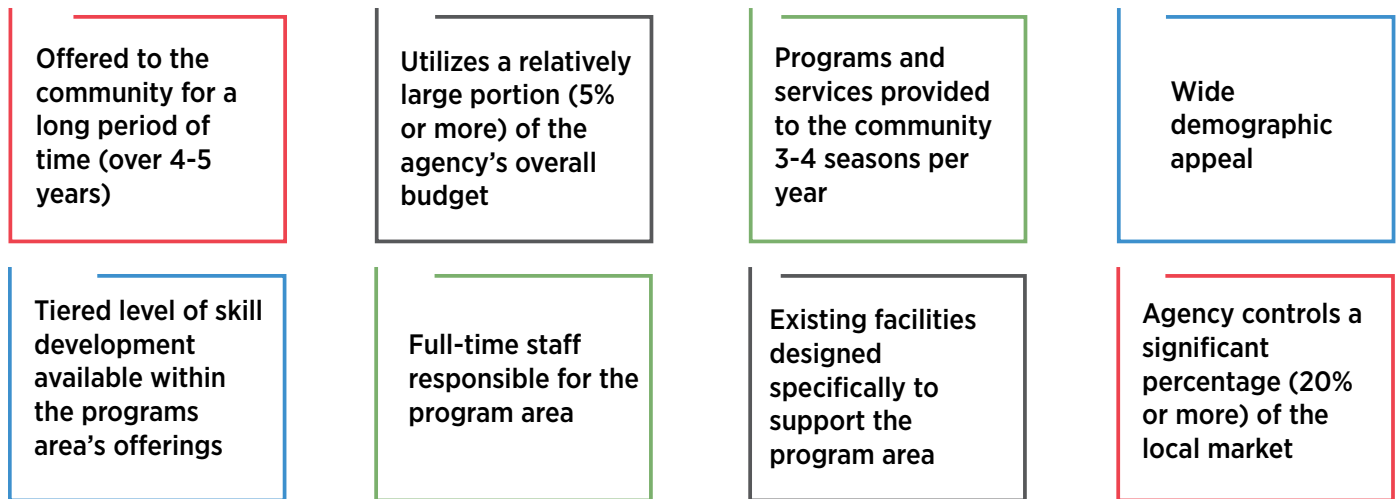
Measuring the cost-efficient delivery of the recreational programs and other services that are offered by the El Paso County PARD to residents and visitors will require a re-evaluation of how direct expenses for each program are allocated by the department. Such an evaluation of expenses to revenues serves as the basis for a detailed cost recovery strategy which is recommended by this Plan, and which will be necessary to decrease the Department's long-term reliance on General Funds.

Likewise, a reorganization of the PARD's division structure - to include a designated recreational services division - will enable the department to better compare budgeting and staffing performance measures to those of other agencies. Common national metrics are maintained by the NRPA within its annual **Agency Performance Review**.

CORE PROGRAM AREAS

One of the first steps in evaluating the efficiency of public recreational program delivery is to identify and classify those services which can be defined as “Core Program Areas”. These areas have consistently addressed an identified community need. Recreational service areas are considered “Core” if they meet the majority of the categories listed in **Figure 3.14, Core Program Requirements**.

FIGURE 3.14: CORE PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS



The El Paso County PARD currently offers programs and services in eight core areas. Within these Core Program Areas, **Table 3.7, Recreational Programming Age Segment Analysis**, provides a finer grained understanding of the age groups that these core programs serve.

TABLE 3.7: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS

CORE PROGRAM AREA	PRESCHOOL (5 AND UNDER)	ELEMENTARY (6-12)	TEENS (13-17)	YOUNG ADULT (18-34)	ADULT (35-54)	ACTIVE OLDER ADULT (55-64)	SENIOR (65+)
AQUATICS	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
BASEBALL/SOFTBALL FOR YOUTH	Secondary	Primary	Primary				
COMMUNITY SPECIAL EVENTS	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
GOLF - ROUNDS		Secondary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
GOLF - THE FIRST TEE	Secondary	Primary	Primary				
GOLF - TOURNAMENTS		Secondary	Secondary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
RESERVATION, RENTALS AND PERMITS	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
SOFTBALL FOR ADULTS				Primary	Primary	Secondary	

Source: PROS Consulting Operational Assessment Report

FUTURE SERVICE NEEDS (RECREATIONAL SERVICES)

Many of the core programming services identified in **Table 3.7** (page 90) either: **A)** Address a clear community recreation priority; and/or, **B)** Maximize the use of one or more County-owned and maintained recreational facilities. As revealed by the public outreach and engagement program conducted as part of the master planning effort, there remain additional community recreation needs for which the El Paso County PARD may be uniquely positioned to address to some degree.

Figure 3.15: High Priority Recreational Programs, reveals the type of recreational services for which many master planning participants indicated there remains a significant unmet need. These opinions were collected using the same “Priority Investment Rating¹” methodology that was used to identify recreational facility needs (see **Figure 3.9**, page 64). Many of the top-rated recreational programs suggest a desire for activities that may require the use of designated indoor recreation space.

Figure 3.16, Special Event Priorities, provides additional details on the types of special events which may be popular with local residents. Ultimately, should El Paso County government choose to expand its recreational program offerings, further age segment and cost recovery analyses will be necessary to determine the degree to which it may be willing to accept an additional financial burden.

FIGURE 3.15: HIGH PRIORITY RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS¹

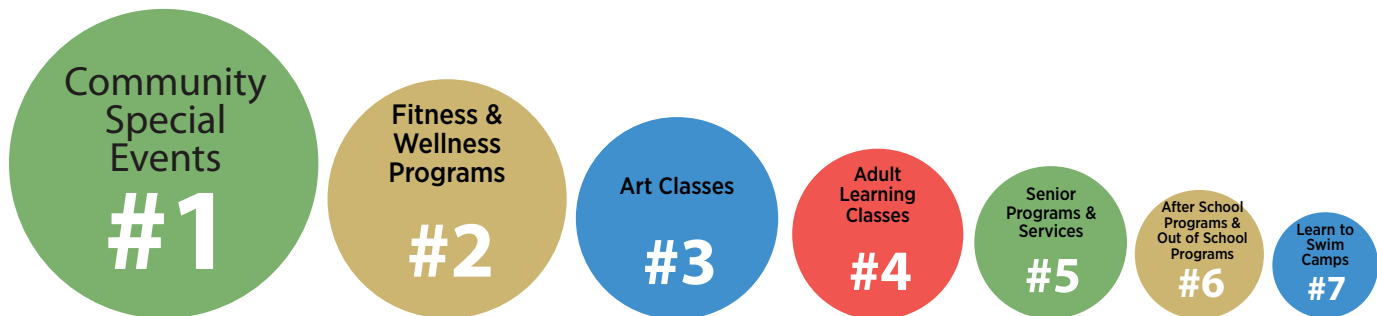
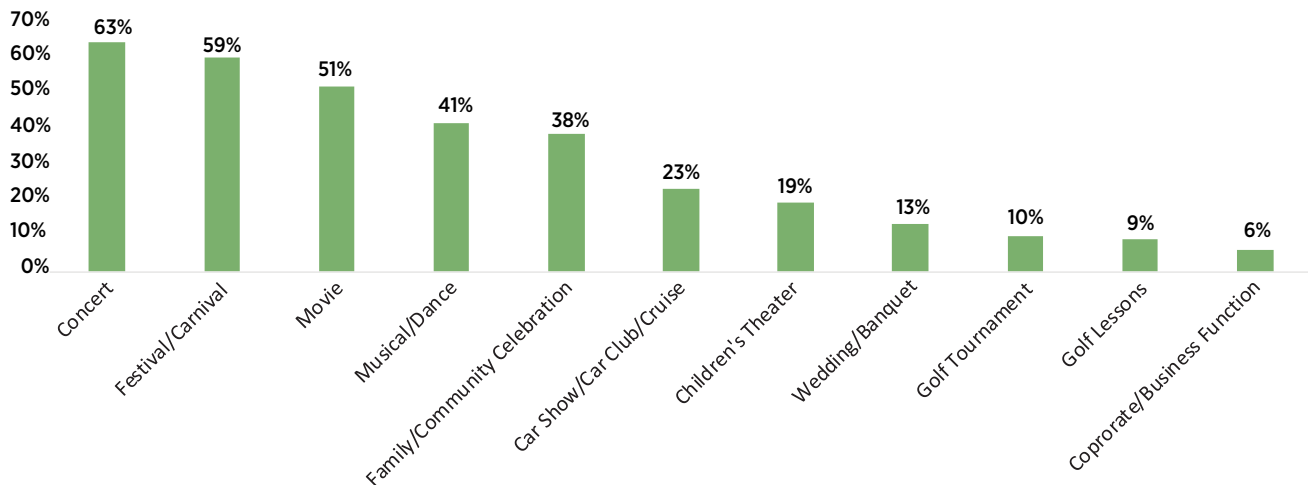


FIGURE 3.16: SPECIAL EVENT PRIORITIES



1. Priority Investment Rating (PIR) methodology developed by ETC Institute. Based on a statistically-valid survey administered by ETC Institute in Spring/Summer 2020. Scoring is a ratio of “unmet need ratings” plus “importance ratings” and is described in more detail in **Appendix A**.

SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS

The El Paso County PARD currently does not classify its programs and services for purposes of maintaining an ongoing assessment of effectiveness in service delivery. Classifying programs and services is an important process for an agency to follow in order to remain aligned with the community’s interests and needs, the mission of the organization, and to sustainably operate within the bounds of the financial resources that support it. Programs are generally evaluated according to three criteria:

- *Type of program*
- *Who benefits*
- *Who bears the cost of the program*

The **El Paso County Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (Appendix B)** used a more detailed set of the above-listed criteria to compare the types of users who benefit from a County-provided recreational service with the degree to which it met an essential community-wide need to determine how best to balance program expenses with revenues. **Table 3.8, Service Classifications**, provides a summary of County programs and services and associated recommendations on pricing strategies and cost recovery goals based on level of community-wide benefit provided by the program. This initial analysis should be augmented by further staff-led efforts to identify ideal program-specific fees in accordance with the recommendations provided in **Table 3.8**.

TABLE 3.8: SERVICE CLASSIFICATIONS

PROGRAM/SERVICE AREA	BENEFIT LEVEL	CLASSIFICATION	PRICING STRATEGY	TOTAL COST RECOVERY GOAL
AQUATICS	Community	Essential	General Fund	0-35%
COMMUNITY SPECIAL EVENTS	Community	Essential	General Fund	0-35%
GOLF - ROUNDS	Individual	Value Added	User Fees	75-100%
GOLF - THE FIRST TEE PROGRAM	Community	Essential	General Fund	0-35%
GOLF - TOURNAMENT	Individual	Value Added	User Fees	75-100%
RESERVATIONS AND RENTALS	Individual	Value Added	User Fees	75-100%
SPORTS - DEVELOPMENTAL	Community	Essential	User Fees	0-35%
SPORTS - COMPETITIVE	Individual	Value Added	User Fees	75-100%
SPORTS - RECREATIONAL	Merit	Important	General Fund/User Fees	50%
SPORTS - TOURNAMENTS	Individual	Value Added	User Fees	100%+

Source: PROS Consulting Operational Assessment Report

PROGRAM MANAGEMENT

The El Paso County PARD measures the success of programs and services on a quarterly basis. However, the tools used are not consistently applied across all programs and services nor are all possible metrics applied.

Specifically, the PARD is lacking tools to measure customer satisfaction and retention. Measuring customer satisfaction will help provide El Paso County with better data to analyze participation. This will allow staff to refine programs to reduce low enrollment or cancel programs due to no enrollment. Participation data will also allow staff to expand programs and services in the areas of greatest demand and unmet needs.

CAPITAL BUDGET

Table 3.9 provides a status of the capital projects from the 2018 Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The table reveals that there have been ongoing efforts to address the major capital needs of the County’s parks system over the last four fiscal years - both, through general fund allocations, and the PARD’s increasingly consistent efforts in securing a greater amount of recreation grants through TPWD and other sources.

In addition to those major capital projects listed in **Table 3.9**, the County’s annual capital budget has also included funding for the purchase of new essential equipment and the hiring of key staff members. **Chapter 4** of this Master Plan includes a comprehensive list of new recommended parks and recreation investments.

TABLE 3.9: STATUS OF CAPITAL PROJECTS FROM 2018 PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN

PROJECT	STATUS	SUMMARY
BOND FUND PROJECTS	Pending	Coyote Park, Gallegos Park, San Felipe Park - Contract pending
FESTIVAL AREA FOR ASCARATE PARK	Ongoing	Improvement in progress to be completed by February 2021
GALLEGOS PARK	Ongoing	In progress to be completed by December 2020
COYOTE PARK	Complete	Various improvements completed
DESERT ACCEPTANCE LINEAR PARK	Ongoing	Reapplying February 2021
ESTRELLA PARK SKATE PARK REPLACEMENT	Complete	Full replacement of skate park completed
BASKETBALL COURT RESURFACING	Pending	Westway, Gallegos, Estrella, Agua Dulce - Grant submitted
PLAYGROUNDS AS ASCARATE, SPARKS, AND WESTWAY	Pending	Replacement of Playgrounds - Requested Grant extension

Source: El Paso County

Estrella Park skate park replacement project



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CHAPTER 04

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS	97
GOAL 1: PARKS SYSTEM GROWTH	99
GOAL 2: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS	104
GOAL 3: PROGRAMS AND EVENTS	125
GOAL 4: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE	128
ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	134
SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN	142

GREAT PARKS FOR ALL!

“The El Paso County Parks & Recreation Department provides a safe, healthy, and enjoyable recreation environment for the citizens of El Paso County. By providing access to a rich mix of cultural, recreational, and social opportunities, citizens of El Paso County and their visitors can enjoy an enhanced quality of life.”

EL PASO COUNTY PARKS AND RECREATION DEPARTMENT MISSION STATEMENT

Plan Recommendations

This Plan includes 46 recommended actions categorized according to four (4) parks and recreation system goals. These actions are structured to address the findings presented in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**, in a way that will facilitate the growth and enhancement of El Paso County’s parkland properties, recreational facilities, and recreational programs and events.

The goals, objectives, and actions introduced in this chapter are not listed according to priority and should not be viewed as a limiting factor when considering other future actions or initiatives intended to enhance the El Paso County parks and recreation system. Changing conditions and unanticipated events may reveal other opportunities for parks and recreation system that have not been revealed as part of this master planning process. Should a future action or initiative advance one (1) of the four (4) goals contained in this Master Plan in the opinion of Plan administrators and County policy makers then it should be pursued with as much energy as the recommendations herein. In contrast, where activities or initiatives diverge significantly from this Plan, the County should amend the plan document (see Plan Administration in **Chapter 5**, page 161).

FIGURE 4.1: PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN GOALS





OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS

Recommendations presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of the Master Plan include opinions of probable construction costs (OPCC) for suggested parkland, recreation facility and accessory facility improvements. Where presented, OPCC are subject to the assumptions and disclaimers presented in **Table 4.1** below.

TABLE 4.1: OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS, ASSUMPTIONS AND DISCLAIMERS

ASSUMPTIONS/DISCLAIMERS ¹
<p>1) ALL OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS (OPCC) REPRESENT THE CONSULTANT’S BEST JUDGMENT AS PROFESSIONALS FAMILIAR WITH THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY AND CURRENT AVAILABLE UNIT PRICING. CONSULTANT DOES NOT GUARANTEE THAT PROPOSALS, BIDS OR ACTUAL PROJECT CONSTRUCTION COSTS WILL NOT VARY FROM THIS OPINION. QUANTITIES ARE ESTIMATES ONLY AND THE ACTUAL AMOUNT OF WORK AND/OR MATERIALS ARE CONTINGENT UPON FINAL EXISTING CONDITIONS, SURVEY, AND CONSTRUCTION DESIGN OF THESE IMPROVEMENTS. OPCC PRESENTED IN THIS PLAN DO NOT INCLUDE SUBSURFACE UTILITIES.</p>
<p>2) UNIT PRICING IS BASED ON AVERAGE COST STATEWIDE AND DOES NOT ACCOUNT FOR ANY SITE SPECIFIC DETERMINANTS THAT WOULD EFFECT COSTS OF CONSTRUCTION (I.E., UNKNOWN SUBSURFACE CONDITIONS, STRUCTURAL FOUNDATIONS/FOOTING PER LOCAL SOIL CONDITIONS, ETC.).</p>
<p>3) TWENTY PERCENT CONSTRUCTION CONTINGENCY INCLUDES (BUT IS NOT LIMITED TO): GENERAL CONDITIONS, MOBILIZATION, DEMOLITION, EROSION/SEDIMENTATION CONTROL, SITE RETAINING WALLS AND UNCLASSIFIED EARTHWORK.</p>
<p>4) ENVIRONMENTAL AND REGULATORY REVIEW, PERMITTING AND FEES ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THIS OPCC PRESENTED IN THIS PLAN.</p>
<p>5) HORIZONTAL UTILITY ADJUSTMENTS/RELOCATIONS/EXTENSIONS/SERVICES FOR STORM SEWER, DOMESTIC WATER, SANITARY SEWER, GAS, ELECTRIC AND COMMUNICATION UTILITY LINES TO THE SITE ARE NOT INCLUDED IN THE OPCC PRESENTED IN THIS PLAN.</p>
<p>6) PROJECTION OF FUTURE CONSTRUCTION COSTS SHOULD INCLUDE A 10 PERCENT ANNUAL INCREASE AT A MINIMUM.</p>

1. The assumptions and disclaimers presented in this Table apply to the probable near-term improvement cost estimates presented in Table 4.5 through 4.16.

Goal 1: Parks System Growth

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IS PROVIDED TO ALL EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.

The County’s government is one of five local governments that offers parks and recreation services to a county-wide population. Many of the residents of the County benefit from access to City park properties, facilities and recreational programs. Other residents rely on the parks owned and maintained by the County - or those parks enhanced by the County through partnerships with other entities.

The County government’s role as a main or supporting provider of parkland must be guided by considerations of overlapping jurisdiction and the degree to which parkland needs are met by municipal service providers. See **Table 4.2**.

TABLE 4.2: PARKS SYSTEM GROWTH, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL 1: PARKS SYSTEM GROWTH. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IS PROVIDED TO ALL EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.	
OBJECTIVE 1.1. ENSURE AN EQUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY-WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARKLAND THROUGHOUT INCORPORATED AND UNINCORPORATED PORTIONS OF EL PASO COUNTY.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 1.1.1. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE. PROVIDE PARKLAND TO CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF UNINCORPORATED EL PASO COUNTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.	100
ACTION 1.1.2. COMMUNITY/REGIONAL PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE. PROVIDE COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKLAND TO CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF EL PASO COUNTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVIDERS	101
ACTION 1.1.3. COYOTE PARK. CONVERT COYOTE PARK INTO A COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARK.	101
ACTION 1.1.4. HORIZON VIEW ESTATES PARK. PREPARE A CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PLAN FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY PARK ON LAND DEDICATED TO EL PASO COUNTY.	101
ACTION 1.1.5. PARTNERSHIP PARKS. PARTNER WITH MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO ADD PUBLIC SPACES TO DECREASE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS.	101
ACTION 1.1.6. TRAILS MASTER PLAN. PARTNER WITH THE MPO, CITY OF EL PASO AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES TO PREPARE A TRAILS MASTER PLAN FOR RECREATION AND TO INCREASE RESIDENT ACCESS TO PARKS, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.	101
OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT PARKLAND IS PROVIDED FOR EL PASO COUNTY’S GROWING POPULATION.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 1.2.1. PARKLAND DEDICATION. CONFIRM AND IF FEASIBLE AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE THE DEDICATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SPACE AS PART OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.	102
ACTION 1.2.2. POCKET PARK PERFORMANCE CRITERIA. ALLOW SMALL POCKET PARKS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LIEU OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE CRITERIA.	102
ACTION 1.2.3. TRAIL DEDICATION. AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE EASEMENT OR RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION FOR MULTI-USE TRAILS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE APPLICABLE TRAIL SEGMENTS, AS PART OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AS APPLICABLE.	103
ACTION 1.2.4. PRIVATE PARKS AND COMMON AREAS. AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO INCLUDE PRIVATE RECREATIONAL AREAS.	103

OBJECTIVE 1.1. ENSURE AN EQUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY-WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARKLAND THROUGHOUT INCORPORATED AND UNINCORPORATED PORTIONS OF EL PASO COUNTY.

Three distinct park planning areas are defined in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment** (pg. 58). These park planning areas correspond to varying levels of municipal jurisdiction and have been established to define the degree to which El Paso County government should assume a role as a principal parks provider to a growing county population; or conversely, maintain its role as a supporting or “specialty” parks provider.

Consistent with the recommended park planning areas identified in **Chapter 3**, El Paso County government should selectively expand its parks inventory to provide a parkland level of service to non-municipal residents which rivals that of municipal populations. In working toward achieving this target level of service for public parkland, El Paso County should avoid providing and maintaining neighborhood parkland where a municipal service provider is required by code to provide the service – and instead focus on ways to augment municipal parkland inventories.

ACTION 1.1.1. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE. PROVIDE PARKLAND TO CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF UNINCORPORATED EL PASO COUNTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

El Paso County should work with the City of El Paso and other municipal service providers to ensure that targeted levels of service for neighborhood parks (based on population and proximity) are provided to county residents. El Paso County should assume the role of primary neighborhood park service provider within Park Planning Areas #2 and #3 (see **Figure 3.6**, pg. 58) in accordance with the target levels of service established in **Table 4.3, Neighborhood Parks, Target Level of Service**. Provision of County parks within the municipal limits of cities in Park Planning Area #2 should occur in conjunction with appropriate interlocal agreements for construction, development and long-term maintenance responsibilities.

TABLE 4.3: NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS, TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE¹

PARK PLANNING AREA ¹	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE			
	RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD	CURRENT COUNTY SERVICE STANDARD	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2040)	PROXIMITY GUIDELINE
PARK PLANNING AREA #1	N/A (Varies)	N/A	N/A	N/A (Varies)
PARK PLANNING AREA #2	2 ACRES/1,000 RESIDENTS			1/2 MILE WALKSHED
PARK PLANNING AREA #3	N/A (VARIES)	N/A	N/A	1 MILE WALKSHED

1. See maps on page 58 and 59.



Coyote (Tornillo) Park's location out of the path of immediate development makes it an attractive candidate for expansion and the development of facilities that serve the recreational needs of surrounding communities.

ACTION 1.1.2. COMMUNITY/REGIONAL PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE. PROVIDE COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKLAND TO CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF EL PASO COUNTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

Develop new community or regional parks to provide county residents and visitors with new venues to participate in active recreation, athletic competition and/or community events. The need for additional community/ regional park space is fueled by a growing population and limited access to competitive field space, indoor recreation space and other active amenities. New County community or regional parks should adhere to the proximity recommendations of 5-mile service radii and should be located in the path of new development largely outside of the City of El Paso municipal limits (see **Figure 3.7**, pg. 60) but may be accomplished through funding partnerships with local municipalities.

ACTION 1.1.3. COYOTE (TORNILLO) PARK. CONVERT COYOTE PARK INTO A COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARK.

Work with the Tornillo Independent School District to convert Coyote Park into a community or regional park suitable for large athletic events and/or other public gatherings. Prepare a conceptual master plan with community input and develop an implementation program for park expansion through property acquisition, facility development, and other upgrades.

ACTION 1.1.4. PARTNERSHIP PARKS. PARTNER WITH MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO DECREASE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS.

Seek opportunities to partner with municipalities, school districts and other public authorities to increase access to park space in Park Planning Areas #2 and #3. Similar to current intergovernmental arrangements, El Paso County may either choose to invest in property acquisition or initial facility investment, or to administer long-term maintenance responsibilities while the partnering entity fulfills complimentary roles in park development or maintenance.

ACTION 1.1.5. TRAILS MASTER PLAN. PARTNER WITH THE MPO, CITY OF EL PASO AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES TO PREPARE A TRAILS MASTER PLAN FOR RECREATION AND TO INCREASE RESIDENT ACCESS TO PARKS, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.

Prepare a county-wide trails master plan in partnership with the City of El Paso and other municipalities. Build from the recommendations of the Paseo del Norte Trail and Mission Trail Plans to identify a broader cross-county network that includes new trail corridors as a key element of newly-developing areas. Commit to consistent recommendations on the development of trails in utility easements, arroyos and other similar corridors to ensure an interconnected trails network that links residential areas to community destinations.

OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT PARKLAND IS PROVIDED FOR EL PASO COUNTY'S GROWING POPULATION.

El Paso County has recently become more active in requiring public (neighborhood) parks as part of the land development process. New parks – constructed by a developer and dedicated to El Paso County – have typically been acquired in conjunction with variances for smaller lot sizes in a proposed subdivision. These conditional variances and subsequent parkland dedications have occurred within the City of El Paso's ETJ, where parkland dedication is required by the City's subdivision regulations but has not been enforced. Where appropriate in these areas, El Paso County has demonstrated a willingness to promote ownership and responsibility to ensure park access.

El Paso County's current practices for acquiring new public parkland should be guided by the Park Planning Areas recommended in this Plan (pg. 58) and the target level of service recommendations associated with **Objective 1.1** (pg. 100). Efforts should also be made to standardize the County's legal authority in requiring future parkland dedication rather than relying on a negotiated variance process which can result in the inconsistent standards for park acquisition and development.

ACTION 1.2.1. PARKLAND DEDICATION. CONFIRM AND IF FEASIBLE AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE THE DEDICATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SPACE AS PART OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.

El Paso County should exercise the authority granted to it by subchapter E, Ch. 232, Texas Local Govt. Code Ann. to adopt parkland dedication and development provisions. Parkland dedication requirements should include provisions regarding park type, acreage calculations by dwelling unit, location and dimensional standards, fees-in-lieu of dedication, development standards and park development fees. Parkland dedication and development provisions should apply to Park Planning Areas #2 and #3 and should be compatible with El Paso (City) standards.

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.

Pocket parks should not be permitted to replace neighborhood parks required as part of a County-adopted parkland dedication ordinance, but may include the following criteria:

- *The pocket park is constructed in proximity to a larger neighborhood or community park;*
- *It enhances El Paso County's multi-use trail system by serving as a trailhead park;*
- *It enhances a cultural, historic, or natural feature;*
- *It serves as a civic space in conjunction with mixed-use development;*
- *It is accessible by being centrally located within the residential development or is proximate 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.*

ACTION 1.2.3. TRAIL DEDICATION. AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE EASEMENT OR RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION FOR MULTI-USE TRAILS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE APPLICABLE TRAIL SEGMENTS, AS PART OF NEW DEVELOPMENT.

If deemed appropriate, El Paso County should consider exercising the authority granted to it by subchapter E, ch. 232, Texas Local Govt. Code Ann. to adopt provisions requiring the construction and dedication of multi-use trails as part of the land development process. Trail dedication and development standards may be adopted in conjunction with parkland dedication provisions, in coordination with local municipalities, and should adhere to the network and design recommendations of an adopted county-wide trails master plan.

ACTION 1.2.4. PRIVATE PARKS AND COMMON AREAS. AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO INCLUDE PRIVATE RECREATIONAL AREAS.

Parkland dedication provisions adopted by El Paso County should allow for the County to defer acceptance of new park space, instead allowing for it to be owned and maintained by a home owners association. Dedication of parkland to a homeowners association that is subject to restrictive covenants reviewed and approved by El Paso County and recorded in conjunction with an applicable subdivision plat. Likewise, County development regulations may require the development of common space and minimum recreational facilities as part of new multi-family residential developments.



Public parkland dedication ordinances can include provisions that govern park location, arrangement, minimum facilities, and more.

Goal 2: Parks System Investments

PARKS SYSTEM AMENITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS ARE OF A HIGH-QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGN AND ESTABLISH A RECOGNIZABLE COUNTY BRAND WHILE MEETING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.

Equitable access to quality parks and recreational facilities for El Paso County’s residents requires a balance of ongoing and targeted investments in both existing park spaces, and in new amenities that meet stated community needs. Efficient recreational service delivery requires that future park investments adhere to uniform and predictable development standards that ensure high quality construction and ease of long-term maintenance. These standards must likewise be applied retroactively to existing County parks.

In conjunction with minimum park development standards that enhance the long-term condition of El Paso County recreational assets, the County must consider targeted investments in new amenities that align with the documented interests of residents. The recommended objectives and actions to achieve this goal are listed in **Table 4.4**.

TABLE 4.4: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL 2: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS. PARKS SYSTEM AMENITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS ARE OF A HIGH-QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGN AND ESTABLISH A RECOGNIZABLE COUNTY BRAND WHILE MEETING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.	
OBJECTIVE 2.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM FEATURES AND FACILITIES.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 2.1.1. PARK DEVELOPMENT. ADOPT MINIMUM FACILITY AND AMENITY STANDARDS FOR NEW PARKS.	106
ACTION 2.1.2. PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS. PREPARE A PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS MANUAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS AND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PARKS.	106
ACTION 2.1.3. LOW-IMPACT DESIGN PRACTICES. INCORPORATE LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN BUILDING DESIGN PRACTICES INTO PARKLAND AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION PROJECTS.	106
ACTION 2.1.4. LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY. INCORPORATE LIGHTING STANDARDS INTO A PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MANUAL.	106
ACTION 2.1.5. 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.	107
ACTION 2.1.6. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS ESTIMATES. INCLUDE A M.O.R.E. ASSESSMENT AND ESTIMATE (MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONS, REVENUES, AND EXPENDITURES) FOR ALL CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN PLANS TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FUNDS.	107
ACTION 2.1.7. BRANDING PROGRAM. PREPARE A SYSTEM-WIDE BRANDING AND SIGNAGE PLAN AND GUIDELINES.	108
OBJECTIVE 2.2. FUND TARGETED INVESTMENTS IN EXISTING PARKS THAT IMPROVE PROPERTY AND FACILITY CONDITIONS WHILE ADDRESSING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTIONS 2.2.1 THROUGH 2.2.12. INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT EXISTING PARKS BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.	109-120

TABLE 4.4: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL 2: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS. PARKS SYSTEM AMENITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS ARE OF A HIGH-QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGN AND ESTABLISH A RECOGNIZABLE COUNTY BRAND WHILE MEETING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.	
OBJECTIVE 2.3. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER PARK AMENITIES TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 2.3.1: RECREATIONAL FACILITY LEVELS OF SERVICE. ESTABLISH A PREFERRED TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR KEY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.	121
ACTION 2.3.2: ATHLETIC FIELDS. UTILIZE COMMUNITY, REGIONAL AND SPECIAL USE PARKS TO INCREASE THE COUNTY'S INVENTORY OF COMPETITIVE SPORT FIELDS.	121
ACTION 2.3.3: SPORT COURTS. DISTRIBUTE A VARIETY OF NEW SPORT COURTS THROUGHOUT THE PARKS SYSTEM.	121
ACTION 2.3.4: AQUATIC FACILITIES. INCREASE ACCESS TO AQUATIC FACILITIES ACROSS COUNTY PRECINCTS.	121
ACTION 2.3.5: SKATE PARKS. UPGRADE AND DISTRIBUTE SKATE PARK INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.	123
ACTION 2.3.6: INDOOR RECREATION. PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE ONE OR MORE INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES AT COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKS.	123
ACTION 2.3.7: WALKSHED ENHANCEMENT. CONSTRUCT OR IMPROVE MULTI-USE TRAILS OR SIDEWALKS BETWEEN ALL COUNTY PARKS AND ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS WITHIN A MINIMUM 1/4 MILE WALKSHED.	124
ACTION 2.3.8: SQUARE DANCE TRAIL. CREATE A LINEAR PARK AND TRAIL ALONG SQUARE DANCE ROAD TO CONNECT TO FUTURE AREA TRAILS.	124
OBJECTIVE 2.4. IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR ASCARATE PARK AND THE SPORTSPARK THROUGH SUSTAINED AND TARGETED INVESTMENTS.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 2.4.1: ASCARATE PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO ASCARATE PARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SEE PAGE 140).	124
ACTION 2.4.2: SPORTSPARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO THE SPORTSPARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (SEE PAGE 145).	124



OBJECTIVE 2.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM FEATURES AND FACILITIES.

As with other essential services such as streets, water, wastewater and storm drainage, investments in dedicated public parkland and recreational amenities must be of a high quality to ease ongoing maintenance requirements and mitigate the long-term burden on residents and property owners. In addition, well-designed park spaces are a source of community pride and can attract comparable private investment.

ACTION 2.1.1. PARK DEVELOPMENT. ADOPT MINIMUM FACILITY AND AMENITY STANDARDS FOR NEW PARKS.

Establish a list of minimum recreational facilities and amenities that must be provided in new pocket, neighborhood, linear, and community parks that meet or exceed the minimum recommendations contained in this Plan. Provide recreational facility options for developers to choose from, subject to County approval, and based on the proximity of similar facilities and consideration of equitable facility distribution. Incorporate park development standards into County parkland dedication and development requirements (i.e., refer to **Action 1.2.1**).

ACTION 2.1.2. PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS. PREPARE A PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS MANUAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS AND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PARKS.

Many applicable park design and construction standards are already included in the City of El Paso's Design and Construction Standards for Park Facilities guidelines. Since the majority of El Paso County's future neighborhood park building is projected to occur within the City of El Paso's ETJ (much of Park Planning Area #2) consistency with, and customization of, adopted city standards, will reduce potential inter-jurisdictional disagreements related to new development.

ACTION 2.1.3. LOW-IMPACT DESIGN PRACTICES. INCORPORATE LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN BUILDING DESIGN PRACTICES INTO PARKLAND AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION PROJECTS.

Include low-impact development techniques into parkland and facility development and renovation projects. Adopt standard landscaping guidelines for parks and other public grounds that promote the use of native drought-resistant plantings. 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.

ACTION 2.1.4. LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY. INCORPORATE LIGHTING STANDARDS INTO A PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MANUAL.

Adopt light fixture selection and installation that provides an appropriate amount of lighting for the use that is being illuminated and applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimizes the impact on adjacent properties and viewsheds through light pollution, light trespass, nighttime sky glow, and visual glare. Park and trail lighting standards accomplish three purposes:

1. *Provides a safe lighting system for the welfare of users;*
2. *Mitigates the environmental impact of sport field lighting on the community (see sidebar); and,*
3. *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.*



SPORT FIELD LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY

The Chihuahuan Desert is known for its clear night skies and has witnessed an increased focus on protecting those viewsheds from light pollution. Despite increased awareness of the effects of light pollution, El Paso County will be challenged to illuminate an increasing inventory sport courts and fields to facilitate evening play schedules which can create incompatibility with surrounding property owners.

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>

ACTION 2.1.5. 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 County is being forward-thinking, effective and efficient with the County’s limited resources. Conceptual master plans also provide clarity and justification when pursuing various grant opportunities. Ideal conceptual master plans should include the following components:

- *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 (Action 2.1.6);*
- *Opinion of probable construction costs;*
- *Phasing plan;*
- *Include cost estimates for improvements in Departmental CIP; and,*
- *Prepare construction documents and specifications for park improvements.*

ACTION 2.1.6. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS ESTIMATES. INCLUDE A M.O.R.E. ASSESSMENT AND ESTIMATE (MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONS, REVENUES, AND EXPENDITURES) FOR ALL CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN PLANS TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FUNDS.

Require a M.O.R.E. Assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) as part of all conceptual park design plans, and as a precursor to the approval or final development plats and the acceptance of parkland for dedication, to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the PARD budget following capital expenditure. M.O.R.E. Assessments should include:

- *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 El Paso County, or from metrics provided by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA);*
- *Estimated additional FTE personnel needed to accommodate added maintenance associated with the proposed park;*
- *Estimated additional one-time or reoccurring equipment purchases; and,*
- *Projected revenues based on current County rental rates and/or contracts for similar programmed uses. For proposed uses not part of the County’s existing system, comparable rates should be projected from comparable facilities in other parts of Texas.*

ACTION 2.1.7. BRANDING PROGRAM. PREPARE A SYSTEM-WIDE BRANDING AND SIGNAGE PLAN AND GUIDELINES.

Develop consistent system-wide standards for identification, informational, regulatory, and wayfinding signage, and banners to establish an easily identifiable parks system brand. Establishment of a system-wide community “brand” for the El Paso County parks system, contributes to a community’s overall sense of place for residents and visitors and makes it easy to distinguish between parks for which the County is responsible versus those that are owned and maintained by other entities. The branding and signage program could be developed as a stand-alone design manual, or as a section of an overall parks system design standards manual (see **Action 2.1.2**).

OBJECTIVE 2.2. FUND TARGETED INVESTMENTS IN EXISTING PARKS THAT IMPROVE PROPERTY AND FACILITY CONDITIONS WHILE EXPANDING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS.

The various assessments conducted as part of the parks and recreation master planning process reveal both challenges and opportunities regarding the condition of El Paso County’s existing parks. Within each park space, this Plan recommends a series of near-term investments designed to improve the immediate condition of the park. These immediate investments relate almost exclusively to the improvement of existing facilities within each park.

Beyond near-term “needs,” a series of additional park enhancements is recommended that: **A)** Expand the types of recreational amenities that are available at County parks; **B)** Promote a more equitable distribution of park facilities across the County parks system; and, **C)** Improve the overall visitor experience. It is the intent that these combined investments occur over a multi-year timeframe.

Actions listing recommended near-term improvements for all El Paso County parks are listed on pages 109 through 120, except for Ascarate Park and the Sportspark. Near-term improvements for Ascarate Park and the Sportspark are presented in the Ascarate Park Conceptual Development Plan and Sportspark Conceptual Development Plan beginning on pages 134 and 142, respectively.



El Paso County’s hot and arid environment present ongoing challenges in maintaining groundcover, preventing erosion and providing adequate shade to park visitors.



ACTION 2.2.1: AGUA DULCE PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT AGUA DULCE PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$320,000.00 of potential investments to Agua Dulce Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Agua Dulce Park are summarized in **Table 4.5**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.5: AGUA DULCE PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
PARKING LOT PAVING (ASSUME 7" BASE, 2" HOT MIX ASPHALTIC CONCRETE PAVEMENT, AND STRIPPING)	SY	\$35.00	2750	\$96,250.00
SIDEWALK (CONCRETE, 5' WIDE, ACCESSIBLE CONNECTION FROM LOOP TRAIL TO SKATE PARK)	SF	\$7.00	100	\$700.00
BASKETBALL COURT RE-STRIPING	EA	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
WELDED STEEL CHAIN BASKETBALL NET (GARED)	EA	\$50.00	6	\$300.00
CHAIN LINK FENCE (AROUND BASKETBALL COURT)	LF	\$40.00	320	\$12,800.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$ 250,000.00
SHADE TREES (AROUND EXISTING SKATEPARK)	EA	\$500.00	6	\$3,000.00
AMENITY AREA BENCH (5' L, ARRANGED AROUND SKATE PARK UNDER NEW TREES)	EA	\$975.00	2	\$1,950.00
SUBTOTAL: \$237,500.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$47,500.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$35,625.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$320,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. UNITS: AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.5**, which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in Agua Dulce Park should be enhanced through employing the following initiatives:

- **Priority Facilities.** Focus Phase 1 facilities on new skate park equipment and shade over the basketball court.
- **New Facilities.** Consider new facilities to serve a future expanded Agua Dulce Park including additional trail and picnicking facilities, open play fields, diamond fields, and futsal court.
- **Access.** Construct a multi-use trail or sidewalk along Kentwood Avenue between Agua Dulce Park and Ascension Street.
- **Acquisition/Expansion.** Consider acquisition of additional lands around Agua Dulce Park for potential future expansion due to the park's critical role for Agua Dulce Colonia and continued residential growth in the far eastern portions of the County.



ACTION 2.2.2: COYOTE (TORNILLO) PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT COYOTE PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$970,000.00 of potential improvement costs to Coyote Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Coyote Park are summarized in **Table 4.6**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.6: COYOTE (TORNILLO) PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56' X 90' X 15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
EXISTING SKATE PARK SURFACE REFINISHING	SF	\$7.00	8200	\$57,400.00
BASEBALL FIELD ALLOWANCE (33,500 SF, 230' FIELD, INCLUDES DUGOUTS, SEATING, SEATING W/ SHADE, IRRIGATION & LIGHTING)	EA	\$500,000.00	1	\$500,000.00
MAIN ENTRY PARK SIGNAGE (INCLUDES FOOTINGS, MASONRY, METAL FABRICATION, LETTERS, LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPE)	EA	\$40,000.00	1	\$40,000.00
SUBTOTAL: \$717,400.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$143,480.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$107,610.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$970,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions). Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.6** which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in Coyote Park should be enhanced by the following initiatives:

- **Facilities.** *Shade cover for the basketball court should be a high priority. Next round of improvements should focus on renovations to the baseball field, which plays an important community role. Consider development of a flat field and futsal court.*



ACTION 2.2.3: ESTRELLA PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT ESTRELLA PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$490,000.00 of potential investments to Estrella Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Estrella Park are summarized in **Table 4.7**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.7: ESTRELLA PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
PARKING LOT PAVING (ASSUME 7" BASE, 2" HOT MIX ASPHALTIC CONCRETE PAVEMENT, AND STRIPING)	SY	\$35.00	6400	\$224,000.00
PARK LIGHTING (ON EXISTING VOLLEYBALL COURT)	EA	\$5,000.00	2	\$10,000.00
SURFACING UNDER EXISTING SWING SET (PLAYSAFER WEARMAT)	EA	\$60.00	6	\$360.00
BASKETBALL COURT RE-STRIPING	EA	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
WELDED STEEL CHAIN BASKETBALL NET	EA	\$50.00	2	\$100.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
SHADE TREES (AROUND EXISTING SKATE PARK)	EA	\$500.00	2	\$1,000.00
AMENITY AREA BENCH (5' L, ARRANGED AROUND SKATE PARK UNDER NEW TREES)	EA	\$975.00	4	\$3,900.00
SUBTOTAL: \$361,860.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$72,372.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$54,279.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$490,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. UNITS: AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.7** which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in Estrella Park should be enhanced by the following initiatives:

- **Facilities.** Facilities to consider in expansion include additional trail and picnicking facilities, open play fields, diamond fields, and futsal court.
- **Access.** Increase park access by adding a sidewalk east to Krag Street and west to East Montana Middle School. Add pedestrian access to the rear of the park from Anton Avenue.



ACTION 2.2.4: GALLEGOS PARK (PRECINCT 4). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT GALLEGOS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$1,800,000.00 of potential investments to Gallegos Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Gallegos Park are summarized in **Table 4.8**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.8: GALLEGOS PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
PARKING LOT PAVING (ASSUME 7" BASE, 2" HOT MIX ASPHALTIC CONCRETE PAVEMENT, AND STRIPPING)	SY	\$35.00	6200	\$217,000.00
BASKETBALL COURT RE-STRIPING	EA	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
MAIN ENTRY PARK SIGNAGE (INCLUDES FOOTINGS, MASONRY, METAL FABRICATION, LETTERS, LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPE)	EA	\$40,000.00	1	\$40,000.00
YOUTH BASEBALL FIELD ALLOWANCE (33,500 SF, INCLUDES DUGOUTS AND SEATING W/ SHADE)	EA	\$200,000.00	2	\$400,000.00
BASEBALL FIELD ALLOWANCE (33,500 SF, 230' FIELD, INCLUDES DUGOUTS, SEATING W/ SHADE, IRRIGATION & LIGHTING)	EA	\$500,000.00	1	\$500,000.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
TREES (ARRANGED AROUND PARK FOR SHADE, INCLUDES EXCAVATING, BACKFILL, STAKING, AND IRRIGATION)	EA	\$500.00	70	\$35,000.00
AMENITY AREA BENCH (5' L, ARRANGED AROUND SKATE PARK UNDER NEW TREES)	EA	\$975.00	3	\$2,925.00
SUBTOTAL: \$1,317,425.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$263,485.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$197,613.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$1,800,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. UNITS: AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.8** which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in Gallegos Park should be enhanced by the following initiatives:

- **Facilities.** Plan and develop an all-weather internal park trail for health and fitness purposes.
- **Access.** Plan and develop a multi-use trail connection to the nearby Rio Grande River Trail Park.
- **Consolidated Improvements.** Fund and conduct major improvement/renovation of the park (address multiple items at one time for cost efficiency). Include ball field improvements, pavilion renovations, new park signage, basketball court renovations, picnic and playground facilities, and parking lot improvements.
- **Acquisition/Expansion.** Evaluate future parkland acquisition options through purchase or surface use agreements for areas adjacent to the park in anticipation of future athletic field needs.

ACTION 2.2.5: HORIZON HILLS PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT HORIZON HILLS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$180,000.00 of potential investments to Horizon Hills Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Horizon Hills Park are summarized in **Table 4.9**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.9: HORIZON HILLS PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
REPAIR TO DAMAGED MASONRY RETAINING WALL (ON SOUTH-WEST SIDE)	LS	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
SHADE TREES (AROUND BASKETBALL COURT AND LAWN, INCLUDES EXCAVATING, BACKFILL, STAKING, & IRRIGATION)	EA	\$500.00	20	\$10,000.00
SUBTOTAL: \$132,500.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$26,500.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$19,900.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$180,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.



ACTION 2.2.6: RISINGER PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT RISINGER PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$680,000.00 of potential investments to Risinger Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Risinger Park are summarized in **Table 4.10**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.10: RISINGER PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
PARKING LOT PAVING (ASSUME 7" BASE, 2" HOT MIX ASPHALTIC CONCRETE PAVEMENT, AND STRIPPING)	SY	\$35.00	850	\$29,750.00
SIDEWALK (CONCRETE, 5' WIDE, ACCESSIBLE CONNECTIONS TO VARIOUS PARK FEATURES)	SF	\$7.00	400	\$2,800.00
OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURT	EA	\$35,000.00	1	\$35,000.00
PLAYSCAPE (INCLUDES EQUIPMENT, 2,000 SF OF SURFACING (SHREDDED/ BONDED), 40' X 50' FABRIC SHADE STRUCTURE)	LS	\$315,000.00	1	\$315,000.00
MAIN ENTRY PARK SIGNAGE (INCLUDES FOOTINGS, MASONRY, METAL FABRICATION, LETTERS, LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPE)	EA	\$40,000.00	1	\$40,000.00
PICNIC SHELTER (12' X 12', INCLUDES CONCRETE SLAB, FOOTING AND STRUCTURE)	EA	\$10,000.00	6	\$60,000.00
PICNIC TABLE	EA	\$1,200.00	6	\$7,200.00
TRASH RECEPTICAL (POWDER-COATED STEEL COATED STEEL TRASH RECEPTACLES, 36 GAL., 26" DIA. X 33")	EA	\$1,000.00	9	\$9,000.00
BBQ GRILL (300 SQ. MULTILEVEL PARK AND CAMP GRILL)	EA	\$400.00	5	\$2,000.00
WATER FOUNTAIN	EA	\$4,800.00	1	\$4,800.00
SUBTOTAL: \$505,500.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$101,100.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$76,000.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$680,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. UNITS: AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.



ACTION 2.2.7: RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL (PRECINCT 4). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$250,000.00 of potential investments to the Rio Grande River Trail to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of the Rio Grande River Trail are summarized in **Table 4.11**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.11: RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
TREES (ALONG TRAIL AND AT REST/GATHERING SPACES, INCLUDES EXCAVATING, BACKFILL, STAKING, & IRRIGATION)	EA	\$500.00	270	\$135,000.00
MAIN ENTRY PARK SIGNAGE (INCLUDES FOOTINGS, MASONRY, METAL FABRICATION, LETTERS, LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPE)	EA	\$40,000.00	1	\$40,000.00
MILEAGE MARKING SIGNAGE	EA	\$2,500.00	5	\$12,500.00
SUBTOTAL: \$187,500.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$37,500.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$28,000.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$250,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.



ACTION 2.2.8: SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$2,100.00 of potential investments to the San Elizario Placita to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of the San Elizario Placita are summarized in **Table 4.12**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.12: SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
TURF REESTABLISHMENT (STENOTAPHRUM SECUNDATUM, ST. AUGUSTINE GRASS)	AC	\$2,500.00	0.3	\$750.00
PARKING STRIPPING (ON EXISTING PARKING AREA)	LF	\$1.50	200	\$300.00
PLASTIC OWL DECOYS & AUDIBLE DETERRENT (ALLOWANCE)	LS	\$500.00	1	\$500.00
SUBTOTAL: \$1,550.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$310.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$230.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$2,100.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.



ACTION 2.2.9: SPARKS PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT SPARKS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$640,000.00 of potential investments to Sparks Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Sparks Park are summarized in **Table 4.13**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.13: SPARKS PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
SIDEWALK (CONCRETE, 5' WIDE, LOOP TRAIL PROVIDING ACCESSIBLE CONNECTIONS TO SWING SET AND PAVILIONS)	SF	\$7.00	3000	\$21,000.00
MAIN ENTRY PARK SIGNAGE (INCLUDES FOOTINGS, MASONRY, METAL FABRICATION, LETTERS, LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPE)	EA	\$40,000.00	1	\$40,000.00
PLAYSCAPE (INCLUDING FALL SURFACE AND SHADE STRUCTURE)	LS	\$235,000.00	1	\$235,000.00
BASKETBALL COURT RE-STRIPING	EA	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
SWING SET	LS	\$14,000.00	1	\$14,000.00
PARK LIGHTING	EA	\$5,000.00	2	\$10,000.00
PICNIC SHELTER (12' X 12', INCLUDES CONCRETE SLAB, FOOTING AND STRUCTURE)	EA	\$10,000.00	3	\$30,000.00
PICNIC TABLE	EA	\$1,200.00	3	\$3,600.00
BBQ GRILL (300 SQ. MULTI-LEVEL PARK AND CAMP GRILL)	EA	\$400.00	2	\$800.00
SUBTOTAL: \$476,900.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$95,380.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$71,535.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$640,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. UNITS: AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.13** which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in Sparks Park should be enhanced by the following initiatives:

- **Facilities.** Consider converting basketball court to futsal court with fencing.
- **Access.** Improved connection between two areas of the park is needed. Consider adjustments to area fencing to create better connection.



ACTION 2.2.10: SAN FELIPE PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE SAN FELIPE PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$460,000.00 of potential investments to San Felipe Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of the San Felipe Park are summarized in **Table 4.14**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.14: SAN FELIPE PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
MAIN ENTRY PARK SIGNAGE (INCLUDES FOOTINGS, MASONRY, METAL FABRICATION, LETTERS, LIGHTING AND LANDSCAPE)	EA	\$40,000.00	1	\$40,000.00
SECURITY VEHICLE GATE (2-WAY, AT MAIN PARK ENTRY OFF OF SAN FELIPE STREET)	EA	\$7,500.00	1	\$7,500.00
NATURAL SURFACE HIKE/BIKE TRAIL	LF	\$10.00	10000	\$100,000.00
PICNIC SHELTER (12' X 12', INCLUDES CONCRETE SLAB, FOOTING AND STRUCTURE)	EA	\$10,000.00	15	\$150,000.00
PICNIC TABLE	EA	\$1,200.00	15	\$18,000.00
TRASH RECEPTICAL (POWDER-COATED STEEL TRASH RECEPTACLES, 36 GAL., 26"DIA. X 33")	EA	\$1,000.00	25	\$25,000.00
SUBTOTAL: \$340,500.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$68,000.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$50,000.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$460,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.14** which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in San Felipe Park should be enhanced by the following initiatives:

- **Conceptual Park Master Plan.** Develop an overall master plan in accordance with he recommendations listed in Action 2.1.5. For initial phases, focus on improvements to established off-road vehicle trails, security fencing and cameras and staffed office/gate facilities.



ACTION 2.2.11: VETERANS (FABENS) PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT VETERANS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$960,000.00 of potential investments to Veterans Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Given the park’s significance to area veterans, enhance the Veterans Memorial feature(s) within the park. Other immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Veterans Park are summarized in **Table 4.15**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.15: VETERANS (FABENS) PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
NEW FALL SURFACE (ON EXISTING PLAYSCAPE, PLAYSAFER CLASSIC TILE 2.75")	EA	\$2,700.00	12	\$32,400.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'- POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURT	EA	\$35,000.00	1	\$35,000.00
REPAIR TO MASONRY WALL (NEAR PLAYSCAPE)	LS	\$2,500.00	1	\$2,500.00
BASEBALL FIELD ALLOWANCE (33,500 SF, 230' FIELD, INCLUDES DUGOUTS, SEATING, SEATING W/ SHADE, IRRIGATION & LIGHTING)	EA	\$500,000.00	1	\$500,000.00
TREES (ARRANGED AROUND SKATE PARK FOR SHADE, INCLUDES EXCAVATING, BACKFILL, STAKING, AND IRRIGATION)	EA	\$500.00	20	\$10,000.00
AMENITY AREA BENCH (5' L, ARRANGED AROUND SKATE PARK UNDER NEW TREES)	EA	\$975.00	9	\$8,775.00
SUBTOTAL: \$708,675.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$141,735.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$105,000.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$960,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.



ACTION 2.2.12: WESTWAY PARK (PRECINCT 4). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT WESTWAY PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.

The needs assessment conducted as part of the master planning process identified over \$360,000.00 of potential investments to Westway Park to improve property and increase public recreational opportunities. Immediate investment needs intended to improve the current condition of Westway Park are summarized in **Table 4.16**. Further facility and amenity additions are also listed below.

TABLE 4.16: WESTWAY PARK, PROBABLE NEAR-TERM IMPROVEMENT COSTS

DESCRIPTION	UNIT ¹	UNIT COST	QUANTITY	COST ²
SIDEWALK (CONCRETE, 5' WIDE, ACCESSIBLE CONNECTION FROM SIDEWALK TO PAVILION AND BASKETBALL COURT)	SF	\$7.00	750	\$5,250.00
OUTDOOR BASKETBALL COURT	EA	\$35,000.00	1	\$35,000.00
SHADE STRUCTURE ON EXISTING BASKETBALL COURT (USA SHADE, 56'X90'X15'-POST SUPER SPAN)	EA	\$120,000.00	1	\$120,000.00
NEW FALL SURFACE (ON EXISTING PLAYScape, PLAYSaFER CLASSIC TILE 2.75")	EA	\$2,700.00	15	\$40,500.00
CHAIN LINK FENCE (6' BLACK VINYL-COATED, AROUND EXISTING PLAYScape)	LF	\$40.00	325	\$13,000.00
SCENIC PAVILION (15' X 20', ORIENTED TOWARDS VIEW OF MOUNTAINS)	EA	\$55,000.00	1	\$55,000.00
SUBTOTAL: \$268,750.00²				
20% CONTINGENCY: \$53,750.00²				
15% SOFT COSTS: \$40,300.00²				
TOTAL COST: \$360,000.00 (Rounded)²				

1. AC: acre; EA: each; LF: linear foot; LS: lump sum; SF: square feet

2. Preliminary costs are for order of magnitude estimating purposes only and are subject to refinement and verification. Unit pricing is based on average cost statewide and do not account for any site specific determinates that would effect costs of construction (i.e., unknown subsurface conditions.) Quantities are estimates only and the actual amount of work and/or materials are contingent upon final design of these facilities.

In addition to the investments listed in **Table 4.16** which focus on near-term repairs and upgrades, recreational opportunities in Westway Park should be enhanced by the following initiatives:

- **Acquisition/Expansion.** Consider acquisition of adjacent areas if feasible to expand park capacity.



OBJECTIVE 2.3. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER PARK AMENITIES TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.

In addition to the site-specific investments recommended in **Objective 2.2**, there are other key recreational facility additions or amenity enhancements that may be considered throughout the El Paso County parks system to address community needs.

General additions to parks system amenities may occur at various locations and may include new facilities, accessory features or structures or parkland expansions

ACTION 2.3.1: RECREATIONAL FACILITY LEVELS OF SERVICE. ESTABLISH A PREFERRED TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR KEY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.

El Paso County’s transition to a primary parks service provider in Planning Areas #2 and #3, will require that the future construction, rehabilitation or replacement of recreational facilities should occur according to a defined target level of service (TLOS). For Planning Areas #2 and #3 parks, El Paso County should establish aspirational target levels of service for common types of athletic fields, sport courts, aquatics, and other miscellaneous facilities. An initial County-wide target level of service may be informed by (but not limited to) the example metrics illustrated in **Table 4.17** (facing page), and/or comparable metrics utilized by the City of El Paso.

ACTION 2.3.2: ATHLETIC FIELDS. UTILIZE COMMUNITY, REGIONAL AND SPECIAL USE PARKS TO INCREASE THE COUNTY’S INVENTORY OF COMPETITIVE SPORT FIELDS.

Subject to a County-adopted target level of service for recreational facilities, additional athletic facilities for competitive play should be constructed within community, regional or other special use parks. If included as part of new neighborhood parks, athletic fields should be limited to no more than one non-competitive multi-purpose field space (i.e. no lighting, limited lines, etc.) and may be arranged to utilize detention areas or overlap open play areas.

ACTION 2.3.3: SPORT COURTS. DISTRIBUTE A VARIETY OF NEW SPORT COURTS THROUGHOUT THE PARKS SYSTEM.

Additional sport courts should be constructed within neighborhood, community, regional or other special use parks subject to a County-adopted target level of service for recreational facilities and distribution across all four County Commissioner precincts. The variety of sports courts offered should consider accessibility to different types of court sports across the County parks system, and where possible, may be determined based on polling the surrounding neighborhoods.

ACTION 2.3.4: AQUATIC FACILITIES. INCREASE ACCESS TO AQUATIC FACILITIES ACROSS COUNTY PRECINCTS.

Subject to a County-adopted target level of service for recreational facilities, additional competitive aquatic facilities should be constructed within neighborhood, community, regional or other special use parks. Aquatic facilities construction should adhere to the future service needs and guidelines recommended in **Chapter 3** of this Plan.

Aquatic Facility Recommendations. Prepare detailed aquatic concepts for:

- **Veterans Pool** - Serves a large portion of the Fabens/Tornillo communities. Work with communities to enhance bathhouse building, rebuild aging pool at Veterans, and add splash pad facilities at both existing parks within the next decade.
- **Ascarate Pool** - Work with user groups to update pool equipment as needed, expand pool complex to add water play features, recreational aquatics components and splash pad facilities within the next decade. Ensure compatibility with overall Ascarate Park vision plan and park enhancements.
- **Gallegos Pool** - Serves a portion of the Upper Valley communities. Work with area communities to rebuild pool, update mechanical equipment, expand associated bathhouse, add splash pad facilities, expanded deck, shade and additional amenities.

TABLE 4.17: RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, EXAMPLE LEVEL OF SERVICE METRICS¹

FACILITY TYPE	MEDIAN LEVEL OF SERVICE, NRPA PARK METRICS (2020)	
	ALL AGENCIES (FACILITIES PER RESIDENTS)	AGENCIES SERVING POPULATION OF 100,000 - 250,000 (FACILITIES PER RESIDENTS) ²
ATHLETIC FIELDS		
BASEBALL FIELDS (ADULT)	1 per 19,518	1 per 47,754
SOFTBALL FIELDS (ADULT)	1 per 13,510	1 per 26,714
SOCCER FIELDS (ADULT)	1 per 12,446	1 per 20,478
MULTI-PURPOSE FIELDS	1 per 8,150	1 per 13,233
SPORT COURTS		
BASKETBALL COURTS	1 per 7,400	1 per 8,792
TENNIS COURTS (OUTDOOR)	1 per 5,004	1 per 5,589
PICKLEBALL COURTS ³	1 per 8,000	1 per 8,000
VOLLEYBALL COURTS ⁴	1 per 17,667	N/A
AQUATICS		
SWIMMING POOLS ⁴	1 per 35,837	1 per 64,250
SPLASH PADS ⁵	N/A	N/A
MISC. RECREATIONAL FACILITIES		
PLAY GROUNDS ⁶	1 per 3,706	N/A
SKATE PARKS ⁶	N/A	24,563 SF - 61,457 SF ⁶
DISC GOLF COURSES ⁶	1 per 50,000	N/A
RECREATION CENTERS	1 per 31,141	1 per 49,999
COMMUNITY CENTERS	1 per 28,939	1 per 54,042
SENIOR CENTERS	1 per 60,513	1 per 123,988
MISC. SOCIAL FACILITIES		
DOG PARKS	1 per 45,899	1 per 99,707
COMMUNITY GARDENS	1 per 29,273	1 per 66,645
LARGE PAVILIONS ⁶	1 per 5,000	N/A
PERFORMANCE AMPHITHEATERS ⁶	1 per 62,475	1 per 112,611

1. Source: NRPA Agency Performance Review (2020). Example metrics only. List not all-inclusive. Based on NRPA, Park Metrics performance measures unless otherwise noted.
2. Agencies serving a population comparable to El Paso County residents outside of the municipal limits of the city of El Paso based on 2020 population.
3. Source: Halff Associates.
4. Outdoor only. Does not distinguish between pools designed for recreational use and competition pools certified by USA Swimming. Facility dimensions and volume may vary.
5. Source: NRPA Agency Performance Review (2019).
6. Source: Skatepark Adoption Model. Square footage per 1,000 residents. Category includes skate parks and skate spots.

ACTION 2.3.5: SKATE PARKS. UPGRADE AND DISTRIBUTE SKATE PARK INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.

Most if not all of the County’s skate park facilities are in poor condition and need to be replaced. Upgrade current skate park infrastructure within County parks to include permanent concrete fixtures and features. Maintain an even distribution of skate park features (based on skate park and skate spot surface square footage) throughout each of the County’s four precincts.

ACTION 2.3.6: INDOOR RECREATION. PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE ONE OR MORE INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES AT COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKS.

Access to indoor recreation facilities has been identified during the master planning process as a high priority – as have a variety of recreational programming options, including art classes, senior programs, and more. El Paso County should partner with school districts or small municipalities to develop community center /classroom space within Park Planning Areas #2 or #3 that serves as a base for a variety of recreational programming offerings in areas outside of the City of El Paso which currently lack access.



SKATE SPORT FACILITIES

Skate sports including skate boarding, in-line skating, and scooters are a popular alternative to team-based sports and traditional athletics. Skate parks have become core elements of many public parks systems including a number of parks maintained by El Paso County.

Although centralized skate park facilities are a logical way for communities 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 large centralized skate parks. 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 parks. Skate spots should be viewed as accessory to full-sized skate parks and should not limit public commitments to develop larger “destination-scale” skate park facilities.



The skate park in Plano, Texas spans over 20,000 SF.



The skate spot in Schertz, Texas covers 4,500 SF.

ACTION 2.3.7: WALKSHED ENHANCEMENT. CONSTRUCT OR IMPROVE MULTI-USE TRAILS OR SIDEWALKS BETWEEN ALL COUNTY PARKS AND ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS WITHIN A MINIMUM 1/2 MILE WALKSHED.

Many existing County parks have poor bicycle and pedestrian access from adjacent residential areas. Designated bicycle and pedestrian facilities extending from all existing parks along collector and arterial streets for no less than 1/2 mile (of further if necessary to reach a residential area or other community destination) will improve comfortable park access for persons of all ages and abilities.

ACTION 2.3.8: SQUARE DANCE LINEAR PARK. CREATE A LINEAR PARK AND CONNECTION ALONG SQUARE DANCE ROAD TO CONNECT TO FUTURE AREA TRAILS AND PARKS.

Development of a linear park and trail along Square Dance Road will link to future City of El Paso recreational facilities and immediately increase access to a comfortable trailway during the intervening period.



CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS

As part of the overall El Paso County park master planning process, special attention was paid to El Paso County's three major parks - Ascarate, the Sportspark, and Gallegos. These parks are key quality of life infrastructure components in the region, and offer great potential to serve as economic drivers for tourism. The ideas presented in this Plan represent a recognition of that value, and are intended to explore the potential of each park and put forth a vision for what they can become.

OBJECTIVE 2.4. IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR ASCARATE PARK AND THE SPORTSPARK THROUGH SUSTAINED AND TARGETED INVESTMENTS.

The parks and recreation master planning process included the development of detailed conceptual plans for the reprogramming and reinvigoration of Ascarate Park and the Sportspark. These "cornerstone" properties of the El Paso County parks system not only serve the specialized and essential recreational needs of county residents, they also serve as community showcases for visitors.

Substantial upgrades to Ascarate Park and the Sportspark can bolster community identity and pride, may facilitate unique experiences found nowhere else in the region. Maintains the ability to collect reliable sources of revenue through rental fees, tournaments and events which can be reinvested in system-wide improvements.

ACTION 2.4.1. ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO ASCARATE PARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES.

ACTION 2.4.2. SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO SPORTSPARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES.

Investments should adhere to the Ascarate Park Conceptual Development Plan and Sportspark Conceptual Development Plan beginning on pages 134 and 141, respectively. Includes both near-term investments intended to address immediate maintenance needs and identifies long-term investments and enhancements to ensure that both parks are sustained as premier local and regional destinations to residents and visitors alike.

Goal 3: Programs and Events

A DIVERSE SUITE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS IS PROVIDED THAT CATER TO VARYING INTERESTS, AGES AND ABILITIES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND PUBLIC PRIDE.

Public feedback during the master planning process reaffirmed the public’s desire for a significant annual inventory of community special events to provide for unique and memorable outings with friends and families. Effective annual recreational programming on County-owned and maintained property - whether provided directly by El Paso County or by another vendor - can place significant strain on County resources. If growth in County-sponsored recreational activities is presumed, it must be done gradually and in a manner where there are ample opportunities to oversee direct costs to the PARD.

The recommended objectives and actions to achieve this goal are listed in **Table 4.18**.

TABLE 4.18: PROGRAMS AND EVENTS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL 3: PROGRAMS AND EVENTS. A DIVERSE SUITE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS IS PROVIDED THAT CATER TO VARYING INTERESTS, AGES AND ABILITIES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND PUBLIC PRIDE.	
OBJECTIVE 3.1. MONITOR, REFINE AND EXPAND THE TYPES OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS OFFERED BY EL PASO COUNTY TO MEET THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 3.1.1: PARTICIPATION DATA (AGE SEGMENT) ANALYSIS. CONDUCT AN ANNUAL AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS TO ENSURE A CONTINUED BALANCE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS ACROSS ALL AGE GROUPS.	126
ACTION 3.1.2: PROGRAM LIFECYCLE. TRACK RECREATION PROGRAM RATES OF PARTICIPATION TO ENSURE THAT THE COUNTY PROGRAM PORTFOLIO ADJUSTS TO MEET CHANGING RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.	126
ACTION 3.1.3: COST OF SERVICES. CONDUCT A COST OF SERVICE ANALYSIS TO ESTABLISH THE COSTS OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAM DELIVERY AND REFINE PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COST RECOVERY GOALS.	126
ACTION 3.1.4: PROGRAM PRICING STRATEGY. DIVERSIFY RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PRICING OPTIONS TO STRATEGICALLY MEET COST-RECOVERY GOALS.	126
ACTION #: RECREATIONAL PROGRAM ADDITIONS. DIVERSIFY THE COUNTY’S RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PORTFOLIO TO MAXIMIZE THE UTILIZATION OF RECREATIONAL AMENITIES AND TO MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE PROGRAM LIFECYCLE BALANCES.	127
OBJECTIVE 3.2. INCREASE AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO EL PASO COUNTY’S RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 3.2.1: COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN. PREPARE A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN TO KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED OF ONGOING DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS.	127
ACTION 3.2.2: ON-LINE PARKS APP AND MAPPING TOOL. PREPARE AND ACTIVATE ON-LINE TOOLS THAT IMPROVE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY OFFERINGS.	127

OBJECTIVE 3.1. MONITOR, REFINE AND EXPAND THE TYPES OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS OFFERED BY EL PASO COUNTY TO MEET THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.

The majority of El Paso County’s recreational programming opportunities are based on athletics (baseball, softball and golf) in part to maximize the use of existing County facilities.

The master planning process reveals a desire for an even greater suite of programs and events, including non-athletic programs for adults and seniors.

ACTION 3.1.1. PARTICIPATION DATA (AGE SEGMENT) ANALYSIS.¹ CONDUCT AN ANNUAL AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS TO ENSURE A CONTINUED BALANCE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS ACROSS ALL AGE GROUPS.

Update the Age Segment Analysis prepared as part of the master planning process on an annual basis to note changes or to refine age segment categories. Given the growing population trend for residents ages 55 and over and the growing demand for services in this age bracket, it is also recommended that the Parks and Recreation Department (PARD) further segment this group into 65-74 and 75+. These two sub-segments will have increasingly different needs and expectations for programs and services in coming years, and program planning will be needed to provide differing requirements.¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

ACTION 3.1.2. PROGRAM LIFECYCLE.¹ TRACK RECREATION PROGRAM RATES OF PARTICIPATION TO ENSURE THAT THE COUNTY PROGRAM PORTFOLIO ADJUSTS TO MEET CHANGING RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.

A lifecycle analysis involves reviewing program participation data over a period of years to determine the stage of growth or decline as a way of informing strategic decisions about the overall recreation program portfolio. Through consistent participation data analysis across all core program areas, refine recreation program offerings to reduce low enrollment or canceled programs due to no enrollment. (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

ACTION 3.1.3. COST OF SERVICES.¹ CONDUCT A COST OF SERVICE ANALYSIS TO ESTABLISH THE COSTS OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAM DELIVERY AND REFINE PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COST RECOVERY GOALS.

To properly fund all programs, either through tax subsidies or user fees, and to establish the right cost recovery targets, a Cost of Service Analysis should be conducted on each program, or program type, that accurately calculates direct (i.e., program-specific) and indirect (i.e., comprehensive, including administrative overhead) costs.¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

ACTION 3.1.4. PROGRAM PRICING STRATEGY.¹ DIVERSIFY RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PRICING OPTIONS TO STRATEGICALLY MEET COST-RECOVERY GOALS.

Refocus the PARD on cost recovery goals by functional program area or line of service. Pricing based on established operating budget recovery goals will provide flexibility to maximize all pricing strategies to the fullest. Allowing the staff to work within a pricing range tied to cost recovery goals will permit them to set prices based on market factors and differential pricing (prime-time/non-primetime, season/off-season rates) to maximize user participation and also encourage additional group rate pricing where applicable.¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

¹. Source: PROS Consulting, Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (2020), **Appendix B**.

ACTION 3.1.5. RECREATIONAL PROGRAM ADDITIONS.¹ DIVERSIFY THE COUNTY'S RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PORTFOLIO TO MAXIMIZE THE UTILIZATION OF RECREATIONAL AMENITIES AND TO MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE PROGRAM LIFECYCLE BALANCES.

Expand programs and services in the areas of greatest demand as illustrated by the statistically-valid survey administered as part of this master planning effort. Ongoing analysis of the participation trends of programming and services in El Paso County is significant when delivering high quality programs and services. By doing so, staff will be able to focus their efforts on the programs and services which address the greatest need and reduce or eliminate programs and services for which interest is declining. Specific efforts should be made to increase programming in the areas of greatest unmet need as identified in the statistically valid survey.¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

OBJECTIVE 3.2. INCREASE AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO EL PASO COUNTY'S RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.

A lack of awareness about an event, activity or program is one of the most common reasons that members of the public cite when describing why they do not participate in the recreational offerings of a public parks and recreation agency.

Improvements to methods of increasing public awareness can also span to the more mundane tasks of property and facility maintenance.

ACTION 3.2.1. COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN. PREPARE A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN TO KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED OF ONGOING DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS.

Evaluate and update policies and procedures for coordinating community outreach efforts related to park maintenance and programming. Maintain an ongoing on-line presence and outreach activities to include even those PARD 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 PARD can be encouraging to the public by helping them anticipate ongoing operational and programming activities of which they are otherwise unaware.

ACTION 3.2.2. ON-LINE PARKS APP AND MAPPING TOOL. PREPARE AND ACTIVATE ON-LINE TOOLS THAT IMPROVE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY OFFERINGS.

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 on-line tools by tying on-line 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.

1. Source: PROS Consulting, *Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (2020)*, **Appendix B.**

Goal 4: Operations and Maintenance

PARKS SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE IS PROVIDED IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER THROUGH CLEAR ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCESSES, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, DIVERSIFIED FUNDING SOURCES, AND HIGHLY-TRAINED STAFF.

As El Paso County continues to oversee expanded parkland acreage and diversify the recreational opportunities that are available to residents, community expectations will increase to fill gaps in recreational services and to enhance facility and parkland assets system-wide. The management of an growing inventory of park space and recreational facilities typically occurs at a rate where new staff can not be added in a proportional manner. The ability therefore to meet public expectations will require that the PARD continue to fine-tune, streamline, and standardize administrative, operational, and maintenance practices.

The recommended objectives and actions to achieve this goal are listed in **Table 4.19** (pg. 129).

OBJECTIVE 4.1. IMPLEMENT STANDARDIZED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE THE LONG-TERM CONDITION OF PARKLAND, FACILITIES AND AMENITIES, AND THAT MITIGATE SYSTEM DEFICIENCIES.

The condition of El Paso County parks varied widely when measured according to the 15 conditions assessment categories that measure landscapes, hardscapes, and structures on all County parkland. Nonetheless, even where El Paso County parks scored well there can always be system-wide improvement in the quality of park spaces maintained for the public.

This Plan’s Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (**Appendix B**) reveals a number of maintenance practices that can be modified or added by the PARD to assist in ensuring an organizational culture of pro-active maintenance.

ACTION 4.1.1. MAINTENANCE RESOURCES.¹ UPDATE FUNDING AND STAFF RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR “GENERAL PARKS” AS DEFINED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN.

Add 4.5 maintenance worker FTEs within the next three years and allocate an additional \$385,000 to \$400,000 for parks maintenance functions within the next three years to meet best practice cost per acre standards (\$200,000-\$225,000 for staffing, \$160,000-\$185,000 for non-personnel expenditures).¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

ACTION 4.1.2. WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM.¹ CREATE A WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN THAT CONSIDERS LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE AND ASSET REPLACEMENT NEEDS.

A work order system should be used to track lifecycle maintenance requirements that are tied to weekly and monthly work orders. This will help the PARD staff to stay ahead of preventative maintenance and limit breakdowns. Further, utilizing the system will provide staff the necessary “actual cost” data for work being performed.¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

1. Source: PROS Consulting, *Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (2020)*, **Appendix ##**.

TABLE 4.19: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS

GOAL 4: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. PARKS SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE IS PROVIDED IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER THROUGH CLEAR ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCESSES, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, DIVERSIFIED FUNDING SOURCES, AND HIGHLY-TRAINED STAFF.	
OBJECTIVE 4.1. IMPLEMENT STANDARDIZED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE THE LONG-TERM CONDITION OF PARKLAND, FACILITIES AND AMENITIES, AND THAT REDUCE SYSTEM DEFICIENCIES.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 4.1.1: MAINTENANCE RESOURCES. UPDATE FUNDING AND STAFF RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR "GENERAL PARKS" AS DEFINED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN.	128
ACTION 4.1.2: WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. CREATE A WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN THAT CONSIDERS LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE AND ASSET REPLACEMENT NEEDS.	128
ACTION 4.1.3: CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT. CONDUCT AN ANNUAL OR BI-ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT TO ADJUST THE PARD'S ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN.	130
ACTION 4.1.4: MAINTENANCE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT. USE THE WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO ANALYZE UNIT COSTS FOR IN-HOUSE VERSUS CONTRACTED MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES.	130
ACTION 4.1.5: MAINTENANCE COST MITIGATION. DEVELOP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS THAT CAN REDUCE THE DIRECT COSTS FOR PARK SYSTEM MAINTENANCE THROUGH INDIRECT REVENUE SOURCES AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.	130
ACTION 4.1.6: TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION. IMPROVE FIELD STAFF'S ACCESS TO HANDHELD GPS AND WEB-BASED EQUIPMENT TO IMPROVE FIELD MAINTENANCE AND INVENTORY ACTIVITIES.	130
ACTION 4.1.7: CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGER. HIRE A FULL-TIME CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGER TO OVERSEE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT.	131
OBJECTIVE 4.2. ADOPT ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF RECREATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS.	
ACTION	SEE PAGE
ACTION 4.2.1: ANNUAL REPORT. PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING AND STEWARDSHIP OF TAX DOLLARS AND FEES AND CHARGES; AND DISTRIBUTE THE REPORT AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE.	131
ACTION 4.2.2: PERFORMANCE MEASURES. ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE ANNUALLY IN THE NRPA'S PARK METRICS PROGRAM INCLUDING THE INPUT OF ANNUAL AGENCY UPDATES INTO THE PARK METRICS DATABASE, AND THE EVALUATION OF UPDATED AGENCY PERFORMANCE REPORTS.	131
ACTION 4.2.3: ACCREDITATION. PURSUE CAPRA (COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AGENCIES) ACCREDITATION FROM THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION.	131
ACTION 4.2.4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING TRAINING PROGRAMS, MATERIALS AND/OR PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS THAT STRENGTHEN THE CORE SKILLS OF THE PARD STAFF AND PROMOTE COMMITMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION.	132
ACTION 4.2.5: PARKS ADVISORY BOARD. ESTABLISH A PARKS ADVISORY BOARD TO ASSIST THE EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT IN PROVIDING ONGOING OVERSIGHT OF THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.	132

ACTION 4.1.3. CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT. CONDUCT AN ANNUAL OR BI-ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT AND ADJUST THE PARD'S ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN ACCORDINGLY.

This Plan includes a conditions assessment for all 12 County park properties that were part of the County parks system in 2020. The results of this assessment should be used by the PARD 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 4.1.4. MAINTENANCE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT.¹ USE THE WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO ANALYZE UNIT COSTS FOR IN-HOUSE VERSUS CONTRACTED MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES.

Given the “varying” cycles of the economy, it is imperative that the PARD continually evaluates the capacity and cost of service in the private sector. Through the development of management processes, the PARD should begin to track unit activity costs through the implementation of a work order management system and in turn, should internally analyze the unit cost to perform work internally against the unit cost to perform work by a third-party vendor.¹ (See **Appendix B** for more details.)

ACTION 4.1.5. MAINTENANCE COST MITIGATION.¹ DEVELOP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS THAT CAN MITIGATE THE DIRECT COSTS FOR PARK SYSTEM MAINTENANCE THROUGH INDIRECT REVENUE SOURCES AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.

Maintenance operations are typically spent in divisions that do not have direct revenue sources that can offset expenditures. There are opportunities, however, to reduce expenditures through the following strategies:¹

- **Adopt-a-Trail Programs:** *These are typically small-grant programs that fund new construction, repair or renovation, maps, trail brochures, and facilities (bike racks, picnic areas, birding equipment, etc.), as well as provide maintenance support. These programs are similar to the popular “adopt-a-mile” highway programs most states utilize. Adopt-a-trail programs can also take the form of cash contributions in the range of \$12,000 to \$16,000 per mile to cover operational costs.¹*
- **Adopt-a-Park Programs:** *These are small-grant programs that fund new construction and provide maintenance support. Adopt-A-Park programs can also take the form of cash contributions in the range of \$1,000 to \$5,000 per acre to cover operational costs.¹*
- **Operational Partnerships:** *Partnerships are operational funding sources formed from two separate agencies, such as two government entities, a non-profit and a public agency, or a private business and a public agency. Two partners jointly share risk, operational costs, responsibilities, and asset management based on the strengths of each partner.¹*

(See **Appendix B** for more details.)

ACTION 4.1.6. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION. IMPROVE FIELD STAFF'S ACCESS TO HANDHELD GPS AND CLOUD-BASED EQUIPMENT TO IMPROVE FIELD MAINTENANCE AND INVENTORY ACTIVITIES.

The PARD’s 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. Data mobility will allow staff to efficiently update, inventory and catalog maintenance needs while in the field, and to access inventories to determine if an immediate solution can be provided to a proper or facility-related deficiency. Data mobility is one of the four key components of a work order management system.¹

1. Source: PROS Consulting, *Parks and Recreation Operational Assessment (2020)*, **Appendix ##**.

ACTION 4.1.7. CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGER. HIRE A FULL-TIME CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGER TO OVERSEE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT.

Over the last few years, the El Paso County PARD has successfully applied for grants from state, federal and non-profit sources to fund a variety of capital parks projects. Grant writing, administration and compliance oversight, in addition to the management of grant-funded and non-grant-funded construction projects requires a full-time commitment from a salaried exempt employee. Capital project oversight, in addition to the administration of development proposals that include parkland to be dedicated, requires an individual with building and construction engineering experience.

OBJECTIVE 4.2. ADOPT ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF RECREATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS.

In anticipation of County parks system growth, the PARD staff must continue to formalize organizational and administrative practices that provide for transparent and ongoing accountability to the Commissioner’s Court and general public.

Formal reporting and accreditation activities establish clear metrics by which the public can easily measure parks system development and maintenance.

ACTION 4.2.1. ANNUAL REPORT. PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT PROVIDING INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING AND STEWARDSHIP OF TAX DOLLARS AND FEES AND CHARGES AND DISTRIBUTE THE REPORT AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE.

An annual agency report should be prepared by the PARD for public information. The annual report should be simple to read and presents data which can be compared to other assessment communities/parks and recreation agencies. Preparation of the departmental annual report should correspond to the timing of the annual budget, and present key metrics such as: recreational program participation, parkland acreage, facility distribution, and more.

ACTION 4.2.2. PERFORMANCE MEASURES. ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE ANNUALLY IN THE NRPA'S PARK METRICS PROGRAM INCLUDING THE INPUT OF ANNUAL AGENCY UPDATES INTO THE PARK METRICS DATABASE, AND THE EVALUATION OF UPDATED AGENCY PERFORMANCE REPORTS.

The NRPA’s Park Metrics program was utilized as part of this master planning effort to evaluate how other public parks and recreations agencies deliver services to constituents within their jurisdictions. El Paso County 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 El Paso County on an annual basis is arranged in a manner consistent with national peers (making comparison assessments more useful). Participation in the Park Metrics program should not obligate El Paso County to measure all data sets in a corresponding manner to the NRPA. The County should always prioritize local needs and processes when determining how to best to organize and submit data to national advocacy and industry groups.

ACTION 4.2.3. 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. Attainment of CAPRA accreditation will require funding for associated training and for periodically hosting CAPRA volunteers for an on-site visit due the application process.

ACTION 4.2.4. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING TRAININGS, MATERIALS AND/OR PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS THAT STRENGTHEN THE CORE SKILLS OF THE PARD STAFF AND PROMOTE COMMITMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION.

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, El Paso County should consider not just management-level employees but also staff at all levels to promote to help promote buy-in to the organization’s overarching mission statements and goals and to assist in recruitment when filling vacant positions.

ACTION 4.2.5. PARKS ADVISORY BOARD. ESTABLISH A PARKS ADVISORY BOARD TO ASSIST THE EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT IN PROVIDING ONGOING OVERSIGHT OF THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.

The El Paso County Commissioner’s Court should consider establishing a Parks Advisory Board through amendment to the county Code of Ordinances. The advisory board or commission would be responsible for working with the PARD to ensure that parks and recreation service delivery adheres to the mission and goals of the Master Plan and addresses ever-changing community needs. The advisory board or commission would make recommendations to the Commissioner’s Court on acceptance of dedicated parkland, and would contribute to ongoing County park planning efforts.





Photo by: Chris Lane

ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Ascarate Park is El Paso County’s largest and oldest park, and is one of the most beloved parks in the greater El Paso region. As the only public park with a large body of accessible water in the entire region, its value to everyone living in the region is immeasurable. Its central location is framed by vistas of the Franklin Mountains to the west and the border with Mexico and Juarez to the south make this park an ideal place to bring all area residents together. The park truly is a diamond in the rough and a one-of-a-kind area asset.



CHARACTER AND CONDITIONS

PARK HISTORY

Ascarate Park was originally part of a bend of the Rio Grande, and resulted after a rectification project by the International Boundary Commission (now the International Boundary and Water Commission, or IBWC) straightened the Rio Grande during the 1930s. In 1937, almost 75 percent of El Paso County residents voted to support a special tax to help fund park development. The original park design was developed by the National Park Service, and built by more than 200 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) employees. The park’s name comes from the Ascarate family who were area pioneers and owners of a large nearby ranch. When it opened in 1940, Ascarate Park was the largest CCC project in Texas.

From 1960 to 2006, Western Playland, a medium sized amusement park, was one of the main attractions at Ascarate Park. In 2007, the amusement park was relocated out of Ascarate Park to Sunland Park, New Mexico, leaving a major void which is now being filled by futsal and a new venue for events.

CURRENT USES

The park’s main attractions are **A)** its two lakes totaling almost 50 acres of water; and, **B)** Ascarate Golf Course, an 18-hole everyday public course, and the 9-hole “Delta 9,” an ideal beginners course and setting for First Tee. The two courses at Ascarate are the most popular and affordable public golf courses in the region. Other current park facilities include:

- *In-park and lakeside walking paths and trails;*
- *Fishing area;*
- *A large rectangular swimming pool;*
- *Two baseball and four softball fields;*
- *Multiple picnic shelters and rental pavilions;*
- *Multiple memorial gardens and monuments;*
- *Event rental facilities at the Golf Course; and,*
- *City of El Paso firefighter training center (not public).*

In the near future, an all-abilities playground is planned for the park. Sponsored by Mothers on Board (MOB), a local children’s advocacy group, the play area will be the largest in El Paso County. A dog park area is also planned for the southern area of the park near the Cesar Chavez Border Highway (Loop 375).

FIGURE 4.2: ASCARATE PARK EXISTING CONDITIONS



ASCARATE PARK CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholder meetings with park user groups and County officials held during late 2020 and early 2021, as well as an analysis of the park, indicated the following opportunities and challenges at Ascarate:

- *The park lacks a “loop” road around the park, resulting in traffic generally using one main entrance.*
- *The City of El Paso’s firefighter training facility occupies a prime lakefront portion of the park — relocation in the future could provide a place for publicly accessible amenities.*
- *Creating a stronger and more readily accessible connection to Loop 375 is needed to make access to the park easier in the future.*
- *The two lakes are a singular attraction in the area, but they need improvements to address leaking; as well as provision of a truly sustainable source of replenishment water; stabilization of bank edges; and water quality improvements.*
- *The park should become a premier location for events, with facilities that accommodate a variety of event sizes.*
- *Promote both daytime and evening use of the park, so that it becomes a premier attraction during all times of the year.*
- *Expand the role of the park as a central location for memorials, commemorations, and recognition that bring everyone in the entire County together.*
- *There are multiple opportunities for concessionaires that can provide attractions in the park and help generate revenue that supports the maintenance of the park.*
- *The park could become the focal point of a larger “park district” in which new live/work/play developments around and near the park help invigorate this area of the city.*
- *Consider ways to announce events and directions to Ascarate from IH-10 to help guide visitors and encourage use of the park.*
- *Maintain gate facilities for special events, but consider alternative revenue generation methods that do not require a gate fee.*
- *Beyond the new bridge and trail connection to neighborhoods to the east, explore trails and connections to other neighborhoods around the park.*



The boardwalk at Ascarate Lake is a daytime and evening attraction.



New trails provide daily access to the park from adjacent neighborhoods and link Ascarate Park to a larger regional trail network.

ASCARATE PARK VISION

Stakeholders envision Ascarate Park as the premier park in the greater El Paso region. It should be a major attraction for a wide variety of activities and events, ranging from peaceful strolling along a lakeside “paseo,” to fishing and kayaking, to serving as a place for major festivals and unique attractions. It should be a memorable place to visit both during the day and at night. It already is and should continue to be a place where community memorials and places of honor can be shared, and where all El Pasoans gather together to celebrate their vibrant community.

POTENTIAL PARK USES

The vision concept and images on these pages show the possibilities for Ascarate Park. Potential uses could include:

- *Lakeside amphitheater for events and festivals.*
- *Basketball courts, including a covered one with seating.*
- *Flexible large event space with capacity for multiple stages.*
- *Multiple lakeside rental pavilions for family events.*
- *Active sports facilities such as futsal and sand volleyball (provide multiple courts to attract larger numbers of users).*
- *Bicycling track and training facilities for children and youth.*
- *Piers and/or bridge(s) that allow access across the lake.*
- *Adventure play facilities, including a zipline across the lake, ropes climbing towers, and other unique activities (potentially provided by a concessionaire).*
- *Enhancements to the existing rental pavilion to allow it to continue to serve as a valuable community asset.*
- *Wide promenade/paseo around all or much of the lake.*
- *Extensive locally created public art displays.*
- *Enhanced wetlands area.*
- *Enhanced pool and aquatic facilities.*
- *Enhanced nooks, piers and support facilities for fishing, including bait and tackle sales.*
- *Extensive low maintenance/very low water usage desert landscape features throughout the park.*
- *High visibility sign boards to promote park activities.*
- *Relocated El Paso County parks administration building to a location near the park entrance (to facilitate rentals and other customer activities).*
- *Premier dog park with separate areas for large and smaller dogs, shade areas and drinking fountains.*
- *Vertical feature(s) that visibly connect the park to areas around it.*
- *Garden areas for strolling, contemplation, and Quincenera photographs.*
- *Enhanced natural areas and wetlands in the southwest corner of the lake adjacent to the golf course.*
- *Multiple locations for food trucks/vendors (concessionaires). Promote the development of a “Picnic-style” food truck court, like the one on Barton Springs Road.*
- *Locations for community services and health providers.*
- *Park-wide walking/running trails.*
- *Events/gathering cluster with restaurants, shops, and possible lakeside hotel.*
- *Additional shade through enhancements to the urban forest canopy.*



Additional shade features and lakeside pavilions will address community needs and can be offset with increased rental revenues.



Possible enhancements that leverage Ascarate Park's prominence in the community and suitability for events may include: **A)** Prominent gateway features; **B)** Upgraded performance spaces; and, **C)** Complimentary "village" commercial development. Enhanced recreational amenities may include: **D)** Shaded basketball/futsal court spaces; **E)** Poured-in-place skatepark; **F)** Boat rental pavilion; and, **G)** Adventure play facilities.

ASCARATE PARK VISION PLAN

As part of the County’s park planning process, a vision plan for Ascarate Park was developed. This vision for what Ascarate Park can and should become results from input by multiple stakeholders and County staff and officials. It serves as an initial overall vision for the park, moving beyond a piece by piece approach to renovating the park, and instead creating a long-term vision that can be implemented over the next decade.

Ascarate’s vision plan incorporates many of the potential programmatic elements previously discussed. Most of all, it envisions an enhanced Ascarate Park that has features for everyone, that is worth visiting both day and night, and that is highly flexible and can support a very wide variety of events and programs. An overall architectural “theme” should be used to increase the attractiveness and marketability of the park. Given the strategic importance of the park, iconic elements should be included, such as the pedestrian bridge across the lake, or a vertical feature that can be seen as far away as the IH-10 corridor.

Consider park name enhancements (such as Ascarate Lake) to further convey the uniqueness of the renovated park as a regional attraction. Actively consider partner entities to help develop or enhance portions of the park.

ASCARATE PARK VISION CONCEPT LEGEND (FACING PAGE)

A	ENHANCED ROUND-ABOUT	I	FISHING LAGOON	Q	SCENIC GARDENS
B	PASSIVE PARK SPACE	J	PLAYGROUND / SPLASHPAD	R	LOOP TRAIL
C	EXISTING BALLFIELD	K	ARBORETUM	S	PLAYGROUND
D	SOCCER FIELD	L	ENHANCED POOL / WATERPARK	T	FISHING PIER
E	BOARDWALKS	M	AMPHITHEATER	U	NEW PARK SIGN
F	BERM W/ VIEWING PAVILION	N	SPORT COURTS	V	NEIGHBORHOOD TRAIL CONNECTION
G	EVENT LAWN	O	TOWN CENTER RETAIL / DINING		
H	ALL-ABILITIES PLAYGROUND	P	ICONIC BRIDGE		

A preliminary opinion of probable construction costs related to the Ascarate Park Vision Concept, as well as phasing considerations, can be found in [Chapter 5](#).

Please note that the general range of possible design and construction costs presented in this overall system-wide master plan for Ascarate Park are at a pre-design level and are only intended to establish order of magnitude range of cost needs for the exploration of future funding mechanisms (such as bonds) by El Paso County. Actual costs will vary, and additional surveying, review of existing conditions and utilities, and more detailed design will be needed to determine more precise construction costs prior to a formal bidding process.

Please see [Table 4.1](#) (page 98) for a full description of all assumptions and disclaimers related to opinion of probable construction costs.

FIGURE 4.3: ASCARATE PARK VISION CONCEPT



ASCARATE PARK - NEXT STEPS

The Vision Plan presented in this Plan represents a strong vision for what Ascarate Park and can be for all residents of El Paso County. That vision has strong support, and the following strategy is recommended in order to identify funding sources to begin implementing portions of the vision as quickly as possible. Initial actions are shown as near term to take advantage of potential bonding opportunities. Potential cost ranges for each of the steps shown below are intended to help establish budgets. Cost projections for improvements by area of the park are provided in **Chapter 5**.

TABLE 4.20: ASCARATE PARK IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

ACTION	TIME FRAME	POTENTIAL COST RANGE
<p>1. Ascarate Lake Sustainability Study/Design. In the immediate future, conduct a lake improvement study to determine need for partial dredging, repairs to stop any existing seepage, enhancements/backup for the existing lake water supply, and enhancements to lake water supply and its aquatic habitat. Include both the larger lake and the Duck Pond lake.</p>	Immediate	\$75,000 to \$150,000 (Potential partners include Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and other agencies)
<p>2. Overall Park/Phase 1 Schematic Design (to provide detail for near-term bonding opportunities). In parallel with the lake improvements effort described above, and in preparation for potential near term bond-funded improvements, prepare a feasibility/schematic design follow-up plan for Ascarate Park to add detail to the park's program of uses, configuration of facilities, and detailed capital and operational cost needs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Incorporate additional engagement with stakeholder groups, park users, adjacent neighborhoods, and county residents at large. • Determine initial phase of improvements, and create illustrations and detailed costs to assist in educating El Paso County voters in possible near-term bond elections. Identify components to be funded and developed by El Paso County or other public entities, and components which may be privately developed by concessionaires or other entities. • Identify follow-up phases if applicable. 	Immediate (Fiscal Yr. 21-22)	\$250,000 to \$400,000 (higher range with inclusion of detailed programming and operating cost reviews, revenue generation potential).
<p>3. Development of Initial Major Phase. If approved by voters, construct the first phase of improvements (as determined by the overall schematic plan). Supplement County funding with grant applications for both the park and lake improvements.</p> <p>If bond funding is not available, pursue grant and certificates of obligation for smaller initial phases.</p>	Near Term (Fiscal Yrs. 2022 to 2025)	\$20 million to \$25 million (will vary based on decisions made in step 2 above, but initial phase should be significant enough to really convey what Ascarate Park can become).
<p>4. Ascarate Lake Improvements Implementation. As part of an initial phase, implement lake stabilization, water supply and water quality improvements identified in step 1 above immediately. This step is critical to ensure the long-term viability of the lake as the central and most valuable feature of Ascarate Park.</p>	Near Term (Fiscal Yrs. 2022 to 2025)	\$2 Million to \$4 Million (allowance, actual amount determined by detailed reviews in Step 1 above).
<p>5. Partnership Opportunities. Pursue additional public and private partnerships with area cities including the City of El Paso, federal entities, private non-profit entities and others to help fund development.</p>	Ongoing	Target grant and partner funding to cover 20 to 25% of overall development costs.
<p>6. Operations and Management Strategies. As renovations and enhancements to the park occur, evaluate management alternatives to operate, promote and fund Ascarate Park operations. Plan for dedicated staff to program, maintain and secure the park. Include on-site park rangers to alleviate safety concerns. Determine which strategies provide significant benefits and cost efficiencies to El Paso County. These may include conservancy, Friends of Ascarate organization, and other strategies that may assist El Paso County in significantly expanding the ability to operate the park.</p>	Near Term (Fiscal Yrs. 22-23 and beyond)	\$0 to \$75,000 (may be conducted by County staff, or may engage specialist to assist in defining potential strategies)
<p>7. City of El Paso Fire Training Academy Facility. Rather than enhance the current facility which sits lakeside, work with the City of El Paso to identify alternative locations for a relocation of the Fire Training Academy facility, to allow for further lakeside park facility development.</p>	Ongoing as feasible	No cost initially
<p>8. Future Park Enhancement Phases. Continue to develop additional phases of the park improvements as funding sources or partners are identified.</p>	Mid to Longer Term (Beyond Fiscal Yr. 2025)	To be determined. Plan for additional phases that are similar in scale and funding to the initial phase described above.



SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The SportsPark is known as the premier facility for baseball, softball and T-Ball in the greater El Paso region. The park's high-quality fields, amenities and strong support infrastructure provide a perfect environment for league play and for tournaments. Over the years, the SportsPark's reputation has come to signify the highest level of play in the region, especially for youth players. The goal for El Paso County Parks over the life of this Plan will be to maintain the park's infrastructure, improve and expand the park if feasible, and continue to support its programming for premier events.

CHARACTER AND CONDITIONS

PARK HISTORY

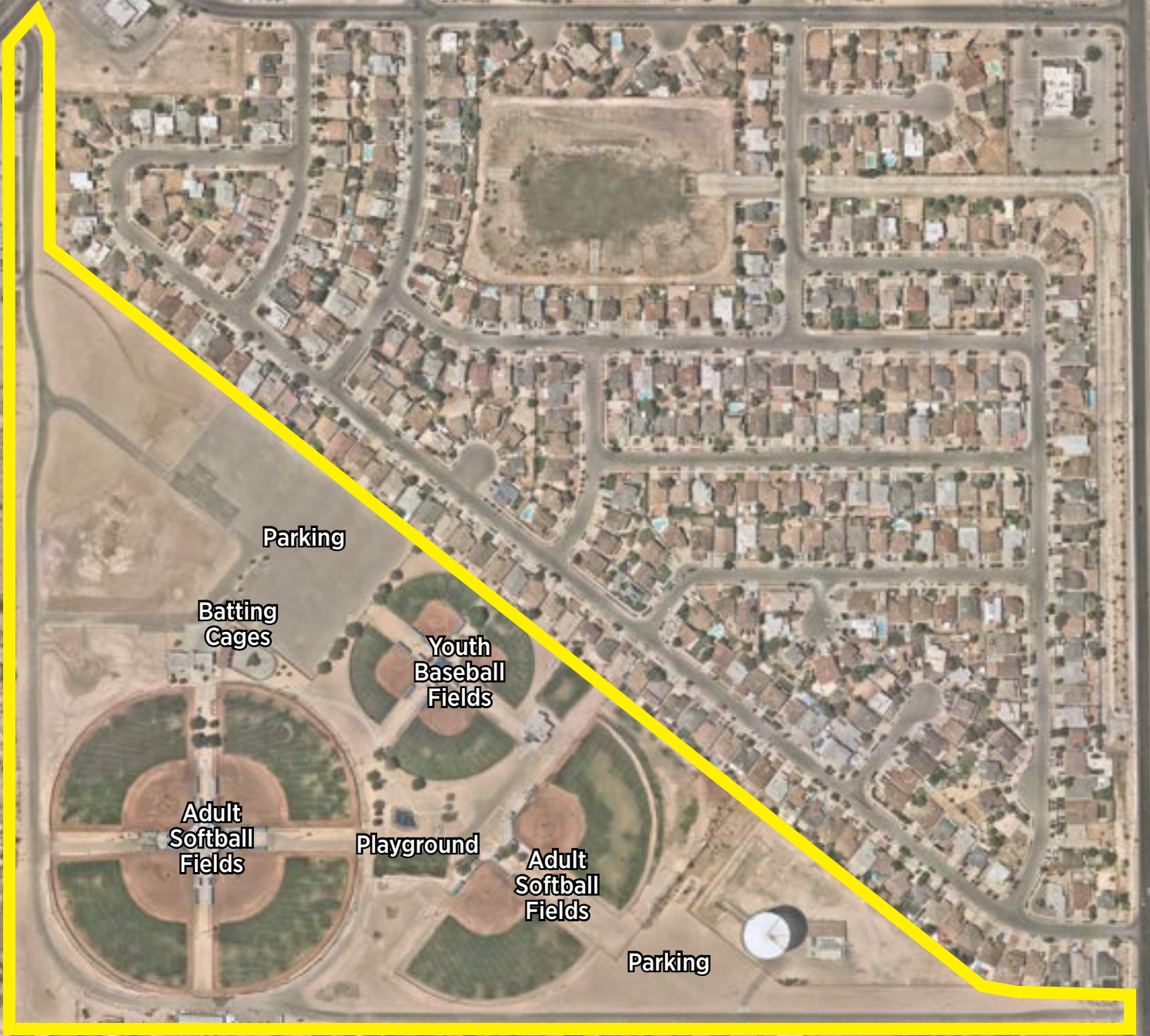
Originally built in the 1980s, the SportsPark originally started with a softball field quadplex, one little league field and a large flat field area for soccer and field sports. Much of El Paso's east side had not yet begun to grow, but new neighborhoods soon developed around the SportsPark. Twenty years later, as the park aged, alternatives to revitalize it were considered during the 2000s. These included a proposal to contract with Big League Dreams, an entity specializing in replica ballfields. Ultimately, El Paso County Commissioners decided to undertake a significant upgrade to the park between 2012 and 2016 at a cost of almost \$9 million. Those major renovations included entry sign improvements, an expanded administration building, a new clubhouse and full-service restaurant, a bigger concession stand, improved restrooms, better walkways and canopied areas for waiting between games, shaded spectator seats and improved batting cages.

CURRENT USES

The SportsPark is singularly focused on diamond sports activities. Skinned infields allow for flexibility for different age group configurations. In 2020, additional play area improvements and canopied pavilions were added. These improvements, guided by the Commissioner's Court, reinforced the importance of the SportsPark as a first-class recreation amenity for all residents of the County. Facilities currently at the park include:

- *Four adult-sized ball fields with 300'+ fence lines and skinned infields, arranged in a quadplex configuration;*
- *Two adult-sized ball fields with 300' + fence lines and skinned infields, arranged side by side;*
- *Four Little League ball fields with 200' + fence lines and skinned infields, arranged in a quadplex configuration;*
- *Covered bleachers and dugouts for all 10 fields;*
- *Two-story main concession and restroom building, with shaded second story viewing and a restaurant;*
- *Pro-shop and administration building;*
- *A central playground area;*
- *Six position batting cage complex; and,*
- *Parking and on-site maintenance facility.*

FIGURE 4.4: SPORTSPARK EXISTING CONDITIONS



SPORTSPARK CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

Stakeholder meetings with park users and County officials held during late 2020 and early 2021, as well as an analysis of the park, indicated the following redevelopment opportunities and challenges at El Paso County's Sportspark:

- *All recognize the Sportspark as the premier facility for baseball, softball and T-ball in the greater El Paso region. The high level of competition (the best players play there) was also noted as a strong attraction to using the facility.*
- *Parking during peak events can get full. Temporary sand/gravel parking should be converted into permanent parking.*
- *An improved area for dropping-off players, as well as for buses to drop-off teams, should be developed. This will help to keep young players from darting across traffic lanes and parking zones.*
- *Facilities for handicapped visitors should be improved. In particular, some fields are a long distance away from designated handicapped parking spaces.*
- *The T-Ball sized quad complex has relatively little warm up and waiting space for multiple teams that may be waiting to play.*
- *Additional shade is needed throughout the park.*
- *Connections to adjacent neighborhoods would be good to provide them with close by recreation facilities such as walking trails.*
- *The entrance from Joe Battle (Loop 375) is challenging, due to high travel speeds along the frontage road.*
- *Additional entrances and exits, if feasible, would be helpful.*
- *Additional fields, if a configuration can be identified, would allow the Sportspark to serve even larger tournaments.*
- *The existing maintenance shed opens directly onto the park's access road, creating somewhat dangerous crossing conditions. Relocation of the maintenance shed to another spot within the park should be explored.*

SPORTSPARK VISION

Stakeholders envision the Sportspark as continuing to be the premier baseball and softball tournament facility in the region. They see improvements as needed to maintain the facility as the top choice in the region. They also envision the possibility of expanding the number of fields, if possible, to create an even more attractive sports destination.

As part of the County's overall park planning process, a vision plan for the Sportspark was developed. Unlike the vision plan for Ascarate Park, the Sportspark vision focuses more on refining the existing park. It identifies specific areas of improvements that address stakeholder comments and that help further solidify the facility as the premier facility in the region. Recommended improvements include:

1. *Pave the temporary parking area located west of the existing parking areas. Additionally, consider reclaiming one row of park adjacent to the existing Little League quad and converting it back to warm up/waiting spaces.*
2. *Create a new bus and passenger vehicle drop-off near the entrance gate to the park. When designing it, consider creating safe routes for pedestrians from the parking areas and capacity for large numbers of visitors at one time.*
3. *Create nicely landscaped and shaded amenity spaces near the gate area for picnicking by visitors. Place this area such that it can be used as an amenity by surrounding neighborhoods when the Sportspark is not being used.*
4. *Further enhance the central amenity area between the three field pods. Enhance the play area, provide additional shaded picnicking and seating areas, and considering adding a splashpad as an additional amenity. Configure the area to allow it to handle significant numbers of visitors.*
5. *Create additional small parking areas along the south entryway of the park to provide closer access for park users.*
6. *Create a walking trail that encircles the park, to be used as a health and wellness facility for both Sportspark attendees as well as users from surrounding neighborhoods.*
7. *Relocate the existing maintenance facility to a location closer to the existing water tower to reduce its impact on vehicular and pedestrian traffic.*
8. *Enhance entrances to neighborhoods south and north of the Sportspark. An entrance to the south currently exists, while a northern entrance will have to be identified.*
9. *Evaluate the environmental and acquisition costs for areas adjacent to the Sportspark that could be used to expand the number of playing fields in the park.*

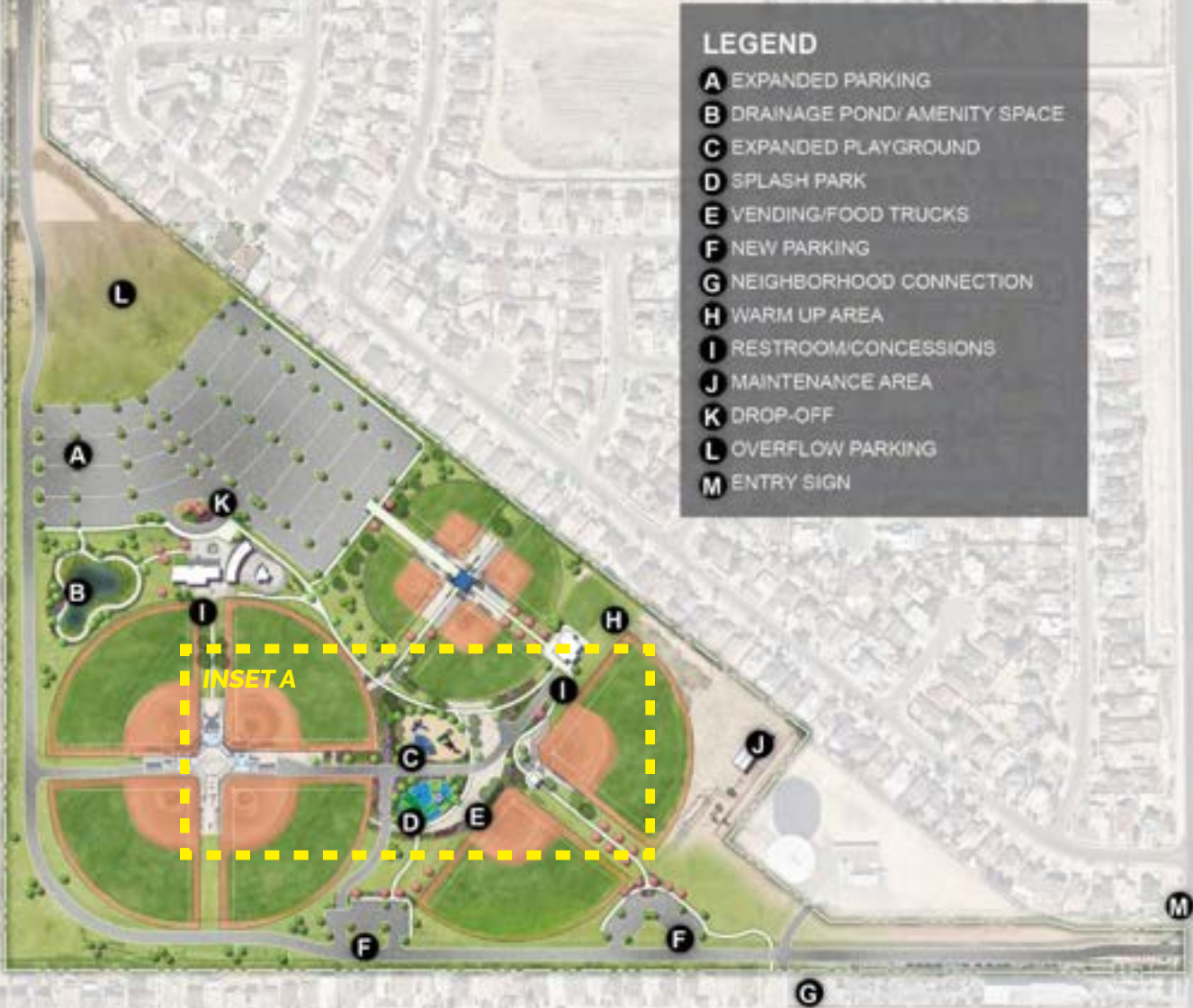
FIGURE 4.5: SPORTSPARK VISION CONCEPT

N Zaragoza Rd

Joe Battle Blvd

LEGEND

- A** EXPANDED PARKING
- B** DRAINAGE POND/ AMENITY SPACE
- C** EXPANDED PLAYGROUND
- D** SPLASH PARK
- E** VENDING/FOOD TRUCKS
- F** NEW PARKING
- G** NEIGHBORHOOD CONNECTION
- H** WARM UP AREA
- I** RESTROOM/CONCESSIONS
- J** MAINTENANCE AREA
- K** DROP-OFF
- L** OVERFLOW PARKING
- M** ENTRY SIGN



SPORTSPARK - NEXT STEPS

Recommendations for the Sportspark focus on refining the facility to maintain its premier status in the region. The following strategy targets implementation within the near future as funding opportunities allow.

TABLE 4.21: SPORTSPARK IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY

ACTION	TIME FRAME	POTENTIAL COST RANGE
<p>1. Confirm Cost Projections and Phasing for Near Term Bonds. Conduct detailed assessments and schematic design to confirm costs for recommended enhancements to the existing facility. These will provide detail for potential inclusion in grant requests and possible near term bond elections.</p>	<p>Immediate (Fiscal Yr. 21-22)</p>	<p>\$0 (if performed internally) up to \$50,000 (if engineer/landscape architect is engaged)</p>
<p>2. Investigate Potential Field Expansion Opportunities. Review options to add additional diamond fields through reconfiguration (limited potential for expansion) or acquisition. Conduct background reviews to ensure site viability for development and environmental considerations.</p>	<p>Immediate (Fiscal Yr. 21-22)</p>	<p>\$0 (if performed internally) up to \$75,000 (for engineer/environmental specialists if needed)</p>
<p>3. Development of Improvements as Funded. If approved by voters, construct funded improvements (as determined by the overall schematic plan). Supplement County funding with grant applications and partner funding as feasible. If bond funding is not available, pursue grant and certificates of obligation for smaller phases.</p>	<p>Near Term (Fiscal Yrs. 2022 to 2025)</p>	<p>\$1.5 million to \$2.5 million (as funded).</p>

A preliminary opinion of probable construction costs related to the Sportspark Vision Concept, as well as phasing considerations, can be found in [Chapter 5](#).

Please note that the general range of possible design and construction costs presented in this overall system-wide master plan for Sportspark are at a pre-design level and are only intended to establish order of magnitude range of cost needs for the exploration of future funding mechanisms (such as bonds) by El Paso County. Actual costs will vary, and additional surveying, review of existing conditions and utilities, and more detailed design will be needed to determine more precise construction costs prior to a formal bidding process.

Please see [Table 4.1](#) (page 98) for a full description of all assumptions and disclaimers related to opinion of probable construction costs.

ASCARATE GOLF COURSE - LAYOUT AND COST RECOVERY DETERMINATIONS:

In parallel with developing a refined long term vision for Ascarate Park, conduct a cost recovery and long-term layout review of the Ascarate Golf Course. Include active golf course users and the community at large as key stakeholders. Consider long-term viability and need for the Delta Nine course. Evaluate re-routing options that may improve play and operations but also allow for additional access points to Ascarate Park during major events.

Consider cost recovery options for the facility over time, with a range of options including a reasonable cost recovery goal that focuses on community-wide play and access to as broad a segment of the community as possible, to a enhanced facility that has higher use fees and cost recovery goals. Community-wide access, as is the current goal of the course, is highly recommended, but consider other mechanisms or revenue sources that can help generate additional revenue to help maintain the course at a high level.





CHAPTER 05

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM

IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAM PARAMETERS	149
PARKS AND RECREATION WORK PROGRAM	151
POLICY PROGRAM	152
INVESTMENT PROGRAM	158
PLAN ADMINISTRATION AND IMPLEMENTATION	161
FUNDING STRATEGIES	163

GREAT PARKS FOR ALL!

Implementation Program Parameters

The El Paso County Parks and Recreation Master Plan is the County’s principal guide for providing parks and recreation services to current and future residents in an efficient and equitable manner.

This Plan’s implementation program includes three (3) principal components. The **Parks and Recreation Work Program** categorizes and prioritizes the Plan actions that were introduced in **Chapter 4** to present an orderly framework for pending County initiatives. The **Plan Administration** section outlines the roles and responsibilities of County officials and implementing partners, while the **Funding Strategies** section highlights key funding sources that may aid in advancing implementation activities.

IMPLEMENTATION METHODS

The actions recommended within **Chapter 4** of this Plan are defined by one (1) or more of the following categories:

- **Operations.** *The action requires a new or modified program, partnership, or staffing arrangement.*
- **Procedures.** *The action requires a new or modified process or policy.*
- **Regulations.** *The action requires Commissioner approved modification to County ordinance.*
- **Studies.** *The action requires further analysis or investigation to determine the most appropriate solution.*
- **Investments.** *The action requires a new or adjusted capital or operational expenditure.*

The action type(s) for all activities are listed within the Parks and Recreation Work Program (**Tables 5.1** and **5.2**). Some recommended Plan actions may meet the definition of multiple implementation categories.



The El Paso County PRMP recommends ongoing, annual near-term maintenance funding and long-term capital investments for system-wide park properties, facilities and assets.

IMPLEMENTATION TIME FRAME

This Master Plan has been prepared to span a 10-year horizon – although some activities may stretch beyond this baseline time frame. The time frame within which each recommended Plan activity should be initiated within the Parks and Recreation Work Program is divided into three (3) periods:

- **Near-term Actions.** *Actions which should be initiated within the next one to two years (2022-2024) although completion may extend across a larger timeframe. These are the City’s top priorities for implementation.*
- **Mid-term Actions.** *Actions which may be initiated within the next three to five years (2025- 2027).*
- **Long-term Actions.** *Long term actions may also be contingent upon completion of other actions, first and may be further prioritized in following Plan updates.*
- **Ongoing Actions.** *Some actions may begin within a year, but are reoccurring or may continue for a period of years.*

Changing conditions may require Plan updates (see Plan Administration, page 160). Regardless of the suggested time frame for the implementation of each action recommended in this Plan, it is presumed that many of the Plan’s recommended actions will require ongoing effort and attention by the County. **Tables 5.1** and **5.2** acknowledge actions that should be conducted on an ongoing basis following initiation.

The level of prioritization illustrated in the Parks and Recreation Work Program is intended as a guide rather than a mandate. Any item listed in **Tables 5.1** and **5.2** may be initiated sooner than recommended if unique circumstances or opportunities arise (such as a grant or partnership).



PARKS AND RECREATION PRIORITIES

The activities and investments listed within the Parks and Recreation Work Program have been prioritized based on information received from public input and the Master Plan's needs assessment (including conditions and operational assessments summarized Chapter 3 and in **Appendix B**).

The following list of parks and recreation improvements reflect the City's highest priority projects, meaning they should be planned for incorporation into the annual capital budgeting process. As this plan matures, each of these projects will be further divided into individual projects with their requisite priorities.

A

ASCARATE PARK ENHANCEMENTS. Enhance Ascarate Park, the region's premier park, by investing in a long-range vision, improvements, enhancements and new/expanded amenities which follow the conceptual development plan vision prepared as part of this Master Plan and subsequent schematic design plans. (See **Action 2.4.1, page 124**).

B

WALKSHED ENHANCEMENTS. Construct or improve sidewalks, pathways, linear parks and/or multi-use trails within a 1/2 mile (10 minute) walkshed or between existing or planned public parks and adjacent residential areas, including the proposed Square Dance Trail linear park. (See **Actions 2.3.7 & 2.3.8, page 124**).

C

GALLEGOS PARK RENOVATION. Invest in park improvements that provide access to expanded recreational offerings, facilitate the ability of the park to host regional athletic events, and support user comfort. (See **Action 2.2.4, page 112**).

D

SAN FELIPE PARK IMPROVEMENTS. Prepare a conceptual master plan for the development of San Felipe Park as a premier special use park catering to off-road vehicle use (first ever facilities for the region). Invest in near-term improvements that increase park security, provide controlled access, and support user comfort. (see **Action 2.2.10, page 118**).

E

VETERANS PARK IMPROVEMENTS. Enhance Veterans Park in Fabens to add new facilities and to celebrate the strong area veterans' community. (See **Action 2.2.11, page 159**).

F

INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES. Partner with school districts or small municipalities to develop community center/classroom space that serves as a base for a variety of recreational programming offerings. (See **Action 2.3.6, page 123**).

G

REGIONAL TRAIL DEVELOPMENT. Work with public and private partners to plan and prepare a region-wide network of linear parks and multi-use trails linking parks, residential areas, and other community destinations; and, to implement the Mission Trail and Paseo del Norte Trail recommendations. (See **Action 1.1.5, page 101 & Action 2.3.8, page 124**).

H

SPORTSPARK ENHANCEMENTS. Enhance the experience of visitors to the Sportspark by investing in park improvements, enhancements and new/expanded amenities which adhere to the conceptual development plan vision prepared in this Master Plan and subsequent schematic design plans. (See **Action 2.4.1, page 124**).

I

SMALL PARK ENHANCEMENTS. Invest in near-term recreational facility and accessory facility enhancements to provide a broader (and equitably distributed) offering of recreational amenities and to improve the condition of current facilities and grounds. (See **Actions 2.2.1 through 2.2.12, pages 109 - 120**).

J

COYOTE (TORNILLO) PARK EXPANSION. Prepare a conceptual master plan for the expansion and development of Coyote Park as a community or regional park suitable for large athletic events and/or other public gatherings. Invest in park improvements that increase park acreage, provide access to expanded recreational offerings, and support user comfort. (See **Action 1.1.3, page 101 & 2.2.2, page 110**).

K

AQUATIC FACILITIES. Construct additional recreational and competitive aquatic facilities within neighborhood, community, regional or other special use parks. (See **Action 2.3.4, page 121**).

Parks and Recreation Work Program

The implementation program described within this chapter includes two (2) major components: **A)** The Policy Program; and, **B)** The Investment Program. Please note that both “programs” include activities related to the Ascarate Park Conceptual Development Plan and the Sportpark Conceptual Plan presented in **Chapter 4**.

POLICY PROGRAM


The Policy Program (**Table 5.1**, pages 152 through 156) is designed to prioritize all general policy, programming, regulatory and operational initiatives that were previously described in **Chapter 4**. The Policy Program addresses investment actions and initiatives only in general terms and does not address anticipated project costs.

INVESTMENT PROGRAM

The Investment Program (**Table 5.2**, pages 157 through 159) identifies estimated cost ranges associated with capital projects including: park land acquisition, new facilities, or the major renovation of existing facilities. These projects have previously been identified in **Chapter 4**, Actions 2.2.1 through 2.2.12 (pages 109 – 120) and **Tables 4.20** and **4.21** (pages 141 and 146), but have been re-organized in this Chapter to allow for the phased implementation of between \$18.6 and \$34.6 million dollars of recommended investments into existing County parkland (as shown in **Figure 5.1** below).


FIGURE 5.1: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENT HIGHLIGHTS

Recommended investments into existing El Paso County park properties reflect the current distribution of County-owned and maintained parkland and includes the following highlights:

Precinct #1 

Recommended Investments: \$2.5-\$8.0 MIL


- Sportspark improvements.
- Future Sportspark expansion.
- Walking/biking access facilities.
- Future connectivity to a regional trails system.

Precinct #2 

Recommended Investments: \$20-\$35 MIL* (Larger amount reflects improvements that benefit the entire County and all precincts)


- Ascarate Park schematic design.*
- In partnership with El Paso, future community or regional park in far northeast El Paso.

*Ascarate Park and Lake facility/grounds/lake improvements (initial phase)

Precinct #3 

Recommended Investments: \$4.5-\$8 MIL

- San Felipe Park improvements as a premier ORV park.
- Expansion of Coyote Park to serve as a regional or community park.
- Various neighborhood park improvements.

Precinct #4 

Recommended Investments: \$10-\$12 MIL








- Gallegos Park enhancement and expansion.
- Rio Grande River Trail expansion/access.
- Various neighborhood park improvements.
- Walking/biking access facilities.

* Note: benefits all precincts and entire County population

POLICY PROGRAM









Table 5.1: Parks and Recreation Policy Program identifies the recommended prioritization of general policy, programming, regulatory and operational initiatives related to park facilities and recreational programming.

TABLE 5.1: PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY PROGRAM

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE ¹	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
	1-2	3-5	6-10*	ON-GOING		
GOAL 1: PARKS SYSTEM GROWTH. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IS PROVIDED TO ALL EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.						
OBJECTIVE 1.1: ENSURE AN EQUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY-WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARKLAND THROUGHOUT INCORPORATED AND UNINCORPORATED PORTIONS OF EL PASO COUNTY.						
ACTION 1.1.1. NEIGHBORHOOD PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE. PROVIDE PARKLAND TO CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF UNINCORPORATED EL PASO COUNTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVIDERS					Procedure, Regulation	County Staff, Municipalities
ACTION 1.1.2. COMMUNITY/REGIONAL PARK LEVEL OF SERVICE. PROVIDE COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKLAND TO CURRENT AND FUTURE RESIDENTS OF EL PASO COUNTY IN PARTNERSHIP WITH MUNICIPAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.					Procedure, Regulation	County Staff, Municipalities
ACTION 1.1.3. COYOTE PARK. CONVERT COYOTE PARK INTO A COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARK.					Investment	Tornillo ISD
ACTION 1.1.4. HORIZON VIEW ESTATES PARK. PREPARE A CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PLAN FOR THE FUTURE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMMUNITY PARK ON LAND DEDICATED TO EL PASO COUNTY.					Study	County, Horizon City
ACTION 1.1.5. PARTNERSHIP PARKS. PARTNER WITH MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO ADD PUBLIC SPACES TO DECREASE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS.					Procedure, Investment	Municipalities, School Districts, Public Authorities
ACTION 1.1.6. TRAILS MASTER PLAN. PARTNER WITH THE MPO, CITY OF EL PASO AND OTHER MUNICIPALITIES TO PREPARE A TRAILS MASTER PLAN FOR RECREATION AND TO INCREASE RESIDENT ACCESS TO PARKS, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.					Study	Municipalities, Public Authorities
OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO ENSURE THAT PARKLAND IS PROVIDED FOR EL PASO COUNTY'S GROWING POPULATION.						
ACTION 1.2.1. PARKLAND DEDICATION. CONFIRM AND IF FEASIBLE AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE THE DEDICATION OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SPACE AS PART OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.					Regulation	N/A (County Staff)







1. Action types described on page 149. See "Implementation Methods."

TABLE 5.1: PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY PROGRAM (CONT.)

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE ¹	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
	1-2	3-5	6-10+	ON-GOING		
ACTION 1.2.2. POCKET PARK PERFORMANCE CRITERIA. ALLOW SMALL POCKET PARKS TO BE CONSTRUCTED IN NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS IN LIEU OF NEIGHBORHOOD PARKS ONLY IN ACCORDANCE WITH SPECIFIC PERFORMANCE CRITERIA.					Procedure, Regulation	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 1.2.3. TRAIL DEDICATION. AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE EASEMENT OR RIGHT-OF-WAY DEDICATION FOR MULTI-USE TRAILS, AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE APPLICABLE TRAIL SEGMENTS, AS PART OF NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT AND COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENT, AS APPLICABLE.					Regulation	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 1.2.4. PRIVATE PARKS AND COMMON AREAS. AMEND THE EL PASO COUNTY, TEXAS, CODE OF ORDINANCES TO REQUIRE NEW RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENTS TO INCLUDE PRIVATE RECREATIONAL AREAS.					Regulation	N/A (County Staff)
GOAL 2: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS. PARKS SYSTEM AMENITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS ARE OF A HIGH-QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGN AND ESTABLISH A RECOGNIZABLE COMMUNITY BRAND WHILE MEETING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.						
OBJECTIVE 2.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM FEATURES AND FACILITIES.						
ACTION 2.1.1. PARK DEVELOPMENT. ADOPT MINIMUM FACILITY AND AMENITY STANDARDS FOR NEW PARKS.					Procedure, Regulation	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.1.2. PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS. PREPARE A PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION STANDARDS MANUAL FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKS AND FOR THE MAINTENANCE OF EXISTING PARKS.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.1.3. LOW-IMPACT DESIGN PRACTICES. INCORPORATE LOW-IMPACT DEVELOPMENT AND GREEN BUILDING DESIGN PRACTICES INTO PARKLAND AND FACILITY DEVELOPMENT AND RENOVATION PROJECTS.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.1.4. LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY. INCORPORATE LIGHTING STANDARDS INTO A PARK DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION MANUAL.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.1.5. 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.					Study	N/A (County Staff)









1. Action types described on page 149. See "Implementation Methods."

TABLE 5.1: PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY PROGRAM (CONT.)

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE ¹	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
	1-2	3-5	6-10+	ON-GOING		
ACTION 2.1.6. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS ESTIMATES. INCLUDE A M.O.R.E. ASSESSMENT AND ESTIMATE (MAINTENANCE, OPERATIONS, REVENUES, AND EXPENDITURES) FOR ALL CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN PLANS TO ENSURE THE AVAILABILITY OF LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE AND OPERATIONS FUNDS.					Study	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.1.7. BRANDING PROGRAM. PREPARE A SYSTEM-WIDE BRANDING AND SIGNAGE PLAN AND GUIDELINES.					Study, Procedure, Regulation, Investment	N/A (County Staff)
OBJECTIVE 2.2. FUND TARGETED INVESTMENTS IN EXISTING PARKS THAT IMPROVE PROPERTY AND FACILITY CONDITIONS WHILE ADDRESSING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS						
ACTIONS 2.2.1 THROUGH 2.2.12. INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT EXISTING PARKS BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.	See Table 5.2, Parks and Recreation Investment Program (page 157)					
OBJECTIVE 2.3. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER PARK AMENITIES TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.						
ACTION 2.3.1: RECREATIONAL FACILITY LEVELS OF SERVICE. ESTABLISH A PREFERRED TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE FOR KEY RECREATIONAL FACILITIES IN THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.					Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.3.2: ATHLETIC FIELDS. UTILIZE COMMUNITY, REGIONAL AND SPECIAL USE PARKS TO INCREASE THE COUNTY'S INVENTORY OF COMPETITIVE SPORT FIELDS.					Investment, Procedure	County Staff, Municipalities, School Districts, Public Authorities
ACTION 2.3.3: SPORT COURTS. DISTRIBUTE A VARIETY OF NEW SPORTS COURTS THROUGHOUT THE PARKS SYSTEM.					Investment, Procedure	County Staff, Municipalities, School Districts, Public Authorities
ACTION 2.3.4: AQUATIC FACILITIES. INCREASE ACCESS TO AQUATIC FACILITIES ACROSS COUNTY PRECINCTS.					Investment	County Staff, Municipalities, School Districts, Public Authorities
ACTION 2.3.5: SKATE PARKS. UPGRADE AND DISTRIBUTE SKATE PARK INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.					Investment	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 2.3.6: INDOOR RECREATION. PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE ONE OR MORE INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES AT COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKS.					Investment	County Staff, Municipalities, School Districts, Public Authorities

1. Action types described on page 149. See "Implementation Methods."

TABLE 5.1: PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY PROGRAM (CONT.)

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE ¹	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
	1-2	3-5	6-10+	ON-GOING		
ACTION 2.3.7: WALKSHED ENHANCEMENT. CONSTRUCT OR IMPROVE MULTI-USE TRAILS OR SIDEWALKS BETWEEN ALL COUNTY PARKS AND ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS WITHIN A MINIMUM 1/2 MILE WALKSHED.					Investment	County Staff, Municipalities, TxDOT
ACTION 2.3.8: SQUARE DANCE TRAIL. CREATE A LINEAR PARK AND TRAIL ALONG SQUARE DANCE ROAD TO CONNECT TO FUTURE CITY TRAILS.					Investment	County staff, TPWD
OBJECTIVE 2.4. IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR ASCARATE PARK AND THE SPORTSPARK THROUGH SUSTAINED AND TARGETED INVESTMENTS.						
ACTION 2.4.1: ASCARATE PARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO ASCARATE PARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.					Study, Investment	County Staff, City of El Paso, TPWD, TxDOT
ACTION 2.4.2: SPORTSPARK DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO THE SPORTSPARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES AS DESCRIBED BY THE SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN.					Study, Investment	County Staff, City of El Paso, TPWD, TxDOT
GOAL 3: PROGRAMS AND EVENTS. A DIVERSE SUITE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND COMMUNITY EVENTS IS PROVIDED THAT CATER TO VARYING INTERESTS, AGES AND ABILITIES TO ENHANCE PERSONAL WELL-BEING AND PUBLIC PRIDE.						
OBJECTIVE 3.1. MONITOR, REFINE AND EXPAND THE TYPES OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS AND EVENTS OFFERED BY EL PASO COUNTY TO MEET THE INTERESTS OF RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.						
ACTION 3.1.1: PARTICIPATION DATA (AGE SEGMENT) ANALYSIS. CONDUCT AN ANNUAL AGE SEGMENT ANALYSIS TO ENSURE A CONTINUED BALANCE OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS ACROSS ALL AGE GROUPS.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 3.1.2: PROGRAM LIFECYCLE. TRACK RECREATION PROGRAM RATES OF PARTICIPATION TO ENSURE THAT THE COUNTY PROGRAM PORTFOLIO ADJUSTS TO MEET CHANGING RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 3.1.3: COST OF SERVICES. CONDUCT A COST OF SERVICE ANALYSIS TO ESTABLISH THE COSTS OF RECREATIONAL PROGRAM DELIVERY AND REFINE PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COST RECOVERY GOALS.					Study	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 3.1.4: PROGRAM PRICING STRATEGY. DIVERSIFY RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PRICING OPTIONS TO STRATEGICALLY MEET COST-RECOVERY GOALS.					Operations, Procedure, Study	N/A (County Staff)







1. Action types described on page 149. See "Implementation Methods."

TABLE 5.1: PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY PROGRAM (CONT.)

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE ¹	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
	1-2	3-5	6-10+	ON-GOING		
ACTION 3.1.5: RECREATIONAL PROGRAM ADDITIONS. DIVERSIFY THE COUNTY'S RECREATIONAL PROGRAM PORTFOLIO TO MAXIMIZE THE UTILIZATION OF RECREATIONAL AMENITIES AND TO MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE PROGRAM LIFECYCLE BALANCES.					Operations	County Staff, Cities, Recreation Vendors
OBJECTIVE 3.2. INCREASE AWARENESS OF AND ACCESS TO EL PASO COUNTY'S RECREATIONAL FACILITIES AND PROGRAMS.						
ACTION 3.2.1: COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN. PREPARE A COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN TO KEEP THE PUBLIC INFORMED OF ONGOING DEPARTMENTAL FUNCTIONS.					Operations, Procedure, Study	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 3.2.2: ON-LINE PARKS APP AND MAPPING TOOL. PREPARE AND ACTIVATE ON-LINE TOOLS THAT IMPROVE PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY OFFERINGS.					Operations, Investment	N/A (County Staff)
GOAL 4: OPERATIONS AND MAINTENANCE. PARKS SYSTEM ADMINISTRATION, OPERATIONS, AND MAINTENANCE IS PROVIDED IN AN EFFICIENT MANNER THROUGH CLEAR ADMINISTRATIVE POLICIES AND PROCESSES, STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS, DIVERSIFIED FUNDING SOURCES, AND HIGHLY-TRAINED STAFF.						
OBJECTIVE 4.1. IMPLEMENT STANDARDIZED MAINTENANCE PRACTICES THAT ENHANCE THE LONG-TERM CONDITION OF PARKLAND, FACILITIES AND AMENITIES, AND THAT REDUCE SYSTEM DEFICIENCIES.						
ACTION 4.1.1: MAINTENANCE RESOURCES. UPDATE FUNDING AND STAFF RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO MAINTENANCE SERVICES FOR "GENERAL PARKS" AS DEFINED BY THE PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN.					Operations	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.1.2: WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM. CREATE A WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM AND ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN THAT CONSIDERS LONG-TERM MAINTENANCE AND ASSET REPLACEMENT NEEDS.					Operations	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.1.3: CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT. CONDUCT AN ANNUAL OR BI-ANNUAL UPDATE OF THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT TO ADJUST THE PARD'S ANNUAL MAINTENANCE PLAN.					Operations, Study	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.1.4: MAINTENANCE CONTRACT MANAGEMENT. USE THE WORK ORDER MANAGEMENT SYSTEM TO ANALYZE UNIT COSTS FOR IN-HOUSE VERSUS CONTRACTED MAINTENANCE ACTIVITIES.					Operations	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.1.5: MAINTENANCE COST MITIGATION. DEVELOP STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND PROGRAMS THAT CAN REDUCE THE DIRECT COSTS FOR PARK SYSTEM MAINTENANCE THROUGH INDIRECT REVENUE SOURCES AND IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS.					Operations	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.1.6: TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION. IMPROVE FIELD STAFF'S ACCESS TO HANDHELD GPS AND WEB-BASED EQUIPMENT TO IMPROVE FIELD MAINTENANCE AND INVENTORY ACTIVITIES.					Operations, Investment	N/A (County Staff)

1. Action types described on page 149. See "Implementation Methods."

TABLE 5.1: PARKS AND RECREATION POLICY PROGRAM (CONT.)











ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (YEARS)				ACTION TYPE ¹	IMPLEMENTATION PARTNERS
	1-2	3-5	6-10+	ON-GOING		
ACTION 4.1.7: CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGER. HIRE A FULL-TIME CAPITAL PROJECT MANAGER TO OVERSEE CONSTRUCTION MANAGEMENT AND OVERSIGHT.					Operations, Investment	N/A (County Staff)
OBJECTIVE 4.2. ADOPT ADMINISTRATIVE PRACTICES THAT IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF RECREATIONAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND THAT ARE RESPONSIVE TO CHANGING COMMUNITY NEEDS.						
ACTION 4.2.1: ANNUAL REPORT. PREPARE AN ANNUAL REPORT IN ORDER TO PROVIDE INFORMATION TO THE PUBLIC ABOUT PARKS AND RECREATION FUNDING AND STEWARDSHIP OF TAX DOLLARS AND FEES AND CHARGES; AND DISTRIBUTE THE REPORT AS WIDELY AS POSSIBLE.					Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.2.2: PERFORMANCE MEASURES. ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE ANNUALLY IN THE NRPA'S PARK METRICS PROGRAM INCLUDING THE INPUT OF ANNUAL AGENCY UPDATES INTO THE PARK METRICS DATABASE, AND THE EVALUATION OF UPDATED AGENCY PERFORMANCE REPORTS.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.2.3: ACCREDITATION. PURSUE CAPRA (COMMISSION FOR ACCREDITATION OF PARKS AND RECREATION AGENCIES) ACCREDITATION FROM THE NATIONAL RECREATION AND PARKS ASSOCIATION.					Operations, Procedure	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.2.4: PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT. PROMOTE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES, INCLUDING TRAINING PROGRAMS, MATERIALS AND/OR PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS THAT STRENGTHEN THE CORE SKILLS OF THE PARD STAFF AND PROMOTE COMMITMENT TO THE DEPARTMENT'S MISSION.					Investment	N/A (County Staff)
ACTION 4.2.5: PARKS ADVISORY BOARD. ESTABLISH A PARKS ADVISORY BOARD TO ASSIST THE EL PASO COUNTY COMMISSIONER'S COURT IN PROVIDING ONGOING OVERSIGHT OF THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.					Operations	N/A (County Staff)

1. Action types described on page 149. See "Implementation Methods."

INVESTMENT PROGRAM




















Table 5.2: Parks and Recreation Investment Program identifies estimated cost ranges associated with capital projects including: park land acquisition, new facilities, or the major renovation of existing facilities over the next 10-20 years. The table includes some of the actions listed in **Table 5.1**, but is not an all-inclusive list of future investments that El Paso County may choose to make into its parks and recreation system during the planning horizon of this Plan.

TABLE 5.2: PARKS AND RECREATION INVESTMENT PROGRAM

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (TERM)			OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS (2021) ¹
	SHORT	MED.	LONG	
GOAL 1: PARKS SYSTEM GROWTH. EQUITABLE ACCESS TO PARKS AND RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IS PROVIDED TO ALL EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.				
OBJECTIVE 1.1: ENSURE AN EQUITABLE AND ACCESSIBLE COMMUNITY-WIDE DISTRIBUTION OF PARKLAND THROUGHOUT INCORPORATED AND UNINCORPORATED PORTIONS OF EL PASO COUNTY.				
ACTION 1.1.3: COYOTE PARK (ACQUISITION/EXPANSION). CONVERT COYOTE PARK INTO A COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARK.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 1.1.5: PARTNERSHIP PARKS. PARTNER WITH MUNICIPALITIES, SCHOOL DISTRICTS, AND PUBLIC AUTHORITIES TO DECREASE NEIGHBORHOOD PARK SERVICE AREA GAPS.				N/A (Varies)
GOAL 2: PARKS SYSTEM INVESTMENTS. PARKS SYSTEM AMENITIES AND ENHANCEMENTS ARE OF A HIGH-QUALITY AND COST-EFFECTIVE DESIGN AND ESTABLISH A RECOGNIZABLE COUNTY BRAND WHILE MEETING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS AND PREFERENCES.				
OBJECTIVE 2.2. FUND TARGETED INVESTMENTS IN EXISTING PARKS THAT IMPROVE PROPERTY AND FACILITY CONDITIONS WHILE EXPANDING RESIDENTS' RECREATIONAL NEEDS.				
ACTION 2.2.1: AGUA DULCE PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT AGUA DULCE PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$320,000.00
ACTION 2.2.2: COYOTE (TORNILLO) PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT COYOTE PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$970,000.00
ACTION 2.2.3: ESTRELLA PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT ESTRELLA PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.	 			\$490,000.00

















1. See "Opinion of Probable Construction Costs on page 98 for an overview of applicable assumptions and disclaimers.

TABLE 5.2: PARKS AND RECREATION INVESTMENT PROGRAM

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (TERM)			OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS (2021) ¹
	SHORT	MED.	LONG	
ACTION 2.2.4: GALLEGOS PARK (PRECINCT 4). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT GALLEGOS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$1,800,000.00
ACTION 2.2.4: GALLEGOS PARK (PRECINCT 4). (DEVELOP LONG-TERM MASTER PLAN. INVEST IN ACQUISITION AND FACILITY EXPANSION.).				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.2.5: HORIZON HILLS PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT HORIZON HILLS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$180,000.00
ACTION 2.2.6: RISINGER PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT RISINGER PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$680,000.00
ACTION 2.2.7: RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL (PRECINCT 4). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT RIO GRANDE RIVER TRAIL BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$250,000.00
ACTION 2.2.8: SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE SAN ELIZARIO PLACITA BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$2,000.00 - \$2,500.00
ACTION 2.2.9: SPARKS PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT SPARKS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$640,000.00
ACTION 2.2.10: SAN FELIPE PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT THE SAN FELIPE PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$460,000.00
ACTION 2.2.11: VETERANS (FABENS) PARK (PRECINCT 3). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT VETERANS PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$960,000.00
ACTION 2.2.12: WESTWAY PARK (PRECINCT 4). INVEST IN PROPERTY AND FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS AT WESTWAY PARK BASED ON NEEDS IDENTIFIED DURING THE MASTER PLANNING PROCESS.				\$360,000.00

1. See "Opinion of Probable Construction Costs on page 98 for an overview of applicable assumptions and disclaimers.

TABLE 5.2: PARKS AND RECREATION INVESTMENT PROGRAM

ACTION	INITIATION TIME FRAME (TERM)			OPINION OF PROBABLE CONSTRUCTION COSTS (2021) ¹
	SHORT	MED.	LONG	
OBJECTIVE 2.3. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS AND THE AVAILABILITY OF OTHER PARK AMENITIES TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF EL PASO COUNTY RESIDENTS.				
ACTION 2.3.2: ATHLETIC FIELDS. UTILIZE COMMUNITY, REGIONAL AND SPECIAL USE PARKS TO INCREASE THE COUNTY'S INVENTORY OF COMPETITIVE SPORT FIELDS.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.3.3: SPORT COURTS. DISTRIBUTE A VARIETY OF NEW SPORT COURTS THROUGHOUT THE PARKS SYSTEM.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.3.4: AQUATIC FACILITIES. INCREASE ACCESS TO AQUATIC FACILITIES ACROSS COUNTY PRECINCTS.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.3.5: SKATE PARKS. UPGRADE AND DISTRIBUTE SKATE PARK INFRASTRUCTURE THROUGHOUT THE EL PASO COUNTY PARKS SYSTEM.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.3.6: INDOOR RECREATION. PARTNER WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO PROVIDE ONE OR MORE INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES AT COMMUNITY OR REGIONAL PARKS.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.3.7: WALKSHED ENHANCEMENT. CONSTRUCT OR IMPROVE MULTI-USE TRAILS OR SIDEWALKS BETWEEN ALL COUNTY PARKS AND ADJACENT RESIDENTIAL AREAS WITHIN A MINIMUM 1/4 MILE WALKSHED.				N/A (Varies)
ACTION 2.3.8: SQUARE DANCE LINEAR PARK. CREATE A LINEAR PARK AND CONNECTION ALONG SQUARE DANCE ROAD TO CONNECT TO FUTURE AREA TRAILS AND PARKS.				N/A (Varies)
OBJECTIVE 2.4. IMPLEMENT THE CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLANS FOR ASCARATE PARK AND THE SPORTSPARK THROUGH SUSTAINED AND TARGETED INVESTMENTS.				
ACTION 2.4.1. ASCARATE PARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO ASCARATE PARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES.				\$10,000,000 - \$25,000,000
ACTION 2.4.2. SPORTSPARK CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN. ENHANCE THE EXPERIENCE OF VISITORS TO SPORTSPARK BY INVESTING IN PARK IMPROVEMENTS, ENHANCEMENTS AND NEW AMENITIES.				\$1,500,000 - \$2,500,000

1. See "Opinion of Probable Construction Costs on page 98 for an overview of applicable assumptions and disclaimers.

Plan Administration and Implementation

El Paso County is responsible for administering the Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The County's role as Plan administrator means that it will be solely responsible for the day-to-day oversight of all plan activities including the coordination of plan implementation, monitoring success, education, and plan amendments. These functions include:

- **Coordination.** *El Paso County oversees plan implementation. It leads individual initiatives or supports the actions of partnering entities.*
- **Monitoring.** *El Paso County monitors the application of plan policies and activities. It reports on plan accomplishments, documents outcomes and measures success.*
- **Education.** *El Paso County updates residents and organizations about the importance of the parks and recreation master plan. It promotes the plan mission, advertises success and solicits continued plan input.*
- **Amendments.** *El Paso County amends the parks and recreation master plan throughout the planning period to account for changes in community conditions and values.*

In addition to the administrative roles identified above, El Paso County will be the principal implementing entity of the Master Plan — but will share implementation responsibility with multiple partnering agencies. As evidenced by the growth of El Paso over the last decade, conditions in El Paso County will continue to change during the Master Plan's 10-plus year horizon. As the population of El Paso County 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 identified herein.

PLAN REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

A review of this Plan should be conducted on a yearly basis, or when significant changes arise. Any resulting amendments could be issued in short report format and attached to this Plan for easy use.

Four (4) primary focus areas subject to periodic evaluation should consist of:

- **Facility Inventory and Conditions Assessment** *An up-to-date inventory of new or improved County-owned facilities is critical and should be documented on an ongoing basis. In addition, this inventory should reference major changes or enhancements to the County's park properties and facilities.*
- **Community Involvement.** *This Master Plan reflects the attitudes voiced by the residents of El Paso County. 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.** *Recording facility use is an important factor in determining the need for additional facilities. Similarly, measures of program participation will help El Paso County to determine how to adjust its recreational program and event offerings over time to best meet latent public demand.*
- **Parks and Recreation Work Program.** *As items from the Policy Plan and Investment Plan are implemented, updates should be made to each to sustain an up-to-date work program for County staff, and elected and appointed officials.*

Each of the focus areas referenced in the list above corresponds with one or more of the recommended actions introduced in **Chapter 4** of this Plan. The administrative process for conducting an annual and five-year plan review is provided on page 162.

ANNUAL PROGRESS REPORT AND AMENDMENT

Prior to the yearly budget process, Parks and Recreation Department staff should create and present a yearly progress report to the County Commission on the status of the actions in the implementation action plan and other relevant topics (in accordance with Action 4.2.1, page 131). 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 County Commission on the department's status of attaining CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) certification. ***(Note: This action should be undertaken under the oversight of a Parks Advisory Board following the Board's creation as recommend by Action 4.2.5 (see page 132)).***

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 recommended TPWD guidelines. A five-year Plan update also serves as an opportunity to solicit additional public opinion about recreational preferences and target levels of service.

INTER-AGENCY COORDINATION

Responsibility for the day-to-day oversight and management of this Master Plan will be shared between the Parks and Recreation Department and the Public Works Department. Other City departments will also be involved with assisting in Plan administration including: County Administration, Community Development, and Police.

The Parks and Recreation Department will also need to coordinate with the City of El Paso and other partnering municipalities, public authorities and school districts to ensure that the Plan is being implemented consistently with the plans from these organizations. It is recommended that quarterly or biannual County and City staff workshops occur to share data and ongoing strategies.

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 County park and recreation policy. Master Plan administration and implementation decisions must reflect the continuing direction of the County Commissioner's Court, and advisory boards. This section affirms the roles of important County boards and commissions in ensuring that the Plan - including upcoming revisions and implementation actions - remains the main guide influencing County park system growth.

Parks Advisory Board

As recommended by Action 4.2.5 (page 132) a Parks Advisory Board established by the County Commission could act as the County's advisory body for preparing, implementing, and updating the Master Plan. Annual Master Plan reviews recommended herein should be conducted in consultation with the Board, and all proposed amendments should contain a Board recommendation. The Board should also be consulted when creating parks and recreation policy in other County planning documents.

El Paso Historical Commission

The Commission should be consulted in all park matters related to historic property or structures. The expertise of the Commission should also be utilized to assist in interpretive materials - particularly those related to important multi-jurisdictional initiatives such as the development of the Mission Trail. However, historical/cultural links to area communities around each County park should be guided by the Historical Commission.

Funding Strategies

Investment in the El Paso County 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 annual general fund budgets, 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 C**.

COMMON COUNTY FUNDING SOURCES

ANNUAL GENERAL FUND

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 not prioritized.)

A consistent reserve fund line item to address unanticipated but needed repairs or replacements should be allocated every fiscal year. A minimum of \$200,000 annually is recommended initially, but should be adjusted as park conditions warrant.

COUNTY DEBT INSTRUMENTS

Debt financing through the issuance of certificates of obligation and general obligation bonds are the most common method to fund public projects. This kind of funding is an approach in which the County issues a bond, obtains an immediate cash payment to finance projects, and must repay the bond with interest over a set timeframe.

General Bond Referendum

The Plan suggests significant capital needs, renovation and additional amenities, to meet the desires and demands of community members in El Paso County. 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 County Commission approval and subject to acceptance by resident vote.

PROGRAM FEES AND FACILITY RENTALS

As referenced in **Chapter 3**, revenue is generated directly by the Parks and Recreation Department through services, programs, special events, and other activities offered directly to the public. The County 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.

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.

PARK DEDICATION ORDINANCE FEES

Among other provisions, potential County parkland dedication provisions, if enacted, could allow the County to collect a fee-in-lieu for parkland acquisition and a fee for the development of neighborhood parks. Because community park demand is also based on demand from new residents, these fees may be extended to community park acquisition and the development of basic infrastructure and facilities for passive use. The development of active community park facilities (e.g., swimming pools, athletic fields, etc.) should be funded through other traditional municipal revenue sources.

PARTNERSHIPS

Partnerships with area foundations and non-profit organizations have greatly helped El Paso County's park system, and should continue to do so in the future. Continue to actively work with entities such as Mothers On Board (MOB), the Paso Del Norte Health Foundation, and many others to partner for targeted improvements.

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 County.

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.

SALES TAX

The revenue source is popular for funding park and recreation agencies either. The typical sales tax rate is one cent for operations and one half cent for capital.

COMMON GRANT FUNDING SOURCES

Grants can provide a substantial source of 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.

- **Texas Parks and Wildlife Department.** *Texas Recreation and Parks Account (TRPA) is the primary source for parks grants in Texas. Grant applications that stress joint funding and support from two (2) or more local entities may have a greater chance of contending for the TRPA grants. These grants are highly competitive, but El Paso County has been fortunate to have received TPWD grant assistance in the past, and should continue to actively pursue these funds.*
- **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 began in 1978 to offer matching grants and technical support to economically distraught communities for restoration of critically desired recreation facilities.*

- **National Urban and Community Forestry Advisory Council (NUCFAC) Grant.** *For 2009, the National Urban and Community Advisory Council has fixed their standards for the U.S. 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.** *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.*
- **KABOOM (and other manufacturer grants).** *Playground suppliers or affiliated charitable organizations have been great partners with El Paso County's Parks, and should continue to be so in the future. They assist in the development of specific facilities such as playgrounds, splashpads or skate parks.*

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, El Paso County 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 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 El Paso County after death.

OPTION TO PURCHASE AGREEMENT

This is a binding agreement among a property-owner and the County 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.

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 County 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 El Paso County 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 El Paso County 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 higher than existing regulations in one location, in return for parkland / open space 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.



EL PASO COUNTY

PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



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