



# 4

## CHAPTER PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

LAS CRUCES PARKS AND RECREATION MASTER PLAN



*Tortugas Mountain viewed from Paseo de Oñate Park.*

## SECTION 1:

### PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS

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This Plan includes 97 recommended actions categorized according to the City’s eight (8) parks and recreation system goals. These actions are intended to address the findings presented in **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**, to facilitate the growth and enhancement of Las Cruces’ parkland properties, recreational facilities, and recreational programs and events.

The goals, objectives, and actions introduced in **Chapter 4** are not listed according to priority, although some actions have been grouped together due to anticipated overlapping outcomes. A summary table of all actions related to a specific goal is located at the end of each section of the chapter. Prioritization of actions related to each of the eight (8) Plan goals is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

Finally, the recommendations contained in this Plan are not exclusive. They should not be viewed as a limiting factor when considering other future actions or initiatives intended to enhance the Las Cruces parks and recreation system. Changing conditions and unanticipated events may reveal other opportunities for parks and recreation system improvement that have not been revealed as part of the master planning process. Should a future action or initiative advance one (1) of the eight (8) goals contained in this Master Plan in the opinion of Plan administrators and City policy makers then it may be pursued with as much energy as the recommendations herein. In contrast, where activities or initiatives diverge significantly from this Plan, the City should amend the plan document (see Plan Administration in **Chapter 5**, page 217).

The City of Las Cruces will lead the efforts to implement the recommendations contained in this Plan. More specifically, it is presumed that the City’s Parks and Recreation Department will remain the primary Plan administrator while other municipal departments, boards and commissions, and City Council will fulfill vital roles in Master Plan implementation. **Chapter 5** includes more thorough recommendations regarding Plan administration and implementation.

## GOAL 1:

### PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT

**GOAL STATEMENT:** PROVIDE AN INCREASED PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE BY ADDING NEW PARK SPACE THAT IS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE CITY; AND BY ENSURING THAT THE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKLAND OCCURS CONCURRENT WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT.

Municipal parks system accessibility cannot be measured solely through the availability of parkland acreage. “Access” also refers to the proximity of parks to places of residence, the facilities that are available at each location, the scale of each park space, and how parkland is programmed.

Furthermore, community interests will continue to evolve – as will the form of Las Cruces’ built environment. The Las Cruces parks and recreation system must expand and adjust to ensure that parks remain accessible to current and future residents and are programmed to address Las Cruces’ needs.

**OBJECTIVE 1.1.** EXPAND AND MAINTAIN A MUNICIPAL PARKS SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES VARIOUS PARKLAND TYPES TO ADDRESS DIVERSE INTERESTS AND IS WELL-DISTRIBUTED TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL LAS CRUCENS.

Neighborhood and community parks form the collective core of most municipal parks systems. The City of Las Cruces should strive to meet and exceed minimum target levels of service for both park types. In addition, concurrent efforts should be made to diversify the type of park space that is available to residents and provide more direct connectivity between the growing City footprint and surrounding open spaces.

**ACTION 1.1.1. LEVEL OF SERVICE - PARKLAND.** Utilize the acreage and proximity service standards presented in **Figure 4.1, Parkland Target Level of Service (2019-2045)**, as a guide for establishing a minimum city-wide level of service for community and neighborhood parkland.

*Parkland target levels of service (LOS) are advisory and aspirational. The levels of service established in **Figure 4.1** should be viewed as minimum targets. Should targets be exceeded during the planning period, the City should consider new benchmarks. When considering parkland acquisition within service gap areas (**Map 3.3**, page 107), proximity guidelines should be augmented by equity considerations such as: **A)** Proximity to transit routes; **B)** Concentrations of multi-family housing and affordable developments; **C)** Population density; and, **D)** Areas of low household income.*

*The absence of other park types from **Figure 4.1** does not mean that other parks introduced in **Chapter 2**, should not be added to the municipal system in the future. Civic, regional, pocket, and other special park types should still be incorporated into the Las Cruces parks and recreation system on a case-by-case basis.*

FIGURE 4.1, PARKLAND, TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (2019-2045) <sup>1</sup>

PARK CLASSIFICATION	TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE			
	RECOMMENDED SERVICE STANDARD	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2019) <sup>1</sup>	RECOMMENDED ACREAGE (2045) <sup>1</sup>	PROXIMITY GUIDELINE
COMMUNITY	2.0 ACRES / 1,000 RESIDENTS	208.3 ACRES	283.13 ACRES	1/4 MILE WALKSHED <sup>2</sup>
NEIGHBORHOOD	1.0 ACRE / 1,000 RESIDENTS	104.1 ACRES	141.52 ACRES	

1. 104,161 residents (est. 2019): Based on 101,706 residents per US Census, American Community Survey population estimates (2017) plus 1.2 percent annual population growth. Assumes 141,565 residents (est. 2045).

2. "Walkshed" refers to an accessible pathway such as a sidewalk or trail extending from the outside edge of a park property.

**ACTION 1.1.2. CIVIC PARKS.** Incorporate civic park space into new mixed-use developments and similar development that is intended to promote a dense, urban, and pedestrian-friendly environment.

*Civic parks are integral to and contribute to the character and function of dense, mixed-use development types. Beyond meeting active recreational needs, provision of civic park space may be required in addition to other parkland level of service standards.*

*Although introduced in the Downtown Development Code as "civic space," Las Cruces does not have the regulatory tools to require the incorporation of civic parks into new development or redevelopment projects. Amendments should be made to the Downtown Development Code, planned development provisions, and other components of the Las Cruces Land Development Code that promote the development of mixed-use urban spaces. Because civic parks can be provided at varying scales, land development provisions may allow this park type to meet neighborhood park requirements, pocket park, or community park needs on a case-by-case basis.*

*The City's improved downtown callacitos are individually small but collectively important in weaving civic space into the downtown.*

**ACTION 1.1.3. EAST MESA COMMUNITY PARK.** Prepare a design for the East Mesa Community Park incorporating the recreational facilities identified as part of the publicly-approved general obligation bond. Work with the Mesilla Valley MPO and other City departments to include an alignment for an extension of E. Lohman Avenue.

*Construction of the East Mesa Community Park will be a key step in implementing the City's minimum community parkland acreage targets. Park development will also improve walkshed-based proximity guidelines (see **Figure 4.1**, above).*



**ACTION 1.1.4. COMMUNITY PARKS.** Construct a new community park (in addition to the East Mesa Community Park) in an underserved area.

*Although design and construction of the East Mesa Community Park is projected to begin in the relatively near future, the City will need to plan for additional future community park space. New community parks should be located in areas depicted in **Map 3.3** (page 107) to reduce service area gaps.*

*Unlike neighborhood parks – which may be constructed as part of the land development process - the larger service area of community parks will require the City to collect impact fees for future community park construction. Because a community park can also serve a neighborhood park function, the City may opt to write parkland dedication requirements in such a manner that land acquisition for one or more future community parks may be linked to land dedication and assembly across multiple future developments.*

**ACTION 1.1.5. OPEN SPACE LANDS PROGRAM.** Establish and fund a municipal open space program to acquire, manage, and maintain natural areas and open space lands.

*The City should conduct a feasibility assessment to determine the cost of initiating and managing an open space lands program. The open space lands program should focus on property with significant ecological or cultural benefit, that preserves viewsheds, and that links developed portions of the City to other public lands. An open space lands program should not be limited to the municipal limits but should also include property in the City's extraterritorial zone.*

*An open space lands program should be managed by the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department and be treated as a system that is parallel to the current parks and recreation system. Funding may be provided through a voter-approved ¼ cent sales tax increase and will account for property acquisition (including conservation easements), land management, recreational facility development, and general staffing.*

**ACTION 1.1.6. EXTRATERRITORIAL ZONE.** Actively plan and coordinate with Doña Ana County for the acquisition of parks and open space within or near the ETZ.

**ACTION 1.1.7. NON-MUNICIPAL PARKLAND.** Work with Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana County, and other entities to determine if some municipal recreational activities can be provided on properties not owned by the City of Las Cruces.

**ACTION 1.1.8. PARKLAND PURCHASE OPTIONS.** Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to acquire parkland, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.

*Actions 1.1.6, 1.1.7, and 1.1.8 promote enhanced partnerships with other local entities to extend the reach of recreational services offered by the City of Las Cruces. Any efforts to develop an open space lands program by the City will require coordination with Doña Ana County to reduce potential County zoning conflicts.*

*Many public schools are located within identified parkland service area gaps. The potential conversion of some public school land into public park space or the modification of current school district policies limiting public access could provide a low-cost alternative to parkland acquisition in some underserved areas.*

#### BERNALILLO COUNTY OPEN SPACE LANDS PROGRAM

*Bernalillo County is one (1) of four (4) communities that currently fund and manage an open space lands program. Originally approved by voters in 1998 through a property tax referendum and bond referendum, funding for the program was renewed by voters in 2000, 2006, and 2014.*

*To guide the use of mill levy funds for the program, the County is now working with the Trust for Public Land to implement the program based on a "Greenprint" analysis that joins community input with state-of-the art mapping and modeling to establish priorities for future land acquisition. For more information on Bernalillo County's Greenprint initiative go to: <https://www.bernco.gov/community-services/greenprint.aspx>.*

## OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO PROVIDE NEW PARKLAND AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR LAS CRUCES' GROWING POPULATION.

The majority of Las Cruces' existing municipal parks system is the result of publicly funded capital improvement projects. While such public investments will be necessary in the future to guarantee further construction of the system, public efforts should be augmented by the land development process. From a community development perspective, parkland and recreation facilities should be viewed as essential public facilities – similar to other public infrastructure networks. To ensure that new parks are developed in a manner that is consistent with the findings and recommendations of this Plan the City must update its regulatory tools.

### **ACTION 1.2.1. ORDINANCES – PARKLAND DEDICATION.** Amend the Las Cruces Development Code to require the dedication of neighborhood park space as part of new development.

*The City's 2013 impact fee policy resolution promoted the dedication of neighborhood parkland as part of new development. The policy is not a requirement of developers and - where used for marketing purposes - is worded in a manner that provides the City with little ability to dictate new park location (for the purpose of proximity and access), suitable land characteristics, and preferred amenities. The policy allows the developer to reimburse themselves for improvements from the impact fees that the City would otherwise collect, the policy decreases the amount of impact fees that can be applied to community park acquisition and development.*

*In contrast, a parkland dedication ordinance can provide the City with the tools to require neighborhood parkland as part of new development and to determine the location, distribution, and amenity requirements of such land. A parkland dedication ordinance should include at least the following provisions:*

- **Parkland.** *The ordinance would require a minimum acreage per dwelling unit to be reserved for public parkland.*
- **Siting.** *Siting provisions would allow the City to determine the ideal location within the development for parkland to be located. Criteria may include: Walkshed proximity to dwelling units within the development; spacing from other public parks; land suitability; street layout; orientation of dwelling units to the park space; and, adjacency to future development where dedicated land can be consolidated into a larger park.*
- **Improvements.** *The ordinance could require the construction of a minimum level of recreational and accessory facilities that address facility targets identified in this Plan. The City may opt to delay park development until a later time and not require up-front improvements. Reasons for delay may be a desire to consolidate land for a larger park space, or the desire to public design process for the land.*
- **Fees-in-Lieu.** *Depending on City objectives, fees could be assessed in lieu of parkland dedication and improvements. The City may opt to charge these fees where the cumulative parkland acreage within an individual development would fall below minimum size requirements for a neighborhood park, or where it determines that the timing of improvements should be delayed. If insufficient acreage in the development exists to construct a neighborhood park, these fees may be applied to a proximate neighborhood or community park.*
- **Maintenance Bonds.** *The ordinance should require the provision of a maintenance bond for any developer-constructed neighborhood parkland.*

*Implementation of a parkland dedication ordinance may require that the City's impact fee policy be adjusted concurrently to remove neighborhood parkland value from the equation on a per-development basis. The formula for a parkland development ordinance's fees-in-lieu however, would be based on land values within each individual development rather than using a city-wide formula.*

**ACTION 1.2.2. POCKET PARK PERFORMANCE**

**CRITERIA.** Allow small pocket parks to be constructed in new developments in lieu of neighborhood parks only in accordance with specific performance criteria.

Although well-designed, programmed, and located pocket parks can be an asset to a municipal parks system, in most cases they should not serve as a substitute to the neighborhood or community parks that are being developed to maintain the City's parkland level of service. Instead, pocket parks should be considered an addition to minimum parkland level of service targets. The size of pocket parks makes it difficult to program the space so that it meets a broad range of recreational interests. In addition, pocket parks are often proposed as part of new development where the subdivision plan has left irregular lot remnants, or where a developer wishes to donate undesirable property to meet minimum parkland dedication requirements.

In conjunction with a municipal parkland dedication ordinance (Action 1.2.1), clear regulatory standards should be established in the Las Cruces Land Development Code that allow the City to determine the conditions under which it would accept pocket parks in lieu of, or in addition to, neighborhood parkland dedication. Example conditions could include:

- The pocket park(s) is constructed in conjunction with a larger neighborhood or community park;
- Enhances Las Cruces' city-wide multi-use trail system by serving as a trailhead park;
- Enhances a prominent cultural, historic, or natural feature;
- Serves as a civic space in conjunction with mixed-use development;
- Is accessible either by being centrally located within the development or is in close proximity to other neighborhood or community parks in the surrounding area;
- The cumulative acreage of all pocket parks exceeds the minimum neighborhood park acreage required for the development;
- The cumulative facilities within all pocket parks exceeds minimum recreational facility requirements as determined by the City.

When reviewing each new development application, land development provisions should provide the City with the authority to determine which combinations of the above pocket park performance criteria may warrant pocket park dedication as part of a development proposal.

**ACTION 1.2.3. ORDINANCES – COMMON AREA.**

Amend the Las Cruces Land Development Code to require common areas and recreational amenities as part of new multi-family development, and public gathering space in large retail and commercial developments.

The Plan's gap analysis (**Map 3.3**, page 107) reveals that even the most robust parkland development initiatives can leave areas that are underserved by public facilities. There also exist some user groups (seniors, children, and persons with physical disabilities) for whom a ¼ mile walkshed measure is insufficient to guarantee convenient access to recreational facilities or outdoor space. To address these deficiencies many communities require the minimum common area and/or recreational amenities as part of new development. A more recent trend has seen a growing number of communities amend their land development regulations to require outdoor social space be incorporated into retail, office, and other non-residential developments that exceed square footage thresholds. Savvy developers have leveraged these new requirements into outdoor spaces that enhance the leasing values of their properties.



Social space incorporated in a commercial shopping plaza. Future tenants can utilize the space for outdoor seating and performances.



SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 1)

The two (2) objectives and 11 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.2, Parkland Acquisition & Development, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.2, PARKLAND ACQUISITION & DEVELOPMENT, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 1: PARKLAND ACQUISITION AND DEVELOPMENT. PROVIDE AN INCREASED PARKLAND LEVEL OF SERVICE BY ADDING NEW PARK SPACE THAT IS WIDELY DISTRIBUTED THROUGHOUT THE CITY; AND BY ENSURING THAT THE PROVISION AND DEVELOPMENT OF NEW PARKLAND OCCURS CONCURRENT WITH NEW DEVELOPMENT.	
OBJECTIVE 1.1. EXPAND AND MAINTAIN A MUNICIPAL PARKS SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES VARIOUS PARKLAND TYPES TO ADDRESS DIVERSE INTERESTS AND IS WELL-DISTRIBUTED TO ENSURE EQUITABLE ACCESS FOR ALL LAS CRUCENS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 1.1.1. Level of Service - Parkland.</b> Utilize the acreage and proximity service standards presented in <b>Figure 4.1, Parkland, Target level of service (2019-2045)</b> , as a guide for establishing a minimum city-wide level of service for community and neighborhood parkland.	158
<b>Action 1.1.2. Civic Parks.</b> Incorporate civic park space into new mixed-use developments and similar development that is intended to promote a dense, urban, and pedestrian-friendly environment.	159
<b>Action 1.1.3. East Mesa Community Park.</b> Prepare a design for the East Mesa Community Park incorporating the recreational facilities identified as part of the publicly-approved general obligation bond. Work with the Mesilla Valley MPO and other City departments to include an alignment for an extension of E. Lohman Avenue.	159
<b>Action 1.1.4. Community Parks.</b> Construct a new community park (in addition to the East Mesa Community Park) in an underserved area.	160
<b>Action 1.1.5. Open Space Lands Program.</b> Establish and fund a municipal open space program to acquire, manage, and maintain natural areas and open space lands.	160
<b>Action 1.1.6. Extraterritorial Zone.</b> Actively plan and coordinate with Doña Ana County for the acquisition of parks and open space within or near the ETZ.	160
<b>Action 1.1.7. Non-Municipal Parkland.</b> Work with Las Cruces Public Schools, Doña Ana County, and other entities to determine if some municipal recreational services can be provided on properties not owned by the City of Las Cruces.	160
<b>Action 1.1.8. Parkland Purchase Options.</b> Pursue low-cost and/or non-purchase options to acquire parkland, including the use of conservation easements and development covenants.	160
OBJECTIVE 1.2. UTILIZE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS TO PROVIDE NEW PARKLAND AND RECREATIONAL FACILITIES FOR LAS CRUCES' GROWING POPULATION.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 1.2.1. Ordinances – Parkland Dedication.</b> Amend the Las Cruces Land Development Code to require the dedication of neighborhood park space as part of new development.	161
<b>Action 1.2.2. Pocket Park Performance Criteria.</b> Allow small pocket parks to be constructed in new developments in lieu of neighborhood parks only in accordance with specific performance criteria.	162
<b>Action 1.2.3. Ordinances – Common Area.</b> Amend the Las Cruces Land Development Code to require common areas and recreational amenities as part of new multi-family development, and public gathering space in large retail and commercial developments.	162

## GOAL 2:

### COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY

**GOAL STATEMENT:** PROVIDE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS THAT SUPPORT RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' FITNESS, RECREATION, AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, WHILE LINKING COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS SUCH AS PARKS, OPEN SPACE, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS.

Las Cruces' emerging multi-use trail network is providing an increasing number of residents with easy access to pathways that serve a dual recreation-transportation purpose. Expansion of this network should be a key objective of the City's efforts to provide access to recreational facilities and to construct a multi-modal transportation network.

Completion of the multi-use trail network will require a concerted effort to provide trail users with safe passage at roadway intersection and other barriers. The multi-use trail network should also be augmented by a parallel system of informal and low-impact recreational trails for hiking and mountain biking that extend beyond the municipal limits and increase the linkages between the City and the area's surrounding natural features.

#### **OBJECTIVE 2.1. CONSTRUCT A COMMUNITY-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK THAT LINKS PLACES OF RESIDENCE TO COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.**

The majority of Las Cruces' existing multi-use trail network is the result of publicly funded capital improvement projects. While such public investments will be necessary in the future to guarantee further construction of the network, public efforts should be augmented by the land development process.



**ACTION 2.1.1. LEVEL OF SERVICE – MULTI-USE TRAILS.** Construct and maintain a city-wide multi-use trail network that is consistent with the recommendations of the City's Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.

*The City's multi-use trail level of service – including mileage, routing, and proximity - will be consistent with and determined by the City's Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan. The City should however, monitor the pace of future trail construction by using the current level of .26 miles of trail per 1,000 residents as a benchmark, and by annually monitoring the amount of residential areas within a ¼ mile walkshed of multi-use trails (currently 21.6 percent of all residential areas, see page 134). Should either of these measures decrease significantly within the next 10 years, then the City should review and amend proposed network routes.*

**ACTION 2.1.2. MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK.**

Amend land development regulations to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new development where a proposed trail route is depicted in the City's Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan.

*The Las Cruces Land Development Code should be amended to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new residential and non-residential development and redevelopment where a trailway corridor is identified on the City's Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO's Trails Priorities Plan. Where the easement would provide for the extension of an existing multi-use trail segment (or a pending segment where funding has been identified or private construction is proposed) than the City should require that the trail segment be constructed within the easement as part of development approval. The City should develop clear standards regarding multi-use trail construction, dedication, and bonding for maintenance.*

**ACTION 2.1.3. UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE SYSTEM.**

Coordinate with NMDOT, Doña Ana County, Adventure Cycling Association, and other stakeholders to establish the first segment of the United States Bicycle Route System in New Mexico. Ensure that the City's on-street bicycle routes and multi-use trails link to the system.

*Similar to the Rio Grande Trail Commission's efforts to build a cross-state trail, the Adventure Cycling Association has long been a champion of the nation's growing on-street United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS). Both proposed networks bisect Las Cruces and both seek to build participating communities' active tourism markets. Proposed Route #15 of the USBRS National Corridor Plan stretches north from El Paso into Colorado, while Route #90 extends west from Las Cruces, to an existing designated segment in Arizona. Las Cruces should lead local partnership efforts with NMDOT to establish the State's first segments of the USBRS.*

**UNITED STATES BICYCLE ROUTE SYSTEM**

*The United States Bicycle Route System (USBRS) is a national network of public bicycle travel routes introduced in 1982 by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials (AASHTO). The concept was reinvigorated in 2003 an AASHTO task force, and the program is now actively promoted by both AASHTO and the Adventure Cycling Association. The program is a means to promote both active transportation, "active tourism" - a growing sector of the leisure and travel industry that combines physical activity with connectivity to a region's cultural, historical, and natural assets. Beyond cycling, the active tourism market includes a variety of interests such as: hiking, mountain biking, paddling, rock climbing, etc.*

*USBRS routes are identified by Adventure Cycling Association a National Corridor Plan and can include routes on roadways and trails. National Corridor Plan routes are not highway specific - but allow local jurisdictions to work with their State's department of transportation to designate specific corridors within an identified area. Over 13,536 miles of United States Bicycle Route have been established across 26 states - but no designated routes currently exist in New Mexico.*

*For more information, visit: <https://www.adventurecycling.org/routes-and-maps/us-bicycle-route-system>*

*The green USBRS sign (M1-9; MUTCD Manual [2009]) was given interim approval by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) for optional use in place of the original black M1-9 USBRS sign.*



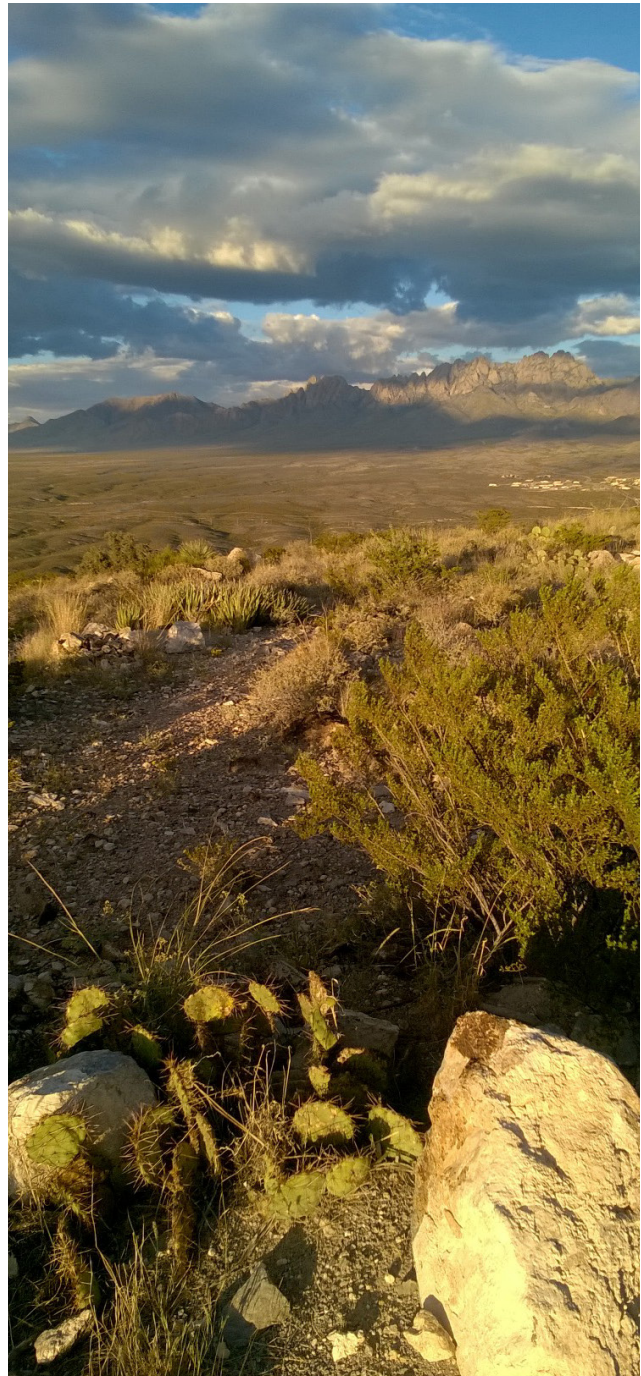
**OBJECTIVE 2.2. DEVELOP A LOW-IMPACT RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM THAT PROMOTES CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO LOW-IMPACT OUTDOOR RECREATION PURSUITS.**

The City's multi-use trail network is being constructed with a degree of formality that serves a dual recreation-transportation purpose and ensures maximum access to all user groups. The City however, has not previously placed great emphasis on less-formal trail facilities that provide minimally improved hiking and single-track biking trails to the multiple open spaces within and surrounding the City. Where the City's long-range planning documents propose that most new development and formal multi-use trail segments should end, there remains the potential to provide a system of hiking and mountain biking trails to link the City to surrounding open spaces, to provide more immediate access to outdoor recreation needs, and to develop an adventure tourism market that capitalizes on ongoing regional efforts.

**ACTION 2.2.1. RECREATIONAL TRAILS – RIO GRANDE TRAIL.** Prioritize the construction of segments of the City's multi-use trail network that will also serve as a principal segment of the Rio Grande Trail.

Las Cruces and Doña Ana County have already constructed a significant segment of multi-use trail along the Rio Grande River Corridor. Both entities should work with the Rio Grande Trail Commission to begin actively marking these completed segments. The City should also support additional efforts by the County or proximate municipalities to expand from the City's current network.

*The recreational hiking trails that surround and ascend Tortugas Mountain could be expanded to provide walking and biking linkages to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument.*



**ACTION 2.2.2. RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM.** Work with the U.S. Bureau of Land Management, State Land Office, and advocacy organizations such as the Friends of the Organ Mountains and Southern New Mexico Trails Alliance to develop a series of designated low-impact recreational trails that provide non-motorized connections between the developed areas of Las Cruces to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks N.M.

*Development of a recreational trail system may be implemented in conjunction with a potential open space lands program (see Action 1.1.5., page 160). Both efforts will require significant buy-in from – and coordination with – other advocacy and governmental partners.*

*Unlike a multi-use trail network, the recreational trail system is envisioned as a marked system of hiking and biking paths possessing minimal surface improvements other than those necessary to cross topographic barriers. Alternatively, the City should look for opportunities to create a closed-loop system of mountain biking trails that can be used for daily recreation and intermittent off-road bicycling competition.*

### **OBJECTIVE 2.3. PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO THE CITY'S MULTI-USE TRAIL AND RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS.**

The pathways and bikeways that comprise a municipality's on-street and off-street active transportation and recreational trail systems are easier to design and construct than are the supporting facilities at intersections, drainage channels, and trailheads that provide potential users with safe access. Failure to invest in these important accessory facilities will diminish the utility of even the most expensive multi-use trail networks. The City must emphasize capital investments and regulatory amendments that improve access to Las Cruces' current and proposed multi-use trail and recreational trail systems.

*Only easements may be required where trail alignment remains conceptual only. The City may consider additional guiding provisions regarding pathway spacing and frequency, alignment, and construction standards.*

**ACTION 2.3.1. MULTI-USE TRAILS – CONNECTIVITY.** Amend land development regulations to require direct pathway connections between new development and the city-wide multi-use trail network.

*The Las Cruces Land Development Code should be amended to require bikeway and walkway connectivity from new residential and non-residential development to the City's trail networks. Access easements and pathway construction can be required as part of new development where a trail exists, funding has been allocated or construction, or the developer is responsible or construction of the trail segment.*

**ACTION 2.3.2. MULTI-USE TRAILS – INTERSECTIONS.** Prioritize the improvement of multi-use trail/roadway intersections to create safer network interconnectivity. Fund hand-actuated signalization and other traffic control enhancements for bicyclists and pedestrians at key intersections and at mid-block crossing points.

*The City should prepare concurrent amendments to the Las Cruces Land Development Code Regulations and various construction standards manuals to facilitate traffic control enhancements related to railway crossings at streets and across drainage channels. The incorporation of these features can be required as part of the land development process.*

*The City should also incorporate railway/roadway traffic control improvements into the capital improvements plan on a recurring basis. Improvements would include hand-actuated signal enhancements at existing controlled intersections and hand actuated improvements at uncontrolled intersections. Prioritization should be based on railway traffic counts collected by the City.*



*Not everyone will have a multi-use trail at their doorstep - even after construction of the City's recommended multi-use trail network. Access to multi-use trails will require the City of Las Cruces to design and construct trailheads of varying scale that support trail network use by adjacent residents, and by those who may have to drive to access the facility.*

**ACTION 2.3.3. TRAILHEADS.** Improve trailhead accommodations. Distinguish between minor trailheads (those with basic accommodations such as seating, signage, and fix-it stations) and major trailheads (which may also include parking, restrooms, and pavilions).

*Las Cruces should prepare uniform standards for the design of major and minor trailheads. Major trailhead design assumes that a percentage of trail users accessing at a given point will drive to the trail while minor trailhead design assumes that most users accessing the trail at a given location come from the surrounding neighborhood.*

*The City should consider an in-house amendment of the Las Cruces Active Transportation Plan to identify where major and minor trailheads should be constructed. Subsequent and corresponding additions to the City's capital improvements plan should be considered.*

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 2)

The three (3) objectives and 8 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.3, Community Connectivity, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.3, COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

<b>GOAL 2: COMMUNITY CONNECTIVITY. PROVIDE A COMMUNITY-WIDE SYSTEM OF MULTI-USE TRAILS THAT SUPPORT RESIDENTS’ AND VISITORS’ FITNESS, RECREATION, AND TRANSPORTATION NEEDS, WHILE LINKING COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS SUCH AS PARKS, OPEN SPACE, SCHOOLS, AND OTHER COMMUNITY ACTIVITY CENTERS.</b>	
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.1. CONSTRUCT A COMMUNITY-WIDE MULTI-USE TRAIL NETWORK THAT LINKS PLACES OF RESIDENCE TO COMMUNITY DESTINATIONS.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 2.1.1. Level of Service – Multi-use Trails.</b> Construct and maintain a city-wide multi-use trail network that is consistent with the recommendations of the City’s Active Transportation Plan and Mesilla Valley MPO’s Trails Priorities Plan.	164
<b>Action 2.1.2. Multi-use Trail Network.</b> Amend land development regulations to require the dedication of multi-use trail easements as part of new development where a proposed trail route is depicted in the City’s Active Transportation Plan or Mesilla Valley MPO’s Trails Priorities Plan.	165
<b>Action 2.1.3. United States Bicycle Route System.</b> Coordinate with NMDOT, Doña Ana County, Adventure Cycling Association, and other stakeholders to establish the first segment of the United States Bicycle Route System in New Mexico. Ensure that the City’s on-street bicycle routes and multi-use trails link to the system.	165
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.2. DEVELOP A LOW-IMPACT RECREATIONAL TRAIL SYSTEM THAT PROMOTES CONNECTIVITY TO OPEN SPACE AND ACCESS TO LOW-IMPACT OUTDOOR RECREATION PURSUITS.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 2.2.1. Recreational Trails – Rio Grande Trail.</b> Prioritize the construction of segments of the City’s multi-use trail network that will also serve as a principal segment of the Rio Grande Trail.	166
<b>Action 2.2.2. Recreational Trail System.</b> Work with the US Bureau of Land Management, State Land Office, and advocacy organizations such as the Friends of the Organ Mountains and Southern New Mexico Trails Alliance to develop a series of designated low-impact recreational trails that provide non-motorized connections between the developed areas of Las Cruces to the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks N.M.	167
<b>OBJECTIVE 2.3. PROVIDE SAFE ACCESS TO THE CITY’S MULTI-USE TRAIL AND RECREATIONAL TRAIL NETWORKS.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 2.3.1. Multi-use Trails – Connectivity.</b> Amend land development regulations to require direct pathway connections between new development and the city-wide multi-use trail network.	167
<b>Action 2.3.2. Multi-use Trails – Intersections.</b> Prioritize the improvement of multi-use trail/roadway intersections to create safer network interconnectivity. Fund hand-actuated signalization and other traffic control enhancements for bicyclists and pedestrians at key intersections and at mid-block crossing points.	167
<b>Action 2.3.3. Trailheads.</b> Improve trailhead accommodations. Distinguish between minor trailheads (those with basic accommodations such as seating, signage, and fix-it stations) and major trailheads (which may also include parking, restrooms, and pavilions).	168

## GOAL 3:

### PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES

**GOAL STATEMENT:** INCREASE COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATIONAL CHOICE BY INCORPORATING NEW INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES INTO THE MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEM PORTFOLIO.

The City’s recent voter-approved general obligation bond provides a source of new revenues that will be used to significantly enhance the recreational opportunities available to Las Cruces. Bond funds will be used for specific capital projects that increase resident access to athletic fields, sports courts, trails,

aquatic facilities, and more. Regardless, this master planning process reminds the City that there remain a large amount of unfunded recreational and accessory facility needs that should be incorporated into the City’s capital improvements plan in the future.

#### OBJECTIVE 3.1. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF LAS CRUCENS.

The demand-based assessment conducted as part of the Plan (see **Chapter 3, Needs Assessment**) identifies multiple recreational activities enjoyed by Las Cruces. Complimentary assessment techniques reveal opportunities to expand the City’s recreational facility offerings beyond that currently provided, and in addition to those for which significant public interest was expressed.

**ACTION 3.1.1. LEVEL OF SERVICE – RECREATIONAL FACILITIES.** Construct, rehabilitate, and/or replace standard system-wide recreational facilities consistent with the level of service recommendations established in the parks and recreation master plan.

*Target levels of service (LOS) for recreational facilities are advisory and aspirational. The levels of service established in **Figure 4.4, Recreational Facilities, Target level of service (LOS) (2019-2045)** should be viewed by the City as minimum targets. Should these targets be exceeded at any time during the planning period, the City should consider the establishment of new benchmarks. The absence of a specific recreational activity or facility from **Figure 4.5** does not mean that it should not be included within the City’s municipal parks system. **Figure 4.5** identifies only a limited number of “core” recreational facility types that are essential components of most municipal parks systems.*



FIGURE 4.4, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, TARGET LEVEL OF SERVICE (LOS) (2019-2045)<sup>1</sup>

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

1. This figure duplicates and conforms to Figure 3.25, Recommended Facility Level of Service (LOS), Las Cruces

2. City-owned fields only.

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

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

5. Category includes skate parks and skate spots.

**ACTION 3.1.2. GENERAL OBLIGATION BOND PROJECTS.** Amend the five-year capital improvements plan to incorporate the parks and recreation projects included in the general obligation bond approved by voters in 2018.

*Many of the recreational and accessory amenities that have been identified as “preferred” by Las Cruces participating in this master planning process have already been included in the 2018 voter-approved general obligation bond. Approved projects include improvements to the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex, Unidad Park, trails, athletic fields, sport courts, and the addition of a new community park on the East Mesa. A full list of all general obligation bond projects is included in **Appendix G**.*

**ACTION 3.1.3. ACCESS – CITY COMPLEX.** Review access policies to the City Complex including the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to allow for predictable access to both recreational amenities.

*The City Complex site includes the former City landfill and some remaining waste collection facilities. The nature of the site requires greater surveillance and access controls than a typical municipal park property. The City should coordinate with interest groups that utilize and contribute to the upkeep of the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to ensure that access to these special facilities is not unnecessarily inhibited.*

**ACTION 3.1.4. AQUATICS – SPLASH PADS.** Replace the Apodaca Pool with a splash pad facility.

**ACTION 3.1.5. AQUATICS – SWIMMING POOLS.** Construct a new swimming pool on park property located east of Interstate 25.

*The target levels of service for recreational facilities (**Figure 4.4**, page 171) include recommendations on the minimum number of splash pads and swimming pools that should be provided for residents of Las Cruces. (Target levels of service for swimming pools applies to recreational pools – not competition pools as proposed for the Las Cruces Natatorium at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.) In seeking to meet the Plan’s target levels of service, the City should prioritize conversion of the swimming pool at Apodaca Park to a splash pad, and the construction of a new community pool in City Council District Numbers 5 or 6. In considering the location of a new swimming pool, the City should consider the proximity map for aquatics presented in this Plan (**Map 3.7**, page 131).*

**ACTION 3.1.6. INCLUSIVE PLAY AREAS.** Incorporate inclusive playground facilities into various regional, community, and neighborhood parks to provide a greater distribution of facilities to serve individuals with physical disabilities.

**ACTION 3.1.7. ATHLETIC FIELDS – MIRACLE LEAGUE FIELD.** Construct a baseball field consistent with Miracle League standards to enable the establishment of a local baseball league for children with disabilities.

*Recreational facility accessibility should include efforts to diversify the type of facilities available for persons with disabilities. In addition to the City’s inclusive playscape within R.L. Young Park, similar facilities should be distributed throughout other areas of the City. Inclusivity efforts should also incorporate facilities for organized athletics. The City should consult with local service organizations to establish potential demand for the construction of a Miracle League Field and plan for design and construction subject to confirmed need and interest.*

**ACTION 3.1.8. CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN AND IMPROVEMENTS.** Incorporate completed conceptual park design projects into the capital budget.

**ACTION 3.1.9. APODACA PARK CONCEPTUAL DESIGN PLAN.** Prepare a conceptual master plan for an expanded Apodaca Park.

*The Parks and Recreation Department has led multiple conceptual design workshops for existing and proposed neighborhood parks. As these plans are finalized and a M.O.R.E. assessment and cost estimate (page 186) is completed for each, phased improvements should be added to the City's capital improvements plan.*

*In conjunction with the property owner of the former Las Cruces Country Club, a conceptual design plan should be prepared for Apodaca Park that aligns with the recommendations of the Apodaca Blueprint. Initiate the conceptual site plan following further determination on the arrangement of additional land area that may be dedicated to the park based on potential site plans, plats, or zoning proposals approved by the City, and potential public/private partnerships.*

**ACTION 3.1.10. INDOOR RECREATION FACILITIES.** Conduct a feasibility study for the addition of indoor recreation space with an emphasis on gymnasium and multi-purpose meeting room space.

*Master planning participants consistently emphasized the need for more indoor recreation opportunities. This desire is based both on local climate, and on the perception that a greater number of meeting rooms, fitness rooms, and gymnasium space would provide more recreational programming options than currently offered. Any feasibility study related to increases in indoor recreation space square footage should consider and compare estimated costs related to the addition of one or more new recreation centers and the renovation/expansion of existing community and recreation centers.*

*BMX pump tracks mix hardscape and landscape features to provide durability and a variety of options for approaches to jumps, banking, ramps, and balancing.*

**ACTION 3.1.11. PUMP TRACK.** Construct a BMX pump track in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex to provide trick riders with a similar level of service as skaters a BMX track riders.

*Building off of the popularity of the Las Cruces Skate Park and the BMX track, the City should construct a BMX pump track to augment its extreme sports offerings. Pump tracks offer opportunities for trick riding and – as a parallel facility to skate parks – decrease the conflicts that can occur between skaters and bike riders when both compete for space at the skate park. Although municipalities do not construct pump tracks as frequently as skate parks, an increasing number are investing in these relatively affordable facilities. The presence of the City's BMX track suggests that there exists a built-in user group for a potential pump track.*



**ACTION 3.1.12. SHADE STRUCTURES.** Invest in shade structures in conjunction with play scapes and adjacent seating areas. Prioritize the placement or replacement of shade structures in locations as identified in the parks conditions assessment.

*Shade structure selection should not only consider cost and durability, but also designs that can minimize glare from hard sun angles in the early morning and late afternoon hours. Accordingly, coordination within the Parks and Recreation Department should also consider the grouping of shade structures with trees and other vegetation to create a shade “oasis” where natural and man made elements provide a concentration of space obscured from direct sunlight.*

**ACTION 3.1.13. SHOOTING SPORTS.** Expand the number of bays at the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range to support additional skeet and trap shooting.

*The City’s shooting range is an asset that is unique to many municipal parks and recreation systems. There is sufficient space to further develop the shooting range facilities in manner that would make it more attractive to larger regional competitions. A feasibility study and conceptual development plan should be prepared to determine the costs associated with facility improvement and expansion for the purposes of economic development.*

**ACTION 3.1.14. SKATE PARK – RENOVATIONS.**

Redesign and renovate the skate park at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.

**ACTION 3.1.15. SKATE PARK - FACILITY ADDITIONS.** Increase skate park accessibility by incorporating “skate spot” features into selected parks that are distributed throughout the City.

*Las Cruces’ centralized skate park is exhibiting signs of wear and a need for basic maintenance. The current layout of the facility however, includes large areas where additional features could be incorporated to improve the user experience. Likewise, accessory spaces around the skatepark may be enhanced to provide a greater degree of comfort for spectators and skaters who are resting during their visits. The City should consult with an experienced skatepark designer to prepare a design for a complete skate retrofit.*

*Skatepark design services may also be retained for a complementary series of skate spots to be distributed among a series of existing parks at various locations in the City. Updates to the Las Cruces Skate Park and the addition of complimentary skate spots around the City should collectively enable the City to meet and exceed the minimum level of service target for skateparks while improving accessibility.*

**ACTION 3.1.16. TEEN FACILITY.** Add indoor recreation facilities designed to meet the needs and interests of teenagers and incorporating amenities that allow for after-school socialization and study. Construct as a stand-alone facility or as a portion of a renovated or expanded community or recreation center.

*Teen facility feasibility and cost may be incorporated into the overall study proposed for indoor recreation space (Action 3.1.10, page 173). The feasibility and design process for a teen facility must incorporate significant outreach efforts at the City’s high schools and middle schools, and among various youth organizations. The City should utilize the Youth Board as a method of outreach, and as an integral advisory body throughout the feasibility and design process. Location of a potential teen facility should consider locations within the current municipal parks system where teens may be inclined to congregate.*

## SKATE SPORTS

Skate sports including skate boarding, in-line skating, and scooters have grown significantly as an active alternative to team-based sports and traditional athletics. Skate parks have become core elements of many municipal parks systems, and a centralized facility of substantial size is not uncommon in cities of similar size to Las Cruces.

Although centralized skate park facilities are a logical way for cities to meet minimum level of service recommendations (square footage and # of facilities) more can be done to increase skate park accessibility. A high percentage of skaters are school-aged children – many without the ability to drive to a single centralized skate park. Skate park accessibility can be increased dramatically by distributing additional skate park square footage across a dispersed system of “skate spots.” Skate spots are mini-skate parks with limited features that range between 3,000 and 6,000 square feet and can be installed within neighborhood-scale parkland. Skate spots should be viewed as accessory to full-sized skate parks and should not limit a municipal commitment to skate park construction.



The 20,000 SF municipal skatepark in Plano, Texas (above) includes street sections, bowls and shaded areas for spectators. The 4,500 skate spot in Schertz, Texas, includes basic street features and grinding rails can be expanded over time as demand and funding allows. Source: SPA Skateparks.

## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 3)

The one (1) objective and 16 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.5, Park Facilities and Amenities, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.5, PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 3: PARK FACILITIES AND AMENITIES. INCREASE COMMUNITY-WIDE RECREATIONAL CHOICE BY INCORPORATING NEW INDOOR AND OUTDOOR FACILITIES INTO THE MUNICIPAL PARK SYSTEM PORTFOLIO.	
OBJECTIVE 3.1. EXPAND RECREATIONAL FACILITY OFFERINGS TO MEET THE DIVERSE INTERESTS OF LAS CRUCENS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 3.1.1. Level of Service – Recreational Facilities.</b> Construct, rehabilitate, and/or replace standard system-wide recreational facilities consistent with the level of service recommendations established in the parks and recreation master plan.	170
<b>Action 3.1.2. General Obligation Bond Projects.</b> Amend the five-year capital improvements plan to incorporate the parks and recreation projects included in the general obligation bond approved by voters in 2018.	172
<b>Action 3.1.3. Access – City Complex.</b> Review access policies to the City Complex including the Archery Range and RC Model Airplane Field to allow for predictable access to both recreational amenities.	172
<b>Action 3.1.4. Aquatics – Splash Pads.</b> Replace the Apodaca Pool with a splash pad facility.	172
<b>Action 3.1.5. Aquatics – Swimming Pools.</b> Construct a new swimming pool on park property located east of Interstate 25.	172
<b>Action 3.1.6. Inclusive Play Areas.</b> Incorporate inclusive playground facilities into various regional, community, and neighborhood parks to provide a greater distribution of facilities to serve individuals with physical disabilities.	172
<b>Action 3.1.7. Athletic Fields – Miracle League Field.</b> Construct a baseball field consistent with Miracle League standards to enable the establishment of a local baseball league for children with disabilities.	172
<b>Action 3.1.8. Conceptual Park Design and Improvements.</b> Incorporate completed conceptual park design projects into the capital budget.	173
<b>Action 3.1.9. Apodaca Park Conceptual Design Plan.</b> Prepare a conceptual master plan for an expanded Apodaca Park.	173
<b>Action 3.1.10. Indoor Recreation Facilities.</b> Conduct a feasibility study for the addition of indoor recreation space with an emphasis on gymnasium and multi-purpose meeting room space.	173
<b>Action 3.1.11. Pump Track.</b> Construct a BMX pump track in the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex to provide trick riders with a similar level of service as skaters a BMX track riders.	173
<b>Action 3.1.12. Shade Structures.</b> Invest in shade structures in conjunction with play scapes and adjacent seating areas. Prioritize the placement or replacement of shade structures in locations as identified in the parks conditions assessment.	174
<b>Action 3.1.13. Shooting Sports.</b> Expand the number of bays at the Butterfield Trail Shooting Range to support additional skeet and trap shooting.	174
<b>Action 3.1.14. Skate Park – Renovations.</b> Redesign and renovate the skate park at the Hadley Avenue Recreation Complex.	174
<b>Action 3.1.15. Skate Park - Facility Additions.</b> Increase skate park accessibility by incorporating “skate spot” features into selected parks that are distributed throughout the City.	174
<b>Action 3.1.16. Teen Facility.</b> Add indoor recreation facilities designed to meet the needs and interests of teenagers and incorporating amenities that allow for after-school socialization and study. Construct as a stand-alone facility or as a portion of a renovated or expanded community or recreation center.	174

## GOAL 4:

### PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE

**GOAL STATEMENT:** PROVIDE A HIGH LEVEL OF PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE THAT PLACES EQUAL EMPHASIS ON LANDSCAPES, HARDSCAPES, AND STRUCTURES.

The Las Cruces parks and recreation system performs well when measured according to the 12 conditions assessment categories that measure landscapes, hardscapes, and structures on all municipal parkland. Nonetheless, there can always be improvement in the quality of park spaces

maintained for the public. This Plan's conditions assessment assigned higher scores to the quality of the City's grounds than it did hardscapes, structures, and other accessory elements (i.e. signs, drinking fountains, park benches, etc.)

**OBJECTIVE 4.1. SCHEDULE SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS THAT REDUCE AND ELIMINATE PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE DEFICIENCIES.**

This Plan reveals a few system-wide features for which the Parks and Recreation Department should place particular emphasis on improving. These system-wide recommendations do not negate the need for park-specific maintenance projects.

**ACTION 4.1.1. GENERAL PARK ENHANCEMENTS.** Utilize the park-by-park results of the park and recreation master plan's conditions assessment to prioritize annual updates to recreational and accessory amenities within low-scoring parks.

**ACTION 4.1.2. CONDITIONS ASSESSMENT.** Prepare a bi-annual update to the park and recreation master plan's conditions assessment and prepare a supporting record of accomplishments report.

*This Plan includes a conditions assessment for all 94 municipal park properties. The results of this assessment should be used by the Parks and Recreation Department as the basis for future maintenance projects. A bi-annual update of the conditions assessment will ensure that future project prioritization remains consistent with changing conditions, and that progress can be tracked.*

**ACTION 4.1.3. ADA ACCESSIBILITY STANDARDS.** Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. Assess planned and existing parks and trails for compliance with ADA Standards for Accessible Design.

*This ongoing requirement should be accounted for during all conceptual park design processes, final design, and during compilation of a parks system design standards manual (Action 5.1.3, page 184).*



*The Entrada del Sol is one of more than 52 public art installations that is currently located on City property and managed by the City of Las Cruces.*

**ACTION 4.1.4. IRRIGATION SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS.**

Incorporate standard specifications for irrigation systems into a parks system design standards manual.

**ACTION 4.1.5. IRRIGATION SYSTEM UPGRADES.**

Commission a system-wide inspection of irrigation systems in City park properties and other municipal property.

*The City's finite water resources, and overall commitment to sustainability, necessitate that it prioritize water system distribution projects to mitigate leakage. A system-wide inspection should inventory irrigation heads via GPS to keep track of maintenance for head replacement. The results of a system-wide irrigation infrastructure inspection should be incorporated into this Plan's conditions assessment and that funding of system upgrades be prioritized consistent with standard specifications.*

**ACTION 4.1.6. PUBLIC ART - DONATION AND INSTALLATION.**

Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to prepare a uniform policy for the donation and installation of art on public properties. The policy should link art installation to identified CIP projects to ensure maximum site integration.

**ACTION 4.1.7. PUBLIC ART – COLLECTION ASSESSMENT AND MAINTENANCE.**

Conduct a collection assessment and prepare a corresponding and comprehensive maintenance plan to evaluate the condition and maintenance needs of the City's existing public art collection. Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to establish a long-term maintenance and collection management policy.

*The City of Las Cruces actively supports the acquisition and installation of public art on City-owned and maintained property. The City Art Board was established in 2013, followed incrementally by a public art funding policy, and a strategic plan. The City initiated a public art master plan in Spring 2019.*

*City parks, public street rights-of-way, community facilities, and other miscellaneous City-owned properties are home to an ever-increasing inventory of public art installations. As the public art inventory grows, and existing installations age, it will be necessary for the City to conduct a recurring collection assessment, and to draft and implement clear policies related to donation, installation, maintenance, and collection management (i.e., "deaccession" – the removal of artwork from the inventory).*



**ACTION 4.1.8. TRAFFIC CONTROL.** Add bollards at strategic park locations (such as Apodaca Park) to prevent park visitors from driving motor vehicles on locations other than designated driveways and parking areas.

*Motor vehicle encroachment is a significant contributor to the deterioration of public grounds. Although bollards may provide for an immediate low-cost solution in providing barricades between motor vehicle parking areas and public parkland, a future design standards manual (Action 5.1.3., page 184) should incorporate alternative designs for barriers that incorporate a variety of options or hard structures and vegetation.*

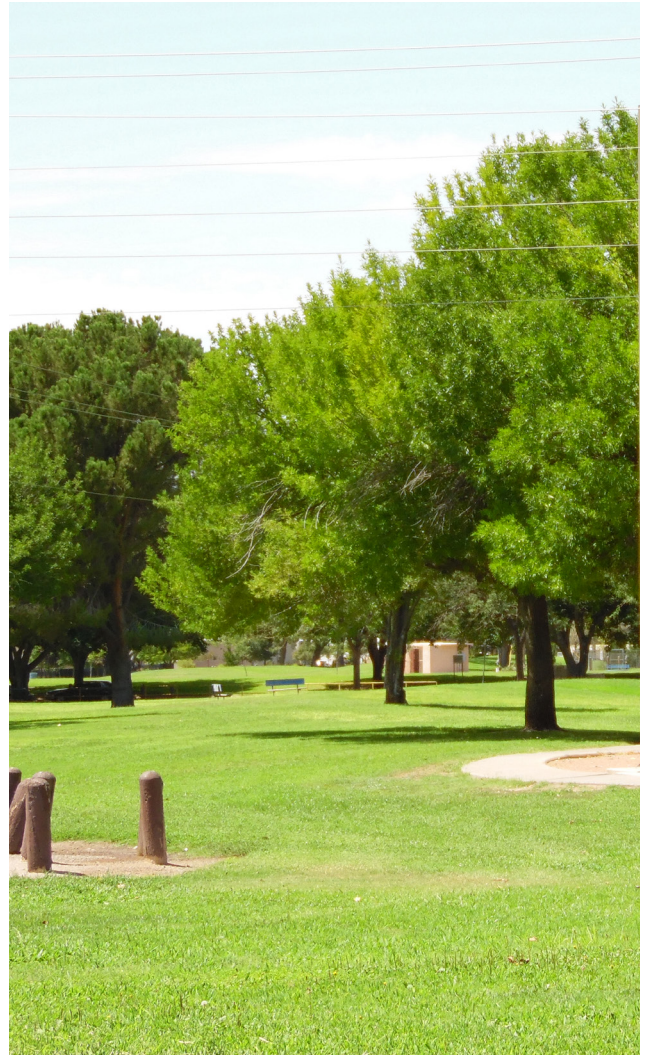
**ACTION 4.1.9. URBAN FORESTRY.** Work with the Community Development and Public Works Department to create standard street cross-sections that incorporate street trees. Update design standards in the Las Cruces Land Development Code related to the installation and management of trees planted in public street rights-of-way and on other public properties.

*Street trees are a key element to provide “active roadsides” along public streets that invite public activity. Street trees benefit pedestrians within parkways by providing necessary shade, and by also serving as a physical barrier between the roadside space and adjacent motor vehicles. Street cross-sections that incorporate trees as a roadside feature are an important component of creating urban mixed-use environments.*

*Great care has been taken by the City to maintain sufficient tree canopy in many City Parks (Valley View Park pictured). Such initiatives should also be promoted in roadside areas of street rights-of-way as part of the City's ongoing initiatives to promote active transportation and a healthy community.*

**ACTION 4.1.10. VOLUNTEER PROJECTS.** Identify a series of facility maintenance or upgrade projects that are of a complexity and scale that special interest of volunteer groups can undertake with minimal Parks Section oversight.

*The materials that would support potential volunteer projects do not necessarily need to be funded by the City. A list of volunteer projects could be compiled at the initiative of the City (subject to PRAB oversight), and may include estimated material costs. Such projects – although essential - should be of a lower priority to the City and represent improvements for which imminent public funding is not expected.*



## OBJECTIVE 4.2. CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING METHODS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO AUGMENT ONGOING MAINTENANCE INITIATIVES.

**ACTION 4.2.1. FEE STRUCTURE - ATHLETICS.** Adjust athletic programming fees to cover a higher percentage of the estimated long-term maintenance costs of publicly-approved major capital investments.

*The City of Las Cruces generates a lower percentage of annual earned or generated revenues to pay for operational expenditures than the national average and many of the comparable communities assessed as part of this master planning effort. The City attempts to keep fee rates low to ensure that recreational programs remain accessible to the broadest possible cross-section of residents. The City however must consider ways to recoup some of the long-term maintenance costs associated with voter-approved projects that will upgrade athletic fields and sport courts.*

*Athletic programming fees may be adjusted for those programs that will directly benefit from the pending GO-bond funded facility upgrades. The Parks and Recreation Department should compare the cost of select improvements with the estimated life of the facility and factor these inputs into its recreational programming cost recovery targets. Athletic programming fee adjustments will not account for all estimated long-term maintenance costs but may be assessed through a combination of increases to registration fees and field or court rentals.*

**ACTION 4.2.2. FUNDING – ACCESSORY FACILITY REPLACEMENT.** Provide a direct annual funding source that will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to quickly replace non-recreational equipment such as garbage cans, benches, shade structures, signage, and more.

**ACTION 4.2.3. FUNDING - EQUIPMENT REPLACEMENT.** Create an equipment replacement fund to periodically replace treadmills, weight machines, aquatic equipment, outdoor athletic equipment, and more on an as-needed basis.

*The Parks and Recreation Department should provide an estimated cost for minimum annual facility replacement targets and restructure annual budget proposals to include replacement fund line items due to depreciation.*

**ACTION 4.2.4. SATELLITE SHOP FACILITIES.** Identify suitable locations in the northeastern part of the city to construct satellite shop facilities as a supplement to the central maintenance yard.

*Satellite shop facilities will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to position some maintenance equipment closer to parkland and public grounds on the eastern side of the city. The satellite shop can be of limited scale, and may be incorporated into an existing City-owned property.*

**ACTION 4.2.5. SPECIAL EVENTS.** Measure staff hours and general City expenditures related to preparation, management, and post-event activities to determine full costs related to event support.

*Most City-sponsored special events do not require entrance fees for the public to participate. This informal policy is in place to encourage public participation regardless of income group. As a result, the City has not established a minimum cost recovery goal for special events. Although the City has consciously chosen not to recoup fees for sponsoring community events, an unintended consequence of potentially expanding events calendars is that City staff can be increasingly removed from their typical daily responsibilities. A cost-assessment of the City's annual special events should consider participating staff from all City departments, and should be part of the recommended parks and recreation annual report (Action 8.2.1, page 199).*



*The Las Cruces International Mariachi Conference brings thousands of performers and spectators to the City. Coordinating the use of City facilities requires the support of various City departments, and countless volunteers.*

**ACTION 4.2.6. STAFFING RATIOS.** Adopt a ratio-based system whereby park maintenance staff is added at a uniform rate concurrent with parkland additions to ensure a proper level of maintenance.

*Between 2012 and 2017, the parkland acreage per Parks Section staff member that had to be maintained increased from 12.1 acres/employee to 24.7 acres/employee. While it is true that only a small percentage of this acreage is considered “active use” (e.g. requiring significant maintenance), the number of active use acres maintained by Parks Section employee still almost doubled between 2012 and 2017 (Active use acres: 2012: 4.2 acres/employee; 2017: 7.7 acres/employee). These figures do not count the addition of street rights-of-way and alleys to the inventory of property that must be maintained by the Parks Section. Future increases to the City’s parkland inventory should not continue to result in dramatic increases to the acres per employee ratios presented in this Plan.*

**ACTION 4.2.7. TECHNOLOGY INTEGRATION.**

Improve field staff’s access to handheld GPS and web-based equipment to improve field maintenance and inventory activities.

*The City’s ongoing efforts to improve record-keeping have led to the purchase of software and hardware that more efficiently tracks programming, budgeting, and mapping. Many of these resources have been limited to technology that is utilized by office personnel. Inventory and mapping capability can be greatly enhanced by providing field maintenance staff with enhanced handheld GPS and web-based equipment that can be used for inventory projects and maintenance scheduling and activities.*

**SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 4)**

The two (2) objectives and 17 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.6, Parkland and Facility Maintenance, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

**FIGURE 4.6, PARKLAND & FACILITY MAINTENANCE, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS**

GOAL 4: PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE. PROVIDE A HIGH LEVEL OF PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE THAT PLACES EQUAL EMPHASIS ON LANDSCAPES, HARDSCAPES, AND STRUCTURES.	
OBJECTIVE 4.1. SCHEDULE SYSTEM-WIDE FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS THAT REDUCE AND ELIMINATE PARKLAND AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE DEFICIENCIES.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 4.1.1. General Park Enhancements.</b> Utilize the park-by-park results of the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment to prioritize annual updates to recreational and accessory amenities within low-scoring parks.	177
<b>Action 4.1.2. Conditions Assessment.</b> Prepare a bi-annual update to the park and recreation master plan’s conditions assessment and prepare a supporting record of accomplishments report.	177
<b>Action 4.1.3. ADA Accessibility Standards.</b> Design and maintain parks and facilities to offer universal accessibility for residents of all physical capabilities, skill levels and age. Assess planned and existing parks and trails for compliance with ADA Standards for Accessible Design.	177
<b>Action 4.1.4. Irrigation System Specifications.</b> Incorporate standard specifications for irrigation systems into a parks system design standards manual.	178
<b>Action 4.1.5. Irrigation System Upgrades.</b> Commission a system-wide inspection of irrigation systems in City park properties and other municipal property.	178
<b>Action 4.1.6. Public Art - Donation and Installation.</b> Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to prepare a uniform policy for the donation and installation of art on public properties. The policy should link art installation to identified CIP projects to ensure maximum site integration.	178
<b>Action 4.1.7. Public Art – Collection Assessment and Maintenance.</b> Conduct a collection assessment and prepare a corresponding and comprehensive maintenance plan to evaluate the condition and maintenance needs of the City’s existing public art collection. Work jointly with the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the City Art Board to establish a long-term maintenance and collection management policy.	178
<b>Action 4.1.8. Traffic Control.</b> Add bollards at strategic park locations (such as Apodaca Park) to prevent park visitors from driving motor vehicles on locations other than designated driveways and parking areas.	179
<b>Action 4.1.9. Urban Forestry.</b> Work with the Community Development and Public Works Department to create standard street cross-sections that incorporate street trees. Update design standards in the Las Cruces Land Development Code related to the installation and management of trees planted in public street rights-of-way and on other public properties.	179
<b>Action 4.1.10. Volunteer Projects.</b> Identify a series of facility maintenance or upgrade projects that are of a complexity and scale that special interest of volunteer groups can undertake with minimal Parks Section oversight.	179
OBJECTIVE 4.2. CONTINUE TO EXPLORE ALTERNATIVE FUNDING METHODS AND RESOURCE ALLOCATIONS TO AUGMENT ONGOING MAINTENANCE INITIATIVES.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 4.2.1. Fee Structure - Athletics.</b> Adjust athletic programming fees to cover a higher percentage of the estimated long-term maintenance costs of publicly-approved major capital investments.	180
<b>Action 4.2.2. Funding – Accessory Facility Replacement.</b> Provide a direct annual funding source that will allow the Parks and Recreation Department to quickly replace non-recreational equipment such as garbage cans, benches, shade structures, signage, and more.	180
<b>Action 4.2.3. Funding - Equipment Replacement.</b> Create an equipment replacement fund to periodically replace treadmills, weight machines, aquatic equipment, outdoor athletic equipment, and more on an as-needed basis.	180
<b>Action 4.2.4. Satellite Shop Facilities.</b> Identify suitable locations in the northeastern part of the city to construct satellite shop facilities as a supplement to the central maintenance yard.	180
<b>Action 4.2.5. Special Events.</b> Measure staff hours and general City expenditures related to preparation, management, and post-event activities to determine full costs related to event support.	180
<b>Action 4.2.6. Staffing Ratios.</b> Adopt a ratio-based system whereby park maintenance staff is added at a uniform rate concurrent with parkland additions to ensure a proper level of maintenance.	181
<b>Action 4.2.7. Technology Integration.</b> Improve field staff’s access to handheld GPS and web-based equipment to improve field maintenance and inventory activities.	181

## GOAL 5:

### PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING

**GOAL STATEMENT:** INCREASE RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' ENJOYMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW PARK SPACES THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STANDARD PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING PRACTICES.

Perceptions of parks system quality extend beyond the City's ability to expediently fix deteriorating equipment, or maintain lawns, tree canopy, and other vegetation. Pride of ownership also requires that municipal parks are presented in a uniform and recognizable manner.

The adoption of consistent design practices to be applied throughout the Las Cruces parks and recreation system can increase the efficiency by which the City maintains its parks, recreation, and open space assets; and, promotes public confidence in overall system quality.

**OBJECTIVE 5.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE FEATURES AND FACILITIES.**

Consistent with the objectives and actions recommended in conjunction with Goal #4, this Plan's conditions assessment reveals opportunities to improve parkland and facility condition through standardized design practices.

#### **ACTION 5.1.1. BRANDING AND SIGNAGE PROGRAM.**

Prepare a system-wide branding plan and design manual. Develop consistent standards for identification, informational, regulatory, and way-finding signage, and banners.

*The purpose of the branding and signage program is to establish a system-wide community "brand" for the Las Cruces parks system, an action which contributes to the City's overall sense of place for residents and visitors. The primary objectives would be to greet visitors with consistent, attractive signage design which makes a good first impression; provides information about the park, what to do and where to go, and who to call; and reinforces the community identity. The intent is not to make all aspects of every park look the same; but to clearly identify that you are in the Las Cruces park system. This branding and signage program could be developed as a standalone design manual, or a section of an overall parks system design standards manual (see Action 5.1.3).*

**ACTION 5.1.2. CONCEPTUAL PARK DESIGN.** Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.

*Preparing conceptual park designs prior to development or redevelopment is a good mechanism to ensure the City is being forward-thinking, effective and efficient with the City's limited resources. Conceptual master plans also provide clarity and justification when pursuing various grant opportunities. A good conceptual master plan should include the following components:*

- *Review of existing studies and reports;*
- *Detailed inventory and analysis of existing conditions;*
- *Design and development workshop or public engagement charrette process;*
- *Conceptual or schematic site plan preparation focused on the program and location of proposed uses, facilities, and amenities;*
- *Maintenance, Operations, Revenue, and Expenses (MORE) assessment (See Action 5.1.8);*
- *Opinion of probable construction costs; and,*
- *Phasing plan and next steps.*

**ACTION 5.1.3. DESIGN STANDARDS MANUAL.**

Prepare a parks system design standards manual to identify the intended character of preferred amenities and structures. Existing facilities may be replaced according to the recommendations of the standards manual beginning with non-permanent fixtures.

*The intent of the parks system design standards manual would be to provide consistent design and construction guidelines across all the Las Cruces' park facilities. It should include a library of options which could be applied in response to individual park conditions. While it will not cover every facet of design or construction for a park, it will provide for a consistent look and feel across all parks and establish a minimum level of quality. It should also help to improve efficiency for maintenance and operations. The guidelines should indicate that new and improved park facilities and amenities be:*

- *Designed and constructed of durable and long-lasting materials;*
- *Designed to maximize shade opportunities;*
- *Designed and constructed using water- and energy-efficient fixtures;*
- *Designed and constructed with an emphasis on low maintenance requirements;*
- *Designed for flexibility of use; and*
- *Designed with a cohesive system of styles and materials to create a "brand" within all City parks (see Action 5.1.1).*

**ACTION 5.1.4. PARK, FACILITY, AND PROGRAM PLANNING.**

Involve residents and stakeholders in conceptual site planning and programming for specific park properties and recreational facilities, and in recreational program development or modification, to facilitate project understanding and garner public support.

*For new development or redevelopment, public involvement could be accomplished through a targeted neighborhood design charrette, which is intended to gather resident input on unique features, types of amenities, and overall theme. Ideas may include such things that are normally not associated with standard park design (e.g., incorporation of special events, arts and culture, heritage, eco-tourism, sustainability, etc.). For input on recreational program development or modification, it may be more appropriate to gather stakeholder input through targeted meetings, community surveys or town halls. Overall, these types of stakeholder input processes develop longer-term support and community buy-in. They are also great opportunities to identify community members who wish to participate in park "build" or "clean up" days, to establish park-specific "Friends Of" groups, and generally just to increase a sense of community ownership over individual parks.*

**ACTION 5.1.5. LIGHTING - SAFETY ASSESSMENT.**

Conduct a park-by-park safety assessment with the Police Department to identify locations where security lighting upgrades are most necessary consistent with the City's outdoor lighting ordinance (including compliance with "dark sky" guidelines), and appropriate City design standards manuals.

*While certain parks and trails are closed dusk to dawn, others allow use long after dark. Particularly in the wintertime, it may be dark as early as 5:00 p.m. This oftentimes means that certain parks and park amenities will be used after dark. To improve the safety (and perception of safety) for all park users, the City should evaluate and fund improvements to establish adequate lighting in all parking lots, trails, restrooms, and other areas where users will be after dark. Proposed improvements could be combined into a single capital improvement project addressing lighting issues in all parks.*

**ACTION 5.1.6. LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY.** Incorporate lighting standards into a parks system design manual that promotes an appropriate amount of lighting for the use that is being illuminated and applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimize the impact on adjacent properties and city-wide viewsheds.

*In general, the City should develop park and trail lighting standards which accomplishes three purposes: **A)** Provides a safe lighting system for the welfare of users; **B)** Mitigates the environmental impact of sport field lighting on the community (see sidebar); and, **C)** Ensures that the established standards continue to be met over the life-cycle of the lighting fixture. Accordingly, the standards should follow the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) and Illuminating Engineering Society of North America (IESNA) 2011 joint IDA-IES Model Lighting Ordinance (MLO) which was written to help municipalities in developing their outdoor lighting regulations. The proposed regulations should rely on the Backlight, Uplight, and Glare (BUG) rating system established by IESNA as a means to protect against light pollution, light trespass, nighttime sky glow, and visual glare.*

**ACTION 5.1.7. LOW-IMPACT DESIGN PRACTICES.**

Work with the Las Cruces Sustainability Office to incorporate low-impact development and green building design practices into parkland and facility development and renovation projects.

*Sustainable measures should always be incorporated as part of the design of parks and trails. Specific measures include the use of native plants that have low water requirements, little maintenance needs, and are well-adapted to the local soil and climatic conditions. Native grasses are prime examples of plants that survive well on rain water, do not need soil improvements to speak of, and do not need regular mowing. A complete list of appropriate Southwestern native plants for the Las Cruces area can be found at <https://www.utep.edu/leb/pdf/recplant.pdf>. Another sustainable measure is Low Impact Development (LID) which is a stormwater tool whereby runoff water is captured into bioretention areas to clean the runoff while being an amenity for people to enjoy, and habitat for songbirds. All low impact design practices should be consistent with the City's adopted Sustainability Action Plan.*

## SPORT FIELD LIGHTING TECHNOLOGY

*New Mexico is known for its clear night skies and there has been an increased focus on protecting those viewsheds from light pollution. The City also has a need to illuminate sport courts and fields to facilitate evening play schedules. In general, adequately meeting these dual needs does provide for a degree of incompatibility. Consequently, the International Dark Sky Association (IDA) has developed a Criteria for Community-Friendly Outdoor Sports Lighting guidelines that upholds the values for meeting both needs. The criteria ensures "outdoor sports lighting design minimizes obstructive light spill and glare into surrounding neighborhoods and natural areas, and meets sustainability and climate-friendly goals, and reduces sky glow to the greatest extent practicable."*

*For more information, go to: <https://www.darksky.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/IDA-Criteria-for-Community-Friendly-Outdoor-Sports-Lighting.pdf>*

*Low profile and low-glare LED lighting at LeConte Family Field, Clemson, South Carolina. Source: Musco Lighting*



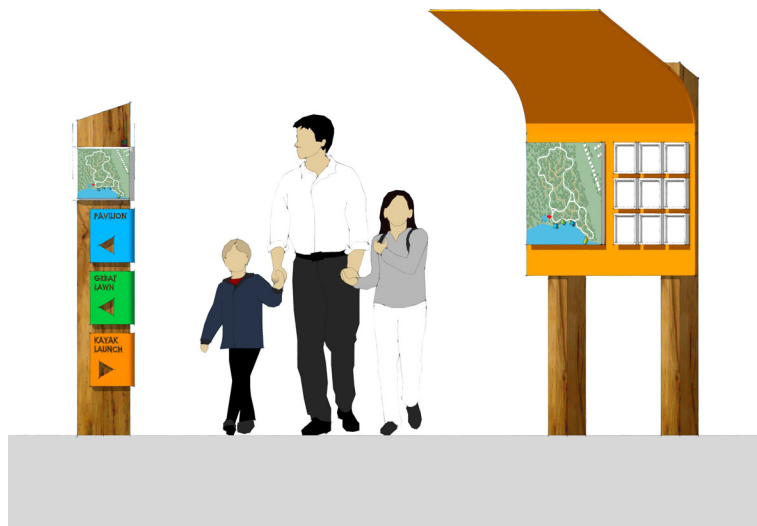
**ACTION 5.1.8. MAINTENANCE AND OPERATION ESTIMATES.** Include a M.O.R.E. assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) within all conceptual park design plans to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Department budget following capital expenditure.

*Development of a conceptual master plan (see Action 5.1.2) is an important precursor to understanding the long-term programmatic configuration and extent of uses, as well as identifying the requisite capital investment costs needed to get it built. However, this is where many cities stop their master planning process. As a result, oftentimes, parks and recreation departments are left with a completed capital project and inadequate resources and staffing to operate and maintain it for the future. Accordingly, the City should include a Maintenance, Operations, Revenue, and Expenses (MORE) assessment as part of every conceptual master planning process. The MORE assessment should include an evaluation of the following:*

- *Estimated annual maintenance costs for maintaining park and trail facilities (structure and amenities), including envisioned contract and equipment maintenance (e.g., 2.5% of initial equipment costs). Estimates could come from existing evaluation of maintenance costs in Las Cruces, or from metrics provided by the National Recreation and Parks Association (NRPA);*
- *Estimated additional FTE personnel needed to accommodate the increased maintenance responsibilities associated with the proposed park;*
- *Estimated additional one-time or re-occurring equipment purchases; and,*
- *Projected revenues based on current City rental rates and/or contracts for similar programmed uses. For proposed uses not part of the City's existing system, comparable rates should be projected from comparable facilities in other parts of New Mexico.*

**ACTION 5.1.9. WAY-FINDING.** Implement a multi-use trail way-finding system including directional signage, mileage markers, and location maps.

*Having a recognizable, safe, and navigable trail system is a priority for the City's parks and trail system. Through a well-planned and consistent way-finding signage program, both residents and visitors will be able to navigate the parks and trails and visually identify with the community. Way-finding signage, which can also aid in emergency response situations, would need to be located at key points and should consist of park entry signage, trail entry kiosks (see example below), trail maps, brochures, a website, and internal trail way-finding signage. Internal milepost markers should occur at ½ mile intervals. The way-finding signage program could be developed as a standalone design manual, or a section of an overall parks system design standards manual (see Action 5.1.3).*



*A way-finding manual can be incorporated into a system-wide design standards manual that ties messaging into preferred material styles for signage structures and other accessory park features.*



## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 5)

The one (1) objective and 9 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.7, Park Design and Programming, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.7, PARK DESIGN & PROGRAMMING, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 5: PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING. INCREASE RESIDENTS' AND VISITORS' ENJOYMENT OF EXISTING AND NEW PARK SPACES THROUGH THE APPLICATION OF STANDARD PARK DESIGN AND PROGRAMMING PRACTICES.	
OBJECTIVE 5.1. DEVELOP AND APPLY UNIFORM DESIGN POLICIES AND PRACTICES FOR PARKS SYSTEM LANDSCAPE AND HARDSCAPE FEATURES AND FACILITIES.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 5.1.1. Branding and Signage Program.</b> Prepare a system-wide branding plan and design manual. Develop consistent standards for identification, informational, regulatory, and way-finding signage, and banners.	183
<b>Action 5.1.2. Conceptual Park Design.</b> Formulate illustrative master plans for the development or redevelopment of each park, as appropriate, to take maximum advantage of grant or other funding opportunities.	183
<b>Action 5.1.3. Design Standards Manual.</b> Prepare a parks system design standards manual to identify the intended character of preferred amenities and structures. Existing facilities may be replaced according to the recommendations of the standards manual beginning with non-permanent fixtures.	184
<b>Action 5.1.4. Park, Facility, and Program Planning.</b> Involve residents and stakeholders in conceptual site planning and programming for specific park properties and recreational facilities, and in recreational program development or modification, to facilitate project understanding and garner public support.	184
<b>Action 5.1.5. Lighting - Safety Assessment.</b> Conduct a park-by-park safety assessment with the Police Department to identify locations where security lighting upgrades are most necessary consistent with the City's outdoor lighting ordinance (including compliance with "dark sky" guidelines), and appropriate City design standards manuals.	184
<b>Action 5.1.6. Lighting Technology.</b> Incorporate lighting standards into a parks system design manual that promotes an appropriate amount of lighting for the use that is being illuminated and applies a BUG rating (backlighting, up lighting, and glare) that minimize the impact on adjacent properties and city-wide viewsheds.	185
<b>Action 5.1.7. Low-Impact Design Practices.</b> Work with the Las Cruces Sustainability Office to incorporate low-impact development and green building design practices into parkland and facility development and renovation projects.	185
<b>Action 5.1.8. Maintenance and Operation Estimates.</b> Include a M.O.R.E. assessment and estimate (maintenance, operations, revenues, and expenditures) within all conceptual park design plans to ensure long-term maintenance and operations funds are incorporated into the Parks and Recreation Department budget following capital expenditure.	186
<b>Action 5.1.9. Way-finding.</b> Implement a multi-use trail way-finding system including directional signage, mileage markers, and location maps.	186

## GOAL 6:

### RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS

**GOAL STATEMENT:** INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY OFFERING A DIVERSE SUITE OF PROGRAMS THAT CATER TO VARYING COMMUNITY INTERESTS, AGES, AND ABILITIES.

Policy makers in the City of Las Cruces have a strong record of supporting the delivery of public recreational programs and events to the residents of Las Cruces. To ensure maximum accessibility to City-sponsored programs and events, fees and cost recovery margins for targeted offerings remain low.

The continuation of policies that subsidize a substantial percentage of the costs of City-sponsored programs and events must be balanced with the costs associated with an ever-expanding suite of programs and facilities to meet the needs and expectations of current and future residents.

#### OBJECTIVE 6.1. MONITOR AND REFINE THE METHODS BY WHICH RECREATIONAL PROGRAMMING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC.

Public feedback received during the master planning process suggests that Las Cruces would like access to an expanded suite of recreational program offerings for all age groups. Future adjustments to the City's annual programming schedule must however be supported by an expanded amount of measurable data that verifies anecdotal evidence of public preferences received through one-on-one interaction with individual residents.

**ACTION 6.1.1. AQUATICS – COMPETITION.** Support competitive youth swimming programs upon completion of the 50-meter lap pool at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. Consider sponsoring an instructional swim league catering to entry-level swimmers of varying ages.

*Development of expanded aquatics programming – including swim competition - should occur in conjunction with the natatorium at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. At that time, a designated aquatics program director position should be filled to maximize usage of the City's pools.*

**ACTION 6.1.2. COMMUNITY EVENTS.** Continue to promote and expand family-oriented programming, special events, festivals and concerts, to enhance community identity, activity and education. Utilize the City's parks, trails and recreation facilities as settings for community events where possible.

*Significant expansion of community event offerings should only occur in conjunction with the completion of cost assessment for the City's ongoing special events (Action 4.2.5, page 180), improvements to recreation program reporting (Action 6.1.5, page 189), and the creation of a designated position to oversee and market programs (Action 8.1.2, page 199). These activities are necessary to ensure that staff resources are adequate to support expanded event calendars.*



The cost for operation and maintenance of the City's pending competition swimming pool will require the development and administration of new aquatics programs. Source: ASA Architects

**ACTION 6.1.3. ATHLETIC PROGRAMMING.** Continue to leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver athletics programming.

**ACTION 6.1.4. PROGRAMMING STAFF.** Expand the relationship with NMSU to increase students' opportunities to coach, instruct, or teach in conjunction with municipal recreational programs on a temporary or part-time basis.

Updates to annual program schedules should only be proposed where a confirmed source of instructors and officials has been identified. While NMSU students serve as a potential source of coaches and instructors, an increasing number of high school students are being recruited in other communities through their coaches and teachers to instruct and serve as mentors to bantam-level children within the sports or other programs in which they participate. An under-utilized example of high-school aged mentorship opportunities is at skate parks and pump tracks where kids of all ages and skill levels readily interact.

**ACTION 6.1.5. HEALTHY COMMUNITY.** Review City policies regarding food and alcohol consumption and tobacco use at municipal properties.

The City's alcohol and tobacco use policies provide clear expectations and direction to residents regarding appropriate conduct at municipal property and facilities. The City however, has the opportunity to take on a greater advocacy role in regard to the promotion of healthy food options at municipal park properties and public grounds and at City-sponsored events. Concessionaire and vending machine policies should be assessed to determine how a greater variety of food options can be incorporated into food offerings at City properties and promoted. Ongoing efforts to provide healthy food options in City vending machines may be augmented by healthy labeling programs such as Fit Pick, a program created and trademarked by the National Automatic Merchandising Association (NAMA).

**ACTION 6.1.6. PROGRAM REPORTING.** Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, attendance, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.

Prepare and distribute standardized exit surveys to be completed by recreational program participants at the conclusion of a course, program, or other activity. Incorporate recreational program survey information into the proposed annual report prepared for review by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board (Action 8.2.1, page 199). Utilize survey results to rank program popularity and to propose annual adjustments to offerings.

FIGURE 4.8, MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME AS A PERCENTAGE OF EARNED/GENERATED REVENUE

	BROKEN ARROW, OK	PLANO, TX	FORT COLLINS, CO	LAS CRUCES, NM
<b>EARNED/GENERATED REVENUE (YEAR)</b>				
TOTAL AMOUNT (DOLLARS)	\$787,830.00	\$10,888,086.23	\$6,585,347.92	\$2,197,289
% OF ALL OPERATING EXPENDITURES	20.0%	35.9%	24.6%	21.4%
<b>MEDIAN HOUSEHOLD INCOME (YEAR)</b>				
TOTAL AMOUNT (DOLLARS)	\$70,788.00	\$83,793.00	\$60,110.00	\$40,924
MEDIAN HH INCOME VERSUS LAS CRUCES (+/-)	+73.0%	+97.4%	+46.9%	N/A

Source: American Community Survey, US Census Bureau (2017): S1701; NRPA, Park Metrics

**ACTION 6.1.7. COST RECOVERY.** Review and update cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.

**Figure 4.8, Earned and Generated Revenues Versus Household Income,** illustrates that Las Cruces’ cumulative earned and generated revenues account for a lower percentage of overall annual operating expenditures than other assessment communities. The figure also illustrates however, that the City’s median household income is between 46 and 73 percent lower than other communities – accounting to some degree for the City’s policy of keeping recreational programming fees low. Nonetheless, there may be room for targeted registration or rental fee increases that balance the need to offset costs with the desire to provide services in an equitable manner.

The Parks and Recreation Department’s 2019-2020 Fees and Charges/Facility Use Policies identifies targeted cost recovery goals for the direct costs of all recreational programs, and for aquatics, youth, and adult programs separately. The City’s progress in meeting these cost recovery targets has not, however, been tracked – and thus was not reported within this Plan. The Parks and Recreation Department must provide an annual update on its progress toward meeting established cost recovery targets and use this information to consider fee adjustments.

**OBJECTIVE 6.2. EXPAND PROGRAM OFFERINGS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF UNDER-SERVED USER GROUPS.**

Continued efforts must be made to generate programs that will interest teens. The Parks and Recreation Department’s Youth Board should lead teen polling efforts in conjunction with high school and middle school student governments.



Teens playing kickball at the Frank O'Brien Papen Community Center.

**ACTION 6.2.1. TEEN PROGRAMMING.** Work with youth organizations to identify and create a suite of programs that interest teens.

*Continued efforts must be made to generate programs that will interest teens. The Parks and Recreation Department's Youth Board should lead teen polling efforts in conjunction with high school and middle school student governments. Consider focusing teen "programming" on events rather than scheduled multi-day courses or programs. For instance, the City could solicit student governments to advertise and promote a series of competitions between teams comprised of students within each school and then culminating with a competition of each school's champion. (Random) examples may include art, spikeball, archery (with instruction), coed and pool-based volleyball, and more. It is important to remember that the success of teen program is just as dependent on the locale of the event as it is on the specific activity.*

**ACTION 6.2.2. COMMUNITY SCHOOLS.** Use the Community School platform to provide targeted after-school and other programming options to residents within specific neighborhoods and school attendance areas.

*Recreational program offering should be distributed not just among City-owned facilities, but also directly within neighborhoods served by a Community School.*

**ACTION 6.2.3. SPECIAL NEEDS PROGRAMMING.** Continue to increase the City's offerings of special needs programming to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of physical, mental, and social activities.

*Las Cruces should work with local service organizations to affirm the perceived degree of need for athletic and non-athletic programming catering to individuals with disabilities. The pending construction of the City's natatorium – combined with this Plan's recommendation for a Miracle Field (Action 3.1.7, page 172) – may provide the venues for aquatic and sports programming for persons with special needs. Applicable local service and sports organizations can collectively assist the City when compiling a curriculum and identifying instructors/coaches for special needs programs.*

**ACTION 6.2.4. SPECIAL INTEREST SPORTS.** Add special interest sports instruction to the City's recreational programs which take advantage of existing facilities.

*The City of Las Cruces provides multiple venues to accommodate sporting activities that extend beyond typical field sports, court sports, and aquatics. Representative examples in Las Cruces include venues for: skate sports, BMX track riding, archery, disc golf, RC model airplane, and shooting sports. Many of these "special interest" sports accommodate limited user groups but offer recreational opportunities for person that lack interest in typical team sports. The City should work with representatives of applicable organizations and businesses to add special interest sport instruction opportunities to its current suite of recreational programs to increase utilization of unique recreational venues and facilities. Expansion of the user groups for these facilities will increase public interest in the care of each venue, addresses latent recreational demand, and may offer future cost recovery opportunities for the City.*

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 6)

The two (2) objectives and 11 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.9, Recreational Programs, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.9, RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 6: RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS. INCREASE PUBLIC ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES BY OFFERING A DIVERSE SUITE OF PROGRAMS THAT CATER TO VARYING COMMUNITY INTERESTS, AGES, AND ABILITIES.	
OBJECTIVE 6.1. MONITOR AND REFINE THE METHODS BY WHICH RECREATIONAL PROGRAMING SERVICES ARE PROVIDED TO THE PUBLIC.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 6.1.1. Aquatics – Competition.</b> Support competitive youth swimming programs upon completion of the 50-meter lap pool at the Las Cruces Recreational Aquatic Center. Consider sponsoring an instructional swim league catering to entry-level swimmers of varying ages.	188
<b>Action 6.1.2. Community Events.</b> Continue to promote and expand family-oriented programming, special events, festivals and concerts, to enhance community identity, activity and education. Utilize the City’s parks, trails and recreation facilities as settings for community events where possible.	188
<b>Action 6.1.3. Athletic Programming.</b> Continue to leverage City resources by forming and maintaining partnerships with other public, non-profit and private recreation providers to deliver athletics programming.	189
<b>Action 6.1.4. Programming Staff.</b> Expand the relationship with NMSU to increase students’ opportunities to coach, instruct, or teach in conjunction with municipal recreational programs on a temporary or part-time basis.	189
<b>Action 6.1.5. Healthy Community.</b> Review City policies regarding food and alcohol consumption and tobacco use at municipal properties.	189
<b>Action 6.1.6. Program Reporting.</b> Periodically undertake a comprehensive evaluation of existing recreation program offerings in terms of persons served, customer satisfaction, attendance, cost/subsidy and availability of similar programs via other providers.	189
<b>Action 6.1.7. Cost Recovery.</b> Review and update cost recovery guidelines for existing and planned recreation programs and services.	190
OBJECTIVE 6.2. EXPAND PROGRAM OFFERINGS TO MEET THE NEEDS OF UNDER-SERVED USER GROUPS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 6.2.1. Teen Programming.</b> Work with youth organizations to identify and create a suite of programs that interest teens.	191
<b>Action 6.2.2. Community Schools.</b> Use the Community School platform to provide targeted after-school and other programming options to residents within specific neighborhoods and school attendance areas.	191
<b>Action 6.2.3. Special Needs Programming.</b> Continue to increase the City’s offerings of special needs programming to provide individuals with disabilities the opportunity to participate in a variety of physical, mental, and social activities.	191
<b>Action 6.2.4. Special Interest Sports.</b> Add special interest sports instruction to the City’s recreational programs which take advantage of existing facilities.	191

SPECIAL INTEREST SPORTS: TRAVIS COUNTY BMX TRACK

*Northeast Metropolitan Park in Travis County, Texas, includes the Central Texas BMX Track. Ranked as one of the top tracks in the nation, the Central Texas BMX track is only one a few to meet new UCI (Union Cycliste Internationale) specifications as well as all USA BMX requirements. The track supported by Central Texas BMX, a non-profit corporation that provides education and promotes youth and adult cycling.*

*Central Texas BMX operates USA BMX sanctioned, practices, races, and clinics at the Travis County facility. To increase BMX ridership, Central Texas BMX offers licensed coaching to new riders of all ages, and in the past has offered on-site bicycle rental for new riders to test their interest in the sport.*

## GOAL 7:

### COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS

**GOAL STATEMENT:** CONNECT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS THROUGH A ROBUST AND SUSTAINED PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORT, AND BY LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.

The mission statement of the Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department (page 44) does not suggest that the City is solely responsible for providing recreational services to the public; nor, that its efforts are confined to municipally owned and maintained parkland. Rather, its mission is to provide "...services to residents and visitors so they can experience a diverse, vibrant, prosperous, active, engaged, connected, happy, and inclusive community."

With such a community-driven focus, the City of Las Cruces should continue to leverage partnerships with other organizations to provide recreation services without limitation to who owns the property or facility, or who operates or manages the specific service, so long as such services can be provided efficiently and equitably.

**OBJECTIVE 7.1. ACTIVELY MARKET THE AVAILABILITY OF MUNICIPAL PARKLAND, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND CITY-SPONSORED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.**

Despite the Parks and Recreation Department's robust online presence, many master planning participants indicated a lack of awareness regarding the types of recreational facilities and programs that the City offers.

- ACTION 7.1.1. COMMUNITY RELATIONS PLAN.** Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office and Public Information Office to establish clear policies and procedures for coordinating community outreach efforts related to park maintenance and programming.
  - ACTION 7.1.2. COMMUNITY OUTREACH.** Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, neighborhood organizations, homeowners' associations, service organizations, churches, and businesses to identify volunteer community service projects for basic park maintenance and improvement.
- Outreach coordination with other City departments may be enhanced by the addition of a dedicated outreach specialist within the Parks and Recreation Department (Action 8.1.2, page 198). Regardless, the Parks and Recreation Department must increase the frequency of its online presence and outreach activities to include even those functions that are seemingly mundane. For instance, there is very little energy spent on advertising daily maintenance activities, yet park conditions are a topic of unending public interest. Savvy daily use of social media tools by the Parks and Recreation Department can be encouraging to the public by helping them anticipate ongoing operational and programming activities of which they are otherwise unaware.*

**ACTION 7.1.3. ONLINE PARKS APP AND MAPPING TOOL.** Work with other City departments to provide improved access to interactive on-line parks system mapping features that identify the location of specific park properties and facilities in relation to specific queries including park name, facility type, addresses, and more.

*Continue to refine the online parks app and mapping tools by tying online maps to images of park facilities, descriptions of assets at each location, and rental schedules tied to each facility in the park that allow users to determine whether a facility will be available for rental or use even before they consider applying.*

**ACTION 7.1.4. MARKETING – GENERAL.** Continue to develop and refine the Park and Recreation Department’s marketing image (i.e. style, formats, message, etc.).

**ACTION 7.1.5. MARKETING – TOURISM.** Work with the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to develop information packets that promote municipal parks and recreational programs aimed at tourists and new residents.

*Only a small percentage of master planning participants expressed interest in the leveraging of municipal parkland and recreational facilities for purposes of enhancing the local tourist economy. Although near-term investments into the municipal parks system are not principally targeted for the development of regional tournaments or events, collaboration with local economic development organizations can help the City pay for the upkeep of key facilities by through targeted advertising campaigns.*

## OBJECTIVE 7.2. EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MAXIMIZE ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS.

Las Cruces maintains relationships with other entities which promote quality of life and public health initiatives. These partnerships should be maintained while new partnerships should be developed to expand the reach of the City’s parks and recreation assets.

**ACTION 7.2.1. ADVOCACY GROUP.** Support community-initiated efforts to create a “friends” group that can provide volunteers, funding, or in-kind contributions, and oversee advocacy efforts to supplement municipal parks and recreation services.

**ACTION 7.2.2. FUNDING PARTNERS.** Create partnerships with advocacy and special interest groups to access funding for various recreational activities such as youth leagues, special events, athletic competitions, special use facilities, and concerts.

*Non-profit organizations are not bound to many of the same rules for donations and other contributions as are governmental entities. A “Friends” advocacy group can support service delivery within an entire public parks and recreation system or focus their efforts on a specific park space.*

**ACTION 7.2.3. CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS.** Encourage the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations to support development and management of a municipal open space lands program.

**ACTION 7.2.4. TRAIL ORGANIZATIONS.** Foster the development and capacity of local volunteer trail advocates (including the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance) to help with trails planning efforts, garner community support, leverage community resources, and play a role in stewardship and maintenance of trail facilities.

*The ongoing success of a municipal open space lands or multi-use and recreational trail network will require community investment that extends beyond public tax dollars. Day-to-day operational and programming activities necessary to ensure the public lands and recreational facilities serve the public interest often require the direct investment of resident time and labor.*



**ACTION 7.2.5. HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS.** Continue to explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MountainView Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and the Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.

*One of the six (6) essential benefits of a well-managed and maintained municipal parks and recreation system is that it improves health and well-being (Figure 1.1, page 5). Ongoing partnerships with local healthcare providers should be geared toward the promotion of daily habits and lifestyles that include activities for which public parkland and facilities are designed to support.*

**ACTION 7.2.6. LAS CRUCES PUBLIC SCHOOLS.** Continue to foster the partnership with Las Cruces Public Schools to utilize school sites for the placement of publicly accessible recreation facilities and programs through cooperative joint-use agreements. Explore additional opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools as the city grows.

The creative use of public school properties and facilities could assist the City in rapidly reducing many of the identified parkland service gaps (Map 3.3, page 107), and in increasing attendance at City-sponsored recreational programs.

**ACTION 7.2.7. NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH.** Continue the Neighborhood Watch program to reduce vandalism and improve the sense of security at municipal parks.

*Neighborhood Watch efforts may be augmented and invigorated by the development and participation of parks-related advocacy groups (Action 7.2.1, page 194) and the designation of licensed law enforcement officers as park rangers (Action 8.1.5).*

**ACTION 7.2.8. STATE AND FEDERAL LANDS.** Continue to foster partnership opportunities on state and federal lands promoting outdoor activities including shooting sports, hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, rock climbing, off-road sports and similar activities in a way that does not adversely affect other resources.

*It is presumed that undeveloped state and federal lands may be ideal locations in which to target development of an open space lands program (Action 1.1.5., page 160) and a network of recreational trails (Action 2.2.1, page 166). Coordination with these entities will be essential to the success of either of these municipal-led initiatives; or, to encourage state or federally initiated efforts to expand areas of designated open space, or development of facilities to provide new outdoor recreation opportunities.*

**ACTION 7.2.9. TREE CITY USA.** Continue efforts with other City departments to obtain Tree City USA designation by preparing and adopting tree policies or ordinances.

*Shade is one of the most essential assets identified by the public during the master planning process that will improve the municipal park experience. Likewise, the benefits of tree canopies within public street rights-of-way and on other public grounds is critically important in developing the full potential of these spaces for public use and enjoyment. The Parks and Recreation Department should coordinate with the Community Development and Public Works Departments to prepare tree policies and ordinances that align with City land development ordinances and construction design standards.*

SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 7)

The two (2) objectives and 14 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.10, Community Outreach and Partnerships, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.10, COMMUNITY OUTREACH & PARTNERSHIPS, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 8: COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND PARTNERSHIPS. CONNECT RESIDENTS AND VISITORS TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS THROUGH A ROBUST AND SUSTAINED PUBLIC OUTREACH EFFORT, AND BY LEVERAGING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER RECREATIONAL, EDUCATIONAL, AND SOCIAL SERVICE PROVIDERS.	
OBJECTIVE 7.1. ACTIVELY MARKET THE AVAILABILITY OF MUNICIPAL PARKLAND, RECREATIONAL FACILITIES, AND CITY-SPONSORED RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES TO RESIDENTS AND VISITORS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 7.1.1. Community Relations Plan.</b> Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office and Public Information Office to establish clear policies and procedures for coordinating community outreach efforts related to park maintenance and programming.	193
<b>Action 7.1.2. Community Outreach.</b> Coordinate with the Community Outreach Office, Keep Las Cruces Beautiful, neighborhood organizations, homeowners’ associations, service organizations, churches, and businesses to identify volunteer community service projects for basic park maintenance and improvement.	193
<b>Action 7.1.3. Online Parks App and Mapping Tool.</b> Work with other City departments to provide improved access to interactive on-line parks system mapping features that identify the location of specific park properties and facilities in relation to specific queries including park name, facility type, addresses, and more.	194
<b>Action 7.1.4. Marketing – General.</b> Continue to develop and refine the Park and Recreation Department’s marketing image (i.e. style, formats, message, etc.).	194
<b>Action 7.1.5. Marketing – Tourism.</b> Work with the Convention and Visitors’ Bureau and the Chamber of Commerce to develop information packets that promote municipal parks and recreational programs aimed at tourists and new residents.	194
OBJECTIVE 7.2. EXPAND PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONS TO MAXIMIZE ACCESSIBILITY TO RECREATIONAL SPACE AND PROGRAMS.	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 7.2.1. Advocacy Group.</b> Support community-initiated efforts to create a “friends” group that can provide volunteers, funding, or in-kind contributions, and oversee advocacy efforts to supplement municipal parks and recreation services.	194
<b>Action 7.2.2. Funding Partners.</b> Create partnerships with advocacy and special interest groups to access funding for various recreational activities such as youth leagues, special events, athletic competitions, special use facilities, and concerts.	194
<b>Action 7.2.3. Conservation Organizations.</b> Encourage the participation of community-based or non-profit conservation organizations to support development and management of a municipal open space lands program.	194
<b>Action 7.2.4. Trail Organizations.</b> Foster the development and capacity of local volunteer trail advocates (including the Southern New Mexico Trail Alliance) to help with trails planning efforts, garner community support, leverage community resources, and play a role in stewardship and maintenance of trail facilities.	194
<b>Action 7.2.5. Healthcare Providers.</b> Continue to explore partnership opportunities with regional healthcare providers and services, such as MountainView Regional Medical Center, Memorial Medical Center, and the Doña Ana County Health and Human Services Department, to promote wellness activities, healthy lifestyles and communications about local facilities and the benefits of parks and recreation.	195
<b>Action 7.2.6. Las Cruces Public Schools.</b> Continue to foster the partnership with Las Cruces Public Schools to utilize school sites for the placement of publicly accessible recreation facilities and programs through cooperative joint-use agreements. Explore additional opportunities to co-develop facilities on school property or property adjacent to schools as the city grows.	195
<b>Action 7.2.7. Neighborhood Watch.</b> Continue the Neighborhood Watch program to reduce vandalism and improve the sense of security at municipal parks.	195
<b>Action 7.2.8. State and Federal Lands.</b> Continue to foster partnership opportunities on state and federal lands promoting outdoor activities including shooting sports, hunting, hiking, camping, wildlife viewing, mountain biking, rock climbing, off-road sports and similar activities in way that does not adversely affect other resources.	195
<b>Action 7.2.9. Tree City USA.</b> Continue efforts with other City departments to obtain Tree City USA designation by preparing and adopting tree policies or ordinances.	195

## GOAL 8:

### ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT

**GOAL STATEMENT:** IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PARK AND RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY BY ALIGNING ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES WITH MASTER PLAN GOALS.

The Las Cruces Parks and Recreation Department has continued to improve the methods by which it collects data related to parks and recreation system conditions and user preferences. The personnel structure of the department has also been altered to improve overall service delivery to Las Cruces.

Additional steps can always be taken to not only improve reporting practices, but to provide greater efficiency in day-to-day administration and operations.

**OBJECTIVE 8.1.** FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT CAN ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF LAS CRUCES.

This Plan reveals a few system-wide features for which the Parks and Recreation Department should place particular emphasis on improving. These system-wide recommendations do not negate the need for park-specific maintenance projects.

**ACTION 8.1.1. ACCREDITATION.** Achieve CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association.

CAPRA accreditation affirms that a parks and recreation agency provides its community with the highest level of service. By extension, CAPRA accreditation means that the governing authority has elected to provide its staff with the necessary resources to operate and maintain its parks and recreation system in an efficient manner. **Figure 4.11** highlights the benefits of CAPRA accreditation:

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

FIGURE 4.11: CAPRA BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION

BENEFITS OF ACCREDITATION	
FOR YOUR COMMUNITY...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Demonstrates that the agency meets national standards of best practice.</li> <li>• Recognizes the community as a great place to live.</li> <li>• Can help secure external financial support and reduce costs for the community.</li> <li>• Holds an agency accountable to the public and ensures responsiveness to meet their needs.</li> <li>• Ensures that all staff are providing quality customer service.</li> </ul>
FOR YOUR AGENCY AND STAFF...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive public and political recognition.</li> <li>• Proves to decision makers, stakeholders and the public that the agency is operating with the best practices of the profession.</li> <li>• Increases credibility and can improve internal and external funding.</li> <li>• Improves overall operations and increases efficiency.</li> <li>• Enhances staff teamwork and pride by engaging all staff in the process.</li> <li>• Creates an environment for regular review of operations, policies and procedures, and promotes continual improvement.</li> </ul>

Source: National Recreation and Parks Association

**ACTION 8.1.2. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – EVENTS AND OUTREACH.** Add a special events manager/coordinator and a social media/marketing position to the Recreation Section. Positions may be created or may be re-assigned from within existing City staff resources.

**ACTION 8.1.3. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – FACILITIES.** Assign a facilities manager to exclusively oversee the maintenance and renovation of buildings and structures operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. The dedicated facilities manager may be added to the Parks section of the Department or remain within the Facilities Management section of Public Works.

**ACTION 8.1.4. DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – PLANNING.** Establish a permanent long-range planning position to oversee annual reporting and long-range planning activities in conjunction with CAPRA standards.

*The department positions recommended within Actions 8.1.2, 8.1.3, and 8.1.4 are essential to advancing the objectives and other actions recommended within this Plan. They also support the City's pending efforts to achieve CAPRA accreditation by providing the Parks and Recreation Department with an in-house "suite" of staff resources to improve the efficiency of various departmental functions. All recommended positions may be created as new full-time equivalent (FTE) positions, may result from re-assignment within the department, or as a result of re-assignment from another City department.*

*An events and outreach position, and planning position, may be added to the Parks and Recreation Department's Administration Section. Among other duties, the parks planner may serve the central role of collecting and disseminating parks and recreation data (see Objective 8.2, facing page). A facilities position may be added to the Parks Section. The proposed facilities position is of importance as the condition assessment conducted as part of this Plan indicated that the City scores much lower on the condition of structures and facilities than it does on public grounds. This may be in part to the current limitations placed on the Parks and Recreation Department in maintain vertical structures.*

**ACTION 8.1.5 DEPARTMENT ORGANIZATION – PUBLIC SAFETY.** Establish a Park Ranger Section to be staffed by state accredited law enforcement officers to monitor municipal park properties and to oversee security at public events.

*This Plan's needs assessment suggests that at least some of the local population perceives city parks to be unsafe. This perception may be based less on actual violent crime and more on loitering and the physical condition of some parks that suggests a condition of deferred maintenance or problem with vandalism. The accreditation of park rangers as law enforcement officers (much like school resource officers) could provide greater direct security oversight of park property and could help monitor security at public events. Public Safety at municipal park property and at public events should remain under the purview of the Las Cruces Police Department, but positions could be added or result from re-assignment within the department.*

**ACTION 8.1.6. RIGHTS-OF-WAY.** Evaluate the transfer of alley and right-of-way maintenance to another City Department so that the Parks and Recreation Department can focus on their core mission of providing recreational services to the community.

*It is not unusual for Parks and Recreation Departments to be responsible for the maintenance of all public grounds. In contrast however, it is equally common for municipal Public Works Departments to be responsible for the maintenance of public street rights-of-way and other landscaped areas due to their overlapping street and utility maintenance responsibilities. Reassignment of the maintenance of street rights-of-way to the Public Works Department will require the transfer of comparable funding and staff resources. Nonetheless, such a transfer would allow remaining Parks and Recreation maintenance staff to focus on specialized groundskeeping and turf management that is necessary to ensure that athletic fields and play areas can endure constant wear and tear.*

**ACTION 8.1.7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers; to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA), the New Mexico Recreation and Park Association, the Sports Turf Managers Association, and other applicable organizations.

Professional development opportunities are not only essential for increasing the knowledge base of your parks and recreation staff, they provide other intangible benefits. Conferences and seminars allow participants from different jurisdictions to share experiences with their colleagues. Professional accreditation opportunities illustrate a connection between an organization's stated goals and its commitment to providing its employees with the tools to achieve those goals.

*In assessing the appropriate level of annual funding for parks and recreation professional development opportunities, the City should consider not just management-level employees, but also non-managerial staff. The absence of professional development opportunities for support staff (professional accreditation, conferences, seminars) can create a disconnect between employees and their overarching mission statements and goals. The availability of robust professional development opportunities for support staff is also an important recruitment tool when filling vacant positions.*

## OBJECTIVE 8.2. AUGMENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS TO CALIBRATE AND IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.

Responsiveness to the public's parks and recreation preferences and needs requires well-collected and thoroughly analyzed data that is maintained on a continual basis. (Such data should not be compiled and disseminated only when a community's parks and recreation master plan is being prepared.) The Parks and Recreation Department has acquired new software in the last few years that has improved its ability to collect data. There is however, a need to do more to package and disseminate that data for administrators and policy makers to make future operational decisions based on verifiable information.

Please note that in addition to the four (4) actions associated with this objective, there are additional reporting actions that are recommended and associated with Goal #6, Recreational Programs (pages 188 - 192).

**ACTION 8.2.1. ANNUAL REPORT.** Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding and stewardship of tax dollars, fees, and other charges and distribute the report as widely as possible.

*An annual agency report prepared by the Parks and Recreation Department, with the oversight of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, should be generated for public consumption. The annual report should be a highly graphic document that is simple to read, presents data which can be compared to other assessment communities/parks and recreation agencies, and can be digitally distributed to the public. The NRPA's annual Agency Performance Review presents a suitable model.*

*The annual report recommended by this action is in addition to data submitted to the Finance Department and included within the annual budget. Although preparation of the departmental annual report could correspond to the timing of the annual municipal budget, the latter document is difficult for many laypersons to understand and does not include multiple data sets that would garner public interest including: recreational program participation, parkland acreage, facility distribution, and more.*

**ACTION 8.2.2. BOARD COORDINATION.** Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other standing City boards and the City Council to improve coordination and to discuss policy matters pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities, and funding.

**ACTION 8.2.3. HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.** Partner with the Historic Preservation Committee and City Art Board to ensure that local historical and cultural resources on public properties are maintained.

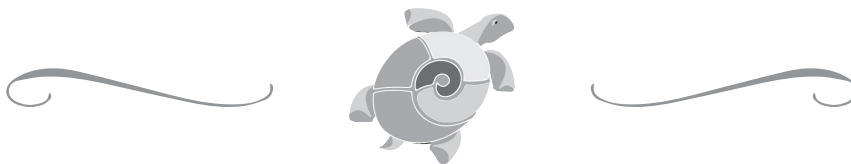
*Although Las Cruces City Land Development Code establishes the powers and duties of the City's various boards and commissions, the scope of interests of many appointed boards and commissions will overlap. A concerted effort must be made by the City to ensure that boards and commissions are communicating directly with each other when pending agenda topics affect both bodies. For example, possible parkland dedication ordinances which would be considered by the Planning and Zoning Commission are a direct implementation step of this Plan. Possible public art installation policies recommended by the City Art Board will affect property under the purview of the PRAB.*

*Board coordination often requires more than just staff representation. On a topic-by-topic basis a one or more representatives should be representing their board's or commission's position to other appointed City bodies where interests overlap. Where the lack of a pending topic does not necessitate such direct interaction, periodic joint workshops should be scheduled between the PRAB and other key appointed bodies. Such a workshop could coincide with the release of an annual report (Action 8.2.1, page 199).*

**ACTION 8.2.4. PERFORMANCE MEASURES.** Actively participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program on a recurring basis including the input of annual agency updates into the Park Metrics program, and the evaluation of updated agency performance reports.

*The Parks and Recreation Department utilizes the NRPA's Park Metrics program to evaluate how other public parks and recreations agencies deliver services to constituents within their jurisdictions. Las Cruces however, does not currently contribute its own data into the program. Uploading budget, staffing, programming, facilities, and parkland data into the Park Metrics program is a simple process and would ensure that much of the data organized and submitted by Las Cruces on an annual basis is arranged in a manner consistent with national peers (making comparison assessments more useful). Likewise, the City may opt to participate in other national metrics such as the Trust for Public Land's Parks Score program and 10-Minute Walk initiative.*

*Participation in the Park Metrics program should not obligate the City of Las Cruces to measure all data sets in a corresponding manner to NRPA. For instance, this Plan recommends the target levels of service for indoor recreation centers be measured according to square footage instead of number of facilities. The City should always prioritize local needs and processes when determining how to best to organize and submit data to national advocacy and industry groups.*



## SUMMARY OF OBJECTIVES AND ACTIONS (GOAL 8)

The two (2) objectives and 14 actions listed throughout this section are compiled in **Figure 4.12, Administration and Management, Summary of Goals, Objectives, & Actions** (below).

The recommended priority and order of implementation for each action is included in **Chapter 5, Implementation Program**.

FIGURE 4.12, ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT, SUMMARY OF GOALS, OBJECTIVES, & ACTIONS

GOAL 8: ADMINISTRATION AND MANAGEMENT. IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF PARK AND RECREATION SERVICE DELIVERY BY ALIGNING ADMINISTRATIVE AND OPERATIONAL PRACTICES WITH MASTER PLAN GOALS.	
<b>OBJECTIVE 8.1. FOSTER AN ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE THAT CAN ENHANCE THE DELIVERY OF PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES TO THE RESIDENTS OF LAS CRUCES.</b>	
ACTION	PAGE
<b>Action 8.1.1. Accreditation.</b> Achieve CAPRA (Commission for Accreditation of Parks and Recreation Agencies) accreditation from the National Recreation and Parks Association.	197
<b>Action 8.1.2. Department Organization – Events and Outreach.</b> Add a special events manager/coordinator and a social media/marketing position to the Recreation Section. Positions may be created or may be re-assigned from within existing City staff resources.	198
<b>Action 8.1.3. Department Organization – Facilities.</b> Assign a facilities manager to exclusively oversee the maintenance and renovation of buildings and structures operated by the Parks and Recreation Department. The dedicated facilities manager may be added to the Parks section of the Department or remain within the Facilities Management section of Public Works.	198
<b>Action 8.1.4. Department Organization – Planning.</b> Establish a permanent long-range planning position to oversee annual reporting and long-range planning activities in conjunction with CAPRA standards.	198
<b>Action 8.1.5. Department Organization – Public Safety.</b> Establish a Park Ranger Section to be staffed by state accredited law enforcement officers to monitor municipal park properties and to oversee security at public events.	198
<b>Action 8.1.6. Rights-of-way.</b> Evaluate the transfer of alley and right-of-way maintenance to another City Department so that the Parks and Recreation Department can focus on their core mission of providing recreational services to the community.	198
<b>Action 8.1.7. Professional Development.</b> Promote professional development opportunities that strengthen the core skills and engender greater commitment from staff, Board members and key volunteers; to include trainings, materials and/or affiliation with the National Recreation & Park Association (NRPA), the New Mexico Recreation and Park Association, the Sports Turf Managers Association, and other applicable organizations.	199
<b>OBJECTIVE 8.2. AUGMENT DATA COLLECTION METHODS TO CALIBRATE AND IMPROVE THE DELIVERY OF PUBLIC PARKS AND RECREATION SERVICES.</b>	
<b>Action 8.2.1. Annual Report.</b> Prepare an annual report providing information to the public about parks and recreation funding and stewardship of tax dollars, fees, and other charges and distribute the report as widely as possible.	199
<b>Action 8.2.2. Board Coordination.</b> Conduct periodic joint sessions between the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and other standing City boards and the City Council to improve coordination and to discuss policy matters pertaining to recreational resources, opportunities, and funding.	200
<b>Action 8.2.3. Historical and Cultural Resources.</b> Partner with the Historic Preservation Committee and City Art Board to ensure that local historical and cultural resources on public properties are maintained.	200
<b>Action 8.2.4. Performance Measures.</b> Actively participate in the NRPA's Park Metrics program on a recurring basis including the input of annual agency updates into the Park Metrics program, and the evaluation of updated agency performance reports.	200

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