

Parks and Recreation

Element 10



INTRODUCTION

Parks and recreation resources enhance the quality of life for community residents. The City's extensive Multi-Use path system also serves as an amenity for recreation. (The Public Parks and Multi-Use Path Plan (Attachment 10-1) depicts existing and proposed park sites and multi-use paths.) Additional recreational opportunities are available beyond the City's boundaries, such as the U.S. Forest Service's Coronado National Forest, the U.S. Bureau of Land Management's (BLM) San Pedro Riparian National Conservation Area (SPRNCA), and amenities and programs offered on Fort Huachuca. Commercial and non-profit enterprises can also provide recreational facilities and programs.



Veterans Memorial Park

BACKGROUND

The City recognizes the need for high quality parks, recreation facilities, and programs to provide a high quality of life for community residents, a concept that was reaffirmed during the 2013 "Dream Your City" visioning process. Since 2000, the City has developed numerous parks and recreation areas such as Garden Canyon Park, Country Club Park, and Chaparral Park and constructed the Pavilion, an outdoor performing arts facility. As a result, of an extensive public process, the City designed Garden Canyon Park to provide recreational amenities and protect the wash's natural beauty in this linear park.

In response to a City Council Strategic Leadership Objective, Leisure Services created the Small Parks Master Plan in 2013 (Appendix U) to guide future phased improvements of small neighborhood parks. The multi-use path and bike lane system continues to grow and has nearly doubled between 2000 and 2013. As of early 2014, there are 21 miles of paths, constructed with funding by private development or Federal or State grants. Coordination and partnerships between the City, Cochise County, and Fort Huachuca resulted in the creation of the Perimeter Trail, facilitating a pedestrian and bicycle access connection from the City's Garden Canyon Park to the Huachuca Mountains east range.

In 2014, the Level of Service for parkland is 10 acres of parkland for every 1,000 residents; however, the City estimates the 2014 ratio of parkland is 6.1 acres for 1,000 residents.

There are six types of parks and recreational facilities in Sierra Vista—

- Neighborhood parks (up to 5 acres)
- Community parks (greater than 5 and less than 40 acres)
- Large-city parks (40 acres or more)
- Linear parks (along dedicated drainageways)
- Multi-use paths
- Sports and recreational fields

A growing trend is for communities to provide off-leash, open, green space areas to serve canines, also known as dog parks. In 2014, Sierra Vista there is one dog park at Tompkins Park and one dog park is planned at Cyr Center Park.

The City also has the Sierra Vista Aquatics Center (known locally as The Cove), the Henry F. Hauser Museum, a performing arts pavilion, tennis courts, and other amenities for recreation. A full explanation of the different types of parks and recreational facilities can be found in Appendix C, Parks and Recreation Facility Implementation Plan.

The City has a close and positive working relationship with the Sierra Vista Unified School District to share resources in support of local sports and recreation programs. For example, the City partnered with the School District to reopen a Teen Center, using an unoccupied School District building and City resources. The City designed the facility based on input from youth in the community.

There are also privately owned recreational amenities open to the public, including Buena High School Performing Arts Center, golf courses, swimming pools, and equestrian facilities. There

are also prime recreational opportunities in the Huachuca Mountains and along the San Pedro River. Sierra Vista is also one of several gateway communities to the Arizona Trail.

The City has a wide range of year-round recreational programs available for all ages and abilities.

The “Dream Your City” process and comments are reflected in the Goals and Strategies below.

GOALS AND STRATEGIES

Goal 10-1 Increase designated parkland to meet City’s level of service (LOS) standard

Per the population estimates provided in the 2021-2032 Parks Master Plan, the City would need 440 acres of park land to meet the LOS standard. There is currently 377 total acres of developed park land in the City, which falls 63 acres short of the LOS standard. However, efforts to develop future parks such as the Rothery Center (21 acres) Roadrunner Park (28 acres), Tribute Subdivision Parks (117 acres) and the Domingo Paiz & Stone Field Expansion (7.5) will help to meet the LOS standard.

Strategies

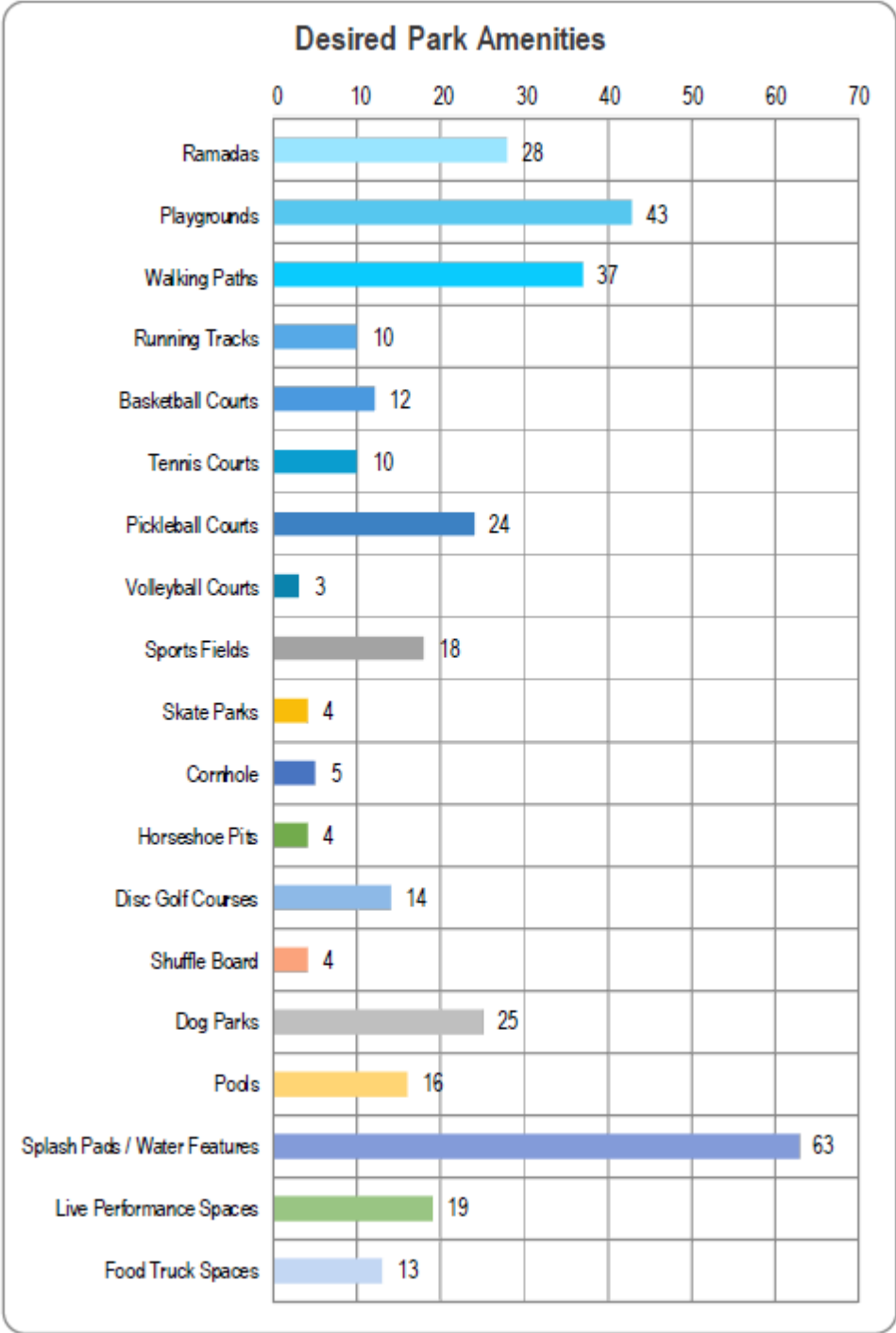
1. Meet the City’s LOS goal of at least 10 acres of parkland per 1,000 residents.
2. Ensure privately developed parks conform to the City’s level of service standards.
3. Acquire land to develop neighborhood and area parks in those neighborhoods that lack parks within standards defined in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, (Appendix C)
4. Require that new subdivisions reserve parkland, as identified in this General Plan.
5. Pursue funding available through Federal, State, and private recreation assistance programs for park acquisition and amenities.
6. Seek to balance the cost of acquiring new parks with the need to also maintain a high level of standard for existing parks.

Goal 10-2 Design and develop sufficient parkland and facilities to meet the needs of the community

The City Council approved a new Parks Master Plan on August 12, 2021. The Plan reflects the vision for the City’s parks and recreation facilities: their operations, maintenance, and enhancements for the next decade. Moreover, it serves as a roadmap for future recreation facilities and programs by considering existing parks and services in an around the City and the anticipated demand for additional or improved recreation facilities.

There was an extensive public outreach process as part of the Master Plan. An online survey requested input from the public about future park amenities. The amenity with the highest response was Splash Pads/Water Features in the parks. Additional amenities requested were playgrounds, walking paths, ramadas, and live performing spaces. ADA and pedestrian connectivity have been designed into the overall Park Master Plan. Once the final draft was completed, the City once again asked the public for their input. Comments received were integrated into the final adopted Plan. Provided below is the table of survey responses relating to proposed park amenities. Additional information regarding the Master Plan can be found on this link: [Parks Master Plan](#)

Figure 10: Survey Response – Favorite Park Amenities



As previously stated the water savings improvements as part of the Schneider Electric project, have been completed in many of the parks. These projects include replacing the grass with artificial turf at the Cyr Center Park and the Domingo Paiz Soccer Fields. Previous to the Schneider Electric improvements, the City used dynamic sprinkler systems and drought tolerant plants in public areas throughout the City.

1. Design parks to industry standards and the needs of the community.
2. Consider security in designs of new parks and park improvements.
3. Construct park infrastructure concurrent with development infrastructure.
4. Minimize the use of turf.
5. Use native or low-water-use plants.
6. Encourage residents to participate in planning neighborhood and linear parks.
7. Ensure that parks and recreational facilities meet all ADA requirements.
8. Pursue cooperative and joint use agreements with other public agencies to develop parks, facilities, and recreation programs.
9. Establish an environmentally friendly multi-use pathway system to interconnect parks when feasible.
10. Consider the feasibility of developing a large special events area.
11. Consider the feasibility of developing additional dog parks to meet the needs of the community.

Goal 10-3 Maintain parks and facilities to City standards

The newly adopted Parks Master Plan includes an Action Plan that provides an overall park system maintenance schedule and improvement recommendations, as well as potential new park developments that could be placed within the City's Capital Improvement Plan. The parks maintenance schedule is for the

years 2021 to 2032. For a listing of all the improvements please review the Master Plan here: [Parks Master Plan](#)

- Strategies**
1. Place a high priority on maintaining parks to City standards.
 2. Implement improvements and modifications to neighborhood parks as defined in the Small Parks Master Plan (Appendix U).
 3. Maintain parks to ensure public safety.

Goal 10-4 Establish facilities and programs to meet the needs of Sierra Vista residents

An analysis in the Master Plan was done to determine the adequacy of the parks facilities and programs to meet the current and future needs of the community. Regarding the types of leisure facilities, Sierra Vista generally exceeds the type of facilities that are found in other communities especially facilities like the indoor swimming pool and tennis courts which are not typically maintained by other jurisdictions. However, the City does not have public community gardens, but does support the discovery garden at the University of Arizona Cooperative Extension. There is also a community garden that is operated by non-profit organization. The City recently acquired the Veteran’s Memorial Sports Complex in 2020 (formerly the Rothery Center) which includes additional athletic facilities such as a running track, tennis courts, baseball fields, and open turf areas.

The Master Plan also provides a list of public amenities as well as a matrix of current programs and services provided at the various parks and facilities. The analysis in the Master Plan indicates that compared to other communities, Sierra Vista does not offer some of the same programs. For example, Sierra Vista does not provide safety training, individual sports, martial arts, golf, cultural crafts, visual arts, and natural and cultural history activities. Creation of these programs will depend on the availability of staffing and public interest. Provided below are tables indicating the Offered Services and Offered Activities provided by the Parks & Leisure Department.

Figure 1: Offered Services (Facilities NRPA Comparison)

Responsibility	Fulfilled?	%	Responsibility	Fulfilled?	%
a. Operate and maintain park sites	Yes	96.6%	m. Include in its operating budget the funding for planning and development functions	Yes	67.4%
b. Operate and maintain indoor facilities	Yes	91.0%	n. Manage or maintain fairgrounds	No	4.5%
c. Operate, maintain, or contract golf courses	No	31.5%	o. Maintain, manage, or lease indoor performing arts center	No	21.3%
d. Operate, maintain, or contract campgrounds	No	6.7%	p. Administer or manage farmer's markets	No	32.6%
e. Operate, maintain, or contract indoor swim facility	Yes	34.8%	q. Administer community gardens	No	51.7%
f. Operate, maintain, or contract outdoor swim facilities/water parks	Yes	73.0%	r. Manage large performance outdoor amphitheaters	No	40.4%
g. Operate, maintain, or contract tennis center facilities	Yes	48.3%	s. Administer or manage professional or college-type stadium/arena/racetrack	No	5.6%
h. Operate, maintain, or contract tourism attractions	No	40.4%	t. Administer or manage tournament/event quality indoor sports complexes	No	15.7%
i. Provide recreation programming and services	Yes	96.6%	u. Administer or manage tournament/event quality outdoor sports complexes	Yes	66.3%
j. Operate and maintain non-park sites	Yes	74.2%	v. Conduct major jurisdiction wide special events	Yes	93.3%
k. Operate, maintain, or manage trails, greenways, and/or blueways (TGB)	Yes	83.1%	w. Have budgetary responsibility for its administrative staff	Yes	83.1%
l. Operate, maintain, or manage special purpose parks and open spaces	Yes	79.8%			

Figure 2: Offered Activities (Programming NRPA Comparison)

Activity	Offered?	%	Activity	Offered?	%
a. Health and wellness education	Yes	79.7%	m. Visual arts	No	70.9%
b. Safety training	No	74.7%	n. Natural and cultural history activities	No	60.8%
c. Fitness enhancement classes	Yes	86.1%	o. Themed special events	Yes	93.7%
d. Team sports	Yes	92.4%	p. Trips and tours	Yes	64.6%
e. Individual sports	No	78.5%	q. Summer camp	Yes	86.1%
f. Racquet sports	Yes	73.4%	r. Before school programs	No	10.5%
g. Martial arts	No	64.6%	s. After school programs	Yes	44.2%
h. Aquatics	Yes	73.4%	t. Preschool	No	27.6%
i. Golf	No	51.9%	u. Full daycare	No	4.1%
j. Social recreation events	Yes	96.2%	v. Specific teen programs	Yes	63.2%
k. Cultural crafts	No	65.8%	w. Specific senior programs	Yes	75.6%
l. Performing arts	Yes	77.2%	x. Programs for the disabled	Yes	56.6%

- Strategies**
1. Provide the appropriate number and types of specialized facilities desired to achieve a diverse park and recreation system.
 2. Construct a multi-purpose, multi-generational community center.
 3. Build new sports fields to accommodate growing sports participation.
 4. Encourage development of private facilities to complement the City’s park and recreational amenity system.

5. Seek program and facility amenities aimed at providing recreational opportunities for children and young teens.

Goal 10-5 Improve interconnectivity between the paved multi-use path system and parks

As previously stated, the Development Code requires all new residential subdivisions to provide pedestrian access to multi-use paths, washes, and parks. Numerous subdivisions under development are currently providing these connections to include Summit Heights, Canada Vista, Retreat and Holiday. The Parks map identifies the linear parks, adjacent to washes to include Garden Canyon Wash, Woodcutter's, and Soldier's Creek linear parks.

Veteran's Memorial Park, Cyr Center Park, Soldier's Creek Park, Timothy Lane Park, and Country Club Park all connect to the multi-use path system. The Master Plan proposes multi-use path connectivity for additional recreational areas to include the Tacoma Street Sports Fields and the western portion of the Cyr Center Park.

- Strategies**
1. Encourage new development to improve and dedicate wash areas to be used as recreational amenities.
 2. Identify washes in already developed areas that can be improved for recreational purposes and develop a plan to prioritize and fund improvements.
 3. Develop unpaved paths adjacent to the washes.

STATE LAW REQUIREMENTS

Arizona Revised Statutes, Section 9-461.05-9 E 2

"A recreation element showing a comprehensive system of areas and public sites for recreation, including the following and, if practicable, their locations and proposed development:

- (a) Natural reservations
- (b) Parks
- (c) Parkways and scenic drives
- (d) Beaches
- (e) Playgrounds and playfields
- (f) Open space
- (g) Bicycle routes
- (h) Other recreation areas."

ATTACHMENTS

Map 16, Public Parks and Multi-Use Path Map

REFERENCES

The following references used in this element are City approved documents.

- Appendix C, Open Space Plan and Parks and Recreation Facility Implementation Plan, 2008. Department of Community Development
- Small Parks Master Plan, 2013. Department of Leisure & Library Services

